



PHOTO BY MARK MOGLE/GAZETTE PACKET

Sounds of the Scottish Walk

The Saint Andrew's Society Pipes and Drums marches along Queen Street during the 2017 Scottish Walk Parade. More photos, page 3.

Eco-City Alexandria

Building an environmentally conscious city with public input.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

What does the Alexandria of 2030 look like? Is it a city laden with car-traffic, choked with greenhouse gases and with sewers overflowing into the streets? Or is Alexandria a clean and efficient city, with widely accessible public and bicycle transportation?

The City's Environmental Action Plan is the guideline for keeping the city on track with its environmental goals, and after several years of relative neglect, the city is working up update the plan with public help.

The city's Environmental Action Plan 2030 was originally adopted in 2009 with the goal of being updated every five years, but budget constraints and other city priorities pushed that update back. Now, however, work has begun on updating the Environmental Action Plan. At a Dec. 4 kickoff event in City Hall, the Sister Cities' room was packed with local citizens.

The city has changed in many ways since 2009, and most of the meeting was a recap of some of the largest environmental shifts in Alexandria. The closure of the GenOn plant in 2012, the largest air polluter in the region, was cited as one of the biggest environmental successes in the city's recent history, though environmental work is still required at the site. Wetlands and stream restoration projects have taken place across the city, notably at Windmill Hill Park and Four Mile Run.

For local transit, despite falling Metro numbers in the region, other forms of regional transit have been on the rise. Alexandria's bikeshare ridership has increased from 17 percent in 2015-2016 to 24 percent in 2016-2017. The Metroway, connecting Braddock Road and Potomac Yards to Crystal City has increased usage by 44 percent annually. The city has also implemented a trolley system in Old Town, with five hybrid-electric trolleys running up and down

SEE BUILDING, PAGE 25

Budgetary Olive Branch?

ACPS superintendent's FY19-28 CIP proposal reflects joint approach.

BY DAN BRENDEL
GAZETTE PACKET

The school administration's proposed FY19-28 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) — still large, though much streamlined compared to last year's unprecedented request — may be a step toward meeting the city in the middle.

The School Board has prioritized "capacity, capacity, and capacity" in light of swelling student enrollment, said Superintendent Lois Berlin, framing her \$459 million CIP proposal to the School Board last Thursday, Nov. 30. Schools exceed their intended student capacity at all grade levels, with gaps projected to widen. The schools and city jointly forecast that enrollment will increase by 18 percent over the next 10 years. Even with proposed expansions, enrollment in excess of capacity will increase by 36 percent. The largest jumps by both measures will occur at the high school level.

This theme of capacity expansion, as well as its hefty price tag, continues the trend of recent years. This year's proposal represents a 25 percent decrease from the School Board's approved \$611 million 10-year request in FY18, though still a 58 percent increase over its \$291 million request in FY17. It's also

a 23 percent increase over the city-approved \$373 million in FY18, and a 68 percent increase over the city-approved \$274 million in FY17. The 9-year portion of this year's proposal that overlaps the FY18-27 CIP exceeds the city's approved amount for that timeframe by \$99 million (28 percent). Adjusting for inflation reduces these increases, but by no more than 5 percentage points.

A major difference this year, though, is that the superintendent incorporated a good deal of input from the Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force. The task force represents an attempt to stabilize the governing bodies' capital planning, which have been misaligned and contentious for years. In October, after five months of deliberating, the task force recommended to both bodies how to re-prioritize 28 facilities projects slated through FY27. By removing, delaying and/or reducing funding for 22 — 11 each from the schools and city — the task force mostly closed an initial \$46 million funding gap for those projects.

Berlin, who participated closely in the task force's work, assimilated its most salient recommendations.

For example:

- ❖ Building a new school first for use as "swing space," rather than temporarily converting a rec center for that purpose;
- ❖ Deferring elementary school tear-down-and-rebuilds a few years in order to align with the city's identified available annual cash flows;
- ❖ Allocating \$30 million up front in FY19, which

SEE SCHOOLS' CIP, PAGE 24

Students and Stethoscopes

ACPS partners with GW to build health care professional pipeline.

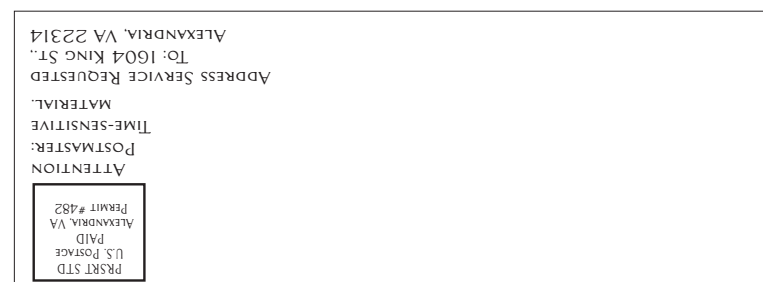
BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

The last year of high school can be a daunting experience, struggling to figure out what kind of career to pursue and where to go to college. But in four years, a group of 150 T.C. Williams High School students will have a slightly easier time of it. After their graduation, the first

class of the Academy of Health Sciences will be able to choose whether to immediately jump into a medical career or sign up for guaranteed admissions at George Washington University.

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and George Washington University (GW) School of Medicine and Health Services have partnered to establish a pathway

SEE STUDENTS, PAGE 26



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Plaid Tidings

47th Annual Scottish Walk Parade

Thousands of spectators lined the streets of Old Town Dec. 2 for Alexandria's 47th Annual Scottish Walk Parade. Grand Marshal David McKenzie led a march of kilts, bagpipers, Scottish clans and more as part of the Scottish Walk weekend of events to benefit the Campagna Center.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Santa salutes the dignitaries on the reviewing stand to close the Scottish Walk Parade.



Representatives of the Kiwanis Club of Alexandria participate in the Scottish Walk parade.

PHOTOS BY MARK MOGLE/GAZETTE PACKET



Kevin Donnelly makes his final appearance as drum major for the City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums.



Burke & Herbert Chairman and CEO Hunt Burke waves to the crowd along the Scottish Walk parade route.



Flag bearers prepare for the presentation of colors to close the 2017 Scottish Walk Parade.



Jeanne and John Warner view the Mass Bands finale of the 2017 Scottish Walk Parade.



Breast cancer survivors walk with family members and staff from the Alexandria-based National Breast Center.



Members of the T.C. Williams JROTC walk along Queen Street during the Scottish Walk Parade.



PHOTO BY NATASHA EDWARDS

Yoshi is ready for the Scottish Walk.

Pier Pressure Holiday Boat Parade lights up the Potomac.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Thousands of spectators gathered at sundown along the Alexandria waterfront Dec. 2 to watch as more than 50 boats participated in the 18th annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.

Led by Alexandria's fireboat, Vigilant, and Washington D.C.'s fireboat, John Glenn, the illuminated boats cruised the Potomac River as they competed for prizes in categories ranging from Best in Show to Best Try.

Media personality Tommy McFly of 94.7 Fresh FM and NBC4 served as announcer of the mile-long parade, which featured a mixture of powerboats and sailboats.

The Best of Alexandria Show went to State of Comfort, led by Captain Brian Johnson, which featured a musical karaoke concept, "Have a carOLOKE Christmas." Best Powerboat went to Stimulus Package and Captain Greg Dreter for "Christmas Angel," an illuminated blue angel with animated wings.

Best Sailboat went to Wisp and Captain Tim Fontana whose crew celebrated the Capital Yacht Club's 125th anniversary with a Capital Yacht Club flag in red, white and blue lights. Other notable entries include Hardest Soul winner FLOTUS, a canoe and paddleboard duo led by Kelsey Semrod, and a new category added for the evening, Best Spirit of Harmony, which was awarded to Nalani and Captain Daniel Ricks for "COEXIST/Rainbow Trees."

The 2017 winning boats are: Best of Alexandria Show - State of Comfort; Best Powerboat - Stimulus Package; Best Sailboat - Wisp; Best Spirit of Harmony (New Category) - Nalani; Best Spirit of America - Beach House; Thinking Outside the Christmas Box -

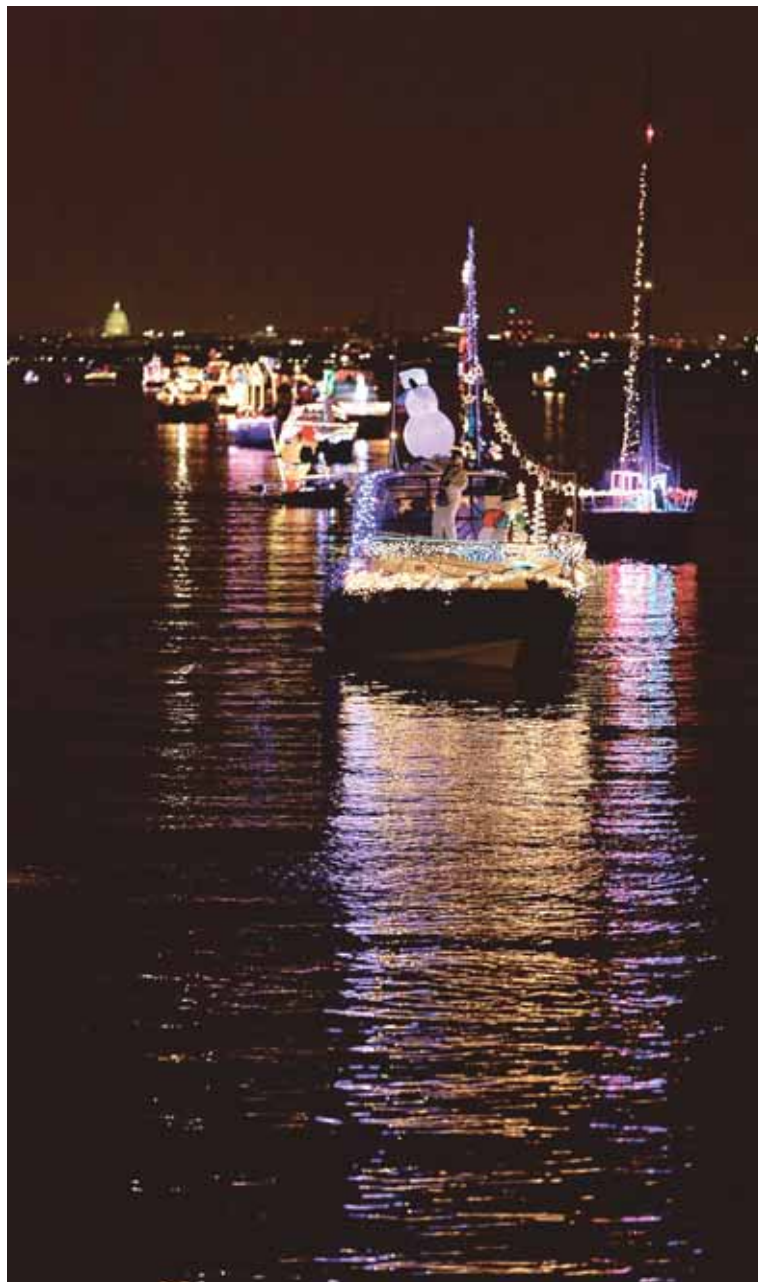


PHOTO BY MARK MOGLE/GAZETTE PACKET

With the U.S. Capitol building in the background, illuminated boats cruise the Potomac River Dec. 2 as part of the 18th annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.

Cyganka; Most Animated - iechyda!; Most Holiday Cheer - Anamchara; Most Spirited Crew - Letter of Marque; Best Theme - Kairos; Hardest Soul - FLOTUS; and Best Try - O'Sea Dee. The parade was sponsored by the City of Alexandria, Visit Alexandria, the Old Dominion Boat Club and Potomac Riverboat Company.



The powerboat Kairos took home Best Theme honors Dec. 2 in the 18th annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights on the Potomac River. More than 50 boats participated in the mile-long parade of illuminated vessels along the Alexandria waterfront.



State of Comfort, led by Captain Brian Johnson, won Best of Alexandria Show for "Have a carOLOKE Christmas."



Stimulus Package and Captain Greg Dreter won Best Powerboat for "Christmas Angel," an illuminated blue angel with animated wings.



The Most Spirited Crew award was won by Letter of Marque.

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Physical Education with a Heart

By SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Forty second graders wiggle up against the walls in the hall outside the gym at Charles Barrett Elementary waiting for the signal to start their class at one of the fitness stations around the gym. Kevin McGrath emerges from his mobile office at the edge of the gym floor which he jokes is a computer and chair pulled out of the closet each day.

PEOPLE AT WORK

McGrath co-teaches this physical education (PE) double class with Misty Boyd. He says a lot of their lessons are done inside. “Too much distraction with noise from traffic and butterflies outside.” The music blares out and each student heads for the exercise area where he or she will start their one-minute routine before rotating to the other stations around the room, each emphasizing flexibility, cardio-vascular, speed, muscle strength.

McGrath says the theory of PE has changed today. It used to be based on skills and children got separated out. The youngsters who weren’t good left because they decided exercise wasn’t for them. “Now we encourage kids to find something you can enjoy, not based on how good you are. It causes positive interactions and avoids bullying — those who are, and those who aren’t.”

He has 500 students in PE twice a week for 45 minutes with 14 double classes and 16 single classes. Today’s curriculum includes areas like local motor movement (skipping, running, jumping), spatial awareness such as personal space (where you can’t touch anybody) and “chase my plate.” He explains this is nutrition fact cards focusing on the five food groups.

McGrath points to the corner where a climbing wall and net span to the ceiling. “They learn balance.” He explains the kids practice a lot of lead-up skills to sports. “They may not play basketball but they learn the skills for the game so they find something they can be comfortable with.

“But today I have something brand new and cool



Kevin McGrath, PE teacher at Charles Barrett Elementary, says the theory of PE has totally changed since he went to school. Today he is demonstrating “a brand new way to use technology.”

for you.” He tells the class to head for a circle in the center of the gym. “Take one large step away from the circle. Boys and girls, this is called a clicker,” as he holds up a small device in his hand. “It has a little symbol if you are answering in a certain way. On each side of the paper there is a letter.” McGrath tells them, “Each of you will have a card.

“Miss Hart’s class on this side of the circle. Come up and get your card and remember your number.” Small fingers wrap around the cards that have an A on one side, a B on the adjoining side, a C on the bottom and a D on the fourth side. “So we’re going to do a practice session. Here is the first question. It’s an easy one.” McGrath asks, “How many hands does a human being have? If you think it is one hand, turn the A at the top, if you think it is two hands, put the B at the top....” As each card gets adjusted, McGrath quickly scans the circle with his clicker to record the responses. He tells them, “This is a brand new way to use technology.”

McGrath started teaching in Brooklyn 15 years ago. He had a challenging first year in a school where he was the first PE teacher and had classes of 60-100 students with no equipment and a five and a half hour commute each day. He has been teaching at Charles Barrett for 13 years. As a result of his own experience, he has created Adopt-A-Gym. McGrath says he realized he has all of the equipment he needs but other schools don’t have that advantage. Each year he has a fun fitness event like the dance-a-thon where students are sponsored and the funds go to purchase PE equipment. Over three years they have raised \$10,300 that has been given to schools in D.C., Richmond, needy in El Salvador and his own first school in Brooklyn. This year he has gone all over to recruit other schools and currently has 11 registered.

McGrath says he decided to become a PE teacher because he had a challenging life as a child and sometimes he almost didn’t make it. “My purpose has been to pass the buck to others in a similar situation.” Since he has the kids in grades K-5, he says he gets to see them long enough to give them the benefit of a doubt and to make a difference.



Kevin McGrath uses the question “how many hands does a human have” to illustrate his clicker that will record student responses on the symbol held up on each card.



A second grader at Charles Barrett Elementary heads to his fitness station to begin the one-minute drills used to improve cardiovascular, muscle memory, speed and fitness.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Extension Showcase

Diane Charles, executive director of ALIVE! in Alexandria, discusses mutual food goals and concerns for low-income families with Jennifer Abel, senior extension agent at the annual 2017 Extension Showcase on Dec. 1. In 2017 1,234 volunteers worked in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria with almost 35 hours donated on average by each volunteer. The volunteers participate in five different program areas such as Energy Masters where 180 volunteers have made improvements in 744 Alexandria and Arlington apartments.



The Master Food Volunteers of Virginia Cooperative Extension have prepared a breakfast for everyone. Nancy Broff, Master Food volunteer, points out the array of different colors displayed on the long buffet table “because we eat with our eyes” and because it calls attention that foods of different colors have different nutrients. She says they offer vegan alternatives such as the avocado tartines as well as gluten-free flourless chocolate chip muffins. The Extension breakfast is held each year to introduce the community to extension activities and to thank them for their support.



Joan McIntyre, a Master Gardener of Northern Virginia (MGNV), talks to bystanders about sustainability and an overall focus on reducing the amount of fertilizer and energy that goes into maintaining a yard. She stresses the importance of native plants. The Junior Master Gardener and Outdoor Explorer program at six elementary schools in 2017 reached 130 students with the support of 31 volunteers. MGNV is available to assist in plant selection, planting practices, pest and disease control in Arlington and Alexandria.

OBITUARY

James Edward Martin

James Edward Martin, 93, of Alexandria, died on Friday, Nov. 24, 2017. He was the beloved husband of the late Betty Martin; father of Donna Breeding, Sandy Brown and Edward "Marty" Martin; grandfather of five and great-grandfather of five.

Mr. Martin served in the Navy during World War II. He began his police career on the Alexandria Police Force subsequently serving with the DC Metropolitan Police



until his retirement, after which he was an administrative assistant with Fairfax County Schools.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Alexandria. Visit www.lls.org/national-capital-area.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

The City of Alexandria is reminding the community about the importance of stopping domestic violence and highlighting available resources. Domestic violence is an instance or pattern of abusive or coercive behaviors that may include threats, harassment, controlling resources, verbal and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical assault, or other actions. These behaviors are exhibited by one individual to exert power or control over another in the context of a family, or in dating relationships, (including those of teen couples and adult couples who do not live together). To check whether you or someone you know might be a victim, take a quick online assessment at www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence#AreYouaVictim to learn more. Those concerned about the safety of another can become active bystanders and help guide the victim to confidential support and assistance. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence#FriendsandFamilyofSurvivors. The City of Alexandria Domestic Violence Program operates a 24/7 hotline at 703-746-4911. Among the services offered are a Safe

House shelter; counseling; confidential support groups; and legal help, including court accompaniment and assistance with protective orders. There are also opportunities to join and support the numerous city agencies working together in the prevention and treatment of domestic violence.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Mayor on Your Corner. 10-11:30 a.m. at Tempo Restaurant, 4231 Duke St. Join Mayor Allison Silberberg for her next monthly coffee, at Tempo Restaurant. No need to RSVP. No charge to attend. There is a \$5 flat fee for pastries and coffee. Please see www.allisonsilberberg.com for more information.

MONDAY/DEC. 11

Home Buying Tips. 7 p.m. at Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Learn how to shop for a home and be successful in a competitive metro Washington, D.C., area market. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

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CareFirst Helps Sustain Health Safety Net

CareFirst invests in community partners who collaborate to expand care for vulnerable.

BY EDEN BROWN
GAZETTE PACKET

As Maria Tildon said, while handing out checks for \$50,000, “if anyone ever doubted the power of women, just come up here and look out at this crowd.”

The room was full of women — and a few men — who made Arlington’s safety net organizations what they are: symbiotic teams. Tildon, who is senior vice president, Public Policy and Community Affairs for CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, majored in international relations and would have been a smooth diplomat: she hastened to praise the men in the room, many of them elected officials who have fought for better health care coverage. Justin Fairfax, newly elected lieutenant governor of Virginia was one of them.

Many people are unaware that Blue Cross Blue Shield’s CareFirst program is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health in the local community, in this case Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

According to Jule Wagner, vice president for Community Affairs, CareFirst acts like a foundation: They work with more than 100 community-based organizations locally. What’s in it for them to hand out grants to local safety net providers?

“It’s our mission,” said Wagner. “People living healthy lives; the health of our community. That’s what we do.” Wagner said CareFirst was investing \$275,000 in six partner organizations represented at the event on Nov. 13.

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, the region’s largest not-for-profit health insurer, isn’t like most health insurance companies.



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN

From left: Jessica Lantz, NovaScripts, director of operations; Stephanie Berkowitz, president and CEO of NOVA Family Services; Nancy White, Arlington Free Clinic executive director; Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board member; Justin Fairfax, lieutenant governor-elect of Virginia; Kathy Sibert, executive director of A-Span; Alexandria City Councilman Paul Smedberg; Maria Tildon, senior vice president of Public Policy and Community Affairs, CareFirst; Dr. Basim Khan, executive director, Neighborhood Health; and Maria Twomey, executive director, MCCP.

Tildon, for instance, was on a first name basis with everyone in the room, from Dr. Tom Connolly, one of the early volunteer doctors at Arlington Free Clinic and an activist in the healthcare arena, to Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board member, and Stephanie Berkowitz, president and CEO of NOVA Family Services. Blue Cross Blue Shield’s CareFirst has a major community partnership: their commitment to reinvesting in the community goes beyond a legal obligation to preserve a tax exempt status. CareFirst associates serve on more than 270 nonprofit boards, and in 2016, their associates volunteered more than 18,400 hours to community organizations.

CareFirst has one of the largest United Way giving campaigns in the region, raising more than \$1 million through associate donations and a company match. Earlier this year, hundreds of associates participated in raising more than \$300,000 in support of the American Diabetes Association.

Lieutenant Governor-elect Justin Fairfax was still celebrating the electoral victory on Nov. 7 and re-

ceived a large round of applause as he stepped in to speak at the press conference after a last minute cancellation by U.S. Sen. Mark Warner. Fairfax said this was a special occasion for him: his wife was born in Arlington, his mother was a pharmacist and worked at the People’s Drugstore here; his wife is a dentist; his sister is a nurse in Fairfax; his grandmother was a nurse. Access to healthcare, no matter what color, last name, or status, is something Fairfax personally champions.

“Here is a place of hope,” he said, referring to the fundamental reason people come to the U.S. to seek a better life, or knock at the door of a safety net organization, “and we need to rise to the better angels of our nature and give these people care.”

Fairfax said he was looking forward to working with those at the event, officials and citizens, in Richmond, where he hoped to expand health care: “There are 31 states who have voted to expand Medicaid — 18 who have not — and as a result, the state of Virginia has given away \$6 million a day in federal aid.”

Tildon presented checks for amounts of \$25,000 to \$60,000 to each of six providers at the event, highlighting the interconnectivity that makes it work: none of the organizations could do this alone. The health care provider could not help patients if he couldn’t prescribe medicines from NovaScripts, and then couldn’t refer them NOVA Family Services for jobs.

Basim Khan, of Neighborhood Health, accepted a check for \$50,000 noting that his organization is about to celebrate its 20th anniversary, and has set a new goal of trying to reach 21,000 patients. He said it was a firm Neighborhood Health belief that “the people we serve should get the same care that people get who are better off; we wanted our doctor’s office to look like anybody else’s. CareFirst made that possible at our Richmond Highway location. They helped support staff to get accreditation, and CareFirst helped us get pediatric dentistry on our list of services.”

Kathleen Sibert, executive director of A-Span, accepted a check for \$50,000 from Tildon. “We couldn’t do it without you,” she said. “We serve 11,000 people a year. Very often if there is a health problem, the doctor tells you to go home and rest and recuperate — but what if you don’t have a home to go to? CareFirst made this possible. The nurse practitioner at A-SPAN, Kasha Shaw, heads up a five-bed medical respite program in our new facility which consistently runs at 95 percent occupancy.”

Also receiving a check on Nov. 13 was the Medical Care for Children Partnership (MCCP). This is a program for youth who aren’t eligible for other programs.

As Andrea Lomrantz, director of Family Services, Fairfax County,

said, “We are the last stop on the safety net.”

MCCP has a public-private partnership with Fairfax County to expand pediatric dental services to children in the Culmore/Stuart Pyramid community. Fairfax County’s dental clinic can serve only 30 low-income patients. “We have 3,200 kids under our care,” said Lomrantz. “The MCCP foundation was able to partner with Northern Virginia Community College and Dr. Basim Khan, to make Neighborhood Health the dental partner for these kids. We estimate just the cleaning alone is about \$150,000 worth of leveraged care. The \$25,000 from CareFirst will make it possible for us to provide that.”

Another check recipient was President and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Services Stephanie Berkowitz. “Last year we helped 34,000 people on their journey to independence,” she told the crowd. “CareFirst has been a partner with intent and impact.”

Berkowitz highlighted the others in the room: “Because of the collective nature of what we do, we are on the cutting edge.” She stressed the need for accessible behavioral healthcare; “It’s one of our biggest needs. CareFirst has supported this for our most underserved community, particularly immigrant children or those who have been through trauma.”

Berkowitz was followed by NovaScripts Director of Operations, Jessica Lantz, who also received a check and who noted over the past few years “we have dispensed \$3.6M worth of life saving medications with the help of CareFirst funding. Also, with CareFirst we are able to continue to educate the community and help fight health literacy through our Educate Before You Medicate program.”

The host of the event, Nancy White, executive director, Arlington Free Clinic, also received a check for \$50,000. In 2015, Arlington Free Clinic launched its Oral Health Program in response to the large unmet need for dental care for low-income, uninsured Arlington adults.

Grant funding from CareFirst has enabled AFC to sustain its capacity to deliver essential oral health care over the past two years; provide partial expansion of dental services; and identify options for increasing access to dental care for more patients and look towards providing a range of services offered in-house.

Once and Future Office

The past, present, and future of the Office of Historic Alexandria

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET



Lance Mallamo (left) and Gretchen Bulova

History isn't a static thing in Alexandria. It is a living, breathing thing. For the past 10 years, J. Lance Mallamo has been the director of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA); guiding the city's historical preservation and interpretation through numerous discoveries, acquisitions and exhibits. On Nov. 30, Mallamo retired. As he departs and deputy director Gretchen Bulova steps in as acting director, the organization is transitioning from older projects into a wave of new challenges and opportunities.

Mallamo came to OHA after 30 years as a historian in New York. At the time, Mallamo said the biggest priority was pursuing museum accreditation for four of the Alexandria's seven museums. The Fort Ward Museum, Gadsby's Tavern, and the Lyceum were all accredited as individual museums, but the Black History Museum, the Friendship Firehouse Museum, the Stabler Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, and the Archeology Museum were not. By 2012, all museums in Alexandria were accredited by the American Association of Museums.

"Before, we had individual museums, but now it's a museum system," said Mallamo. "There are only eight museum systems operated by municipal governments in the United States. Accreditation affirms to the community that you meet highest standards and best practices. It shows the public that you maintain your collections and policies."

During his time at OHA, Mallamo said some of the office's most important work was on the Contraband and Freedmen's Memorial at 1001 S. Washington St. During the Civil War, Union-occupied Alexandria became a safe haven for black Americans escaping slavery. Many were housed in barracks and lived in poor conditions, leading to disease that killed many of those who had survived dangerous escapes to the north. A plot of land across from the Catholic cemetery was converted into a cemetery for contrabands and freedmen. The site was used as a burial ground from 1864 to 1869, but over time the above ground visibility of the graves was eroded and by 1955 a gas station was built on top of the site. As construction was beginning on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, the cemetery was rediscovered and OHA led the effort to find and identify the graves.

"It was a sacred, hallowed ground developed into gas station," said Mallamo. "This was correcting a historic indignity. It was putting that back, front and center, and giving dignity to the people buried there."

Work with the city's cemeteries was a major part of Mallamo's job with OHA. At Fort Ward, Mallamo said the office had a

team of archeologists working for three years to identify 49 graves on-site and research the history of the local African American community.

"We've always been doing something great," said Mallamo. "I've been working with a fantastic team whose greatest regret is that there are only 24 hours in the day, because we want to do so much. We've been serving the community of Alexandria where people are so excited about their local history, where they challenge us every day to maintain a high level of service."

One of the latest big adventures for OHA was the discovery of the ship buried in Old Town. The intact bottom hull of a scuttled 18th century ship was uncovered in January 2016. Since then, the ship has been moved to the Texas A&M University's Conservation Research Lab for study. As Mallamo retires, it's also one of the big challenges he hands off to Bulova.

"We have a lot on our plate," said Bulova. "The ship that was discovered two Christmas's ago, that's out for conservation, needs a home to come back to."

Bulova has been working in OHA since 1991 and says the office is near and dear to her heart.

"The opportunity to be director is pretty incredible," said Bulova. "It's an honor to work for the city. They're an outstanding model for stewardship of historic properties. We have a very energetic staff that wants to do more and more programs and exhibits."

As her team meets in January, Bulova said they will be developing their strategic plan for the next five to 10 years. Among the organization's challenges, Bulova said the city is facing a growing need for off-site storage for historical artifacts. OHA will also begin the process of adapting the Murray-Lee-Fawcett House into a city-owned historic property.

"It's been lived in since 1772 with minimal alterations," said Bulova. "It shows the evolution of construction of living in a house; only modified to live in, with no extravagant additions. It's such a unique structure. Nationwide, this will bring visibility to Alexandria. We're looking forward to bringing team of architectural historians to study it."

Bulova said to stay tuned to OHA in January as the team develops plans for the organization's future.

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OPINION

Give Locally in Alexandria

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger for tens of thousands of poor children in our area.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

Northern Virginia is among the wealthiest areas in the country. Many, if not most, of us go through our daily and seasonal routines without encountering evidence of the needy families among us.

In Alexandria, more than 8,700 students are

poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals. That's almost 60 percent of the slightly more than 15,000 students enrolled.

The city's estimated median family income rose in 2015 to \$109,175.

But among Alexandria's families with children, 10.7 percent have incomes below the poverty line. That's \$20,420 for a family of three. That's about \$1,700 a month. The median monthly housing cost in Alexandria is over \$1,700, meaning the cost for half the housing is more than that. Median rent is \$1,555.

These are children living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who

must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. Some of these are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school.

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

Many nonprofits in the city need your help to provide a holiday meal for Thanksgiving or Christmas, to provide children with gifts.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are a few ideas.

— Mary Kimm

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Where to Give Locally:

- List of Nonprofits in City of Alexandria
- ALIVE! Alexandria; 2723 King St, Alexandria, VA 22302; (703) 837-9300; ALIVE! serves thousands Alexandrians annually with shelter; low-cost early childhood education and childcare; financial help for rent, utilities, medical care and other critical needs; emergency food; and deliveries of donated furniture and houseware. www.alive-inc.org
- Senior Services of Alexandria, 703-836-4414, www.seniorservicesalex.org. Support services for elders enabling them to age with dignity.
- Tahirih Justice Center, 703-575-0070, www.tahirih.org. Legal services, public policy advocacy, and education for immigrant women and girls.
- Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, 703-746-4774, www.alexandrianimals.org. Pet adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, education and community service and outreach.
- Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN) of Northern Virginia, 703-820-9001, www.scanva.org. Parent education, public education-re: child abuse and court advocacy for abused and neglected children.
- Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center, an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, serves as a safety net for clients of the Community Services Board who encounter extraordinary or emergency financial needs. With no paid staff or rented space, the Friends group is able to devote 98 percent of donations and grants it receives to client support and co-sponsorship of free public educational programs. See bit.ly/friendsoftheAMHC
- Rebuilding Together Alexandria, 703-836-1021, www.RebuildingTogetherAlex.org. Home repair and maintenance for vulnerable veterans, elderly, disabled and families with children.

- ACT for Alexandria, 703-739-7778, www.actforalexandria.org. Nonprofit and donor services.
- Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless, 703-525-7177, www.aachhomeless.org.
- Carpenter's Shelter, 703 548-7500, www.carpentersshelter.org. Homeless services and programs including education and case management.
- The Campagna Center, 703-549-0111, www.campagnacenter.org
- Center for Alexandria's Children, 703-838-4381, www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org. Child abuse & neglect and parent support.
- Child and Family Network Centers, 703-836-0214, www.cfnc-online.org
- Community Lodgings, Inc., 703-549-4407 Transitional and affordable housing, youth education, adult education, bilingual staff assistance.
- Computer C.O.R.E. 703-931-7346, www.computercore.org. Adult education, computer training and career development.
- Hopkins House, 703-549-8072, www.hopkinshouse.org. Preschool academy, family budgeting and literacy, family education and youth summer enrichment camp, Early Childhood Learning Institute.
- Northern Virginia Family Services, 571-748-2500, www.nvfs.org. Employment and job training, healthcare, housing, mental health, foster care and Healthy Families.
- Volunteer Alexandria, 123 N Alfred St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 703-836-2176; <http://volunteerallexandria.org>; Volunteer recruitment and placement, court-referred community service placement, community awareness events, and volunteer management training. See www.achsova.org.

- Bethany House, 6121 Lincolnia Rd #303, Alexandria, VA 22312; (703) 658-9500; <http://www.bhmv.org/>; Bethany House provides emergency shelter and supportive services to victims of domestic violence throughout Northern Virginia and the surrounding D.C. metro communities.
- The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042, 703-237-0866, lcnv.org, teaches adults to speak, read, write and understand English at the most basic level. The organization has been around for 55 years, and serves Fairfax and Arlington counties and the cities of Falls Church and Alexandria. Most of the students are immigrants, and they are mostly women, and low income.
- The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia has launched its Permanent Fund campaign, a community endowment which is a forever source to provide critical support for those in need in the Northern Virginia region; Consider leaving a legacy through a current or planned gift to the Permanent Fund at the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia. <http://www.cfnova.org/permanentfund>.
- Neighborhood Health Clinics www.neighborhoodhealthva.org. To improve health and advance health equity in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax by providing access to high quality care regardless of ability to pay.
- Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia (Habitat NOVA) helps families build strength, stability, and self-reliance to create better lives for themselves and their children through affordable homeownership. Serving Fairfax and Arlington counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. 295 Edsall Road, Suite 120, Alexandria, VA 22312; phone: 703-521-9890; email: info@habitatnova.org. Visit www.habitatnova.org. Alexandria ReStore: 703-360-6700.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Cynical and Disgusted'

To the Editor:

The following open letter was addressed to the mayor, vice mayor, and City Council.

Once again a citizen is coming to you again greatly concerned with the apparent lack of any oversight and enforcement by City Planning and staff for the protection of Alexandria's rapidly disappearing native forest and tree canopy, especially with projects under their charge like the "Karig Estates" debacle.

Did you know that many 100s of beautiful, old canopy trees have been senselessly cut and grubbed out over the past two months at Mark Center? Does Planning know, or care?

During cutting and stump grinding, the place looks like a war zone — especially from Sanger Avenue to both sides of Beauregard Street. Many residents are deeply concerned. This cutting continues and will probably eventually get

through all of Mark Center.

As you — or at least Planning hopefully knows — there is a Beauregard Small Area Plan for land use decisions for all of Mark Center. It has been on the city website for years.

Is anyone in the city monitoring any of this to see if it is in accordance with the plan?

It is my understanding that if a private landowner in the city wishes to do large-scale tree removal over a large area — especially if development or potential property development is involved — they must first notify the city and file an application for doing so.

As is often the case it may just be lip service — hard to believe it isn't with this destruction — but one of the "requirements" of the plan is "4.30. Employ sound urban forestry principles and practices to improve the city's tree canopy."

What a joke. We're so far from "sound urban forestry principles" and "improving the city's tree canopy" here that we might as well be a

Third World country practicing subsistence farming, destroying whatever natural resources are at hand.

It's hard not to be cynical and disgusted when so many public meetings over the years end in senselessly clear-cutting what's left of the city's beautiful tree canopy.

Adding insult to injury is Planning's evidently being asleep at the switch and in typical apathetic form in ensuring — and fighting for — Alexandria's quality of life. So much for enforcement and those we entrust looking out for us. And it's their/the city's plan — in other words, it's their job.

Cill Dara/Alexandria

Lincoln's Perspective

To the Editor:

In this ongoing discussion regarding Confed

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.





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Mary Taylor 703.785.5619 & Pat Tierney 703.850.5630
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Julia Martin 703.850.5543
ALEXANDRIA / Old North Port \$ 567,500

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Marcy Covarrubias 703.772.6569
ALEXANDRIA / Old Town \$ 539,000

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Norma Gants 703.408.2560
ALEXANDRIA / Fayette Court Condos \$ 290,000

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Long & Foster Old Town Historic District Office 703.683.0400
400 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314



OPINION

Arts and Culture: \$111.8 Million Contributor to City's Economy

BY MATTHEW STENSURD
CHAIR, ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS
PAT MILLER
PRESIDENT, ALEXANDRIA ARTS ALLIANCE
PATRICIA WASHINGTON
PRESIDENT & CEO, VISIT ALEXANDRIA

every year and play a significant role in attracting new residents, companies and employees.

It's not just during the holidays that the arts are important to Alexandrians. Year-round, the arts enrich our lives, fill us with joy, and contribute to a high quality of life.

While we recognize these intrinsic values, arts and culture are also big business. Alexandria's nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$111.8 million industry supporting more than 2,600 full-time jobs, generating over \$56 million in household income to local residents and contributing \$7.5 million in state and local revenue. These economic impact stats are from the



Stensrud



Miller



Washington

at the arts in a bold new way — as essential to our most pressing challenges, from educating our children during school and non-school hours to activating public spaces within retail corridors and the new waterfront to strengthening our community by celebrating our diversity and inclusiveness.

With the holiday season upon us, it is evident that arts and culture are at the center of the Alexandria experience.

Whether it's attending a festive concert or theatre performance, "shopping small" at one of the many markets, galleries and maker spaces, or sharing in a major holiday event such as the Scottish Christmas Walk Parade or First Night, arts, culture and creativity are at the core of who we are. They draw millions of visitors to our city

Americans for the Arts' Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 study and the latest results were recently touted by the city's Office of the Arts. Alexandria's stats show that arts and culture are more than a "nice to have" frill, they are a significant economic contributor.

With the city's budget season also upon us, now is an opportunity to look

Building on what we know about the power of arts and culture to make us more competitive, distinctive and stronger as a city, we encourage our City Council to increase investment in the arts and creativity as a partner to education, youth development, tourism, and economic development.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 10

erate leaders, some important facts have not been considered through ignorance or agenda. First, at Appomattox, General Grant greeted General Lee with civility and courtesy. He permitted the Confederate officers to retain their side arms and the enlisted men their personal horses and mules. Both were allowed to keep their personal possessions. General Grant also provided General Lee's soldiers, who had few rations remaining, with 25,000 rations. No sign of

vengeance or vindictiveness was in evidence.

Second, President Lincoln's Reconstruction Plan, while not condoning their actions, called for amnesty, with few exceptions, to all Confederates, military and civilian, who would take a prescribed loyalty oath to the United States. State governments where 10 percent of the 1860 population had taken the oath and agreed to emancipation would once again be recognized as states of the Union. Lincoln's position from the begin-

ning of secession was that the Union was indissoluble. The U.S. Supreme Court confirmed Lincoln's position in 1869.

Upon Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson, in spite of much opposition in Congress, implemented Lincoln's plan for amnesty and reuniting the Union. Virtually all of the military and civilian Confederate leadership were pardoned by President Johnson. Fortunately today's climate did not exist, for the nation might still not be united. Among those exemplifying the

current efforts to "purify" the past is a U. S. senator who has long been in politics and served as a governor. I do not recall him calling for the removal of statues, portraits, plaques, place names, etc. until recently. Also, I am sure that past generations of Christ Church congregations are applauding its recent actions, not realizing how much their worship was being so distracted and that future members will find their service greatly enhanced.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 22

Special thanks to:
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OPINION

Getting Back on the Porch

Alfred Street Baptist Church's pastor on the church's public role.

BY DAN BRENDEL
GAZETTE PACKET

Alfred Street Baptist Church has been an Alexandria fixture for over 200 years. The city's largest black church, it boasts some 8,000 members and over 80 ministries. The nationally renowned Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, described on the church's web site as "not afraid to take on social and political issues," has been pastor since 2008. This writer, a Catholic layman passionate about the role of religion in public life, had a conversation (edited below) with Wesley to learn about his church's vision and activities in that regard. This is the second in what intends to be an ongoing series of interviews with local religious leaders about religion in the public square.

A CONVERSATION regard. This is the second in what intends to be an ongoing series of interviews with local religious leaders about religion in the public square.

"The Catholic Church has a pretty robust 'social doctrine' — a theological basis and then guiding parameters about how to engage in political, social and economic life. Does your tradition have a developed doctrine of that sort?"

Wesley: "... If you see how and why black churches were shaped and formed, they weren't just about religion. It was the only safe and sacred space for black people ... So out of black churches were birthed black colleges, ... businesses, ... newspapers, ... banks. And those are core pieces of black life. ... And so any black church that is not engaged in society, and equipping members for that, I think has disengaged from its heritage and its rooting. So for the black church, to ask if there's a defined doctrine, the answer is almost 'no,' because it's just inherent in who we are ..."

"There's been a lot of gentrification [in Old Town] ... There's still this African-American faith community there, but ... the community has diverged ... Can you say a little more

specifically, in the context of this place, what you see the black faith community doing, in terms of the engagement with schools and businesses and press?"

Wesley: "... Gentrification, for me, although [it] can be a great benefit to the city, typically dispossess the poor; it becomes 'economic-ism.' And typically people of color are on the back end of that. So we, as our church, are committed to a few things that we believe help preserve black presence here in Old Town. ... We have now entered into a memorandum of understanding with the city that we are a partner in preserving affordable housing in this area. ... And I think that's critical for families [who] ... don't want to leave ... Our internal programs continue to cater to families with lower incomes ... [For example,] our tutoring program on Mondays — we have about 300 kids ... and those aren't our church kids, those are kids from the neighborhood. ..."

"Does the congregation here have a structural means of [engaging city politics] ...? Do you maintain personal relationships with City Council members, School Board members, ARHA commissioners?"

Wesley: "We do have a social justice ministry, as well as our communications team, which keeps an eye on what's happening in Alexandria through the press and through public documents ... Yes, we maintain relationships, particularly through the mayor. ... We are the largest church in Alexandria. And so, you want the black vote in Alexandria? You're going to have to come through Alfred Street. ... That's how we hold sway ... We also have members of our church who sit on City Council, who sit on school committee, and they're the ones that get in my ear ... Some older members of the church who are long-term Alexandria residents [serve as] ... our own internal 'intranet' ..."

"What are some of the key local issues related to the poor?"

Wesley: "... We start with the housing, that's major for us. Dealing with the homeless issue. ... You'd also be surprised at the number of financial requests we get for aid and assistance from non-members who are struggling with bills ... The STEM issue in a lot of our public schools ... We have partnered with Hybla Val-

ley Elementary School, where ... we're helping to donate to build their science lab to be certain that that school — which is predominantly Hispanic and black and predominantly free lunch, ... — that they don't fall behind from the private schools ..."



Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

"There's a lot happening with public schools that I would imagine is going to shape the public education landscape here for decades if not generations to come. That's a pretty decisive moment, it seems like to me, in terms of evangelizing the local culture ... What are some of your thoughts about that?"

Wesley: "... I know some of the challenges with TC. ... But we also fear what will happen if you create a new elite school, that you'll see this segregation again. Definitely aware of that. But I didn't understand the question [about cultural evangelization]."


"The Catholic Church has a [principle of] ... 'leavening' the secular institutions and spheres to help them to become what they ought to be doing. How does the market, how does education, how does the media, how does politics become ordered to the valid purposes that God intended for them?"

Wesley: "Part of the challenge of course, being a religious institution ... you get the outcry, parental as well as political: 'church and state, you guys are supposed to be separate.' What we have done that I think makes a major difference is, I believe in the 'ministry of presence.' ... At TC our men's ministry [does] ... a mentoring program that has nothing to do with religious education; it has to do with life skills ... The biggest thing we can do is just get faces in the place, and hopefully our presence as men and women of faith, who are not trying to push faith on you, but it's a light in the midst of that circumstance or situation. ..."


SEE PORCH, PAGE 22

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Handcrafted jewelry from Silverbrook Studios is available at the Del Ray Artisans Fine Art and Fine Crafts Holiday Market.



Gifts, books, clothing and food items specially designed for Alexandria are available at Valerie Ianeri's The Old Town Shop on South Union Street.

Ballet Arts Ensemble of Fairfax
Presents
Nutcracker In A Nutshell
Saturday, Dec. 16th
at 3:00 pm & 7:30 pm
Sunday, Dec. 17th
at 3:00 pm
Rachel Schlesinger
Concert Hall and Arts Center
at NOVA Alexandria Campus
Tickets \$30
Call for More Info: 703-273-5344
www.thecenterforballetarts.com



The Christmas Attic is ground zero for shoppers during the holiday season, where nutcrackers are always popular.



Handcrafted pottery by artisan Stephen Lally is available through the Del Ray Artisans Gallery.



Colorful handcrafted bags are available at the Del Ray Artisans Fine Art and Fine Crafts Holiday Market. Remaining dates are Dec. 8-10 and Dec. 15-17.

Sleighting the Holidays

A survival guide for local gifts.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN

You've made your list and checked it twice. Even if you aren't already one of the 57 percent of shoppers who have started their hunt for holiday gifts, you can relax. Local businesses offer last-minute shoppers a selection of gift ideas sure to please even the Grinch on your naughty or nice list. With Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday, shoppers actually get an

extra weekend to shop for family and friends. And while it may seem counterintuitive to wait until then, stores are actually less crowded and many begin marking down merchandise that evening in anticipation of the Dec. 26 sales. Old Town and Del Ray feature many shops with handmade and Alexandria-centric items. In Old Town, one-of-a-kind hand-crafted gifts can be found at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, including textile gifts like colorful scarves, wraps, sweaters and capes. Unique pottery and images of local scenes are also available in a variety of mediums. You can pick up some hand-painted note cards or give a gift certificate for a family or pet portrait. The Old Town Shop on South Union Street carries a variety of items designed to highlight Alexandria and its history as a port city. Gift items range from clothing to historic maps and food items from the Old Town Farmers Market. In Del Ray, the Del Ray Artisans Fine Art and Fine Crafts Holiday Market features works from local artisans including handmade pottery by Stephen Lally. Remaining weekends for the Market are Dec.

8-10 and Dec. 17-19. Visit www.delrayartisans.org for details. An often overlooked source of holiday gifts is The Shops at Mount Vernon. Combine a shopping trip with a visit to George Washington's Estate and lunch at The Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant. For something different, check out the gift shops in Alexandria's local museums. And school bookstores often have interesting gifts for students along with logo-ware for your favorite alum. Local spirits can be purchased at Port City Brewing or pick up some gourmet cupcakes at Alexandria Cupcake. While you are walking along King Street, stop in at Goldworks, where David Martin creates custom designed jewelry for both men and women. Gift certificates for dance or acting classes are available at The Little Theatre of Alexandria or purchase a season subscription to one of Alexandria's many performing arts organizations like The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra or MetroStage. With 18 shopping days left until Christmas, there is plenty of time to get your holiday shopping done while checking out the many local shops and restaurants.

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Dec. 8-10
Dec. 15-17
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Alexandria, VA
DEL RAY ARTISANS
DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2017

WELLBEING

Season of Giving, Healing

Acts of kindness can boost wellbeing.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL

As Terrance Puller surveys boxes wrapped in holiday paper and filled with tubes of toothpaste, sticks of deodorant and other self-care toiletries, he says he can feel his heart well up with gratitude. The packages were part of a donation drive to benefit So Others Might Eat (SOME), a local nonprofit organization with a mission to provide services to the poor and homeless. Puller, who is now both a SOME employee and volunteer, reminisces about a period in his life when he was a recipient of such generosity.

Five years ago, Puller says he was alone, homeless and deep in an alcohol and crack cocaine-induced haze. He would later recall that he was so staggeringly intoxicated one holiday season that he would miss an opportunity to say goodbye to his dying mother. What he did receive that year however, was life changing.

"I was able to come into the shelter and get treatment, food and eventually a job," said Puller. "I volunteer my time because ...

being here reminds me of my story and makes me grateful. It keeps me uplifted, less depressed and clean and sober."

Mounting research validates Puller's assertion. "Giving of our talents and time is an important way to improve our well-being," said Carolyn Lorente, professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. "What many of my colleagues are looking into is the connection between volunteerism and sense of self. It turns out that when we give to others, it not only helps those we are assisting but also boosts our sense of agency, gives us a sense of purpose and belonging and informs our sense of identity."

During the holidays, which are often emotionally charged, a focus on helping others can lead to feelings of gratitude and happiness, says psychologist Jerome Short, Ph.D. In fact, he points to a 2010 study published in the journal *Clinical Psychology Review*, which shows a link between benevolence and contentment.

"Kind acts increase personal happiness because we naturally empathize with others and take pride in our ability to make others smile and feel good," he

said. Even for those who haven't experienced levels of need such as Puller's, acts of altruism can have a positive effect on one's mood. An example is Jennifer Carter, a senior at Marymount University in Arlington, who spent last weekend in the center of a crowded auditorium on the university's campus frantically tying strips of fleece cloth. Along with nearly 300 other volunteers, she was making blankets for newborn babies for an organization called HOPE, a nondenominational crisis pregnancy center in Fairfax County.

"When these new mothers leave the hospitals it's usually with a thin cotton blanket," she said. "A lot of times, the things that they're missing are warm blankets for the babies. It feels good to be able to give these mothers something that many people take for granted. It makes you realize how fortunate you are."

Short points to a 2016 study from the University of California at Riverside which shows that volunteerism can lead to gratitude and happiness.

"Grateful people pay more attention to the cost, effort, and value of helping acts than the average person does," he said. "They are better at coping with life stress because they trust others

to help them and then reach out and accept help."

Christabel Sampson experienced this metamorphosis first hand when she relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and was unable to find a job. She had mounting bills, but no income. Her financial outlook spiraled further downward and she became homeless. She moved into a shelter run by Interfaith Works, a nonprofit organization in Montgomery County Maryland that works to meet the needs of the poor. Through the organization's job training program, she was able to gain skills training, clothing and shelter. As a result of the services she received, Sampson says she found a job. Now she volunteers her time to helping others at Interfaith Works and has even become a member of the organization's board of directors.

"The experience of being homeless and now helping other women definitely made me stronger," said Sampson. "Sometimes even a spoken word can be said to help someone to a better place. I have empathy because I have been there."

For More Information

Interfaith Works – www.iworksmc.org

SOME – some.org

HOPE Pregnancy Care Center – 703-536-2020

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HOLIDAY FUN & ENTERTAINMENT

THROUGH DEC. 10

Sheehy Cares Toy Collection. Various times at Sheehy Honda of Alexandria, 2434 Richmond Highway. Sheehy is working with the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program to collect new, unwrapped toys during the holidays each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted. Visit www.sheehy.com or call 703-802-3480.

THROUGH DEC. 15

39th Annual Weichert Toy Drive. Various times at Weichert Realty, 121 N. Pitt St. Members of the community are invited to drop off new, unwrapped toys at the company's sales offices which will be delivered throughout the holidays in conjunction with local charities that assist financially and physically disadvantaged children. Call 703-549-8700.

THROUGH DEC. 16

Snow Day on Stage. Various times at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. This nonverbal production features live music and lots of wintertime fun, just in time for the holiday season. \$9. Visit artsonthehorizon.org.
A Christmas Carol. Various times at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. \$17. Call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.

THROUGH DEC. 23

4th Annual Holiday Market Festival. Various times in the Carlyle District, 300 John Carlyle St. Art and craft items, enjoy sweets, mulled wine and live entertainment from local musicians. Visit www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 7

Happy Hour Toy Drive. 5-8 p.m. at Del Ray Pizza, 1401 Belle Haven Road. Hosted by the Care and Share Committee of the Hollin Meadows Elementary School PTA. Aside from collecting toys there will be raffle prizes from local stores, small businesses and restaurants. Call 703-565-5300.

Holiday Open House. 6-8 p.m. at the Mount Vernon District Office, 2511 Parkers Lane. An evening of refreshments, get to know the staff and tour the office. Artwork from Bryant High School students will be on display. Call 703-780-7518 or email mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 8-9

Holiday Pops Concert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. "Reflections!" show weaves pop arrangements of holiday classics with new tunes. Collecting donations and wrapped gifts for the Alexandria Community Shelter adult residents at all performances. \$20/under 5 years old free. Email marketing@alexandriasingers.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Mount Vernon High School Holiday Market. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. Shop indoors from over 50 vendors. Email ptsaholidayfest@gmail.com.

Kwanzaa Workshop. 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. \$2. Call 703-746-4356 or visit alexandriava.gov/blackhistory.

Civil War Christmas in Camp. noon-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Road. \$2 suggested donation per person; \$5 per family. Call 703-746-4356 or visit alexandriava.gov/blackhistory.

Recycled Wrapping. 3 p.m. at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Wrap gifts with reused newspaper that will spare the Earth. The library will have stamps, paints, ribbons and bobbles to add a special touch. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

Del Ray Candy Cane Bar Crawl. 4 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ave., Del Ray. Free. Call 703-683-2570 or visit www.visitdelray.com.

Caroling. 5-8 p.m. at the St. Mary Catholic Church, 310 S. Royal St. Carolers will sing all of the traditional Christmas songs. Call 703-841-2517.

Alexandria Choral Society Concert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Alexandria Choral Society



FILE PHOTO BY J. CLIFFORD

First Night

The 23rd Annual First Night Alexandria, a family-friendly New Year's Eve party, takes over Old Town Alexandria on Sunday, Dec. 31 with more than 150 performances at 24 indoor venues in Old Town and one in Del Ray, with live music, dancing and children's activities. Dancing in the street starts at the east end of King Street at 10 p.m. First Night's fireworks finale returns with a display over the Potomac River at midnight. Afternoon activities are from 2-5 p.m. Performances are from 7 p.m.-midnight. Children under 12 and active military are free. 703-746-3299, FirstNightAlexandria.org. #ALXFirstNight

presents "On This Shining Night," featuring new settings of familiar works, modern compositions to evoke the season, and traditional seasonal carols. \$20 adult, \$15 senior/military/student. Visit www.alexandriachoralsociety.org.

DEC. 8-10

Del Ray Artisans' Holiday Market. Fridays: 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Free to browse. Call 703-838-4827 or visit www.delrayartisans.org.

Artfête Weekend. Various times at The Art League's Madison Annex, 305 Madison St. Open house and holiday party, holiday ceramics sale, and more. Visit www.theartleague.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Ivy Hill Cemetery Presents: The History and Mystery of Christmas. 7 p.m. at Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King St. Historians Terry Gish and Wayne Kehoe host an informational event. \$10. Not for children under 10. Call 301-395-9541 or 703-549-7413.

SUNDAY/DEC 10

Christmas Celebration. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Saint James United Methodist Church, 5200 Fillmore Ave. Celebrate the Christmas season with music, activities for the family, and food. Free. Visit sjumc.net.

Colonial Handbell Ringers Concert. 2 and 4 p.m. at 201 S. Washington St. Free. Call 703-746-4994 or visit www.colonialringers.com.

Cookies with Santa. 4-5:30 p.m. at the Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St. Meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

Free Holiday Concert and Sing-Along. 4:30 p.m. at St. James' Episcopal Church, 5614 Old Mill Road. A Holiday Concert by the students of Kevin Diana. Selections from Handel's Messiah and other sacred and secular favorites will be performed. Call 703-780-3081 or visit

www.stjamesmv.org.

Concerts at Saint Luke's. 5 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road. A candlelight concert presented by Words&Music, who play holiday music of the Advent season. Words&Music is a vocal quartet with piano from the Alexandria area. \$20 Adult; \$15 Senior; free to students 18 and under. Call 703-765-4342 or visit www.saintlukeschurch.net.

A Cappella Holiday. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. The Capital Hearings, Washington, D.C.'s most versatile a cappella ensemble, will entertain with their anchor holiday concert that includes the premiere of "It Sifts from Leadens Sieves," composed by Rachel DeVore Fogarty, the winner of the 2017 Capital Hearings Young Composers Competition. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

TUESDAY/DEC. 12

Twelve Beers of Christmas. 5-midnight at the Union Street Public House, 121 S. Union St. Choice of 14 Christmas beers on tap - 12, plus two bonus beers to simply celebrate the season of giving. Visit unionstreetpublichouse.com.

DEC. 15-16

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon. 5:30-9 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. \$34 adult/\$24 youth with mansion tour; \$30 adult/\$20 youth without mansion tour. Visit www.mountvernon.org/illuminations.

DEC. 15-17

Del Ray Artisans' Holiday Market. Fridays: 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Free to browse. Call 703-838-4827 or visit www.delrayartisans.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

Gift Wrapping Fundraiser. Noon- 4 p.m. at

Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Alice's Kids is holding its 5th annual gift wrapping fundraiser. Call 703-304-0958 or visit www.aliceskids.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

The Mount Vernon Flutes. 2 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. This small ensemble from the Mount Vernon Concert Band will perform holiday songs in the gallery. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

Holiday Handbell Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Hear from Jingle Bells and White Christmas to the Game of Thrones Theme and Wizards in Winter. \$10. Visit www.vabronze.org.

Cookies with Santa. 4-5:30 p.m. at the Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St. Meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. at the waterfront between King and Oronoco streets. Free. Visit www.waterskiingsanta.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

New Years Noon. 10 a.m.-noon at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. The fourth annual bash includes performances by "Oh Susannah" and "The Great Zucchini" and an 11:55 a.m. for a countdown to "Noon Year" with music and a balloon drop. All ages invited, but especially appropriate for children ages 2 and up. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

First Night Alexandria. 2 p.m. to midnight at venues throughout Old Town. Activities include the Ninth Annual Fun Hunt, musical entertainment, food, drink and midnight fireworks over the Potomac River. Visit www.firstnightalexandria.org or call 703-746-3299.

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON

Cooking Up Traditional Ethiopian

BY HOPE NELSON fact location for us," Solomon said.

Tucked into a space in a West End shopping center, the new restaurant cooking up traditional Ethiopian food is easy to miss at first. But look again and you'll see a new resident of the Van Dorn Plaza, its sign unassuming, its food anything but.

You've found Makeda — named after Queen Makeda of Ethiopia. Let your stomach be your guide and pop in for a meal.

Makeda opened several months ago as the kid sister to chef and owner Philipos Mengistu's longstanding Queen of Sheba restaurant in New York City, a pioneer bringing the restaurant's food to the D.C. area. Mengistu says the expansion makes sense.

APPETITE "Our menu is getting strongly popular in this area," he said. Much of the menu inspiration from Queen of Sheba, "so we catered that for the neighborhood around here too."

The Alexandria outpost was the brainchild of two lifelong friends: Mengistu and Daniel Solomon.

Friends since kindergarten in Ethiopia, they joined forces for Makeda. After years in the United States, Solomon went back to his homeland, and when he returned, he revisited

Makeda

516A S. Van Dorn St.
Hours: 11 a.m.-2 a.m.

Top seller: "So far we're selling a lot of the vegetarian [combination] dish, and a lot of Makeda tibs, which is a ribeye meat," salted with onion, garlic and peppers, owner and Chef Philipos Mengistu says.

Mengistu's Queen of Sheba in New York and saw the menu in a new light.

"When I came back and had lunch at Queen of Sheba, I felt as if I was at home. So I said you know what, how about bringing that taste to Alexandria?" Solomon said.

While scouting for a location, the chosen region was equally important, Solomon said. With hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian residents in the greater D.C. area, the key was finding a spot that would accommodate as many people as possible.

"Most of the Ethiopian community lives around Springfield and the Franconia area. Not only that, but this place is growing ... not only for the Ethiopian community, but non-Ethiopians as well. And this was a per-

THE MENU ITSELF is abundant with many Ethiopian favorites. And while Mengistu is a fan of everything on the menu, a couple of items do stand out personally with him.

"While I like everything, I have two favorite dishes: I like the vegetarian combination, which is one of my favorites, and the doro wot, which is our signature dish. It is served in Ethiopia when it's a holiday. It's like a holiday treat," he said.

The vegetarian combination offers up a buffet of vegetable-based options for diners, ranging from shiro to gomen wot. The doro wot, on the other hand, is a chicken dish cooked in a stew flavored with onions and Ethiopian spices. It is in fact Ethiopia's national chicken dish, and Makeda offers it daily — no holidays required.

Though Makeda hews closely to the roots of Mengistu's original Queen of Sheba, there are some differences in this sibling restaurant. For starters: gluten-free options, ranging from gluten-free injera to rice and other

companions to the main course. And then there's the addition of a kids' menu — almost a requirement in the West End neighborhood bustling with families.

"Here we put the kids' menu because we want kids to be comfortable and the families to be comfortable," Mengistu said. "They can have injera, the kids can have their spaghetti, they can share an Ethiopian dish with the kids — we have rice chicken, we have chicken nuggets, which is not Ethiopian but we have to accommodate."

Makeda is now offering a weekend brunch menu, as well — with an Ethiopian twist, of course.

The menu is an egg-based brunch menu, "but we do it Ethiopian style. We have cracked wheat; we have fit-fit, which is typical Ethiopian breakfast; we have egg with meat — we do it Ethiopian style," Mengistu said.

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Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

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December 13: 5th Annual Alexandria Ugly Sweater Contest 6pm-10pm

December 24: Champagne Sunday Brunch 10am-3pm
Open until 1am. Live music by Siobhan O'Brein at 830pm

December 25: Traditional Holiday Dinner Open at 5pm
Live music by Siobhan O'Brein at 8:30pm

December 31: Champagne Sunday Brunch 10am-3pm. Open until 4pm
NYE Celebration, doors open at 6pm.
Tickets only
Live music by Pat Carroll and Nick and Ian at 9pm

Jan 1: Champagne New Year's Day Brunch 11am-2pm

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FIRST NIGHT ALEXANDRIA

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Badge and schedule information at FirstNightAlexandria.org
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ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Holiday Toy Drive. Through Dec. 8, various times at Quander Road School, 6400 Quander Road. Donate new/slightly used unwrapped toys for toddlers to 12 years old (puzzles, dolls, board games, action figures and more). Call 703-718-2400, Ext. 2431.

Toy Collection. Through Dec. 10, Sheehy Honda of Alexandria, 2434 Richmond Highway, Alexandria will collect new and unwrapped toys as part of the company's annual Sheehy Cares Toy Collection to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, which will distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

Mount Vernon Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-12 p.m., Wednesdays, through Dec. 14. Fresh local food, artisan crafts. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/mtvernonmkt.htm.

39th Annual Weichert Toy Drive. Through Dec. 15, various times at Weichert Realty, 121 N. Pitt St. Members of the community are invited to drop off new, unwrapped toys at the company's sales offices which will be delivered throughout the holidays in conjunction with local charities that assist financially and physically disadvantaged children. Call 703-549-8700.

Snow Day on Stage. Through Dec. 16, various times at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. This nonverbal production features live music and lots of wintertime fun, just in time for the holiday season. \$9. Visit www.artsonthehorizon.org.

"A Christmas Carol." Through Dec. 16, various times at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. \$17. Call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.

Del Ray Artisans' Holiday Market. Through Dec. 17, weekend hours only, Fridays: 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Free to browse. Call 703-838-4827 or visit www.delrayartisans.org.

Watercolor Exhibit. Through Dec. 19, various times at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. See "Nature from Three Points of View", the work of Jan Burns, Madeleine Chen, and Shari MacFarlane, at the Horticulture Center. Sunday, Oct. 29 is the Artists Reception. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring or call 703-642-5173.

The Old Bull and Bush. Through Dec. 24, various times at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal St. An effort to reopen the famous Hampstead England pub on stage to celebrate the holidays with food, song, jokes, dance and a sing-along. Call 703-548-9044 or visit www.metrostage.org.

4th Annual Holiday Market Festival. Through Dec. 23, various times in the Carlyle District, 300 John Carlyle St. Art and craft items, enjoy sweets, mulled wine and live entertainment from local musicians. Visit www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com.

Potomac Fiber Art Show. Through Jan. 7, various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. The show will be supplemented with juried items on Dec. 5. The Torpedo Factory has new hours, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily and weekends, and 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Visit torpedofactory.org.



MetroStage Celebrates

The Old Bull and Bush will be at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal St. through Dec. 24. An effort to reopen the famous Hampstead England pub on stage to celebrate the holidays with food, song, jokes, dance and a sing-along. Call 703-548-9044 or visit www.metrostage.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 7

Worldly Collection for Auction. 10 a.m. at the Potomack Company, 1120 N. Fairfax St. Featuring the Ron Krannich Collection from Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Democratic Republic of Congo. Call 703-684-4550 or visit www.potomackcompany.com.

Happy Hour Toy Drive. 5-8 p.m. at Del Ray Pizza, 1401 Belle Haven Road. Hosted by the Care and Share Committee of the Hollin Meadows Elementary School PTA. Aside from collecting toys there will be raffle prizes from local stores, small businesses and restaurants. Call 703-765-5300.

Shops of Del Ray's Ladies' Night Out. 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Mount Vernon Ave., Del Ray. Shop local and enjoy special promotions while sipping Virginia wine. Call 703-683-2570 or visit www.visitdelray.com.

Holiday Open House. 6-8 p.m. at the Mount Vernon District Office, 2511 Parkers Lane. An evening of refreshments, get to know the staff and tour the office. Artwork from Bryant High School students will be on display. Call 703-780-7518 or email us at mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Neighborhood Health 20th Anniversary Gala. 6-9:30 p.m. at the Hilton Mark Center, 5000 Seminary Road. Join the gala "Celebrating Our Partnerships" to support Neighborhood Health's mission of serving thousands of uninsured patients in the community. Email anniversary@neighborhoodhealthva.org or phone 571-438-7715.

An Introduction to French Comics. 7-9 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Arlington resident RM Rhodes leads this lecture about comics. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum or call 703-838-4994.

Meet the Author. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. "A Civil Life in an Uncivil Time: Julia Wilbur's Struggle for Purpose" by Paula Tarnapol Whitacre. \$15. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. 7:30 p.m. at the Minnie Howard School, 3801 W. Braddock Road. Alexandria GOP Committee volunteer appreciation dinner and December meeting. \$5. Call 571-281-7042.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 8-9

Holiday Pops Concert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. "Reflections!" show weaves pop arrangements of holiday classics with

new tunes. Collecting donations and wrapped gifts for the Alexandria Community Shelter adult residents at all performances. \$20/under 5 years old free. Email marketing@alexandriasingers.com.

DEC. 8-10

Artfête Weekend. Various times at The Art League's Madison Annex, 305 Madison St. Open house and holiday party, holiday ceramics sale, and more. Visit www.theartleague.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Holiday Market. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. Shop indoors from over 50 vendors. Email ptsholidayfest@gmail.com.

Civil War Christmas in Camp. noon-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Road. \$2 suggested donation per person; \$5 per family. Call 703-746-4356 or visit alexandriava.gov/blackhistory.

Recycled Wrapping. 3 p.m. at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Wrap gifts with reused newspaper that will spare the Earth. The library will have stamps, paints, ribbons and bobbles to add a special touch. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours. 4-9 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. Tour stops at several locations around Old Town. \$25 adults; \$20 seniors (65 years and older) and active military; \$5 children (ages 6-17). Call 703-746-4242.

Del Ray Candy Cane Bar Crawl. 4 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ave., Del Ray. Free. Call 703-683-2570 or visit www.visitdelray.com.

Caroling. 5-8 p.m. at the St. Mary Catholic Church, 310 S. Royal St. Carolers will sing all of the traditional Christmas songs. Call 703-841-2517 or email a.pellerano@arlingtondiocese.org.

Ivy Hill Cemetery Presents: The History and Mystery of Christmas. 7 p.m. at Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King St. Historians Terry Gish and Wayne Kehoe host an informational event. \$10. Not for children under 10. Call 301-395-9541 or 703-549-7413.

Alexandria Choral Society concert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Alexandria Choral Society

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 22



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ENTERTAINMENT



Celebrating At Mount Vernon

Trees inside George Washington's Mount Vernon visitors' center are covered with ornaments and historical trivia.

FILE PHOTO BY
TIM PETERSON

CALENDAR

presents "On This Shining Night," featuring new settings of familiar works, modern compositions to evoke the season, and traditional seasonal carols. \$20 adult, \$15 senior/military/student. Visit www.alexandriachoralsociety.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Apothecary Museum Geek Tour Series. noon-1 p.m. at Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105 S. Fairfax St. \$15. Call 703-746-3852.

Christmas Celebration. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Saint James United Methodist Church, 5200 Fillmore Ave. Celebrate the Christmas season with music, activities for the family, and food. Free. Visit sjumc.net.

Colonial Handbell Ringers Concert. 2 and 4 p.m. at 201 S. Washington St. Free. Call 703-746-4994 or visit www.colonialringers.com.

Cookies with Santa. 4-5:30 p.m. at the Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St. Meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

Concerts at Saint Luke's. 5 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road. A candlelight concert presented by Words&Music, who play holiday music of the Advent season. Words&Music is a vocal quartet with piano from the Alexandria area. \$20 Adult; \$15 Senior; free to students 18 and under. Call 703-765-4342 or visit www.saintlukeschurch.net.

A Cappella Holiday. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. The Capital Hearings, Washington, D.C.'s most versatile a cappella ensemble, will entertain with their anchor holiday concert that includes the premiere of "It Sifts from Leadens Sieves," composed by Rachel DeVore Fogarty, the winner of the 2017 Capital Hearings Young Composers Competition. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

TUESDAY/DEC. 12

Homeschool Programs with Historic Alexandria. Each class offers two sessions, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1-2:30 p.m. Class is "Ship Science" at the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 N. Union St., #327. Use dendrochronology and other scientific methods to uncover the mystery behind Alexandria's 18th-century ship discovered along the waterfront. Visit shop.alexandriava.gov.

Meet the Mystery Author. 7 p.m. at Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary

Road. Mystery writers Lane Stone and Sherry Harris will be on hand to sign copies of "Murder in the Afternoon." Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

Twelve Beers of Christmas. 5 p.m.-midnight at the Union Street Public House, 121 S. Union St. Choice of 14 Christmas beers on tap - 12, plus two bonus beers to simply celebrate the season of giving. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 13

AARP Virginia Dinner Group. 4-8 p.m. at FireFlies, 1501 Mount Vernon Ave. Enjoy dinner with other AARP members and their guests and receive a 20 percent discount on a dinner entree. Call 703-548-7200.

THURSDAY/DEC. 14

Local Author Thursday. 5-7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Featured author Garrett Peck is a historian and tour guide in the nation's capital. Call 703-599-6307.

DEC. 15-16

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon. 5:30-9 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. \$34 adult/\$24 youth with mansion tour; \$30 adult/\$20 youth without mansion tour. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

The Mount Vernon Flutes. 2 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. This small ensemble from the Mount Vernon Concert Band will perform holiday songs in the gallery. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

Cookies with Santa. 4-5:30 p.m. at the Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St. Meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

Celtic Christmas with Iona. 7 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic Memorial 101 Callahan Drive. Sponsored by FocusMusic. \$15/18 at door. Email Herb@FocusMusic.org or call 703-380-3151.

MONDAY/DEC. 18

Ballroom Dance Classes. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Led by Gary Stephans on Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing, Salsa, Merengue, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Samba. Visit

www.nvfaa.org or call 703-505-5998.

SUNDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. at the waterfront between King and Oronoco streets. Free. Visit www.waterskiingsanta.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 28

Piff The Magic Dragon Magician. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. A former participant on America's Got Talent. Visit www.birchmere.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

New Years Noon. 10 a.m.-noon at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. The fourth annual bash includes performances by "Oh Susannah" and "The Great Zucchini" and an 11:55 a.m. for a countdown to "Noon Year" with music and a balloon drop. All ages invited, but especially appropriate for children ages 2 and up. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1704.

First Night Alexandria. 2 p.m. to midnight at venues throughout Old Town. Activities include the Ninth Annual Fun Hunt, musical entertainment, food, drink and midnight fireworks over the Potomac River. Visit www.firstnightalexandria.org or call 703-746-3299.

JAN. 9-FEB. 4

"Déjà Vu," Art Exhibit. Various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery show "Déjà Vu," highlights the work of artists Elizabeth Davison, Elise Miller, and Dianne Harris Thomas. Visit torpedofactory.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Watercolor Workshop: Painting on Yupo. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Paint on slick plastic called yupo with instructor Marni Maree. \$90. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call 703-642-5173.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Air Force Band Concert. 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall 4915 East Campus Drive. Special appearance by tubist Patrick Sheridan. Visit www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/.

Ring in the holiday season with a return of the classic by Charles Dickens. A must for the entire family!

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Getting Back on the Porch

FROM PAGE 13

“Have you discerned a really constricting church-and-state anxiety here in this city?”

Wesley: “No, and I think it’s because the church isn’t always about proselytizing and evangelizing. The church is about having a presence and a voice for justice and for the poor and for the oppressed. ... You want to see God furious with God’s own people? Look at God’s people neglect the poor among them. ... The hungry want to be fed; the naked want to be clothed; the incarcerated want justice. And so I think that that’s our primary voice. ... When you stand on those issues ... I don’t have to hide that I stand as a Baptist preacher. You know that; but that doesn’t mean I’m also not a citizen and that I should be exited out of the room. ... There are some great social service organizations in Alexandria; Alfred Street is one of them. ... Which means we’ve earned the right to sit at some tables, ... to be heard on some issues, ... to raise our hand in support or objection ...”

“Are you part of [the mayor’s] clergy council?”

Wesley: “Yes. And I think there’s room for that group to do a little bit more. And I don’t think it’s the fault of the mayor ... Religious institutions are so disjointed. ... In civil rights, it was white clergy that helped push it over the edge. Black clergy were behind it; but ... when you see white clergymen and Jews and Catholics marching beside King, it made a whole different statement. I don’t think there’s anything that’s generative of that type of bonding of clergy today in this city. And that’s kind of lamentable.”

“Are there any key injustices ... that you think could serve as a local vehicle ... for that kind of bonding?”

Wesley: “The big elephant in the room in Alexandria is still just affordable housing. And too many churches aren’t engaged in that, don’t see it as their cause. ... I don’t see an issue right now on the table that draws us together. ...”

“There is a moral authority that comes with [the injustices the black churches have faced] that is kind of unique. ... Do you think that there is an opportunity to pull more of that moral authority together around some of these issues, because of Alfred Street’s stature? ... Do you think that you can mold consensus about that a little bit, rather than finding it? ... Maybe it’s not your job, I’m not trying to put words in your mouth.”

Wesley: “No, I think it could be. ... I would love to see the gathering of the black churches in Alexandria around the right movement ... Part of some of the dilemma that Alfred Street faces [is] that we have a lot of members who are not Alexandria citizens; we’re a commuting church ... The politicians are concerned about the voters, not just the numbers; so our size gets us to the table; but, at the end of the day, how many of your members are voting?”

“How do you think churches can deal with this kind of thing, where your church is located here, your ministries are located here, but ...



Residents and police interact at a police community forum hosted by Alfred Street Baptist Church. The church wanted to create and open dialogue to ensure that what happened in Ferguson, Mo. wouldn’t occur in Alexandria.

a lot of your [commuting members] ... don’t have the bandwidth to be political actors in two jurisdictions?”

Wesley: “... I believe Alfred Street is a national church, a national platform, that our cause and concern is not simply in our local area. ... I [also] believe that the work of the church is to affect its community and affect the members of its church to go back to their local communities, if it’s not the same as the church, and make a difference ... Our influence extends beyond. And that gets political awareness. ... We have influence around the neighborhood. And the residents are in support. ...”

“The early churches were churches of places — the church of Corinth, the church of Rome. ... [And] just pragmatically ... what probably touches most people’s lives most often [than national politics] are decisions made by the Planning Commission, by the School Board. ... I’ve been learning that there’s this theological [and] ... pragmatic primacy of the local ... Do you agree with that, disagree with that?”

Wesley: “I absolutely agree. ... In the early ‘60s and ‘70s, if you went through a black community, black people sat on porches. The porch was a place of fellowship and a place of observation. ... My biggest challenge is getting people out of the back yard,

back on the porch; to have a vision and a mindset of a responsibility for much more than what’s happening in your home and your back yard, and to give a damn about what’s happening in the community ... One of the cancers of contemporary Christianity is this ‘me, myself and I’ ... That to me is one of the greatest distortions of the gospel. ... I think in the evangelical [tradition] there’s more of a temptation for personal piety to override communal obligation. And there has to be a balance. We do have a personal, pietistic, moral ethic and imperative. But that also has to play itself out in an ‘I am my brother’s keeper’ [way].”

“Is 10 o’clock on Sunday morning still the most segregated hour of the week, and if so how can the churches be a vanguard to change that?”

Wesley: “... Clearly we’re still an African-American church. ... I don’t think it’s anything wrong. There’s a historical rooting and there is a sense of, ‘I want to be in a space that affirms me — not blends me, but affirms me.’ ... So I don’t think there’s anything wrong that First Baptist is 80 percent white and we’re 80 percent black. What needs to happen are moments when we worship together ... to show that we worship the same God, we believe in the same Christ, and that there are opportunities for us to sit in each other’s presence and affirm that without hostility. And the witness to the world that presents is great.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 12

One more point is interesting to consider. Slavery was legal in the United States before the Civil War. It is not unlikely that some current Virginians supporting the “purification” effort, had they lived then, would have owned slaves. There are many things from the past that we may disagree with which should be learned from and not erased. Who are we to look back through the wrong end of the “telescope” and question the judgments of our then nation’s leaders, who had personally experienced the total horrors of the Civil War, President Lincoln and President Johnson.

Charles Fellow/Alexandria

‘Sanitized Confederacy’

To the Editor:

In defense of his argument to “Leave Alexandria’s Protest Statue alone” (See letter, “Protest Art,” Nov. 30) Jimm Roberts depicts the “Appomattox” statue as simply “a three-dimensional manifestation of unspoken disappointment.” He sees a Confederate soldier with his “head bowed, “shoulders sagging” and no weapon, “facing toward Washington’s home and family values.” He wants us to accept that the “unspoken disappointment” portrayed by the soldier is mostly on behalf of “the premature deaths of long ago Alexandria citizens.”

In furtherance of his argument he declares, “The literalists will have us believe that our protest art statue endorses a cause, and removing it will purify history.” Let me say as

a “literalist” he got part of that right; the statue indeed “endorses a cause.”

As a “literalist” I ascribe to the principle that one cannot honor the Confederate (or Confederates) without, at the same time, honoring the Confederacy. And while it may be true that the statue’s placement in 1889 at the intersection of Washington and Prince streets was intended principally to honor those from Alexandria who fought and died “prematurely” for the Confederacy, it is nevertheless the case that every one of those men fought for a regime that was totally committed to white supremacy, racial purity and, yes, the perpetuation of slavery.

It has been well documented that the placement of so many Confederate statues throughout the South following the end of Reconstruction and in to the 1930s and ‘40s, was a flagrant attempt in itself to “purify history.” This was the evolution of the Cult of the Lost Cause, which was designed to obfuscate or detract from the real reasons why the South wasn’t victorious. The principal tenet of the Lost Cause argument, wrote Edward H. Bonekemper III, the author of “The Myth of the Lost Cause,” was that the “protection of states’ rights, not slavery, was the central cause of secession.”

Hence, most historians, other than those who still defend the Lost Cause, would regard the removal of the statue as a restoration not a purification of history. And keeping the statue in place, as Mr. Roberts advocates, is a clear attempt to ward off modern protesters from tampering with heritage or history.

Responding to critics over the removal of Confederate

memorials in South Carolina, African American State Rep. Justin T. Bamberg declared, “We’re not offended by your heritage. We’re offended that states and local governments, by erecting these monuments on public property that belongs to everybody, are paying homage to people who wanted to keep part of the population in slavery. This is the history we should never again put on a pedestal to be revered.”

Moving the statue just a few hundred feet across the street to the Lyceum can hardly constitute “purifying history.” Instead, I believe Mayor Mitch Landrieu’s overarching argument in defending the removal of four Confederate monuments in New Orleans earlier this year has great relevance to our situation in Alexandria. “These monuments,” he declared, “purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy, ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement and the terror that it actually stood for [Their removal is] about showing the whole world that we as a city and as a people are able to acknowledge, understand, reconcile and most importantly, choose a better future for ourselves, making straight what has been crooked and making right what was wrong.”

I still think the Appomattox statue should be donated to the new African American Museum of History and Culture, but if it “travels” to the Lyceum instead I will be content. After all, at the Lyceum it can still serve Mr. Roberts’ vision for his so-called Protest Statue — “as an artistic statement for the aggrieved and for whatever they protest, now and in the future” Whatever that means.

Richard Merritt/Alexandria

Sgt. Herman Austin and his partner, Kahn.

SHELLEY CASTLE
PHOTOGRAPHY



A Nose for the Job

Rejected as a pet, German Shepherd finds a home with D.C. Corrections.

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

Prospects may have appeared dim for a young dog called Kahn, who was surrendered to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) in April 2016. He was too intense and high-energy to live comfortably as a family pet. Evaluation at the shelter showed that Kahn, a distinctive all-black German shepherd, tended to snap at other dogs but was intensely focused. This gave AWLA staff an idea.

They contacted Sgt. Bryan Morrison of the Arlington County Police Department's canine unit, who unofficially helps find avocations for dogs too energetic to be pets.

Morrison sent an email describing Kahn to dog handlers at area police departments and law-enforcement facilities, and he quickly heard back from the Washington, D.C., Department of Corrections. They needed help with sniffing out narcotics in their detention facility, and they thought Kahn might have the drive — and the nose — for the job.

After meeting Kahn and getting a better sense of his personality, the D.C. officials determined he had the special characteristics for a working dog and agreed to take a chance on him. They sent Kahn to Maryland's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Canine Unit for 14 weeks of training in identifying drugs. "He had to pass with at least 90 percent accuracy on all imprinted odors," said Lt. Gregory Shumake, who headed the unit. "One thing that struck me about Kahn was that he never gave up. He continued to search until he found something."

Kahn graduated from the school in September 2016, and the following June reported for duty at the elite canine unit of the D.C. Central Detention Facility in Southeast Washington. Now 3 years old, Kahn's days are intensive and full of challenges, as he and his partner, Sgt. Herman Austin, patrol the prison, which houses some 1,400 inmates. Kahn has learned to navigate the prison environment outfitted in a black K9 harness and is always on alert. He has be-

come an expert in detecting marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin and methamphetamines and is trained to sit down quietly when he suspects the presence of drugs. "He's made several drug recoveries," said Shumake, who now leads the canine unit at the D.C. facility.

Conducting searches is one of the highlights of Kahn's day, Shumake says. Those are times he spends with Austin, his handler, and the search is an extension of their bond as a team. Being active on the job provides Kahn with a constructive outlet for his energy that wouldn't be available to him as a stay-at-home pet.

Shumake says that with proper training, some overactive shelter dogs can become solid law enforcement specialists, saving detention facilities and police departments thousands of dollars that just one breeder-raised dog can cost and providing the dogs with much needed "jobs."

The Alexandria Police Department found this to be true when an AWLA alum named Zara underwent training to join the department four years earlier. She now patrols with her human partner, focusing on sniffing out explosives and suspicious packages.

Following this success, the AWLA introduced Ranger, a high-energy, motivated Belgian Malinois mix, to the Virginia State Police, where he found a home with one of the officers.

Beyond their professional contributions, these dogs can also be excellent canine companions, once their attention is focused and their energy spent on a fulfilling job. Kahn's sweet disposition is on display when Austin takes him home for the night.

"We actually spend more time with our dogs than with our families," said Shumake. His chocolate Labrador retrievers, Charlie (from Lab Rescue of the LRCP) and Lilo, are in training to work at the jail and spend off-hours with Shumake and his family. "It's clear, though, that these dogs are happiest when they're working."

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, which operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter for the City of Alexandria, is an independent, local, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The AWLA is committed to ending animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare, and serving as an educational resource for the City of Alexandria community. More information is at AlexandriaAnimals.org.



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Schools' CIP Proposal Reflects New Joint Approach

FROM PAGE 1

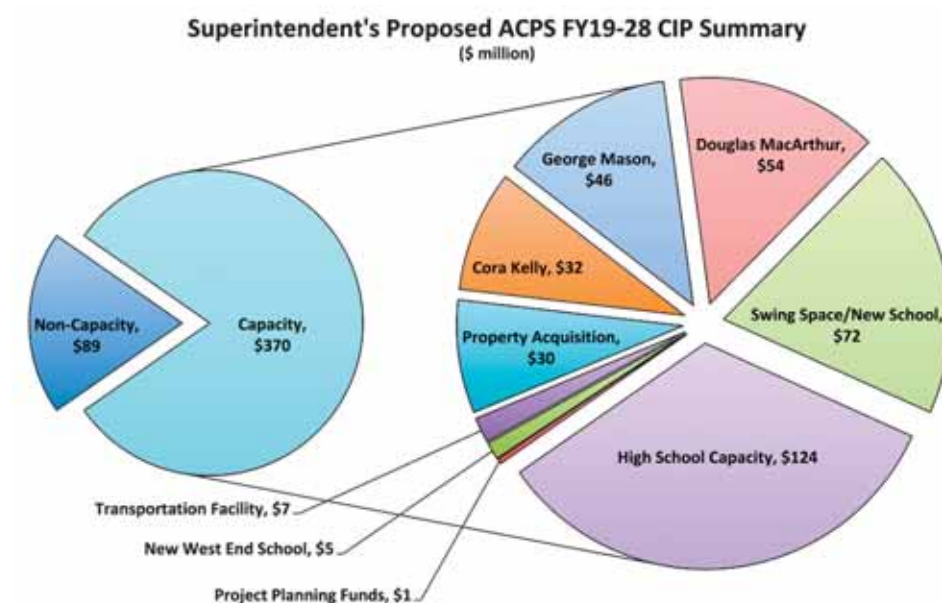
the schools can use to seize quickly upon property acquisition opportunities as they arise;

- ❖ Phasing funding for high school capacity expansion in order more fully to engage the public about potential alternatives to meet that need;

- ❖ Removing \$28 million for a new pre-K center, also to enable further alternatives analysis and stakeholder engagement.

Berlin also recently hired Mignon Anthony — a task force member up until her new appointment — as the school system's new chief operating officer. Anthony comes to Alexandria from Baltimore City Public Schools, where she oversaw a \$1 billion capital program. She will have "budgetary oversight" for capital improvement and operations and maintenance, among other areas, according to an ACPS press release.

City Council recently instructed City Manager Mark Jinks not to consider another property tax rate increase when building his FY19 budget proposal. Property taxes account for the lion's share of the city's revenues. Asked whether the schools' request would be feasible without raising taxes, Helen Lloyd, a school system spokesperson, said: "ACPS [Alexandria City Public Schools] aligned the superintendent's proposed CIP with the recommendations of the task force with only slight adjustments for cost estimates and for non-capacity items based on deferral of projects. The task force was charged with prioritizing projects within the revenues allocated specifically for facilities based on already approved rev-



enue generation. ACPS' requested CIP funding will continue to escalate as projects continue to be deferred. Ultimately we feel the superintendent's proposed projects can be achieved within approved funding if the City Council considers these projects as priorities as the task force did in their recommendations. The city FY19 CIP is projected at around \$200 million and ACPS is only asking for \$67 million of that. While somewhat higher than contemplated a year ago, it could be fully funded without a tax increase if the ACPS funding needs are given priority."

The city administration did not respond to requests for comment about the feasibility of the superintendent's proposal with-

out raising new taxes.

At its first CIP work session, Tuesday, the School Board gave mixed responses to Berlin's proposal.

School Board member Bill Campbell said, "Everything that's being said and proposed by the task force may not necessarily work. And so I don't think we need to take it as gospel that what they say and want to do is going to actually fit what we identify as what the real needs are."

Multiple School Board members expressed concern that the CIP proposal does not specifically include a new middle school. Berlin and staff said that other line items — such as swing-space-to-become-a-new-school, land acquisition and relocatable

classrooms — could go toward a new middle school and interim accommodations. School Board member Karen Graf expressed doubt that these alternatives would suffice.

Graf also said: "I'm really having trouble accepting the push-back of the [elementary school] projects on the timeline. ... I don't think we should be volunteering to push our projects back."

ACPS CFO Michael Herbstman explained that the task force needed to move some projects back in order to balance expenditures against "a very thin margin of cash flows per year." The task force similarly deferred seven slated city projects, including renovations for City Hall and the health department, as well as a fire station replacement.

School Board chair Ramee Gentry said: "While I appreciate the concern around some projects getting pushed out, ... the advantage of aligning with the task force is that there actually is the potential for far more certainty than we've experienced in past years. School X might have to wait one more year, but there's a lot more certainty that that thing will actually happen in [the specified year]. ... I think that trade-off is worth it."

The schools' budget documents are available at www.acps.k12.va.us/budgets. The School Board will hold a CIP work session and public hearing starting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7 at the ACPS Central Office, 1340 Braddock Place. Subsequent work sessions will occur Dec. 11, 19 and Jan. 3, culminating in final adoption Jan. 11. All meetings are open to the public.



PHOTOS BY "MANCO" MIKE ANDERSON



More than 2,000 luminaries line Mount Vernon Ave. in Del Ray Dec. 2 in memory of Nancy Dunning, who was known as "the Queen of Del Ray." Dunning was found murdered in her home Dec. 5, 2003.

Let There Be Light Del Ray tree lighting kicks off holiday season.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Hundreds gathered in the Pat Miller Neighborhood Square at Mount Vernon and East Oxford avenues as Alexandria's Del Ray community kicked off its holiday season Dec. 2 with the annual tree lighting ceremony and visit from Santa.

"We are extremely grateful again this year

to Bill Blackburn and Mike Anderson for donating a close to 30-foot tree," said Gayle Reuter, a board member of the Del Ray Business Association, which sponsors the tree lighting event. "And Wind Mill Hill Designs arranged for their amazing crews to put it up."

Continuing a tradition that began in 2003, more than 2,000 luminaries lined Mount Vernon Ave. in memory of Nancy Dunning, who was active in the Del Ray community

and known as "the Queen of Del Ray." Dunning, wife of then-sheriff Jim Dunning, was found murdered in her home on Dec. 5, 2003. Her murder remained unsolved until 2015, when Charles Severance was convicted of the killing. Items were collected for Carpenter's Shelter in Dunning's memory.

Also lining Mount Vernon Avenue were 12 holiday trees decorated by local nonprofits.

"Nonprofits have decorated trees and are competing for cash prizes," Reuter said. "We hope everyone has a chance to stroll the Avenue, check out all the decorated trees and cast their vote for Best Decorated Tree."

Voting will be open until 5 p.m. Christmas Day and the winning nonprofit will receive \$500 from the Del Ray Business Association. For more information or to vote, visit www.visitdelray.com/holiday-tree.

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Announcements

NEWS

Building an Eco-City

FROM PAGE 1
 King Street.

The presentation also laid out preliminary goals for the next few years. The biggest topic, and the largest environmental crisis in the city, is the implementation of the Sanitary Sewer Long Term Control Plan, a plan required by the state to build a new sewer system to replace Old Town's current combined stormwater-sewer system.

The update also proposes to add increasing the tree canopy from 34 percent to 40 percent. The plan also calls for a reduction of greenhouse gases per person from 13 to 10 metric tons.

Several members of the public were people who had been involved with the creation of the original Environmental Action Plan.

"I think the idea is that this was a living document revisited all the time," said Joy Pochatila. "If parts of it get thrown away, it's because there are better ideas. It's going to be a painful process, the update, I'm sure; but I'm encouraged this process is happening. It should have been happening for a while."

Peter Pennington, former chair of the Environmental Policy Commission, said he hoped that specific education goals would be included in the plan.

"Now that the country has entered the dark ages in terms of science is concerned, I think education is something you should seriously look at," said Pennington. "We tried to have education for the children, but there were changes of staff and it never really got going. That was perhaps a failure. As much as you are fighting budget, we also had to fight time constraints. Teachers never have time ... For rest of the city; not for nothing did we add recycling bins along King Street. It was not just to boost recycling, it was to send a message. We need to do something dramatic, for the sake of education, to bring in the city and to make everyone proud they live in an eco-city."

Public outreach for the Environmental Action Plan update will continue with a series of "cafe" meetings in February and March 2018. The plan will be publicly reviewed on Earth Day, April 28 with phase one of the update presented to the City Council in May.

Obituary

Douglas Colin Fox, 75, of Huddleston, VA & formerly of Alexandria passed away on Monday, November 20, 2017 at his home. Douglas was born in Asheville, NC and was the son of the late Zeb Wayne and Agnes Smith Fox. Douglas was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and retired from the Department of the Army, United States Army Davison Aviation Command.



Doug was the consummate "gear head" and an avid old car guy. We must not forget his talents as a storyteller. We who knew him best remember the fun times at the car shows in Gettysburg, PA, Charlotte, NC, Mother's Day Run, Colonial Beach and many local Saturday night events, too many to name here. Doug was surrounded by the best of friends. His friends were loyal to him and helped him when he needed them most. In return he was a loyal friend and always had their back.

He is survived by his sister, Beverly Charlene Fox Jones of Virginia Beach, VA. She will miss her big brother. His

Obituary

beloved cats Jack and Mack will also miss their buddy.

Doug's love of cars and anything with a motor and speed was unlimited. Even though he openly criticized and complained about how the "new" Nascar had too many rules and too many daddy's little rich boys, no race went unwatched by Doug. His days of racing at Manassas Raceway and Beltsville, MD were some of his best memories. When his health declined and he was unable to pursue his passions, his days were numbered. In the spirit of his love of cars, it is befitting that all of us gather in a garage and send Doug off in a plume of smoke from many exhaust pipes.

A memorial service and gathering of old friends will be held in such a place at 11:00 AM on December 8, 2017 at Larry Rao's Garage, 4329 Hawkins Mill Road, Lynchburg, VA 24503. We invite you to bring a chair and come join us.

Arrangements are being handled by Updike Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Bedford, VA (540-586-3304).

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Context of Having Written



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much about last week's column but, sometimes in my unexpressed desire to fulfill my writing obligation/not let me cancer/cancer treatment affect my schedule, I write my column under less-than-ideal circumstances.

Post chemotherapy/(last week) – the immediate week after, is about as challenging as it gets for me. I'm a bit irritable. I'm a bit out of sync/unable to focus. I'm somewhat impatient. My hands are shaky. My eyes are "squinty." I'm hungry yet I can't eat. My self-editing skills are below average – more than usual. And finally, my reading comprehension is mostly lost in the toxic haze. Still, I'm determined to make my deadline.

Not that any of the preceding paragraph is an excuse. It's more of an explanation as to why a column written with the best of intentions may have missed the mark in tone and substance. Though I've not received any feedback as yet confirming my sense of what I had written last week; nevertheless, my feeling upon submitting it to editorial was that I had wavered a bit. Unfortunately, I didn't have the balance emotionally or the ability physically to assess its content. I apologize in arrears for attempting to maintain its regularity.

And to that point, specifically to that word, that's what my attitude as a cancer patient has been about: regularity. Doing the things that I regularly/normally/typically do without deviating from my norm. Because for me, deviating from my norm, living/doing outside of my box – within reason, would be – to me anyway, reinforcing the negative that is most definitely a cancer diagnosis. A diagnosis with which I have long ago made my peace, made my choices and moreover, made my it goal to face the present/future with a positive attitude infused with as much self-effacing good humor as possible. It's nothing I really did intentionally, it is simply who I am: my father's son, with inherited sensibilities to live my life thinking the glass is half full, until it's not.

And so far, nearly nine years into a "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I'm living proof that either whatever I'm doing is working (and there's a bit more to the story) or I'm an incredibly lucky act of kindness for which there's no quantifiable explanation. Regardless, I'm not the least bit inclined to look a gift horse in the mouth and/or deny the possibility that my tumors are necrotic (dead). I'm very happy to accept the inexplicable fact that, statistically speaking, I'm an official anomaly: a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer survivor.

However, since I'm not one to presume facts not yet in evidence, I'm still infused every six weeks, scanned quarterly and seen by my oncologist every three months. I don't for a second believe that somehow, after being diagnosed with a "terminal disease" in late February 2009, that life goes merrily along without consequences. Not that I'm a fatalist – Rebecca, I'm merely evaluating/introspecting/compartmentalizing and allocating precious emotional resources so I can live my life as I'm accustomed to doing.

And what I'm most accustomed to doing, especially dating back to December 1997, is writing a weekly column for Connection Newspapers. Though the columns published previous to June '09 were not "cancer" columns, as we call them, they were nonetheless written with the same passion and nonsensical prose as my "cancer" columns are. So, generally speaking, I am able, as my brother Richard says, "to churn out the dribble."

Still, writing is not like reading. Though a similar commitment is needed, writing requires a bit more effort. And it's been an effort I've sustained before, after and during my lung cancer diagnosis. Some weeks are harder than others. Last week was difficult. This week not so much.

Perhaps you agree?

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

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NEWS

Students

FROM PAGE 1

for students interested in a career in medicine and health care. The partnership will create five new career and technical education pathways within a new GW-ACPS Academy of Health Services at TC. It will start with the launch of a biomedical informatics pathway in fall 2018, followed by four additional pathways — sports medicine, pharmacy, emergency medical services and medical laboratory sciences that will launch over the next four years.

Sherri Chapman, who organized the partnership, said the program is the only one of its kind in the state. At no extra cost, TC students can apply to join the dual-enrollment program with GW and earn over 20 college credits in health and medical science courses. The partnership is designed to offer three pathways post graduation: attain employment after graduation into a medical career, enroll into Northern Virginia Community College, or will have guaranteed admission into GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences with several scholarship opportunities.

"It's giving those students that may not be able to afford college an opportunity," said Chapman. "They would save money by already having credits. They would have automatic admission. There would be scholarship opportunities."

The program will take a maximum of 150 students in its freshman class, with another 150 added to the freshman class each year after.

Dr. Reamer Bushardt, senior associate dean for health sciences at GW School of Medicine and Health Services, said the academy was formed after an earlier partnership between ACPS and GW where students designed and developed apps.

"We were tremendously impressed with students, really enjoyed working with the teachers and students," said Bushardt. "We started talking about the great demand on health careers in Northern Virginia and D.C. area. It was that context where we talked about how to build on partnership and synergy and our impact on how to meet regional needs."

In the D.C. metro region, over the next 10 years there is anticipated to be an annual shortage of approximately 1,236 healthcare professionals and roughly 776 healthcare support occupations, according to Labor Insight Jobs and Burning Glass Technologies. Bushardt said programs like the TC partnership are also a good way of building diversity in the healthcare field, where Bushardt says that currently isn't very represented. Bushardt said that often, as students start Middle School or High School, they start to form ideas of what they can and can't be. "People think about being a nurse or physician, but there's a lot of health careers," said Bushardt. "It's an opportunity to reach deeper into the pipeline. It's about supporting counselors and teachers, helping connect students with careers they may not know about but may line up with their talents and interests. And we hope some of those students choose GW and continue education there."

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