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Alexandria Gazette Packet

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JANUARY 24, 2019

Responding to Gas Leaks

Washington Gas meets with residents.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Representatives from the Washington Gas Company held a Natural Gas Safety Briefing for residents of the Clover-College Park neighborhood on Jan. 10 after numerous reports from concerned citizens about gas smells around the area. The reports began in late September and became more frequent in November and December and continued into early January. One resident reported “Washington Gas trucks all around the neighborhood.”

Concerned citizens, worried about a pattern of gas leaks, had contacted Washington Gas in November and Washington Gas responded with an email notice to the city on Nov. 19. The email indicated they were investigating the leaks and making repairs as needed. The email explained they conduct a proactive leak survey every three years to ensure reliability, safety, and protection and that they “do not see a pattern.” They indicated this year is “relatively consistent with the past three years of similar repair work.” The email also outlined a follow up action list including a presentation followed by Q&A for the residents of the Clover-College Park Civic Association (CCPCA).

On Jan. 2 there were more reports of several gas trucks at Dartmouth and Crown View as well as at Vassar Road, W. Taylor Run and at Skyhill Drive. Lisa Porter, CCPCA president,



Washington Gas workers repair gas leaks around 300 Skyhill Drive on Jan. 2.

Call

Customers should report odor complaints 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using the Washington Gas Emergency Leak Line 703-750-1400 or 800-752-7520.

notified the neighborhood email list that Mayor Justin Wilson, City Manager Mark Jinks and Transportation and Environmental Services are aware of these reports along Skyhill Drive where Washington Gas was testing for gas leaks ahead of the Civic Association meeting. They discovered several leaks and sent in additional crews to perform repairs, which “appear to be related to deteriorated rubber couplings on older infrastructure.”

On Jan. 10 top Washington Gas

officials came to the CCPCA monthly meeting armed with three-year gas leak graphs, procedures and details about the complexity of the system, resources and emergency information. More than 30 residents in the Clover-College Park neighborhood came with their questions and complaints about individual experiences with gas leak reports on their properties.

Melissa Adams, chief corporate social responsibility officer for Washington Gas, explained there are approximately 13,000 miles of gas main and approximately 13,000 miles of service lines in the entire system of Washington Gas across its ser

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

‘Rags to Riches’

PreK-8-school and rec-center, a joint city-schools operation, opens.

By DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Patrick Henry School, a replacement PreK-8 school adjoining a city-run recreation center, welcomed nearly 800 elementary and middle school students on Tuesday, Jan. 22.

The conjoining facilities, a joint project between the public school division and city government, begun in FY 2014, opened almost on time, despite a brief rain delay, and on budget. The project cost some \$62 million — \$52 million for the school, \$10 million for the rec center.

SEE PREK-8 SCHOOL, PAGE 4



DAN BRENDEN

The school and rec center each has its own HVAC chiller, but the systems share a single cooling tower on the roof, saving capital costs. The chillers’ rotating shafts float inside magnetic fields rather than on bearings, improving efficiency and reducing wear and tear.

Diverted to Treatment

City agencies work together for new drug treatment court.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

The City of Alexandria is implementing a drug treatment court designed to provide treatment as an alternative to incarceration for individuals with significant substance abuse problems. Commonwealth’s Attorney Bryan Porter estimates the program will serve roughly 10 citizens the first year.

The need is much greater, he said, with an estimate of about 50 felony drug possessions going through his office each year. “It’s a tough budget year for the city and I am not asking for additional funds to begin this new program. I have asked a senior prosecutor in my office to take on the extra duties,” he said.

The initiative has been a collaborative effort with a number of city

SEE CITY AGENCIES, PAGE 3

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Agencies Work Together for New Drug Treatment Court

FROM PAGE 1

agencies, including the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, the Alexandria Police Department, the City Manager's Office, the Alexandria Circuit Court, the Alexandria Public Defender, the Office of Probation and Parole, the Alexandria Clerk of Court and Offender Aid and Restoration. Porter said they have been designing the model for Alexandria over the past year and applied to the Virginia State Court last fall for permission to initiate this program.

He said the Department of Community and Behavioral Health will be providing much of the treatment and will also be absorbing the cost. "The idea is to try to start

with the funding levels we have. The Federal government has grants to address the opioid crisis, and hopefully we could get a treatment specialist as well as a civilian administrator to handle the paper flow. Then we could expand to take more citizens into the program." The length of the program depends on the defendant who first has to be designated as high risk/high need, which means they have been diagnosed as having a substance abuse disorder that would benefit from intensive treatment. The treatment could last between 6 months to 2 years. The program includes intensive testing, treatment and therapy addressed at the underlying substance-abuse disorder.

Porter says the code section authorizing

these programs has been on the books for 15 years but a fairly small number of jurisdictions have treatment courts due to lack of time and resources. But the Government Accountability Office indicates adult drug courts have been proven to be highly cost effective with an average return on investment of approximately \$2-\$4 for every dollar invested. This translates into economic savings for local communities of approximately \$3,000 to \$22,000 per participant.

"It's a win/win for everyone. The program has a high success rate for the individual who will not reoffend and can become a productive member of society. It is better for the police and sheriff who are often asked to be the primary care treaters. But this is a blunt instrument without the re-

sources or expertise to address the myriad of complex issues associated with substance abuse. It obviously helps the court dockets and will probably reduce the caseload for my office." It is anticipated that Alexandria's treatment court will commence operation in April or May. "It is really important for people in my position to be smart," Porter said. "The people who go through my office have substance abuse or mental health issues or both. This new program goes hand in hand with my office's Mental Health Initiative. Citizens who commit nonviolent crimes as a result of a substance abuse disorder do not need lengthy incarcerations; instead, they need treatment and understanding so that the root cause of their problem can be addressed."

Drug Courts Can Make the Difference in Recovery

One woman's journey to the other side.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

"Heroin takes away any physical and emotional pain but it takes joy, love, family. But you are in so much pain from whatever brought you to that place that you take it anyway."

Heidi Christiansen says she is all for the new Alexandria Drug Court: "The fact that they are addressing the drug epidemic is extremely encouraging. They will need to take baby steps, to have checks and balances." She says the drug crisis is beyond epidemic; "it is a boom. They crack down on prescriptions so little old ladies in Iowa go to heroin. The drug dealer doesn't ask how many pills you have. It's cash and carry."

Christiansen was sentenced to five years for possession in Louisiana seven years ago. She entered drug court there in Baton Rouge as an alternative to jail time. "I was not extremely happy about the amount of

time it takes in Phase 1 where you have three classes a week, AA meetings, three random drug tests, and an appearance before a drug court judge while holding down a full-time job." She said, "We got tested for alcohol after every LSU game."

But she explains the program is designed so the addict can address substance abuse issues.

The advantage is you are free, able to shower when you want, cook what you want to eat, and the most important, to be the primary caregiver to children. "You want drugs but there is no way to fake a screen. You are watched on camera as you give a sample."

She says drug court isn't for everyone. "Just because you need it doesn't mean you are a good candidate." Christiansen says you sit down with a drug court advocate and they ask a number of questions about your resident status, your job status, criminal history and drug history, "Then they as-



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Heidi Christiansen

sign you a risk assessment number. People within some certain numerical range are accepted for the program." She says in Louisiana the drug courts have a 70 percent success rate in preventing recidivism. She says Virginia is a highly conservative state where they view investments to help drug addicts as being soft on

crime.

She remembers when she was in drug court she was sent to rehab for 28 days for a dirty drug screen. She was sent to a small town in Louisiana the day before Thanksgiving and got out the day before New Year's.

After Christiansen finished drug court in Louisiana she came to the Virginia Beach area to help her cousin run a business. "I was on pain management in Louisiana due to a 17-year abusive relationship with a husband who broke a number of bones and ran over me over with a car. Virginia doesn't

supply some medications in the same supply." So her cousin went and got heroin. It was available and everywhere.

"I remember the moment, the first time I took it. I looked in the mirror and said 'what the hell are you doing?' But a wave of nausea came over me and I threw up. I moved everything so I wouldn't have to look in the mirror. That was the beginning of the end. I became a heroin addict."

She says her cousin was incapable or running his company "so I turned to alternate methods of income contrary to the law. "If you live at-risk lifestyle you will come into contact with law enforcement."

Christiansen was arrested for possession in both Chesapeake and Virginia Beach but put on probation in both jurisdictions. "I have three possession charges in the state and I have never possessed a drug. I was arrested for drug paraphernalia, which is a felony in Virginia but not in Louisiana where it is a misdemeanor. It's how the system here gets so clogged up. It will be a mess in the beginning."

"I knew I was going to have a dirty drug screen so I evaded parole and they found

SEE MAKING, PAGE 19

Deputies, Officers Assist Seniors during Snowstorm

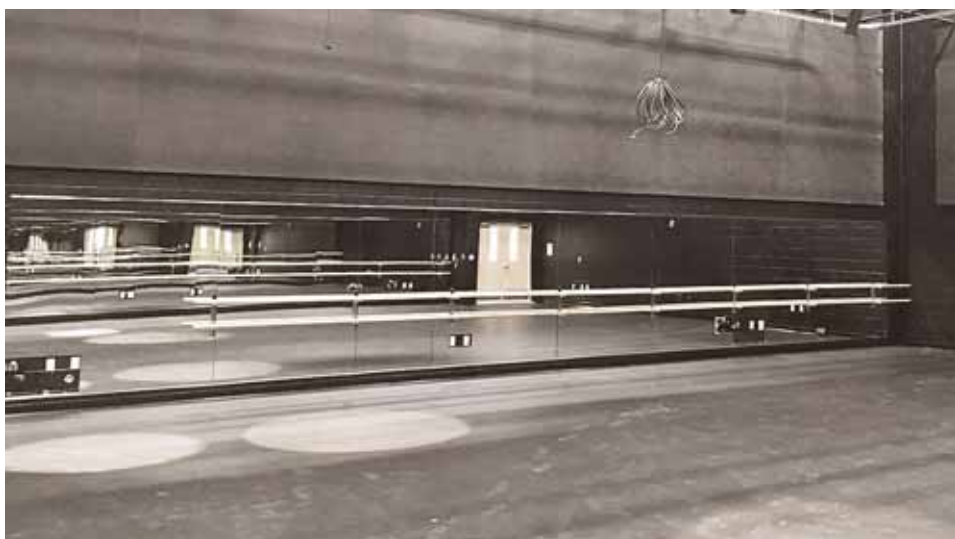
The Sheriff's Office and the Police Department stepped up to assist Senior Services of Alexandria on Jan. 13 when the heavy snow and road conditions prevented their regular drivers from delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound seniors. Officers Tara Finkle and Henry Segura covered the routes in the West End and Lieutenant Sean Casey and Captain Robyn Nichols handled the deliveries in the downtown and greater Del Ray areas.



From left: Officers Tara Finkle, Officer Henry Segura, Lieutenant Sean Casey and Captain Robyn Nichols delivered Meals on Wheels during the recent snowstorm.



While delivering Meals on Wheels, Lieutenant Sean Casey assisted a senior he met in Old Town by calling her a cab.



A “black box” theater provides flexible performing arts space, such as for Patrick Henry’s full time dance program. The theater is one of the dual facilities’ shared spaces, open for rec center use after school hours. The school’s “cafetorium” — part cafeteria, part auditorium — also provides a stage with performance lighting and sound, and space to seat over 300.



A first floor kindergarten classroom. The first floor houses grades K-1; the second floor grades 2-5; the third floor grades 6-8. Dividing grades by floors streamlines grade-level programming, said Ingrid Bynum, Patrick Henry’s principal.

PreK-8 School and Recreation Center Opens

FROM PAGE 1

By building the facilities together, the schools and city saved on certain costs, including design, construction, and shared HVAC infrastructure.

The old school facility dates to the early 1950s, the old rec center to the early 1970s. But the new facilities are state-of-the-art.

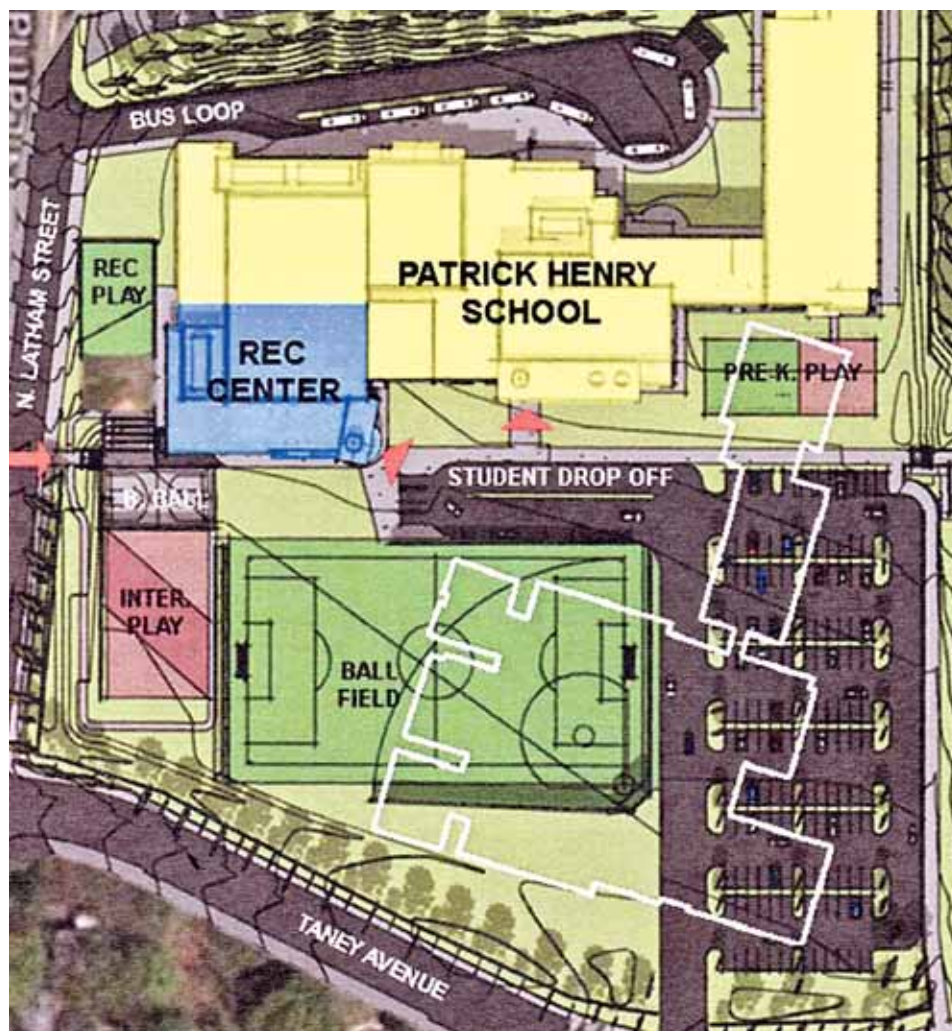
The new construction represents a “rags to riches” transition, said Paul May, the school division’s project manager. “We’re moving on up,” agreed Ingrid Bynum, Patrick Henry’s principal of seven years.

The new school can accommodate 900 students by design, about a one-quarter increase on the old school’s capacity. The new

campus will remain under- or fully utilized through FY 2023. But thereafter student enrollment will increasingly exceed the design capacity, reaching 111 percent utilization by FY 2029, according to recent enrollment forecasts.

Incorporating the middle school grades (6-8) at Patrick Henry gives parents an alternative to Francis Hammond, the West End’s stand-alone middle school.

The tradeoff is Patrick Henry’s smaller student body size and continuity between students/families and teachers/administrators, versus the much larger Francis Hammond broader array of courses, said Bynum.



The new school (yellow) and rec center (blue) provides nearly 156,000 square feet of space, two-thirds more than the old facilities (white outline). To streamline costs, the school division kept students in place at the old facility during construction, rather than build or repurpose a temporary “swing space” elsewhere. The site provided enough space for this, but only just: the new building came to within just eight feet of the old, a “logistical nightmare,” said Paul May, the schools’ project manager. Most other school sites slated for rebuilds are too small for students to stay in place. The old Patrick Henry facilities remain, but are scheduled for demolition by fall, to make room for a turf field and additional parking.



A commercial-grade kitchen includes warming packs for school-served meals. About three-quarters of Patrick Henry’s students qualify for federally subsidized free or reduced priced meals. All students receive free school breakfasts, regardless of eligibility.



The rec center’s “flex court” provides an indoor track and court space for basketball, badminton, pickleball and volleyball. The school’s adjacent gymnasium provides additional court space and a rock-climbing wall. The two gyms are among the dual facilities’ shared spaces, open for each other’s use during appropriate hours.

PHOTOS BY DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

'Give Us a Direction'?

School Board to vote on strategy for high school expansion.

BY DAN BRENDL
GAZETTE PACKET

The School Board will vote on Thursday, Jan. 24, on a proposal to expand T.C. Williams into a multi-site "connected high school network," notwithstanding uncertain fiscal ramifications and public buy-in.

Student enrollment is outpacing seats division-wide, not least for the secondary school. Under current conditions, T.C. Williams High School would operate at about 130 percent of design capacity within a decade, based on enrollment forecasts. Addressing the problem is one of the school division's top priorities, and paying for it constitutes one of City Council's largest foreseeable citywide capital investments.

Last fall, Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings and COO Mignon Anthony outlined for the prior School Board three general choices, though details remain forthcoming:

- ❖ Make the existing T.C. Williams bigger;
- ❖ Build another stand-alone comprehensive high school;
- ❖ Preserve a single T.C. Williams Titans "brand," but distribute "thematic-based" specialty programs,

akin to the school division's existing "academies" (health sciences, finance, STEM), across one or more additional facilities.

Hutchings and Anthony prefer the third option. They've asked the School Board formally to approve it as the overarching "strategy" around which to tailor subsequent planning efforts, namely, site selection.

The School Board needs to move forward by a "process of elimination," with Thursday's vote being the first winnowing, said Hutchings. "The vote ... is not to have a concrete plan on everything that we are doing. The vote is, are we going to have a strategy with one high school ... [or] multiple high schools ...?" It's too early in the planning process "to start talking about all the things that everybody want to hear about location and ... programs"

"We're just asking for you to give us a direction," said Anthony.

Hutchings' administration prefers the connected network strategy for various reasons, but especially because they think it would maximize flexibility for families to choose best-fit learning environments.

"All students are not going to thrive in a very large school" like T.C. Williams in its current form, Hutchings said in a Jan. 17 podcast. "A small learning community" or other more "isolated" environments, including "blended" online-and-classroom studies, might better suit some students. "So this connected high school model affords choices for our students." He says research shows that smaller learn-

SEE BOARD TO VOTE. PAGE 18

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Mother and Son: Different Victories, Same Day

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Jerome Maquiling was at Woodgrove High School in Purcellville on Dec. 15 competing in the We the People Championship for T.C. Williams High School. At the same time his mother, Lourdes Sinoben Maquiling, was in Fairfax County taking the citizenship oath with 411 other people. It had been 18 years since she'd come to this country and 13 since she had applied for her green card.

PEOPLE AT WORK

Jerome said he spent "countless hours at night with the pros and cons of where he should be that day, which is beneficial, what should I do. She didn't want me to get a bad grade and my teammates counted on me. We were considering maybe after I finished with the competition I could go there but I was a very long way away."

"I wanted Jerome by my side. I told him, 'it was up to you,'" his mother said. "It was hard for him, too. Jerome is very quiet so it was good for him to have the confidence to talk about immigration. When he told me

he didn't want to disappoint his teammates who depended on him, I understood."

The We the People is an honors class designed to promote civic competence and responsibility among the nation's elementary and secondary students. The curriculum is an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of the United States constitutional democratic republic and helps students prepare for the competition.

Jerome's topic was immigration policy. "I know what it's like; it's close to my heart." Jerome was a member of a four-person T.C. team charged with a four-minute presentation among them. He said they worked on it together, and timing was an important piece. In one minute "well, 50 seconds" Jerome discussed what changes should be made to the immigration system.

He says his three points were the necessity to lessen the burden on how long it takes to become a citizen, the idea that instead of imprisonment at the Mexican border ICE could use ankle bracelets and monitoring which would be more humane and cost effective, and finally there should be education before people get here.

Jerome had spent several months prepar-



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Jerome Maquiling

ing for the competition and at the same time quizzing his mother on the questions for her naturalization exam. He said applicants for citizenship have to memorize 100 questions for the exam.

Lourdes Sinoben Maquiling says they asked her, "If the President and Vice President cannot fulfill their duty, who is in charge?" Then after she answered the question correctly they asked her the name of the current Speaker of the House. They also

asked her to write a sentence in English about Columbus Day and to read a paragraph "to see if I could read and write."

Jerome's team was part of a group of 41 seniors from T.C. Williams who competed against teams from 28 high schools in the region and will now advance to the state competition Jan. 31. He says after his mom's ceremony was over, "she picked me up at school and we just talked and talked about what happened." Lourdes Sinoben Maquiling said when they came toward her in the ceremony to give her the plaque everybody was crying. After long years of waiting her American dream had come true. "The gym was packed so it was very emotional."

Lourdes Sinoben Maquiling had come to this country with an American couple living in Japan where she had worked as their nanny. "They wanted me to come here with them when they moved back so I worked for them and applied for my green card in 2005." She finally received her green card in 2011 and then had to wait another five years for her citizenship. She said, "I feel so blessed to be part of this country. But I wish ... it was not so long to become a citizen."

Living Legends of Alexandria Lists 2019 Honorees

Living Legends of Alexandria has announced its selections of Living Legends for 2019. The 2019 Living Legends were vetted from an array of nominations that were submitted by the public and received through fall of last year. These community leaders were chosen based on their having met one or both of two selection criteria as evidence of having improved the quality of life in the City of Alexandria by having: (1) led the creation or redevelopment of something which wouldn't have existed without their involvement; or (2) demonstrated substantial and sustained contributions over a significant period of time.

LIVING LEGENDS OF ALEXANDRIA 2019

* Ronal Butler – Since 2002, Ronal Butler has served on the board of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, including five years as president from 2012-2017. He has also contributed his time and resources to the Campagna Center, Alexandria Rotary

Club, Northern Virginia Urban League and the Ira Dorsey Scholarship Endowment Fund.

* Brooke Curran – In 2009, Brooke Curran founded RunningBrooke, a nonprofit that serves at-risk children by encouraging physical activity. To date, the organization has contributed more than \$1.5 million to the local community through Move2Learn grants and scholarships and improvements to local schools and parks.

* James Henson – James Henson, a longtime member and officer of the Departmental Progressive Club, has worked to preserve the history of African Americans in Alexandria through his leadership in several community organizations. He was instrumental in the publication of the book "Change Agents," which details the influence of African Americans in the city's history.

* Jane King – Jane King spearheaded the development and creation of the Alexandria Strategic Plan on Aging, which addressed the need for affordable housing,

accessible transportation and workforce development for those over the age of 50. She served as chair of the Commission on Aging and is currently the chair of At Home Alexandria.

* Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel – Recognized as one of the most brutally tortured POWs during the Vietnam War, Capt. Eugene McDaniel returned to Alexandria following his release and founded Adult Companion Care to help provide quality home care for seniors. He also founded the Alexandria-based American Defense Institute to provide citizen education and leadership training for young Americans.

* Lawrence Robinson – Lawrence Robinson joined the Alexandria Elks Lodge #48 in 1968, where he led an annual oratorical contest for students and was recognized as Virginia State Association Elk of the Year in 2002. A member of the Departmental Progressive Club for more than 50 years, Robinson has spent many of those years serving as an officer of the club, in-

cluding 12 as its president.

* Jason and Loren Yates – Since 1982, Jason and Loren Yates have been committed to improving the Braddock Metro/Del Ray community. Decades-long efforts have resulted in the transformation of abandoned buildings into Yates Corner, a lively retail destination, while Yates Automotive contributes to local charities through its monthly "Give Your 2 Cents" gas purchase program.

The 2019 Legends will be formally recognized and introduced to the public at the 12th annual Meet the Legends reception on March 14 at the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

The mission of Living legends of Alexandria, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is to identify, honor and chronicle the lives of individuals who have made significant contributions to improve the quality of life in Alexandria. For information, to volunteer, become a sponsor or nominate a future Legend, visit www.AlexandriaLegends.org or contact AlexandriaLegends@outlook.com.

Celebrating Trump

Members of the conservative book club sponsored by the Commonwealth Republican Women's Club (CRWC) celebrated the second anniversary of the Trump Administration with a birthday cake and sparkling wine from Virginia's Trump Winery. From left are Caz Wesley, CRWC President Eileen Brackens, Susie Miller, Linda Greenberg, Pauline Bacaj and Linda App. The club also discussed Steve Hilton's book "Positive Populism."



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Learning about Judicial Watch

Linda App, left, and Laurie Kirby, right, were two of a dozen members of Alexandria's Commonwealth Republican Women's Club who were in the audience at the Republican Women's Federal Forum luncheon in January to hear Tom Fitton, center, president of Judicial Watch, speak about recent FOIA successes.



NEWS

Art fills a wall in the Carpenter's Shelter's temporary location at Landmark Mall.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Art for Shelter's Sake

Carpenter's Shelter and Torpedo Factory Artists' Association (TFAA) installed on Jan. 15 the first of multiple artists' works in its temporary shelter. This installation is the culmination of a months-long collaborative effort involving both organizations and local artists.

Patrick Sargent, local printmaker and president of Printmakers, Inc., used reproductions of Printmakers, Inc. artwork to create a wheatpaste mural for the Carpenter's Shelter common area. For their next project, TFAA will print and display vinyl reproductions of original works on resident doors at the shelter. The vinyl prints fully cover the doors and the door frames serve as picture frames for the artwork.

Artist Lisa Schumaier will lead youth residents in a children's art project later this winter. Additional contributing artists include TFAA members Jennifer Allevato, Veronica Barker-Barzel, Rachel Collins, Betty Grisham, Guy Jones, Rachel Kerwin, Francine B. Livaditis, Charlene Nield, Marsha Staiger, and Jo Ann Tooley.

In early June 2018, Carpenter's Shelter temporarily relocated to the former Macy's at Landmark Mall to make way for their



Patrick Sargent

property redevelopment project in Old Town Alexandria. Carpenter's Shelter and TFAA are partnering to brighten the temporary shelter by creating site-specific art installations and displaying reproductions of original work.

In August 2018, TFAA hosted a fundraiser during the opening reception for the Dimensions exhibit at Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic. Carpenter's Shelter promoted their Adopt-A-Door Sponsorship program to generate additional support. The financial success of these endeavors covers costs associated with these projects.

To learn more about Carpenter's Shelter, visit www.CarpentersShelter.org.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pathway to Excellence

Inova Alexandria Hospital has earned the Pathway to Excellence designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). The achievement identifies the hospital as one of the best places for nurses to work. Nationwide, only 171 hospitals have earned Pathway status. ANCC's Pathway to Excellence Program recognizes a healthcare organization's commitment to create a positive nursing practice environment. To achieve designation, Inova Alexandria Hospital met six Practice Standards including shared decision-making, collaborative leadership, a safe environment, evidence-based quality initiatives, a commitment to work-life balance, ongoing education and professional development.

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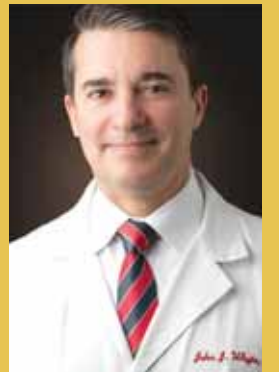
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Whyte, a board-certified internist and author of several books on health, is the chief medical officer at WebMD.



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OPINION

'My Hopes Have Already Been Dashed'

Current General Assembly session generates frustrations.

There were big changes in the Virginia House of Delegates after last year's elections, but Democrats fell one coin flip (actually name out of a hat) short of controlling the legislative body.

No doubt the electoral swing delivered one of the most important changes in recent history, the expansion of Medicaid to cover hundreds of thousands of Virginians who had previously lived without health coverage.

But as Del. Ken Plum (D-36) wrote in his column this week: "In light of the last election for House seats, I approached this legislative session with the hope that there might be more flexibility in the House leadership that might result in the consideration of bills that had been summarily defeated in past sessions. My hopes have already been dashed."

A groundswell of public support for Virginia being the 38th and final state needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment led to the Senate passing a resolution for ratification.

The subcommittee of the House Privileges and Election Committee Tuesday morning defeated a resolution to ratify the Equal Right Amendment on a vote of 4 to 2. Four members of the House are blocking a vote by the 100 members of the House.

"A major struggle seems to be looming be-

tween the two houses on the ERA which might need to be resolved by the voters at election time," Plum wrote.

Yes, that time is November, with primary voting likely in June.

The question of nonpartisan redistricting is too important to leave until after the next election.

Be Part of the Pet Gazette Packet

The Pet Gazette Packet, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, Feb. 22.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family

The Senate has passed a bill to establish such a process while House leadership is expressing opposition. Since the legislation is a constitutional amendment, it is important that a resolution be passed this year and next to go to a popular referendum in 2020 in time for redistricting after the 2020 census results are known.

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— MARY KIMM

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Protecting Women's Medical Decisions

BY CHARNIELE HERRING
STATE DELEGATE (D-46)

As the General Assembly session marches on, one issue that has many of my constituents — and women across Virginia, have been pressing is the right to reproductive choice and bodily autonomy. With the Federal government in a state of partial shutdown, Congress stuck in a deadlock, and the rebalancing of the U.S. Supreme Court, it is a valid concern that our rights could be eroded.

This week marks the 46th anniversary of the landmark decision of Roe v Wade in which the majority opinion decided that a woman's choice whether to have an abortion is protected by her right to privacy, enshrining a person's right to make their own medical decisions.

Across the United States, over 400 restrictions on abortion have been signed into law since 2011. Virginia is among that number with our mandatory ultrasound law that began as the notorious transvaginal ultrasound bill back in 2012. Laws like these have reduced access to abortion and driven abortion access inequality. Restrictions on abortion have shut clinic doors and left entire sections of our country without access to safe, legal abortion. This disproportionately impacts those with low incomes, people of color, and those living in ru-



ral communities. We must work to guarantee access to health care, including access to abortion, and not make it contingent upon where you live or how much money you make.

Changes to the fundamental idea of privacy in your own medical decisions is truly an issue of the day. Right now, there are 15 abortion cases one step away from the U.S. Supreme Court. As of today, if Roe v Wade were to be overturned there is nothing in the Virginia code that protects the right of a woman making her own healthcare choice regarding abortion. Given these threats, it is critical for Virginia to ensure that its residents maintain their fundamental reproductive healthcare rights, including the right to choose or refuse contraception or sterilization, carry a pregnancy to term, or have an abortion.

This is why I have filed HB 2369, The Reproductive Freedom Act. It's critical that Virginians have the freedom and dignity to make their own personal and private healthcare decisions, including the fundamental right to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, or have an abortion. I strongly believe that a person is fully capable of making thoughtful and deeply personal decisions about their family, future, and health without the interference from politicians who presume to know better. Medical decisions should be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor, not her representa-

tive or senator.

Access to comprehensive health care is a core component of social and economic equality, and studies show that impeding access can produce devastating economic consequences. Women who live in states with policies that support access to reproductive health care have higher earnings and are more integrated into the workforce. They also face less occupational segregation compared with women living in states that have more limited reproductive health care access. Most importantly, keeping abortion safe and legal drastically reduces the odds of medical risk or death.

Charniele Herring represents Alexandria City's 46th District in the Virginia General Assembly where she serves as House Minority Caucus Chair and on the Courts of Justice, Counties, Cities, & Towns, and Agriculture, Chesapeake & Natural Resources Committees. See www.charnieleherring.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Questions Remain

To the Editor:

On Jan. 20, I organized an Amazon Town Hall and called it a "Deeper Dive" because I believe whether you are for or against providing subsidies to Amazon to locate in Northern Virginia, the public needs more information, and that even though there is lots of information on-line, on both the alexandria.va.gov and Arlingtonva.us websites, people want to be

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 21

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Steven Mauren
Editor, 703-778-9415
smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

Jean Card
Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

Dan Brendel
Reporter, 757-472-3435
dbrendel@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

John Bordner, Mark Mogle
Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe
Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown
Contributing Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

Julie Ferrill
Display Advertising, 703-927-1364
jferrill@connectionnewspapers.com

Tara Lloyd
Display Advertising, 703-740-7128
tlloyd@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:
Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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Mike Manuel 703.615.6317
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Pia Taylor 301.661.9974
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OPINION

Taking on Political Inaction

... around gun violence prevention.

BY KERRY DONLEY,
ELIZABETH BENNETT-PARKER,
AND RICHARD MERRITT

In his inaugural speech on Jan. 13, 2018 Gov. Ralph Northam proclaimed, "If we are going to build a healthier Virginia for everyone, we must address the public health crisis of gun violence."

Just four weeks later, on Valentine's Day, one of the deadliest mass shootings occurred at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., where a former student killed 17 students and faculty. Less than three weeks following the Parkland shootings the Alexandria City Council and the Alexandria City School Board

COMMENTARY

adopted resolutions calling on the federal government and the Virginia General Assembly to adopt common-sense gun laws. Both resolutions received little or no attention, and were particularly shunned in Richmond where the General Assembly tabled every gun control bill brought forth by a Democrat.

Such inaction was especially callous in the face of such statistics as:

- ❖ Virginia is one of 17 states where more people are killed annually by gunfire than in car accidents.
- ❖ Virginia ranks fourth among the states for highest number of individuals killed in mass shootings.
- ❖ Suicide rates in Virginia have been slowly increasing over the last two decades, with handguns the most common cause of death in suicides in almost 60 percent of the cases.

❖ In Virginia women are killed with guns by intimate partners at a rate that is 21 percent higher than the national average.

The Alexandria City School Board's resolution had a particularly trenchant sentence that captured so well the state of affairs related to gun violence prevention within the Commonwealth: "The ongoing political inaction is failing our children." A less polite way of saying this would be that the ongoing political inaction at the state and federal levels of government leaves our kids and families needlessly and irresponsibly at risk of gun violence.

In to this void of political inaction – which has prevailed far too long – a small but dedicated group of civic-minded Alexandrians has stepped forward to propose some modest legislative changes within the city and in Richmond to lower the level of risk of exposure to gun violence for our children and families. We firmly believe that with occurrence after occurrence of federal inaction sound, common sense gun control must begin at the local and state levels.

In the immediate wake of the tragic shootings in Florida, school officials and elected leaders in Alexandria and around the Commonwealth undoubtedly revisited security protocols and safety measures to ensure that nothing had been overlooked and to examine what, if anything, they could learn from the Parkland experience. We support such efforts; Alexandria must not be caught in the lens of afterthought believing "it could never happen here."

Although the risk of death or injury by firearm of a child, teacher or employee while at school can never be zero, it is probably as close to zero as it has ever been. David Ropeik, an instructor at Harvard and author of "How Risky Is It, Really? Why Our Fears Don't Always Match the Facts," says, "the

chance of a child being shot and killed in a public school is extraordinarily low. Not zero — no risk is. But it's far lower than many people assume, especially in the glare of heart-wrenching news coverage after an event like Parkland. And it's far lower than almost any other mortality risk a kid faces, including traveling to and from school, catching a potentially deadly disease while in school or suffering a life-threatening injury playing ... sports."

So this begs the question: do we not owe it to our kids, our families and our fellow citizens to invest as much attention and resources to preventing injury and death by firearms in non-school environments as we invest in making our kids safer while in school? Our small alliance is committed to putting the spotlight on many of the areas where gun violence prevention and reduction is "undernourished".

Some national data highlights those concerns very well:

❖ Among injury-related deaths, firearms are the second leading cause behind car accidents for children ages 1 – 17.

❖ About one-third of American children live in homes with firearms, and of those households, 43 percent contain at least one unlocked firearm.

❖ Suicide accounts for nearly two-thirds of gun deaths in the U.S, killing over 21,000 Americans each year.

❖ Since 2007, child firearm suicides increased by more than 70 percent and are now responsible for more than 500 deaths of children in America each year.

❖ Domestic violence claims at least 2,000 lives and many more injuries each year, and 70 percent of the victims are women. More than half the time, the weapon used to carry out an "intimate partner" homicide is a gun.

As a result of discussions with key leaders on City Council, including newly elected members, the Alexandria community can expect to see debate early on in 2019 over a few legislative proposals e.g. keeping illegal guns off the streets, encouraging responsible storage practices of gun owners, particularly those with children in the home, that taken together should reduce the risk of gun violence against our children and others.

However, if progress at the local level beyond the aforementioned measures is to occur, the General Assembly must begin the hard work of restoring a significant degree of authority to regulate firearms to local governments, much of which had been usurped or at least heavily restrained by NRA-backed legislation within the General Assembly over the past decade or so. To that end, we are asking the Alexandria delegation to the General Assembly to rally behind two specific measures during the 2019 session:

❖ Grant localities the authority to prohibit firearms in public buildings, e.g., City Hall, recreation centers, libraries, department of health, etc., and,

❖ Remove key exemptions in current law to prohibiting possession of firearms of any type on school property.

Such actions would put local governments on a path toward equal partnership with our governor in his continued quest to "build a healthier Virginia for everyone," by beginning to address the public health crisis of gun violence.

The authors are former Mayor Kerry Donley, Vice-Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, and Richard Merritt, member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission

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ENTERTAINMENT

'Three Sistahs' Returns to MetroStage

Set in 1969, play has “timeless themes, memorable characters, and unforgettable music.”

BY STEVE HIBBARD

For the fourth time, MetroStage in Alexandria is reprising the musical, “Three Sistahs,” from Jan. 24-Feb. 24. The show premiered in 2002 when it received the Helen Hayes nomination for Outstanding New Musical and it was brought back again in 2007 and 2014.

“Three Sistahs” exposes the souls of a trio of strong, independent women as they gather together in the family home one last time. They reflect on the past, present and their hope for the future with powerful music and insights about their lives and relationships. It mixes a tapestry of gospel, rhythm and blues, bebop and funk, with a score by William Hubbard and lyrics by Thomas W. Jones II. It is a family drama inspired by Chekhov’s masterpiece and set during the Civil Rights and anti-war movements in 1969.

According to Carolyn Griffin, producing artistic director at MetroStage: “There are timeless themes, memorable characters, and unforgettable music. Set in Washington, D.C., in 1969, these sisters are gathered in the family home after a funeral for their brother. Everyone can relate to the circumstances, to the sibling relationships and ultimately of their hopes and dreams for the future. The music supports them every step of the way, and the audience will never forget the evening spent with the Bradshaw sisters.”

She continued: “We premiered ‘Three Sistahs’ in 2002, and since then it has been a company favorite. It is the only show we have ever brought back for a fourth time and when you hear the music and get to know these three independent strong women you will understand why. Played by three remarkable actors, one actor, Roz White, who is familiar to our audiences, has been in all four productions. Also of note — the original music was all composed by Alexandria’s own William Hubbard.”



PHOTO BY CHRIS BANKS

From left: Ayana Reed, Roz White, and Kara-Tameika Watkins star in MetroStage’s “Three Sistahs.”

She added: “So when we call it MetroStage’s iconic musical we mean it! Since MetroStage premiered it here, and Alexandria is the composer’s hometown, then maybe we should be calling it ‘Alexandria’s iconic musical.’”

Roz White plays the role of Olive Bradshaw, the eldest of the sisters. “Olive is a college professor who has a chip on her shoulder after being the caregiver of her father through his illness and until his death. When we meet Olive, she is hurt and bitter because her sisters have not come to visit or stepped in to assist her with their father’s care,” she said. “She masks her bitterness under a cool, aloof exterior. The truth is, Olive is a control freak and at times

overbearing. Although the sisters love each other deeply, loss, grief, and unrealized dreams have made them edgy and unwilling to be understanding of each other’s need for a true sisterly connection, free of judgement and criticism that family can often dish out rather harshly.”

She added: “The most challenging thing about playing Olive is that I have previously played Marsha in past productions here at MetroStage. So, I am striving to create a different approach to Olive, that is not mixed in with Marsha’s rhythms and physicality. It’s a great exercise as an actor to have the opportunity to play two roles in the same piece, and so I welcome the challenge. I’m having a great time bonding with my

stage family. This will be a rewarding and moving experience for us as well as the audiences who will come to share with us at the theatre!”

Kara Watkins plays the role of Marsha, the middle sister in the Bradshaw family. “She currently lives with her husband, Carlton, in Ohio. The last time she came home was one year ago for her father’s funeral. As with her sisters, she has her own ghosts that she must confront in the house. There is unfinished work and things left unsaid that may need to be brought to light in order for her to feel content enough to continue on,” she said.

She continued: “Finding the moments where the emotions come bubbling to the surface and when they break through has been the biggest challenge for me. In a way it mirrors something about everyone in real life. We all think there are moments when it’s best to keep things in for the good of relationships or maybe even for our own peace of mind.”

“When is it better to speak your mind or to divulge a secret? How best to keep the peace? These are some of the questions that Marsha asks herself throughout the play. It is also my challenge to show Marsha’s levels, not keep her at one note throughout the play ... keep her relatable,” she said.

The story of “Three Sistahs” is by Janet Pryce, with book and lyrics by Thomas W. Jones II, and music by William Hubbard. Jones will direct and William Knowles will music direct and play the keyboard while conducting Greg Holloway on drums and Yusef Chisholm on bass.

MetroStage will present “Three Sistahs” from Jan. 24-Feb. 24. Show times are Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Sundays at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$55 with student and active military and group discounts available. Four or more tickets are \$50. For ticket reservations, call 703-548-9044 or go online to www.metrostage.org.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

George Washington’s Mount Vernon is Open. George Washington’s Mount Vernon, a private, non-profit organization that does not accept government funding, will remain open through the partial government shutdown. Mount Vernon visitors can tour the first president’s Mansion, explore the gardens and grounds, and visit Washington’s final resting place. The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, Be Washington interactive theater, and the 4D Revolutionary War Theater offer visitors and immersive experience to learn about George Washington and

the Founding Era. Specialty tours are offered daily for an additional cost. Visit mountvernon.org.

Art Exhibit: Bringing Words to Life. Through Jan. 27 at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, 2660 Duke St., Alexandria. The exhibit is a part of Del Ray Artisans’ Gallery Without Walls program in partnership with VCA Alexandria. The show pairs a line from an artist’s favorite song, poem, book, or speech with the artist’s visual interpretation of that quote. Patrons may view the artwork at VCA Alexandria during regular business hours and at the discretion of hospital staff. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww.

Exhibit: “Hard Wired.” Through Jan. 31 at Touchstone Gallery, 901 New York Ave. NW Washington, D.C. Tory Cowles of Potomac is represented by Touchstone Gallery, a resident artist in Studio 7 at Alexandria’s Torpedo

Factory, and an abstract painting instructor at Glen Echo Park’s Yellow Barn. Her work evolves out of a spontaneous abstract expressionist process which depends on the rawness of the materials, the unexpectedness of the composition, and the mystery of how materials are transformed. Artist talk, Saturday, Jan. 19, 4-6 p.m. Call 202-347-3787 or visit www.touchstonegallery.com.

Art Exhibit: “Destroy the Picture.” Through Feb. 2, Wednesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m. at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Beverly Ryan has been a resident artist at the Torpedo Factory Art Center since 2001 and has taught at The Art League School in Alexandria, Va., for 15 years. She has curated several shows of abstract painting, narrative painting and encaustic painting. Between 1949 and 1962, numerous painters

including Alberto Burri, Salvatore Scarpitta and Yves Klein produced artwork that incorporated destruction in their processes. The book *Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void*, written and edited by Paul Schimmel describes the exhibition of these works in Los Angeles at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012-2013. In the spring of 2018, this work inspired Beverly Ryan to lead a group of her students to explore destruction and re-creation of artworks from previously unresolved paintings. Visit www.bethesda.org/bethesda/gallery-b.

Art Exhibit: “Lift Us Up, Don’t Push Us Out.” Through Feb. 3, gallery hours at The Art League Gallery in Studio 21, Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Performing Statistics: a Project by ART180 and Legal Aid Justice Center — “Lift Us Up, Don’t

Push Us Out” asks the question, how would criminal justice reform differ if it was led by incarcerated youth? Connecting incarcerated youth at the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center with artists, legal experts, and advocates to reimagine Virginia’s juvenile justice system, this exhibition provides the answer. Including virtual reality experiences, photography, murals, and interactive audio installations that use human touch to activate stories from youth in the system, their media campaigns and mobile exhibits have connected the dreams, stories, and policy demands of youth in the juvenile justice system with tens of thousands across Virginia and beyond. Visit www.theartleague.org.

Art Exhibit: It’s Not All Black and White. Through Feb. 3, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily (Thursdays until 9 p.m.) at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery,

ENTERTAINMENT

in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Studio 29, Alexandria. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show, It's Not All Black and White. It may be black and white (dreary) outside but Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery radiates with color. In addition to lovely neutral pieces, artists have warmed their space with colorful creations. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work may also be exhibited. Free admission. Visit www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com or call 703-548-0935.

Photography Exhibit: Fax Ayres. Through Feb. 24, Thursday-Sunday, noon-4 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Fax Ayres' photography employs a 'lightpainting' technique to imbue his subjects with an almost surreal quality. He sets up still life vignettes in the dark and then carefully paints individual components with light, assembling multiple images together to create the final photograph. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

Art Exhibit: Ritualisms. Through March 3, gallery hours at Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. New Target Gallery Exhibition contemplates the universality of rituals. The exhibition juxtaposes different artists' interpretations of rituals through their work, daily routines, habits, or personal quirks. It also brings in broader cultural formalities and religious ceremonies. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.


Beginner Square Dance Lessons. Through March 27, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St. Keep up with New Year's resolutions and enjoy both mental and physical exercise with

Square Dance Lessons. \$30 for each four-week session. Open to couples, singles and groups. Email boomerangs@wascacclubs.com or call 571-210-5480.

Still Life Alive. Through April 2, 2019, 9-5 p.m. at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Patricia Uchello One Woman Art Show, featuring 100 original oil paintings of flowers, fruit, landscapes and seascapes. Uchello's work has been collected by IBM, the International Monetary Fund and more. Email pmuchello@aol.com or visit www.patriciauchello.com.

Revolutionary War Medals. Through March 2020 at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway, Mt. Vernon. Now on view in Mount Vernon's Donald W. Reynolds Education Center is an exhibition featuring 30 rare medals from the American Revolution and the early republic. War and Peace in Miniature: Medals from the American Numismatic Society is an unparalleled collection that highlights the remarkable heroes and events from the Revolutionary War and the new nation's diplomatic endeavors. Visit mountvernon.org/warandpeace.

Tours of the Freedom House Museum. Saturdays and Sundays, 1-5 p.m. at Freedom House Museum, 1315 Duke St. The Freedom House Museum was once the headquarters and holding pen for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, Franklin and Armfield. The building is currently owned by the Northern Virginia Urban League and together with the Office of Historic Alexandria. Visit the museum in this historic reminder of slavery. Admission is \$5 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the door.



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ENTERTAINMENT

Off the Menu: What's New?

BY HOPE NELSON

A new year means new restaurants in Alexandria. From French fare to Mexican cuisine to a bar full of interesting beers, the city's flavors are vibrant amid the cold temperatures outside.

Bistro Sancerre Opens Near Carlyle

Old Town's new French bistro and steakhouse opened its doors over the weekend, tucked away in the King Street Station complex facing Duke Street. Sporting both an indoor main dining room and a patio for more seasonally appropriate socializing, the restaurant has plenty of space for both casual and business dining. Its dinner menu touts the likes of New York strip steak, braised lamb shank, pan-roasted rack of venison — and risotto for the non-carnivores at the table. 1725 Duke St.

Hops n Shine Ready for Business

Del Ray's newest addition switched over from "Coming Soon" to "Here Now" earlier this month, and it's jumping into the city's dining scene with both feet. With an extensive beer list and fun food offerings, Hops n Shine is aiming to become the neighborhood's go-to spot for a brew or two and a bite (and then some) to eat. The local region is well-represented on the restaurant's beer list — Port City, 3 Stars and Crooked Run are all in attendance — but the eatery also ventures past the Mid-Atlantic to Bell's, Sierra Nevada and more. Pair your brew of choice up with a loaded grilled cheese sandwich, chili cheese dog or loaded tater tots and let the fun begin. 3410 Mount Vernon Ave.

CALENDAR

Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Museums.

"Alexandrians Fight the Great War." Various times at The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington St. This new exhibition traces the experiences of local people during the first World War. The homes, hospitals, factories and shipyards of wartime Alexandria come back to life through the use of rare images, archival and modern-day video clips, quotes from participants, original objects including weapons, period music, and scale models. Call 703-746-4994 or visit www.alexandriahistory.org.

"Before the Spirits are Swept Away." Various times at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. This exhibition, featuring 20 of Sherry Sanabria's

African American historic site paintings, is made possible by the Sanabria family, who generously donated 23 of her paintings to the Alexandria Black History Museum. These paintings are part of Sanabria's "Sites of Conscience" series, which has as its focus African American heritage, prisons, concentration camps, and mental hospitals. Free, but donations are appreciated. Call 703-746-4356.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

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

Life Drawing. Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions

for anyone to develop life-drawing skills further. Drop-in for the session and bring supplies to draw or paint live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Del Ray Artisans is located at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org for a schedule.

The Harmony Heritage Singers

(Mount Vernon Chapter of Barbershop Harmony Society), a daytime, a cappella, Chorus, rehearses on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, monthly, at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Newcomers welcome for fun or to book for a performance. visit www.HHSingers.org, or call Bruce at 703-352-5271.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LTA Presents 'The Fantasticks'

Musical from 1960 is a tale of a boy, a girl, and meddling fathers.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

The Little Theatre of Alexandria (LTA) is presenting "The Fantasticks" from now through Feb. 2. This musical by Tom Jones is a tale of a boy, a girl, and their meddling fathers who nudge them toward marriage by pretending to keep them apart. With a nod toward Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," this musical has been enchanting audiences with its universal themes and songs, including "Soon It's Gonna Rain" and "Try to Remember." The show is produced by Sharon Field and Rance Willis.

According to Director Eleanore Tapscott: "Apart from the gorgeous score and great songs, what really stands out to me about this play is its theatricality. We have echoes of various theatre styles — commedia, Shakespearean, vaudeville. Young lovers divided by feuding families sounds like a certain play set in fair Verona. The vegetation fixation of the parents hints at the Shakespeare's green world comedies. The wall makes us think of the rude mechanicals' production of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' The play's primary source material is loosely based on 'Les Romanesques' ('The Romancers') by Edmond Rostand (yes, he who wrote 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' another popular play about a complicated romance). My goal with this production is to honor those theatrical styles."

Stephen P. Yednock is playing the role of Bellomy, who is Luisa's father. "He lives next door to Hucklebee, Matt's mother and his best friend. Bellomy and Hucklebee know that Matt and Luisa would be perfect for each other but kids being the way they are will resist the whims of their parents. So, in a clever ploy to bring them together, they build a wall between the houses and forbid their kids to see each other. This, of course, makes the two young adults defy their parents and see each other leading to a blossoming romance," he said.

He said Director Tapscott has incorporated the idea of using many old theatre conventions, especially commedia del arte within the show. "In her concept, each of the actors wears a mask at the beginning and end of the show to bring out the idea that each of us is a stylized actor from a traveling acting company who is then playing the part of 'Bellomy,' 'El Gallo,' 'Hucklebee,' etc. So, in a way I'm playing two parts in this show, 'Bellomy' and the commedia dell'arte actor who is playing Bellomy."

Rachel J. Hogan is playing the role of Luisa. "My character is an imaginative and fierce young lady who lives everyday as if she is the princess in her own fairytale. Through the course of the show, however, she discovers that life is not all flowers and rainbows, as she once hoped. Regardless, Luisa loves without apology and finds strength in her own convictions," she said.

She added: "Because Luisa is so entrenched in whimsical ideology, it has been a challenge for me to speak with truth, and not just

drama, when portraying her as a character. It was my initial decision to play a majority of her lines as big as possible, but I have since focused and decided that grounded energy is the best way to go for this particular role."

Fred Lash, who's been in the show four times, beginning in 1979, is playing the role of Henry. "I love this role, as it affords me the opportunity to mix Shakespeare, Laurel and Hardy, and Robin Williams all into one character," he said. "Obviously, this show, and its memorable musical score, has always been a favorite of mine since it opened in New York in 1960. As Henry, an aging actor who has performed so many years that he has worn down a bit, I find a lot of myself and my experiences. However, despite his age and years of acting, he is still able to 'dress the stage' quite well and project to the back row of the theatre."

He added: "I want the audience to be uplifted and to recall those times in their various pasts when they experienced love for the first time; but to also realize that love and happiness do not come without pain, suffering, and a certain amount of sorrow. It is the ups and downs of life; the peaks and valleys of living; and the ebb and flow of happiness that the audience should see, hear, and embrace."

The Little Theatre of Alexandria is presenting "The Fantasticks" from now through Feb. 2. Show times are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$29 to \$34. The venue is located at 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Visit www.thelittletheatre.com.




PHOTO BY MICHAEL DEBLOIS
Luis "Matty" Montes (left) as Matt and Janice Zucker as Hucklebee.



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ENTERTAINMENT

THROUGH JAN. 27

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week. For 10 days and two weekends, 65 restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one or a \$35 dinner for two. More than 35 restaurants will also offer lunch menus at \$15 or \$22 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Brunch lovers can enjoy brunch menus for \$15 or \$22 per person at 14 restaurants. Visit www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 24

Play “House Detective.” 1-2 p.m. At Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria. Adults are invited to come to Historic Huntley to discover some of the clues that help historians unravel the mystery surrounding a property. What can architectural details and styles tell historians? Examine photographs, artifacts and the buildings of Historic Huntley to resolve some of its unexplained past. \$5 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley.

JAN. 24-FEB. 24

“Three Sistahs.” At MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. “Three Sistahs” is an intimate musical which exposes the souls of three strong independent women as they gather together in the family home one last time. They reflect on the past, present and their hope for the future with powerful music and insights about their lives and relationships. Performances will be Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3

p.m., and 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Jan 24- Feb 24, 2019. Tickets are \$55 with student and active military and group discounts available. Four or more tickets are \$50 each. Call the theatre at 703-548-9044 or go online to www.metrostage.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 25

Container Gardens for the Yardless. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Just because you don’t have a yard doesn’t mean you can’t have a garden. Learn how to brighten your home with plants and flowers. Whether in flower pots, hanging baskets or window boxes, container gardens are beautiful, easy and rewarding. At this Garden Talk with Extension Master Gardeners, learn how to create a dazzling display with eye-catching perennials and annuals. Get information and inspiration to design your own container gardens. Cost is \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring James K. Polk and William Ramsay Schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

SUNDAY/JAN. 27

Wild Women of Washington. 1-3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603



Art Exhibit: Bringing Words to Life

The exhibit is a part of Del Ray Artisans’ Gallery Without Walls (GWW) program in partnership with VCA Alexandria. The show pairs a line from an artist’s favorite song, poem, book, or speech with the artist’s visual interpretation of that quote. This exhibit will display the artwork and quoted lines together at the VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital. Patrons may view the artwork through Jan. 27 at VCA Alexandria during regular business hours and at the discretion of hospital staff at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, 2660 Duke St., Alexandria. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww.

“I Hope You Dance” by Monica Hokeilen.

Green Spring Road, Alexandria. From newspaperwomen and suffragettes to rebellious first ladies and socialites, the nation’s capital has attracted many unladylike ladies over the years. Hear their stories as author Candan Schwantes discusses her book, “Wild Women of Washington, D.C.: A History of Disorderly Conduct from the Ladies of the District.” Reservations are required. \$42 for the program and tea; \$18 for the program only. To make reservations

for tea, call 703-941-7987, or to learn more about the historic site, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

MONDAY/JAN. 28

Bullying and Lockdowns: Perspectives on School Security. 7:15 p.m. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Part of the Agenda:Alexandria program,

which falls on the fourth Monday of the month, begin at 7:15 p.m. Programs are \$5 each or free with your \$35 membership, payable online at www.AgendaAlexandria.org/ sign-up page or at the door by check or credit. All are invited to a pre-program dinner if desired. Dinner is 6:45-7:15 p.m., prices starting at \$32 with reservations by the Friday prior to the program. Visit www.Agenda:Alexandria.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring Ferdinand T. Day and Samuel W. Tucker schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

“New Beginnings” Opening Reception. 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. See artwork created by reuse. These creations incorporate found objects, recycled materials or older works of art. The exhibit runs from Feb. 1-24. Exhibit details, plus information on four special workshops at DelRayArtisans.org/event/new-beginnings.

FEB. 1-MARCH 30

Art Exhibition: High School Students. At The Gallery at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. The Alexandria All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns for its fourth year. This year’s experience features more than 90 Alexandria high school students representing six high schools including public, private, and independent. Returning for 2019’s collaborative event are students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School, Commonwealth Academy, and The Howard Gardner School. Visit ourconvergence.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 2

15th Annual Alexandria Warehouse Sale. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. At The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Deemed the “Super Bowl of Shopping

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ENTERTAINMENT

Events” (always occurring the Saturday of Super Bowl weekend), the winter deals event is free to enter and will include a variety of new boutiques and retailers not only located in Alexandria, but throughout the Metro region. The event was the brainchild of Elizabeth Todd (co-founder of the Old Town Boutique District and owner of The Shoe Hive). Visit www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com or www.AlexandriaWarehouseSale.com.

Story Time for Little Historians. 11 a.m. At The Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St., Alexandria. This month’s topic: Presenting Henry’s Freedom Box – A True Story from the Underground Railroad, which was written by Ellen Levine and illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Bring your little learners to the Alexandria Black History Museum for cultural stories and creative craft activities that introduce world history and folklore. Explore the museum exhibits afterward to learn about local black history. All ages are welcome, but most suitable for children 3-6 years old. \$3 per person. Visit www.alexandriava.gov.

Happy Birthday, John Carlyle: A 1770s Celebration. 12-4 p.m. at Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Help wish a happy birthday to Alexandria town founder, Col. John Carlyle. Festivities will include 18th-century dancing, live music, and a birthday treat. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. Visit www.novaparks.com.

Locals’ Alley Saturdays. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 S. Union St. at King Street. Meet the makers of local goods, featuring: Ester’s Granola tasting. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

Seed Exchange. 12:30-4 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. These seed swaps are in-person and face-to-face. Bring extra seeds and swap them with other gardeners. Everyone will leave with a bag full of seeds, new garden friends, and expert planting advice. \$20 per person. Registration is now open at WGSeedExchange-GSG.brownpapertickets.com.

Country-Western Dance. At Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St, Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance. Lessons, 6-7 p.m. Open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 3

Walking With Washington Tour. 2-4 p.m. at Ramsay House, Alexandria Visitor’s Center, 221 King St., Alexandria. Explore important sites associated with George Washington in his hometown of Alexandria. This guided walking tour of historic Old Towne covers significant people and events in Washington’s life and in American history, with stops at Ramsay House, Market Square, Carlyle House, Wise’s Tavern, Duvall Tavern/Charles Lee House, Gadsby’s Tavern, Washington’s townhouse, The Lord Fairfax House, the “Light-Horse” Harry Lee house and Christ Church. Sponsored by the City of Alexandria’s George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee. Free. Visit washingtonbirthday.com.

Tell Me Your Name. 3:30 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. A conversation about identifying enslaved individuals and their communities and putting that into a historical and genealogical context.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO BY JEREMY BRANDT VOREL

The dining room at the Majestic.

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week

For 10 days and two weekends (Jan. 18-27), 65 restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one or a \$35 dinner for two. More than 35 restaurants will also offer lunch menus at \$15 or \$22 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Brunch lovers can enjoy brunch menus for \$15 or \$22 per person at 14 restaurants. Learn more about restaurant week at AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

In 2017 Carlyle House Historic Park undertook a new research project to improve its knowledge and interpretation of the site’s enslaved population. Join Maddy McCoy, founder of Slavery Inventory Database, LLC, for an illuminating tour on the new research of the enslaved community at Carlyle House. Cost is \$10. Tickets available at apm.activecommunities.com/novaparks/Activity_Search/2516.

MONDAY/FEB. 4

School Holiday Camp. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. The country may have been in a depression, but kids were still finding ways to have fun in the 1930s. Today’s kids will discover new ways to have old-fashioned fun in the “Play Like It’s 1935” camp at Huntley Meadows Park. Children age 6-12 are invited to the park to play games like the Alcorn children did when they moved to Huntley during the Great Depression. Kids will make a simple toy to take home, too. It’s a full day of fun while school’s out. \$65. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Talk on Microgreens. 7-8:30 p.m. at Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St., Alexandria. Discussion on Microgreens: What Are They, Why Are They So Fabulous, and How to Grow Them. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia. Free. Advance registration requested at mgmv.org. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

FEB. 6-MARCH 10

“Opposites Attract.” At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Show featuring everything Quiet and Loud,



Mia’s Italian Kitchen

Large and Small, Smooth and Rough, Bright and Dull, Stiff and Flowing, Smiles and Frowns – the list goes on and the artists had a great time incorporating this theme into their work. Visit www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 7

Evening of French Love Songs. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. The Alexandria-Caen Sister Cities Committee invites you to Chansons d’Amour: An evening of French love songs. In anticipation of Valentine’s Day, spend an evening learning about French Love Songs and listening to curated selections of “Chansons d’Amour” with event MC, Joseph Gueron. Gueron is the Producer and Host of GloBeat, the world music radio show on WERA 96.7 FM. The event includes music, dancing, and a wine and dessert reception. Cost is \$10. Tickets available onsite or online at shop.alexandriava.gov. Email AlexandriaCaenSisterCities@gmail.com with questions.

FRIDAY/FEB. 8

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring George Mason and Matthew Maury schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

The Alligator Pears. 6-8 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington St., Alexandria. The Alligator Pears features Piedmont Blues music. Beer and wine for sale; light refreshments available as well. Visit www.alexandriava.gov.

Gunston Hall Game Night. 6-9 p.m.



Vermilion

at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Gunston Hall is opening its doors after-hours to welcome game enthusiasts to immerse themselves in a variety of 18th-century card, board, and dice games. \$35 registration includes beverages and heavy hors d’oeuvres, including some items made from 18th-century recipes. Visit www.gunstonhall.org.

Reception and Gallery Talk: Ritualisms. 7-10 p.m. at Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. New Target Gallery Exhibition contemplates the universality of rituals. The exhibition juxtaposes different artists’ interpretations of rituals through their work, daily routines, habits, or personal quirks. It also brings in broader cultural formalities and religious ceremonies. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 9

ASO Presents: Mozart’s Prague Symphony. 8-10 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 East Campus Drive. New and old traditions collide in February with an exploration of the Classical-era symphony. The program centers on Mozart’s Symphony No. 38 “Prague,” juxtaposed with Prokofiev’s Symphony No.1 “Classical.” The program will also feature soloists from the ASO for Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 and Stravinsky’s Dumbarton Oaks. Adult, \$20-\$80; youth, \$5; student, \$10. Call 703-548-0885 or visit www.alexsym.org.

Outfitting Billy Yank Program. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. Learn about the clothing and equipment used by Union soldiers during the Civil War in “Kepi to Cartridge Box: Outfitting Billy Yank,” at Fort Ward Museum. Free. Call 703-746-4848, or visit www.fortward.org.

Locals’ Alley Saturdays. 12:30-2:30

p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 S. Union St. at King Street. Meet the makers of local goods, featuring: Truly-Life soaps and bath products. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

Workshop on Valentine Topiary. 2-3:30 p.m. at Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Branch out and give the gift of topiary this Valentine’s Day. Floral Design Workshop: Valentine Topiary” with floral designer Chuck Mason who will lead you through this fun, floral project that you can keep for yourself or give away. \$39 for the program, plus \$30 for supplies. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

SUNDAY/FEB. 10

Walking With Washington Tour. 2-4 p.m. at Ramsay House, Alexandria Visitor’s Center, 221 King St., Alexandria. Explore important sites associated with George Washington in his hometown of Alexandria. This guided walking tour of historic Old Towne covers significant people and events in Washington’s life and in American history, with stops at Ramsay House, Market Square, Carlyle House, Wise’s Tavern, Duvall Tavern/Charles Lee House, Gadsby’s Tavern, Washington’s townhouse, The Lord Fairfax House, the “Light-Horse” Harry Lee house and Christ Church. Sponsored by the City of Alexandria’s George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee. Free. Visit washingtonbirthday.com.

Tell Me Your Name. 3:30 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. A conversation about identifying enslaved individuals and their communities and putting that into a historical and genealogical context. In 2017 Carlyle House Historic Park undertook a new research project to improve its knowledge and interpretation of the site’s enslaved population. Join Maddy McCoy, founder of Slavery Inventory Database, LLC, for an illuminating tour on the new research of the enslaved community at Carlyle House. \$10. Tickets available at apm.activecommunities.com/novaparks/Activity_Search/2517.

TUESDAY/FEB. 15

Second Glance. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. An everyday object can be irresistible. Beyond the intended purpose to get the job done, objects can represent a memory or merge in unlikely, whimsical combinations. “Second Glance” features excerpts from Jane Franklin’s “EyeSoar” and new work in cooperation with Fine Art Photographer Fax Ayres. Cost is \$15. Visit www.nvfaa.org/events/second-glance.

SATURDAY/FEB. 16

Front Parlor Reopens. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. At George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway, Mt. Vernon. Mount Vernon’s front parlor reopens after an extensive restoration. New forensic analysis of the architecture and significant documentary discoveries revealed more about the appearance and evolution of the room than was previously known. As one of the most elaborately finished rooms in the house, the front parlor served as the primary entertaining space in the Mansion for most of the Washingtons’ lives. Visitors during Washington’s birthday celebrations (Feb. 18 & 22) can tour the Mansion for free and view reproductions of the original furniture with vibrant Saxon blue upholstery. Visit mountvernon.org/frontparlor.

Board To Vote on Strategy for High School Expansion

FROM PAGE 5

ing environments can increase student performance and decrease dropouts.

He also thinks the strategy would enable the division more easily to adapt its portfolio of facilities to future demographic changes.

But the situation poses something of a chicken-and-egg conundrum. If Hutchings is reluctant to conduct detailed planning without knowing the big-picture preferred model, the School Board is reluctant to bless a particular model without knowing more about consequent details.

Several School Board members, prior and current, have repeatedly expressed confusion about what precisely the staff is asking them to vote on, especially given that costs remain undefined.

“What is the financial implication [of] what it is I’m voting on? What’s the cost-benefit analysis of weighing this option versus options ...?” asked re-elected incumbent School Board Member Veronica Nolan. “I don’t personally feel like I have enough data to make an informed decision.”

According to a Dec. 20 staff presentation

to the prior School Board: “Costs at this early planning phase do not indicate a significant cost savings or exposure of any specific high school model. Capital costs cannot be compared with accuracy between models at this time. ... Costs, timing, feasibility and other project specific factors will be determined in spring of 2019.” Although a Jan. 10 presentation to the new School Board expressed greater confidence, saying: “some cost savings are expected from a connected high school network.” Savings could result from “reduced duplication in the operating budget for two comprehensive high schools; more ability to renovate or retrofit space(s) rather than expensive new constructions; smaller sites [being] more available than large sites”

Some School Board members expressed doubt that gleanings from last fall’s community engagement process well support the administration’s proposal.

School Board Member Heather Thornton observed that an online community survey yielded only 421 responses.

Moreover, “a connected high school network was not explicitly advocated for greatly” during the engagement process, she

said, quoting from a staff presentation slide. “Community buy-in is going to be essential in this process, and if we’re not getting explicit advocates right of the bat, that concerns me.”

“Most people I’ve talked to haven’t been following very closely and don’t know very much about the connected high school concept. ... Those who have been following it have a lot of questions,” said School Board Member Michelle Rief.

“We literally pushed through as much engagement as we thought we could bear,”

given a short timeline to get the project moving, said Anthony. But “a lot of people did not tune in between July and maybe last month. They just didn’t show up. They just didn’t understand. A lot of them are going to understand when we have a feasibility study ... and say, we’re thinking about putting [one or more] high school campuses ... in your neighborhood, or in this particular place. I guarantee you that is when we’re going to get a whole lot of attention.”

For more, visit www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/2260.

Council Re-appoints Housing Commissioner

BY DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

City Council unanimously re-appointed incumbent Peter Kleeblatt to the public housing authority’s board of commissioners, out of a pool of four applicants, on Tuesday, Jan. 8.

The Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority administers federal housing programs, including public housing and “Section 8” vouchers, locally. It

serves some 6,600 Alexandria residents, according to a 2018 report. It owns and operates over 20 properties citywide. The board consists of nine citizen members, include one representative each from the public housing resident association and the city’s Landlord-Tenant Relations Board. The commissioners serve staggered four-years terms. Kleeblatt, an 8-year Alexandria resident, now enters his second term. He’s a principal with The Pinkard Group, a real estate firm in Washington, D.C., which has also executed projects in Alexandria.

Other applicants included a researcher at the Urban Institute’s Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center, with a doctorate; an FBI realty specialist, with dual master’s degrees; and a business owner and consultant relating to forest services and environmental conservation, with a doctorate.

For more information, visit www.arha.us and www.alexandriava.gov/Boards.

Warnings Follow Overdoses

The City of Alexandria has responded to four suspected opioid overdoses since the weekend, including two fatalities. City officials are urging residents to be aware of the medical safety of the drugs, including heroin, that could be extremely concentrated or mixed with something unusual that is resulting in life-threatening situations.

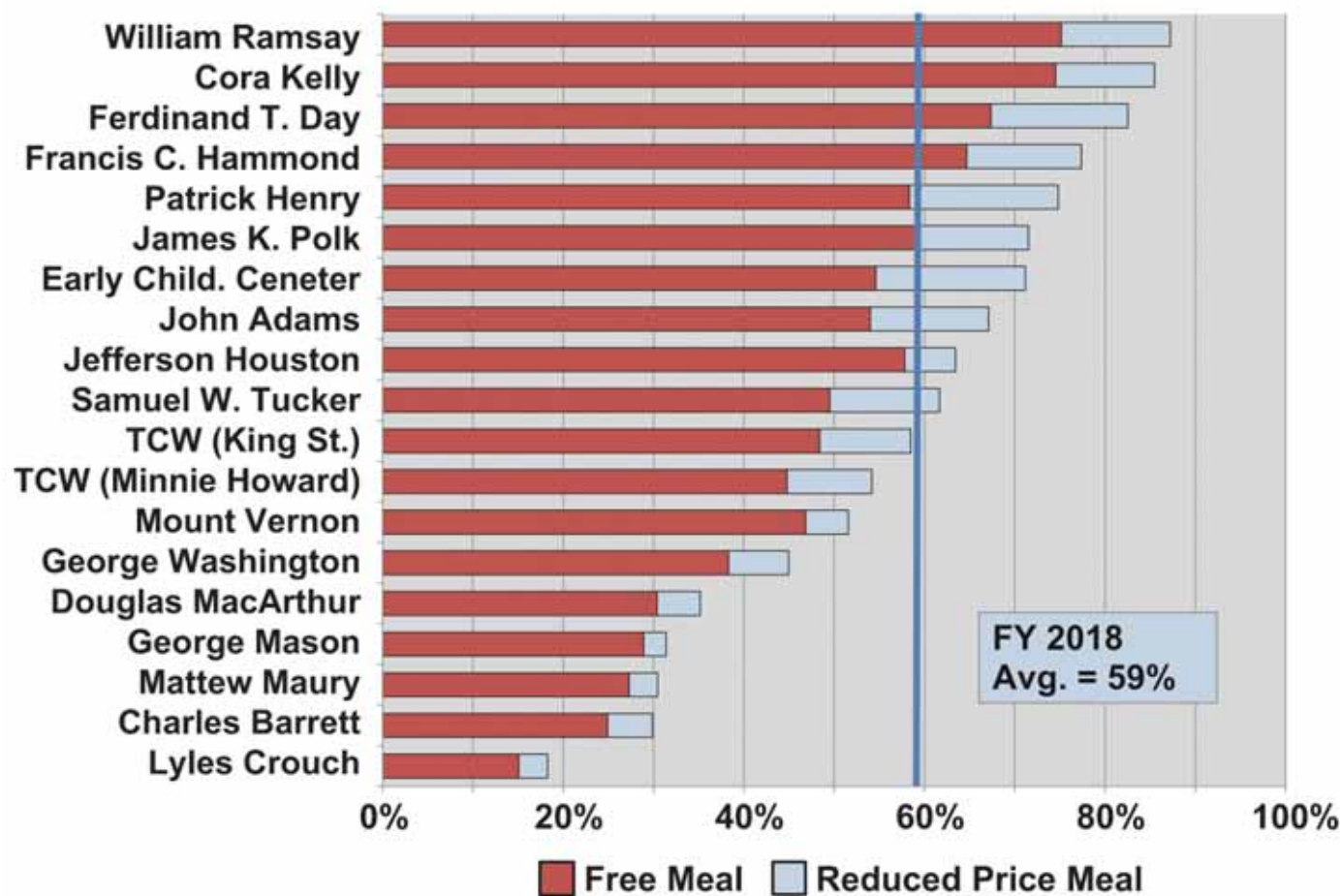
Naloxone (Narcan) can save the life of someone who is overdosing, if given in time. It is available without a prescription at all pharmacies. To obtain it for free, visit the Alexandria Health Department’s main office, 4480 King St., from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; and from 12:45 to 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays. Appointments are not necessary, but may be made by calling 703-746-4888. Anyone who assists a person in need is protected by the Good Samaritan Law from liability while rendering aid.

For help with addiction, call 703-746-3636 (Virginia Relay 711), 24 hours a day. If you have information regarding past overdoses, call the Alexandria Police Department at 703-746-6277. For life-threatening situations, call 911 immediately.

For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/Opioids.

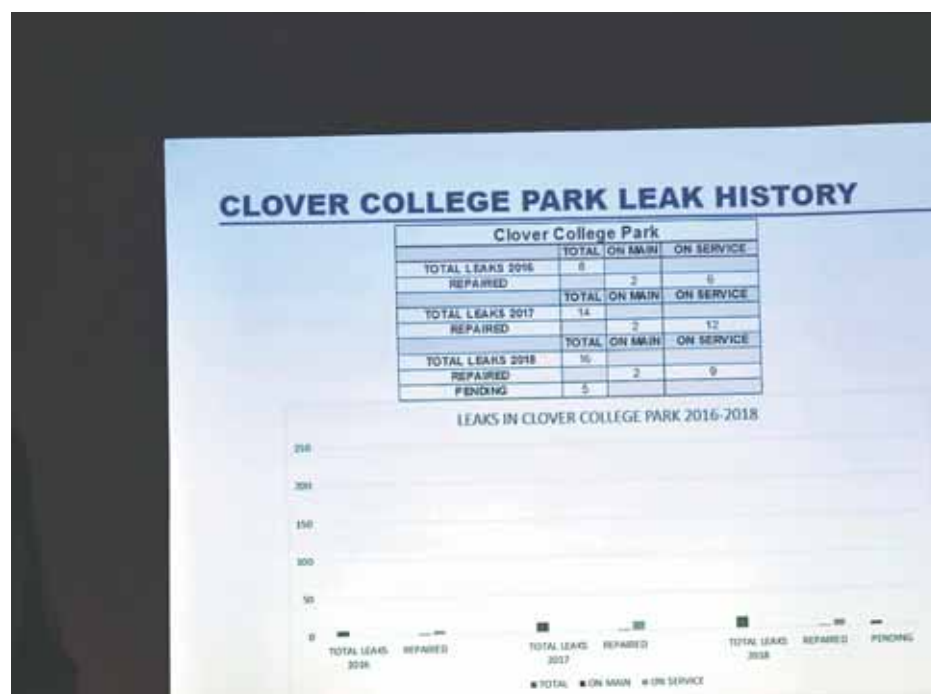
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ACPS Free & Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility (Oct. 31, 2018)



Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility

Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than \$0.40 per meal. ACPS absorbs the entire meal cost for all eligible students. For the period July 2017 through June 2018, the annual federal poverty level for a household of 4 is \$25,100; 130 percent of that level is \$32,630 and 185 percent of that level is \$46,435.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE GAZETTE

Katie Harkless, director, Below Ground Field Operations, Washington Gas. Clover-College Park Gas Leak Comparison 2016-2018.

Washington Gas Meets with Clover-College Park Residents

FROM PAGE 1

vice territory of Maryland, D.C., and Virginia “so we will have leaks; it’s part of the system. But safety is our number one priority, and we do a number of things to inspect and maintain.” She said between inspections there may be a leak. “You are our eyes, ears and noses. Call Washington Gas 24/7 and we will be out almost immediately.”

She said, “We do periodic surveys of the whole system every three years (more than required by the Federal regulations), special studies as needed. We did one here.” She said they know the vintages and ages and schedules for replacement for the system. “So you will see Washington Gas trucks around Alexandria quite a lot doing modernization and replacement. It doesn’t mean there is an emergency leak.”

Katie Harkless, director, Below Ground Field Operations, pointed out they respond to leaks both proactively by doing leak surveys and reactively where they rely on the general public to call in odor complaints. First they send out a technician who does a preliminary investigation, then a ground crew comes in. “Then we go bar holing into the street to make an assessment on repair or replacement.”

Harkless said, “We did a special assessment for you on Jan. 2-3 and found 11 leaks, eight hazardous which were repaired within a day and a half and three non-hazardous that will be rechecked in 6 months. A Clover-College Park leak history chart revealed eight leaks discovered in 2016, 14 in 2017 and 16 in 2018. This compares to 166 in the City of Alexandria in 2016, 224 in 2017 and 184 in 2018.

Jill Edwards Hoffman, a Clover-College Park resident, said, “Our house on Cambridge Street is probably the one that sets all of this off.” She expressed concern about the concentration of leaks and how this compares to other areas. Hoffman said she wondered if there is something bigger going on. She said the gas company told her they could only come to one address at a



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Washington Gas trucks a familiar site in Clover-College Park neighborhood.

time and not look at the larger issue. Steve Price, assistant VP for Safety, Quality and System Protection at Washington Gas, responded, “We never want to leave something unsafe. They never should have told you they can only do one address at a time.” He took out his notebook and made notes for follow up.

Harkless said, “When we started getting all of these calls, we asked them to run it through the complex algorithm in our model. This neighborhood came in with a low-medium risk with no leaks found on your main line.”

Roy Byrd who lives at 3008 Dartmouth said he was another lottery number. “I had the last one in December.” Byrd said the crew came out and said they could repair or replace the line. I don’t know anything about it; I was ill equipped to make a decision.”

He says when the crew was finished “they said to call this number to get the gas turned back on. So I did at 5 in the evening and

they said, ‘yes, we’ll send someone tonight.’ At 8 p.m. I called again and no one picked up so I called the emergency number and she told me it’s not the right number.

“I called back at 11 p.m. The lady was a little short and said she had more important calls going on. She couldn’t talk to me because my name wasn’t on there. She had to talk to my wife. It turned out to be 3 a.m. when they finally arrived. I stayed up. When the truck arrived, it went to the wrong house.” He indicated the work was efficient but the process was flawed.

During Byrd’s description, Price shook his head several times. “They have to be courteous. We usually get high compliments on our service.” Price asked for Byrd’s address so he could look into the “one off” situation and track down what happened. Price explained that the field folks can get hit with emergencies that delay their planned arrival but the customer may never know what happened.

Residents expressed some frustration about not having information on why the repair trucks were present and what they were doing. Harkless said she hopes the residents received door hangers telling them what was performed. “This is new within the year to leave a notice at your door as well as the surrounding area.” She says in one instance they discovered a contractor had performed the work who didn’t have the door hangers in his vehicle. “We’ll re-

train if needed.”

John Wexler raised a question about the 2900 block of Dartmouth where three out of five houses have had significant repairs in November-December and whether that would be considered a systemic issue. Harkless replied it was a pretty small area to be defined as systemic and that the pipes had probably all been installed the same year and have met the end of life cycle at the same time.

Wexler asked whether the other two houses on the block shouldn’t be inspected and Harkless said they would be part of the next six-month survey. Wexler suggested all inspections should be done in January when people are using their gas. Harkless replied, “we can’t be everywhere at once.”

Price indicated he had a list of follow up for residents and that these meetings were very helpful feedback for Washington Gas. “I’m leaving with a lot of action items tonight.”

Further gas leaks have been reported since the meeting on Jan. 10. Two of the neighbors involved reported that the Washington Gas crews were extremely professional and customer related. “They explained what they were doing, were very helpful and answered all questions ... It appears that the efforts of the CCPCA board have really caused Washington Gas to take notice and improve their responsiveness and customer service.”

Making a Difference

FROM PAGE 3

me and I got incarcerated for 17 months on March 31, 2016. I was able to get on the other side. It fixed me. I never want to do heroin again.”

Now Christiansen works at Guest House in Del Ray where she graduated from their six-month residential program and is in the nine-month after-care program as well as Independent

Living in the City of Alexandria. She works on development for Guest House, the speaker’s bureau and fundraising. Guest House is a six-month residential program for non-violent drug offenders.

“I am better than I have ever been.” She is looking forward to celebrating her granddaughter’s first birthday in Baton Rouge, “an invitation I wouldn’t have if I’d been using.”

Bringing Animal Cruelty Cases to Justice

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

Just before 6 a.m. on a Wednesday last spring, the Animal Services department of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) received a call from the Alexandria Police Department: A five-month-old Labrador puppy had been taken to VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital with a swollen face and head: It appeared to be animal abuse, a violation of Virginia law.

When AWLA Animal Services Chief Tammy Doran arrived at the animal hospital, she learned that the puppy, known as Allie, had been brought in by its owner, who had returned from work to find the injured dog.

Despite severe swelling, an exam and X-rays at the animal hospital showed no broken bones. The doctors decided to hold the dog overnight for treatment.

Interviewing the owner's boyfriend, police learned that he had beaten and tossed the puppy around for several hours. He attributed his actions to stress at work. A landmark study published in "Society & Animals" in 1997 showed that 71 percent of women abused by their partners reported that the same partner had threatened or actually harmed their pet. Fortunately, in this case, the owner's girlfriend confirmed that he had not been violent with her.

Although the man had admitted beating the puppy, a full investigation by the Alexandria Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit, the Commonwealth's Attorney's office and the AWLA was required in order

to bring charges against him. AWLA's Chief Doran helped gather evidence and provide expertise in the case, which ultimately went to a grand jury in Alexandria.

Crimes against animals are now treated more seriously in this jurisdiction than they were in past decades, when prosecution and conviction for such acts were rare. "I consider any allegation of animal cruelty to be serious," said Bryan Porter, Commonwealth's Attorney for Alexandria. "Using violence against any animal is disturbing and clearly wrong, and it is incumbent on my office to punish such criminality and to deter future acts of cruelty."

The AWLA Animal Services unit is sometimes a first responder, receiving an average of 150 calls from the public about animal neglect and abuse each year, but it is just one of many organizations involved in the investigation and potential prosecution of such cases. When signs of animal abuse are found, all animals in the home might be seized, and the AWLA officers are tasked with gathering evidence and sometimes assisting with filing of criminal charges. Local veterinary providers and the AWLA's veterinarian also may assist with the case, providing information about the abused animal's medical condition and sometimes serving as expert witnesses.

Statistics show that in homes where animals are being abused, it is highly likely that humans are being abused as well. According to a comprehensive study published in 1983 in the "International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems," animal abuse occurred in 88 percent of households under state supervision for child abuse. For



PHOTO BY DESILVA STUDIOS, LLC

AWLA Animal Services Chief Tammy Doran takes a break with one of the shelter's charges. Doran is called on to assist authorities with cases involving animal cruelty.

this reason, AWLA's Animal Services also works with Child Protective Services if children live in the home, as well as Adult Protective Services if there is a vulnerable adult in the home. Animal Services is also a member of the City of Alexandria's Domestic Violence Intervention Program, a community response collaborative that works to assist all victims of domestic violence, including animals.

Porter said the AWLA plays a vital role in the animal cruelty cases he prosecutes. "My office's ability to conduct thorough and professional investigations and prosecutions would be made exponentially more difficult if it were not for the dedicated people comprising AWLA," he said. Porter specifically commended the work of Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Maana Parcham on Allie's case, calling the process a "wonderful example of collaboration between AWLA, Alexandria Police and my office."

Virginia and the rest of the nation are moving toward expanded protection for animals and pet owners. Bipartisan legislation passed signed by the President last month seeks to help victims of domestic violence flee their abusers without compromising the safety of beloved pets. Originally known as the Pet and Women Safety Act, the proposal was included as part of the 2018 Farm Bill and is now known as the Protecting Animals with Shelter Act. This legislation expands existing federal domestic violence protections to include threats or acts of violence against a victim's pet and provides grant funding to programs that offer shelter and housing assistance for domestic violence victims with pets.

The defendant in Allie's case ultimately pleaded guilty to cruelty to animals and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, with 80 days suspended. He also was ordered not to own animals for one year and to take a course in anger management. After recovering from her injuries, Allie was returned to the breeder and ultimately found a new home.

Chief Doran was heartened that the collaboration led to successful prosecution, especially because jail time for such cases is highly unusual. "Animal abuse is everywhere," said Doran. "We domesticated animals, and now we need to take responsibility to protect them from abuse and harm."

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization. Operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, which is Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter, the AWLA is committed to addressing animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare and serving as an educational resource for the community. See AlexandriaAnimals.org.

Helping Homeowners Stay Warm This Winter

BY MICHAEL SPAETH
REBUILDING TOGETHER DC • ALEXANDRIA

The wintertime is a tough time for our neighbors in need. A broken window or the lack of a working furnace can significantly impact the quality of life for low-income families and individuals during the winter.

To help address this need, volunteers and contractors complete many types of repairs to help low-income homeowners during the wintertime. Our volunteers insulate homes by caulking and applying weather stripping to doors and windows, putting foam insulating pads on switch and plug covers, completing plastic window sheeting, and installing water pipe insulation. They also replace hot water heaters, fix broken windows, and more. Finally, we hire local contractors to repair or replace heating systems in clients' homes. Each year, volunteers and contractors complete about 40 to 50 of these

wintertime repairs in Alexandria.

"These repairs help our clients in many ways," said Haig Paul, our director of programs. "The clients save money, they are healthy and comfortable in their homes, they aren't shivering from the cold temperatures, and they have peace of mind knowing that they don't have a hole in their window, for example."

Harold M. is one such homeowner. Harold grew up in a small town in Illinois. He served in the Army during the Vietnam War, and then lived and worked in Boston for over 30 years. He has been living in Alexandria with his wife for the past 13 years.

Harold and his wife had no heating or air conditioning in their Alexandria home, and during the wintertime they were cold and very uncomfortable. They had to use floor heaters as a temporary solution. Repairs to their heating system would normally cost about six or seven thousand dollars. After they completed our application form, local contractors fixed their heating system, free of charge to them.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Volunteers insulate windows in a client's home as part of Energize Alexandria.

"Your contractors did fantastic work," said Harold. "They were professional, pleasant, and respectful. They were just fantastic. And once they finished, everything worked perfectly. Ever since they left, we haven't had any problems. We couldn't be happier."

Rebuilding Together DC • Alexandria is an award-winning, mission-driven organization that creates healthy neighborhoods for residents by maintaining housing for low-income homeowners, revitalizing community spaces, and creating homeownership opportunities. We are now accepting applications from Alexandria homeowners for free home repairs. Visit www.RebuildingTogetherDCA.org or call 703-836-1021.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE XX

able to ask elected officials and the people who negotiated this deal questions in person.

We had a great discussion and a vigorous debate, and I want to thank all the elected officials who came prepared to discuss this issue. Arlington County Board Chair Christian Dorsey and 31st Virginia Senate Candidate Nicole Merlene came from Arlington, and we had Del. Mark Levine and Sen. Adam Ebbin, who both represent part of Arlington as well as Alexandria. We had former Mayor Allison Silberberg as well as Del. Lee Carter, who came all the way from Manassas where the effects of Amazon are also being felt. We had a representative of the Carpenters Union, Neri Canahui, who talked about the need for project labor agreements. And we had Sandra Klassen and Roshan Abraham from the co-sponsors Our Revolution Northern Virginia, and Our Revolution Arlington. Mayor Justin Wilson originally hoped to come but ended up having a conflict.

What we didn't have was much of the information citizens are craving. How much are housing prices and property taxes going to go up? What are the transportation and affordable housing improvements, and when will those happen? Where exactly is National Landing? And what kind of programs will be at the new Virginia Tech Campus, and what will the campus look like, and how will this technology pipeline actually work? How will Amazon be held accountable and what leverage will our local communities have moving forward?

The event was held in the Charles Houston Gymnasium partly because we thought there would plenty of room for some of the stakeholders involved to come set up a display, provide information, and put a face to some of the big players: JBG properties, Virginia Tech, and Amazon. I was never given contacts for any of these three groups from economic development officials in Arlington or Alexandria. I know their numbers are in easy reach. It was also clear from our long line of questioners and the applause of the audience that many people still need to be convinced that this will be good for our region, and that the positive will outweigh the negative impacts.

Arlington, to its credit, has had two listening sessions, and both Alexandria and Arlington have had virtual town halls.

Even though there is no vote regarding funding in Alexandria,

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 22

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Legals

Sealed responses to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the City of Alexandria per specifications will be received in the office of the Purchasing Division until the date and time designated as follows:

Title: Request For Qualifications No 797:
Chinquapin Elevator Design
Closing Date and Time:
March 8, 2019, 3 p.m., local time

Non-Mandatory pre-proposal conference
and site visit date, time, and location:
February 5, 2019, 10:00 a.m.,
prevailing local time
100 North Pitt Street, Suite 301
Alexandria, VA 22314

For general inquiries contact James Pearson,
Contract Specialist, at 703.746.4275.

The City of Alexandria reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, cancel this solicitation, and to waive any informalities or irregularities in procedure. THE CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO BE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS.

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Legals

ALEXANDRIA RENEW ENTERPRISES (AlexRenew) INVITATION TO BID NO 19-018

AlexRenew is seeking competitive sealed bids for electric chillers and air handling units for the Building J Facilities Relocations and Decommissioning project.

Sealed bids with the notation "**Building J Facilities Relocations and Decommissioning- Electric Chillers and Air Handling Units**", ITB No. 19-018, will be received at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attn: Maryam N. Zahory, Purchasing Agent, on or before 3:00 pm, February 19, 2019. Solicitation documents may be obtained from the AlexRenew website <https://alexrenew.com/business-opportunities> and the Commonwealth of Virginia website <http://www.eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-i-buy-for-virginia.html>.

Legals

Legals

Legals

ALEXANDRIA RENEW ENTERPRISES (AlexRenew) INVITATION TO BID NO 19-017

AlexRenew is seeking competitive sealed bids for Laboratory Casework for the Building J Facilities Relocations and Decommissioning project.

Sealed bids with the notation "**Building J Facilities Relocations and Decommissioning- Laboratory Casework**", ITB No. 19-017, will be received at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attn: Maryam N. Zahory, Purchasing Agent, on or before 2:00 pm, February 19, 2019. Solicitation documents may be obtained from the AlexRenew website <https://alexrenew.com/business-opportunities> and the Commonwealth of Virginia website <http://www.eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-i-buy-for-virginia.html>.

Legals

Legals

Announcements

Announcements

ALEXANDRIA RENEW ENTERPRISES (AlexRenew) INVITATION TO BID NO 19-018

AlexRenew is seeking competitive sealed bids for plate and frame heat exchangers for the Building J Facilities Relocations and Decommissioning project.

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Worried About What Awaits



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that there's anything wrong with me – other than having cancer that is – but I've been going to see doctors – other than my oncologist – fairly regularly in the past few months: internal medicine, three times; otolaryngologist, two times.

The reason/symptoms vary, but in general, nearly 10 years into my "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I am finally erring on the side of taking a precaution and scheduling appointments with doctors as often as I see fit. Apparently, waiting isn't the hardest part after all, it's the dumbest part – if you have cancer.

So far, in all five instances, the various symptoms were not cancer-related, they were life-related. Meaning, they had nothing to do at all with my have cancer and/or its progression, and everything to do with living life outside of the bubble.

However, surviving life inside the cancer world for as long as I have has now made me a bit trigger happy, so to speak. At the drop of a hat or for most any other reason, I am scheduling an appointment with my primary care physician to confirm or debunk any medical suspicions that I might have.

Henceforth, I am going to let the professionals tell me what I need to know and what I need not worry about. It has become time for me to no longer fool around with my health presuming that whatever ails me is merely a blip when in fact it could be a sign of things potentially to follow.

Sort of like the oil warning light illuminating on your car's dashboard – it likely means the damage has already occurred. And the next steps you take might even be too little, too late.

As concerns my health, there is no warning light as such. Knowing there's only so much I can do to preempt (some of which I've been doing) what trouble possibly awaits, at the very least I shouldn't be stupid or stubborn anymore. Instead I have to be vigilant and proactive.

Since my life is at stake here, I can't worry too much about what the doctor might say when I show up at my appointment with less-than-life altering/cancer-connected symptoms. Until they tell me otherwise, which they haven't yet, I will continue to overreact to any symptoms I experience because for all I know about such matters, it just might matter.

And lately, when my exams have indicated there was nothing to matter, I've often felt the need to apologize for taking up the doctor's time. Time which I realize is very valuable. But they would hear none of it. Instead, they have encouraged me not to hesitate making future appointments should the need arise.

And I suppose that's the issue: 'should the need arise.'

But how will I know when the need arises? How will I know if the need is genuine? How will I know if the need is cancer-related or merely life-related, and should I act differently depending on the answer? Or should I not care about any of these questions and simply schedule appointments as soon as possible because, as I was advised years ago when I was first diagnosed: "It's all about you now, Kenny."

In thinking about where all this anxiety is coming from, I believe it has something to do with my switching to an immunotherapy drug – which we've been discussing for a few months, and being aware of the many possible side effects. Side effects which, should they manifest, I am to contact my oncologist immediately.

My concern is however, will I know and will I be too early or too late. Or maybe it won't matter, and that's what scares me. Moreover, I'm afraid we might not be able to stop what we've already started.

Granted, it's all speculation, and it's all premature.

Either the side effects prevent me from infusing the drug or it doesn't. And if I am able to be infused, the tumors, especially the "Adam's Apple" tumor, shrink in the process. And if I have to see multiple doctors during my treatment, so be it.

This is no time to wait and see. It's time to be seen without waiting.

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

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 21

we are all contributing tax dollars to the state deal, and Alexandria was closely involved in negotiating of the deal. I would also suggest that since, in the information that Arlington has provided, 80 percent of employees will live elsewhere — that elsewhere is Alexandria. And these impacts will be felt in some of our most diverse and probably economically vulnerable communities like Lynhaven, and Arlandria. It also means that 80 percent of employees coming to Amazon will be travelling from somewhere else, so our roads like Route 1, our Metro System and the BRT will all be impacted.

So it is time that our city government hold its own Town Hall, and make sure that the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, who negotiated the deal for us, JBG, Amazon and Virginia Tech are there, and that the information is provided in multiple languages. It is imperative that our own city provide the information citizens are craving.

Boyd Walker
Alexandria

Understanding Dementia

To the Editor:

You visit the Smithsonian to take a simulated ride in a space shuttle, why not try your hand at living with Alzheimer's Disease?

Silverado, Alexandria's new memory care community which opened last July, is offering Alexandria more than just care and beds for 66 for residents with memory impairment. Silverado is reaching out to friends and neighbors with a new program to help us understand what dementia "feels like."

Recently, I took the Virtual Dementia Tour that Silverado is now offering. Donning special goggles, earphones, heavy gloves, and insoles in my shoes that simulate neuropathy, I was put in a darkened room and given instructions to complete five simple tasks. With programmed noise and confusion in my ears, and my eyesight and dexterity significantly impeded, I was able to remember and attempt only three tasks. I completed one.

The post-tour discussion with staff gave participants a chance to voice frustration at not being able to do what under normal circumstances would have been easy assignments (like putting on a big white shirt or filling a dog food dish). The conversation is designed to encourage a new understanding of those for whom these distractions are constant. We who live in an able-bodied world have little idea of the road blocks others face. This tour is a good reminder.

The tours are free and by appointment. Call the Office of the Family Ambassador, 703-215-9110. Silverado is located at 2807 King St.

Welcome to Alexandria, Silverado. You are already making this a better place to live.

Kitty Porterfield
Alexandria

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