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# Alexandria Gazette Packet

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DECEMBER 19, 2019

## Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue

**600 toys  
collected in  
annual toy drive.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**C**hristmas arrived early for some local families as more than 600 toys and gift cards were distributed during the Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive distribution Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.

"This was our best year," said former Alexandria City Councilman Willie Bailey, who founded the Firefighters and Friends toy drive 20 years ago. "Each child selected two toys and three books and had a chance to visit with Santa and a character from the cartoon Paw Patrol."

Volunteers escorted children to various tables to help in the selection of toys and books.

"As always, our volunteers were awesome," Bailey said. "I would



**Toy drive founder Willie Bailey, left, welcomes families to the toy distribution Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.**

like to give a special thank you to the Departmental Progressive Club for joining forces with us again this year. In its 92nd year of existence, the DPC members look forward to this every year."

Supporters and sponsors included: Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue; Departmental Progressive Club (DPC); Greenhill's Picket Place Community Foundation;

Jack Taylor Toyota; InspireLit; Carling Angels Therapy Dogs; Mindy Lyle; Michael Johnson; Alexandria Police Department; and the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.

"Everyone here today agreed that there is nothing more wonderful to see than the innocent joy in the children's eyes when they see all of the toys, books, and of

SEE TOY DRIVE, PAGE 4



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNET/GAZETTE PACKET

**Alexandria Sheriff's Deputy Angela Speight poses for a photo with local children during the Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive distribution Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.**



**Police Chief Michael Brown, left, joins volunteers at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive distribution Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School. With Brown are Departmental Progressive Club representatives Merrick Malone, Harry White and William Chesley, with Mindy Lyle in front and T.C. Williams standout and WNBA player Tierra Ruffin-Pratt at right.**

**A ROYAL VISIT — U.S. presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg, right, stopped by the Royal Restaurant Dec. 13 to chat with owner and Korean War veteran Charlie Euripides, seated, and chef Richard Euripides as part of a campaign visit to Alexandria.**



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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#WeAreAlexandria



### Old Town | \$4,300,000

This gracious brick, free-standing, five-bedroom home sits on a triple lot, one of which is buildable. Built in 1812 and renovated in the 1850s to add Victorian details, including a Mansard roof, it is surrounded by formal gardens with growing beds, mature evergreens, boxwood, hellebore and hydrangea and roses. This home is one of Old Town's finest offering exquisite moldings, gleaming hardwoods, six fireplaces, 11-foot ceilings, a family room addition and serene gardens. An original carriage house tucked into the rear garden is equipped with a full kitchen and bath. With its own entrance and French doors that open onto the garden, it provides a private retreat that can be used as a guest suite, office or artist's studio. This special residence, rare in the size of its grounds, is located in the desirable Southeast quadrant with off-street parking for three cars.

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### Vauxcluse | \$1,500,000

Amazing transformation of this stately, 6-bedroom, brick colonial sitting on the end of a cul-de-sac just a short distance from shopping, dining, Alexandria Hospital & major arteries. Completely rebuilt including new drywall, windows, flooring, and chef's kitchen.

**Chris Hayes 703.944.7737**

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### Old Town | \$525,000

Bright interior with unusual charm including spiral staircase, 2 faux fireplaces & exposed brick. 1 bedroom, 1 bath, den and loft. Kitchen walk-out. South-facing yard with rear fence and storage shed. Close to shops and the river. Easy street parking.

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### Mount Vernon Forest | \$644,500

Steps from Mount Vernon Estate in sought-after community. Owners have lavished thousands in updates & refurbishments to this classically traditional, but current home. County kitchen is sunlit and opens to huge designer deck overlooking sprawling lawn.

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### Capitol Hill | \$350,000

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Impeachment Flashback

The impeachment of **Andrew Johnson** wasn’t all that popular here in Alexandria, which was under military occupation during the Civil War. Alexandria Gazette editor **Edgar Snowden** editorialized against the impeachment of Johnson, who was accused of violating the Tenure of Office Act by firing War Secretary **Edwin Stanton**. When the House impeached Johnson, Snowden said the trial in the Senate would be a “spectacle,” one designed “to make sport” for the people.

“It is stated that the crowd expected is to be so great that the Senate chamber will not hold half of those who will flock there,” Snowden wrote in March 1868. “Tickets will have to be issued to the favored and elected curiosity hunters who desire to see an impeachment.”

Snowden also compared the Senate trial to a traveling waxworks show in the Dickens novel “The Old Curiosity Shop.”

“Be in time, be in time,” Snowden quotes Dickens. “Remember that this is Jarley’s stupendous show, and that it is the best show in the world. All others being imposition and deceptions. Be in time, be in time.”

Sidewalk Ban

Scooters are not allowed on the sidewalks of Alexandria. That’s the conclusion of members of the Alexandria City Council, who recently approved the next phase of the dockless mobility pilot program. City officials had initially proposed a partial ban on sidewalks for parts of Old Town and Del Ray. But Mayor **Justin Wilson** offered a counter-proposal to just ban them on all sidewalks in the city.

“The most consistent concern that we have heard throughout this pilot process was residents’ concern about the interaction between scooters and pedestrians on sidewalks, and residents who are terrified of scooters coming up behind them and knocking them over,” said Wilson. “Regardless of the modes of transportation, where we see safety challenges in the city is when you have a disparity in speed, and the higher the disparity in speed the more dangerous it is.”

That disparity works both ways. While the heavily trafficked parts of Old Town on Del Ray might have a disparity on the sidewalks, streets like Beauregard Street or Duke Street have the opposite disparity — cars zooming by so fast that it could be dangerous to ride a scooter on the street, especially a scooter that’s been engineered to go slower than it’s designed to meet all the speed limits imposed by local governments. The mayor says that’s yet another argument in favor of the kind of bike lanes that are still causing controversy on Seminary Road.

“Obviously we’ve had a very controversial conversation around Seminary Road, but hopefully not all of them are going to be that controversial,” he said. “To the extent we have the ability to expand out network of bicycle and scooter facilities we want to do that, and it would make things safer regardless of where you are.”

Making Progress

Last weekend, the Alexandria City Council unanimously approved adding “gender identity” and “transgender” as protected status under the Alexandria Human Rights Act, a motion that was introduced by Councilman **Mo Seifeldein**. It was a unanimous vote, and nobody spoke against the motion although one speaker at the public hearing expressed concerns it might violate the infamous Dillon Rule, which prohibits the city from doing anything the General Assembly has not given specific permission to do.

Before voting in favor of the motion, Councilwoman **Del Pepper** recalled when sexual orientation was added to the city’s Human Rights Code in the 1980s. Unlike this month’s vote, that was a time when City Hall was besieged by people who argued that homosexuality was a sin. Council members were also concerned that conservatives lawmakers in Richmond might try to exact some revenge.

“When this was passed, adding sexual orientation, you could have heard a pin drop,” recalled Pepper. “We were all very tense.”

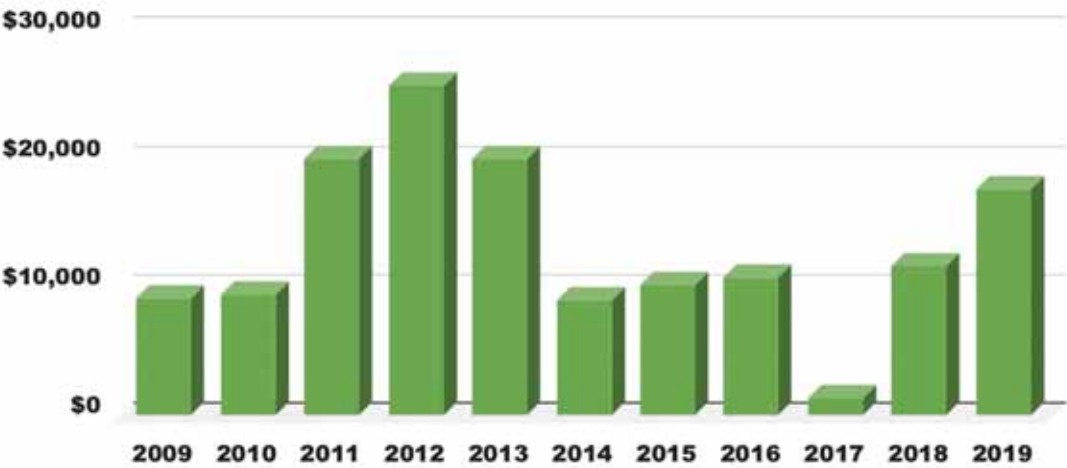
Part of that tension came was the result of a ruling from Attorney General **Mary Sue Terry**, who concluded that no statute authorized the city to enact an ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Pepper recalled that Mayor Jim Moran decided to press on anyway.

“You have to push the envelope,” Pepper recalls Moran saying at the time. “This is how you make progress.”

— MICHAEL LEE POPE

NEWS

Delinquent Tax Write-Offs



source: Alexandria city government

Unpaid Taxes Written Off

City often forgives delinquent taxpayers rather than going after them.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

In the last decade, Alexandria has written off more than \$100,000 in uncollected tax balances. The annual write-off happens every November, just as City Council members are appearing with a giant turkey at City Hall to celebrate Thanksgiving. City officials say the cost of collecting small-dollar balances would exceed the recoverable amount, adding that they will no longer publish the names of the tax cheats in the newspaper because they no longer believe that to be cost effective.

“Given the ability to make information more widely available on the web, the Finance Department no longer publishes the names of delinquent taxpayers in the newspaper,” explained City Manager Mark Jinks in a recent memo outlining the hit to the city’s wallet. “If the taxes are paid in full before posting online, the property owner’s name or the name of the business will not be listed.”

City officials say they have no record of when the last time they published the names in a newspaper or how much they paid at that time. In response to a request for information about the write-offs, Communications Director Craig Fifer said it was “likely two or three times in the late 2000s.” Virginia law allows local governments to charge the

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA TOP TWENTY DELINQUENT REAL ESTATE TAXPAYERS Tax Year 2018 and Prior Years AS OF OCTOBER 22, 2019							ATTACHMENT 1	
Total Due	Taxpayer Name	No. of Parcels	Parcel Locations	Status	On 2018 List?			
1 \$85,700	VASILAS ROGER L	3	1205, 1207, 1211 KING ST	Finance Collections	Yes			
2 \$76,431	ORONOCO STREET RESIDENTIAL LLC	1	525 N FAYETTE ST	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
3 \$73,828	PARKING ST LLC	1	5055 SEMINARY RD 8	Finance Collections	No			
4 \$68,547	ALF DONALD L OR SUSAN D	1	3713 FT WORTH AV	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
5 \$48,116	NORTHERN VIRGINIA URBAN LEAGUE INC	1	1315 DUKE ST	Finance Collections	No			
6 \$38,079	COOK HAROLD G OR LATANIA E	1	322 A CLIFFORD AV	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
7 \$34,557	SOLOVYOV VERA	1	107 S LEE ST	Finance Collections	Yes			
8 \$34,075	USA ON BEHALF OF US ARMY	1	1897 N. BEAUREGARD ST	Finance Collections	No			
9 \$31,296	JONES JERRY HOLTON	1	313 VASSAR RD	Finance Collections	Yes			
10 \$30,057	WOOD HARRIS S	1	501 SLATERS LA 1109	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
11 \$29,996	PAYNE BARBARA A	1	1015 FIRST ST	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
12 \$24,607	BOYD-KING PATRICIA M BOYD	1	1004 WOODS PL	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
13 \$24,332	PATTERSON SUSAN L	1	4663 KELL LA	Finance Collections	Yes			
14 \$22,432	BURNS KEVIN P	1	1726 DOGWOOD DR	Referred to City Attorney	Yes			
15 \$20,748	SKIPWITH JUANITA	1	236 BURGESS AV	Referred to City Attorney	No			
16 \$20,466	RODRIGUEZ FREDERICK OR KAMLA	1	3920 DUKE ST	Referred to City Attorney	No			
17 \$20,371	WALLACE CHRISTINA P	1	711 S FAIRFAX ST	Finance Collections	No			
18 \$19,769	IN THE ESTATE OF THEODORE R GIBSON C/O KIM Y GIBSON	1	919 BASHFORD LA	Finance Collections	No			
19 \$19,691	FROST PAMELA	1	502 E NELSON AV	Finance Collections	No			
20 \$19,621	DAGNATCHEW KEBEDE	1	4860 EISENHOWER AV 277	Referred to City Attorney	No			
\$742,719								

Includes tax, penalties, interest, stormwater fee and refuse fee, as applicable.  
Excludes three accounts under review due to parent parcel delinquency.  
Delinquencies on Parking St LLC and USA on behalf of US Army are Stormwater Management Fees only.

cost of publishing these kinds of lists to the delinquent taxpayers identified in the list.

“It’s kind of like the Salem witch trials,” said Frank Shafroth, director of the Center for State and Local Leadership at George Mason University. “The idea is to embarrass people into paying their bills, and it’s the kind of thing that makes elected officials uneasy because you never know when a voter or a voter’s mother in law might be on the list.”

Back in 2017, the city was able to limit the annual tax write-off to \$1,356 — much less than this year’s write-off, which was \$17,640, still a fraction of one percent of taxes paid. When

asked why 2017 was an outlier, city officials say it can be explained by the vagaries of timing of payments and timing of interest.

Other than deciding that publishing the names of tax cheats in the newspaper is no longer cost effective, perhaps the biggest change in recent years is that the city now works with Nationwide Credit Corporation to track down unpaid bills.

“We give everybody ample warning to avoid it,” said Kevin Greenlief, acting deputy director of the Department of Finance. “We make it very clear that there’s going to be an additional surcharge if you don’t pay your taxes now.”



## PEOPLE

# 'Santa Stampede' Set for Dec. 21

## Carlyle restaurants to support ALIVE!

**R**estaurants in the Carlyle area will join forces Dec. 21 to celebrate the holidays while collecting food donations to support ALIVE!

The first annual Santa Stampede will include Tequila & Taco, Sweet Fire Donna's, Whiskey & Oyster and Theismann's restaurants with each featuring a specialty \$5 cocktail, beer or shooter at each location.

"We will be collecting non-perishable food donations for ALIVE! and there will be boxes at each location for donations," said Chelsea Anderson of the Homegrown Restaurant Group. "At each bar you order something at, you will receive a jingle bell. Collect all four bells and you'll be entered into a raffle of various prizes, including a pair of Apple AirPods Pro."

Collection boxes for non-perishable food items to benefit ALIVE! will be located outside each participating restaurant leading up to and on the day of the event, which takes place from 2-5 p.m.



Chelsea Anderson, right, of the Homegrown Restaurant Group, will be on hand for the first annual Santa Stampede Dec. 21 in the Carlyle area. Four area restaurants will feature holiday specials while collecting non-perishable food items for ALIVE!

"The crawl is walkable between the four restaurants, but we will also have the King Street Trolley running between each location," Anderson added. "Attendees can begin at any of the participating restaurants."

Anderson also noted that the event is dog friendly, with free holiday bandanas for pups and

free Santa hats to the first 50 people.

"DJ Mike Critz will be spinning the 1s and 2s outside of Whiskey & Oyster," Anderson said. "It will be a fun way to celebrate the holidays and help support a good cause."

— JEANNE THEISMANN



PHOTO BY JANET BARNET/GAZETTE PACKET

Del Ray Business Association president Sue Kovalsky, right, celebrates with honorees at the Dec. 16 DRBA Star Awards luncheon at Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap Restaurant. With Kovalsky are Bill Reagan, City Star Award recipient; Gayle Reuter, DRBA board member; "Mango" Mike Anderson, Business Star Award recipient; and William Jahns, Youth Star Award honoree.

## The Stars of Del Ray

### DRBA presents annual Star Awards.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he Del Ray Business Association celebrated the holidays with the organization's annual Star Awards luncheon Dec. 16 at Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap restaurant.

DRBA president Sue Kovalsky led the presentation of awards to individuals who have contributed to the success of the Del Ray community's many events throughout the year, including the Taste of Del Ray, Halloween Parade, Turkey Trot, Tree Lighting and recent Candy Cane Crawl.

Bill Reagan, Executive Director of the Alexandria Small Business Development Center, was honored with the City Star

Award for his work as a liaison between the city and Del Ray businesses.

"Mango" Mike Anderson of the Homegrown Restaurant Group received the Business Star Award. Anderson owns three Del Ray restaurants on Mount Vernon Avenue – Pork Barrel BBQ, the Sushi Bar and Holy Cow Burgers, and has been a leader in the Del Ray business community for many years.

William Jahns received the Youth Star Award for his many hours of volunteer support at Del Ray events and Amy Shopkorn received the Citizen Star Award.

According to Kovalsky, "the Star Awards are presented to individuals that have gone above and beyond in supporting, promoting and volunteering for the Del Ray Business Association and thus helping to make Del Ray such a great place to live, work and shop."

[www.visitdelray.com](http://www.visitdelray.com)



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**WARM FOR THE HOLIDAYS** - Members of Freemason Universal Lodge #1 with children at the Dunbar Alexandria-Olympic Boys and Girls Club after donating new coats to the club Dec. 16.



William Chesley of the Departmental Progressive Club helps a child select books Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.



Children play with the popular Paw Patrol character, courtesy of Clowning Around Entertainment, during the toy drive distribution Dec. 14 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School.





VISIT ALEXANDRIA

## Waterskiing Santa!

### Don't Miss the Waterskiing Santa Show

On Christmas Eve, next Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 1 p.m., the Waterskiing Santa Show will occur in the Potomac River on the Alexandria Waterfront. This will be the 34th year of this wonderful show which includes numerous acts including flipping waterskiers, characters like Frosty The Snowman, the Grinch and others and, finally, Santa Claus skiing by with his full complement of reindeer. The best viewing will be on the waterfront between Oronoco Street and Duke Street. The current weather prediction includes no pre-

cipitation. Typically, thousands of people view the show and it is always exciting and enjoyable. There is no charge to watch the show and an amusing pre-show featuring the Grinch begins at 12:45 p.m.

For more information, visit the website at [www.waterskiingsanta.com](http://www.waterskiingsanta.com).

After the show, there is plenty to do in Alexandria from shopping and eating to observing the beauty of this historic city. Merry Christmas to all my Christian friends.

**Jay Spiegel**  
Mount Vernon

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*Happy Holidays & Best Wishes  
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Looking forward to continuing our  
association in the New Year!*

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**ALEXANDRIA**  
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# OPINION

## At Heart a Firefighter for Life: Gerald Amos Wanzer

By CHAR McCARGO BAH

**W**hen one sits down to talk to a person about their life, one would quickly discover that person's passion, and for Gerald Amos Wanzer it was a dream to become a firefighter.

After graduating from Parker-Gray High School in 1962, he enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF) in February 1963. He was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) and then sent to Sheppard AFB where he completed his basic training. Then he was trained as a Communication Technician, and upon completing the program, he was assigned to the 90<sup>th</sup> Communications Squadron at Francis E. Warren AFB until he was honorably discharged in 1967. With his technical experience, Gerald ob-



Gerald Amos Wanzer at work prior to 1981.



Gerald A. Wanzer in retirement

tained a job with the C&P Telephone Company as a Telephone Installer/Repairman. Unknown to him at the time, he became the first Black in Northern Virginia to work as a telephone installer. He worked for the telephone company for two years, and during that period, he experienced hardship and prejudices.

After two years with the telephone company, an opportunity came for Gerald to pursue his life-long dream. When he was a child he received a fire truck for Christmas. His dream was to become a firefighter but that occupation was not accessible to blacks. In spite

SEE GERALD AMOS, PAGE 7

## Merry Christmas

**“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”**

**T**he pages of the Connection (including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Potomac Almanac and the Centre View) have been full of holiday spirit, beginning before Thanksgiving. Help for the needy, holiday parades, Santa and more Santa; tree lightings, stories of giving, the Nutcracker.

Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

It is also about embracing the teachings of Jesus: to love thy neighbor as thyself; to help the needy; to feed the hungry and clothe the poor; to care for those who are sick; to invite and welcome strangers; to treat others as you would have them treat you.

### Matthew 7:12:

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

### Matthew 25:35-40:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was

in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

**SO SHARE** the verse relating the birth of Jesus from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David.) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought

forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and

on earth peace, good will toward men.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

— MARY KIMM  
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Editor's Note About the Rest of 2019

This is our last regular edition of 2019. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish our annual Children's Issue, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. You'll be able to find this online while you wait for the print edition at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/) Scroll down to Children's.

Our next regular edition will publish Jan. 8, 2020, with deadline for content and advertising of Jan. 3 (late ads accepted).

In the meantime you can email the editors at [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com). You can reach sales/marketing/advertising at [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com).

Digital replica editions of the most recent week's papers are available at [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs)

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# Gerald Amos Wanzer

FROM PAGE 6

of the odds against him, he was employed by the Alexandria Fire Department in May 1969 as a firefighter. He would have made history again, but a former classmate, John Davis was hired in 1966 as the first Black to join the Alexandria Fire Department, and Gerald was the second to join the department. He remembers his first fire call was to 2518 King Street, he also recalls answering the call of an airplane crash at Simpson Stadium Park in the 1970s that resulted in fatalities.

Early on, Gerald showed organization and leadership skills, and he became the first president of Alexandria (Arlington and Fairfax) Chapters of Black Firefighters International Association. He was the first Alexandria Black Firefighter to pass the Officer's exam but was denied the promotion to an Officer. While he was at Fire Station #6 in Seminary, he and his team received a call for 375 North Armistead Street at the West End of Alexandria. During that assignment, a ladder fell on Gerald and injured his back. The injury to his back forced him to retire with disability in 1981.

The conversation about his work career, and his passion for his job lightened his face during the interview. He remembers when the first ten Black Alexandria's Firefighters

started their career. He went through all the names of the first Black firefighters and the year each of them started working for the City: John Davis (1966), Gerald Amos Wanzer (1969), Calvin Harris (1970), Clarence Evans (1970), Willie Manning Jr. (1972), John Locke (1974), Michael Milton (1974), Michael Webster (1975), Russell Middleton (1975 or 1976) and James LeCruise (1978).

Gerald Amos Wanzer was born on March 31, 1944 to Daniel and Viola Williams Wanzer in Alexandria, Virginia. He was the sixth and last child in the family. He has two siblings living, his brother, Clifton D. Wanzer and his sister, Janet Wanzer Golden. Gerald has five children but two are deceased.

His surviving children are Craig, Edward and Jessica. All of them are successful in their careers.

Today, Gerald meets monthly with the Black Retired Firefighters for lunch. In his heart, he will remain a firefighter for life.

Char McCargo Bah is a published author, freelance writer, independent historian, genealogist and a Living Legend of Alexandria. She maintains two blogs, <http://www.theotheralexandria.com> and [www.findingthingsforu.com](http://www.findingthingsforu.com).

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# Food for Thought, and Eating Of Course

## Classic tales from Alexandria's classic restaurants.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**H**ope Nelson combined her love of food and experience as a history buff to produce her recently released book, "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria."

"We moved to Alexandria 15-1/2 years ago and have loved the restaurant scene." Nelson says her book took about sixteen months to complete with the research and writing taking a full 12 months. Then came months of editing and proofing.

It took Nelson a couple of attempts to settle on where her book was going. "I thought the best way was to interview restaurant people—the managers, the customers, the waiters." But after interviewing person after person, she discovered that "although it was great and completely informative, it was just one long news story. I wanted it to be a patchwork of the city and its history."

So Nelson took a different direction. She spent a lot of time at the Alexandria Library



Hope Nelson, author of newly released "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria"

Local History Special Collections studying pages through 100 years of articles from the Washington Post, the Alexandria Gazette Packet and other media.

"Then I felt inspired. I got really rolling. I was pulling from the ages of when the writing took place." At the end of the day Nelson focused on restaurants from a diverse group, incorporating the history and "the microcosm of cultures, religions, socioeconomic status and more." But she says, "no illusions. I couldn't get them all in."

But, she says with a smile, "that leaves room for volume 2."

Nelson took all of the present day photos in the book. Some of the rest of yesteryear came from local history and special collections. She attributed her success in this area to the local librarians. "To a person they were so friendly and knowledgeable. I felt like one of the gang within a week." Her book includes vignettes arranged by subject such as Family Dining, Celebrating the Coast and Alexandria's International Hot Spots.

"The richly woven Alexandria culinary fabric has run the gamut." She said, "So many of these footprints had been here before."

Nelson writes of the "Curse of 100 King Street" where the building hasn't changed much in more than a century but a succes-

sion of restaurants have rotated through the space beginning with the Corn Palace and a grocery store in 1871 to the current newly opened Mia's in the same space. She writes about Le Gaulois, which stood on King Street for more than two decades but since closing in 2009 has been the home to a succession of restaurants.

Nelson came across some funny stories. "I've got to find humor in everything I do."

She reports the Beachcombers Restaurant used to rise above the Potomac River on stilts. Customers enjoyed dining above, rather than adjacent to, the water. Although it was closed in 1954 due to a fire, people still talk about how Alice Roosevelt liked to look at the lily pads from the restaurant. And since the restaurant was rumored to be located in D.C. waters, it could stay open later, and no one seems to have challenged it."

She traces the restaurant scene from the opening of Gadsby's Tavern in 1792 "where no less than six presidents have used it for receptions and grand balls." Today's ambiance remains the same and the menu still features peanut soup and Gentlemen's Pye. At the other end of the history spectrum is Misha's Coffee Roaster and Coffeehouse on King Street, "an anti-Starbucks kind of bohemian."

SEE CLASSIC RESTAURANTS, PAGE 9

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# News

## Classic Restaurants

FROM PAGE 9

Nelson holds a full time job and writes a weekly food column for the Alexandria Gazette so, "I wrote when I could find the time, mostly at night and on Saturday mornings. I do everything better in the morning," including training for her triathlons. "I finished my book just three weeks before it was time to begin training for my next triathlon."

Nelson held her first book signing Dec. 11 at the Union Street Public House, also featured in her book. "Because I feel restaurants are so fun, we held it at a pub where people could eat and drink and chat." Union Street Public House, just across from the river, has its roots in a building that has been in place since the 1790s.

Nelson's next book signing is scheduled for Jan. 18 at 10 a.m. at the Alexandria Visitor's Center.

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

##### Winter Recreation Registration.

Registration for winter classes and activities offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will begin at 9 a.m. on Dec. 18 for city residents and Dec. 20 for nonresidents. Winter registration applies to programs taking place January through mid-April 2020. To register or learn more about winter recreation programs offered by the City, visit [alexandriava.gov/Recreation](http://alexandriava.gov/Recreation).

#### THURSDAY/DEC. 19


**Community Meeting.** 6:30-8 p.m. At City Hall Sisters Cities Conference Room 1101, 301 King Street, Alexandria. The Alexandria Waterfront Commission will hold a community meeting to receive comments on the potential use of the portion of 2 King St. that includes eight parking spaces. The City of Alexandria received an unsolicited proposal to develop the parking lot portion of the property located at 2 King St., which was acquired by the City through a settlement agreement with the Old Dominion Boat Club. The portion of the property formerly used for the Old Dominion Boat Club building and parking lot was replaced with Waterfront Park in November 2018. The property to be discussed at the community meeting is not the park area, but the remaining portion with eight parking spaces located across Strand Street, which is currently leased for private parking. The City has not decided on the future use of these eight parking spaces and is interested in hearing from the public about what kinds of public or private uses would be

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

## 7 Must-Try Restaurants for New Year's Eve

BY HOPE NELSON

From a down-home Chinese takeout theme to several Roaring '20s-themed soirees across town, there are a multitude of ways (and price points) to celebrate New Year's Eve out on the town. Have a look at a baker's half-dozen options.

### Great Gatsby-Themed Soiree at Café 44

Dust off your best top hat and tails for Café 44's party, which hews to F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous book "The Great Gatsby" while celebrating

### APPETITE

both yesteryear and what's to come next. Nosh

on the likes of oysters Rockefeller and prime rib while enjoying Prohibition-themed cocktails and bubbly. 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 401. 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m. \$110 to \$300.

### Celebrate With Lebanese Flair at Zikrayet

This New Year's Eve event has been taking place for a decade, and Zikrayet shows no signs of slowing down with it.

Musicians Roni Asmar and Robert Mrad will entertain partygoers throughout the evening as guests



### Evening Star Cafe is offering a four-course dinner for New Year's Eve.

feast on a multicourse meal. 2006 Eisenhower Ave. 8:30 p.m.-2 a.m. \$125.

### Toast the Town at Mason Social

North Old Town's Mason Social will host a good old-fashioned social hour (or two, or three) for New Year's Eve. Food and drink specials will persist all night, and complimentary Champagne will be poured up close to the Magic Hour. 728 N. Henry St. 9 p.m.-2

a.m. \$95.

### Sip Wine and Munch on a Midnight Breakfast Buffet at Sonoma Cellar

A \$65 wristband nets you all the wine and beer you can (responsibly) enjoy at King Street's Sonoma Cellar. Pair your beverages with the eatery's full dinner menu and chat the night away with friends. And once the clock strikes midnight, rekindle your appetite for a Midnight-Thirty Breakfast Buffet.

207 King St. 10 p.m.-1:30 a.m. \$30 to \$85.

### Roaring '20s Party at Village Brauhaus

Kick off the 2020s with a throw-back to last century's version. Bring your best flapper dress or vintage suit and enter into Village Brauhaus' costume contest. A little nervous about your entry into the proceedings? The open bar will probably help that. 710 King St. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$30 to \$100.

### House Party at Rustico

On the last day of the year, Rustico's regular menu will be supplanted for the evening by a relaxed, Chinese-takeout vibe. With the likes of kimchi fried rice, General Tso's chicken, pot-stickers and vegetable lo mein on offer, guests can settle in and enjoy the evening among friends old and new. Wash it all down with themed cocktails and get ready to toast to a new decade. 827 Slaters Lane. 7 p.m.-2 a.m.

### Wolf Down a Four-Course Meal at Evening Star Café

Evening Star Café is pulling out all the stops for a proper New Year's Eve feast. With four courses (each including a vegetarian option), guests certainly won't leave hungry.

Feast your way through black trumpet caviar, beef tartare, scallops over salsify, and chocolate sponge cake – to name just one possible pairing. Each course actually has several options from which to choose. 2000 Mount Vernon Ave. 5:30 p.m.-2 a.m. \$75 per person; \$35 for wine pairing.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).

## CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### ONGOING

#### Creature Comforts Art Exhibit.

Now thru Jan. 26, 2020. At VCA Alexandria, 2660 Duke Street, Alexandria. The "Creature Comforts" art exhibit at VCA Alexandria through the Gallery Without Walls program features artwork of the animals in our lives by Del Ray Artisans members. Showcasing animals that lift and fill our hearts is a popular theme at VCA Alexandria and coincides with the winter holiday season in which creature comforts of all types are appreciated. Visit [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww)

nonverbal production captures the magic of making new friends and sharing ideas to accomplish big goals. The show was written and directed by Arts on the Horizon members Natalie Cutcher and Amanda Forstrom, was created for an audience of children ages 2-5. Show times are Dec. 19, and 20 at 10:30 a.m.; Dec. 21 at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$10 for children and adults and can be purchased online at <http://www.artsonthehorizon.org> or at the door on the day of the performance.

### NOW THRU DEC. 22

**DRA Holiday Market.** The Market is Dec. 20-22. Hours are Friday 6-9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m.-6 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market offers handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. The artists are presenting a variety of media, including botanical drawings, fiber/textiles, glass, jewelry, mixed media, mosaics, painting, paper crafting, photography, pottery/ceramics, sculpture, watercolor, wood turning, and more. Different artists each weekend. Free admission. Visit the website: [DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2019](http://DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2019)

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

**T.C. Williams Winter Concert.** 7:30 p.m. At T.C. Williams High School auditorium, 3330 King Street, Alexandria. This is the 10-Year



### Hold On! Demitasse to Tumbler at Scope Gallery at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria.

### Hold On! Demitasse to Tumbler

Dec. 30-Feb. 2, 2020, At Scope Gallery at Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Studio 19, Alexandria. Your morning coffee will be all the more pleasurable in an artistic, individually crafted work from a local (DMV) artist. Choices include a cup depicting elements of the natural world by Shirley Gromen or a mug inspired by the color of the ocean by Klaudia Levin. Left-handed? Hiromi Minemura has designed a mug just for lefties, some accompanied with a saucer and spoon. Tea time in the afternoon? Use Elizabeth Greene's lidded tea mug to keep the tea from spilling on the way back to your desk. Sushi for carry-out? Accompany the meal with Ana Cavalanti's beautifully embossed set of saki bottle and saki cups. If espresso is your "cup of tea," you'll relish Scott Kaye's handmade, 2 1/2-inch-tall cups with a subtle Shino glaze. And need just a little sip of something before bed? Roni Polisar's wood-fired 'Sip Cups' would be perfect. These are just a sampling of works available this month. So hoist a piece of art this new year while imbibing your favorite beverage. Visit [www.scopegallery.org](http://www.scopegallery.org), [www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope](http://www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope).

anniversary of Theodore Thorpe as the T.C. Williams High School choir teacher and director. Alumni and current choirs will share the stage. Cost is \$20/adults; \$10/students; kids under 12 free.

### DEC. 20-21

#### Christmas Illuminations at Mount

**Vernon.** 5:30-8:30 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Join Mount Vernon for an evening of family-friendly fun and fireworks choreographed to holiday music. Before the fireworks begin around 8 p.m., take a stroll through the estate while being serenaded by local choirs and visit with re-enactors from the First Virginia Regiment. Martha Washington will also be on site to greet holiday guests. Watch colonial artisans demonstrate the 18th-century process of creating chocolate and visit with Aladdin the camel on the 12-acre field. Keep toasty by warming up by a bonfire, enjoying some hot chocolate or cider. Admission: \$36 adult/\$26 youth with mansion tour; \$30 adult/\$20 youth without mansion tour. [mountvernon.org/illuminations](http://mountvernon.org/illuminations)

### SATURDAY/DEC. 21

**Puppet Show.** 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. At Oswald Durant Center, 1605 Cameron Street, Alexandria. Tickets are \$6. Featuring the Silly Goose and Val Holiday Extravaganza. Val

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12



## HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



**The Majestic Executive Chef Ulysses Cabahug chooses 6 diver scallops**



**Shallots deep fried golden brown.**



**Cabernet poached Anjou pears added to skillet.**



**Mixed mushrooms deglazed with white Chablis.**

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE



**Customer favorite diver scallops with celery root puree, wild mushrooms, pine nuts, crispy shallots.**

# Meet Chef Ulysses Cabahug at The Majestic

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**E**xecutive Chef Ulysses Cabahug at The Majestic Cafe on King Street lines up six diver scallops and pats them dry on both sides to get a good sear. “Now is when the magic begins.”

“These are as fresh as it gets from a premium seafood vendor in Ocean City.” He says, “they call these day boat scallops because they are only harvested in small quantities in small boats and come straight here; they are never on ice which can water log the scallop.”

Cabahug turns the heat to high under a cast iron pan and squirts in about one and a half ounces of a high-smoke-point oil (a mixture

of 90 percent canola oil and 10 percent extra-virgin olive oil). Just enough to cover the surface of the pan. “You want it to be smoking before adding the scallops.”

He seasons the scallops with Kosher salt on one side. “That’s the trick. I cook them one-and-a-half to two minutes on one side only.” This allows the scallop to get a really nice crust but not get dry inside. Cabahug swirls the oil around the pan to prevent the scallops from sticking and then places them side-by-side in the skillet. “See this is the kind of crust you want.”

Placing the scallops on a small plate to let them rest for a bit, he then turns to the thinly sliced shallots that have been soaking in buttermilk for a few hours. Cabahug tosses the shallots into a large alu-

minum bowl in a flour mixture with paprika, blackening seasoning, Old Bay and salt and pepper. Then into a wire basket. He plunges the basket into a vat of soybean and canola oil about a minute until they turn “a golden color. Just 10 more seconds and then onto a towel to drain.”

The mushroom blend is next with about three ounces of a mixture of hen-of-the-woods, shiitake and cremini mushrooms sautéed in a hot skillet with oil until they soften and release their water. Again he sprinkles on a little Kosher salt. Flames shoot high as he deglazes the mushrooms with a little white Chablis cooking wine and tosses the mushrooms. Finally he adds several bite-size pieces of cabernet-poached Anjou pears to the skillet.

Cabahug pulls out a container

of pureed celery root, which he has previously prepared by peeling the celery root and rough chopping. “Then I simmered it in heavy cream and butter with shallots and garlic to add flavor. Then I add grated Manchego cheese and pureed it in a Vitamix blender.”

The assembly of the final dish begins with a smear of celery root puree across the large plate. He artfully places the scallops on the plate in a zigzag pattern. “Now I’ll put the pieces of red pear next to the scallops for a contrast in color.”

The mushrooms form the next layer with the crispy shallots arranged on the top and a smattering of pine nuts. Cabahug picks up a plastic squirt bottle. He dots house-made fig balsamic on top of the scallops. “Finally I’ll sprinkle on chopped chives.” Cabehug says this is the customer favorite “and my

favorite, too with the contrast in flavors and textures.” He says he invented this recipe after discovering the best scallops available.

Cabehug says he became a chef because “I love to eat.” He says his grandma, his mom and his dad were all good cooks. “I poked my head into the pot to see what was stirring. I always had these pots in front of me.” He says he would say his favorite dish at home in the Philippines was bone marrow soup. “I wanted to know how long do you simmer it to get all of the flavor out of the pot. What are the techniques?”

“I learned the key to it is taking your time. I use the same strategy in everything I make, no shortcuts.

“My grandma always told me ‘you love to eat so you have to cook. No one is going to cook for you all the time.’”



# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10

returns for a fast-paced, humorous musical treat celebrating snow, jingle bells, elves, Santa, reindeer and more. Enjoy a family afternoon out with music, ventriloquism, comedy, dancing, singing, and 100% audience participation.

**Celebrate the Season.** 4-6:30 p.m. At Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. The 80-man award winning Alexandria Harmonizers chorus invites you to a festive evening of holiday favorites including Jingle Bells, Sleigh Ride, Little Drummer Boy and their own version of The 12 Days of Christmas. Cost is \$35. Visit the website: [www.harmonizers.org](http://www.harmonizers.org)

**Country-Western Dance.** At Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss Street, 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. Trial memberships available at door for member level entry fee. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit [www.nvcwda.org](http://www.nvcwda.org)

## SUNDAY/DEC. 22

**MIN~Contemporary Flute and Guitar Duo.** 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. MIN~Contemporary Flute and Guitar Duo makes its highly-anticipated winter season return to the Athenaeum with a varied program that includes many beloved holiday classics. Flutist Saïs

Kamalidiin and guitarist extraordinaire Rick Peralta comprise one of the few remaining, regularly performing, professional flute and guitar (chamber music) duos in this part of the country. With their 15 year legacy of musical excellence, the repertoire of MIN consists of music of the baroque, ballads, bossa novas, blues, Broadway and beyond.

**S.O.M.E. Benefit Recital.** 3-4:30 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. An afternoon of violin and cello music to benefit So Others Might Eat (SOME). Tickets \$20. Featuring international artists Rachelle Hunt, violin; and Katie Tertell, cello. The program will include works by Beethoven, Mozart, Handel-Halvorsen, and new work by Mark Boden (UK). Tickets available on Eventbrite. Suggested donation \$20. [www.eventbrite.com/e/some-benefit-recital-tickets-75172225149?aff=eprofsaved](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/some-benefit-recital-tickets-75172225149?aff=eprofsaved)

## TUESDAY/DEC. 24

**Candlelight Communion Service.** 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King Street, Alexandria. The community is invited to close out Christmas Eve with a Candlelight Communion Service with music will be led by the King Street Brass Quintet and Combined Choirs. We will share communion, worship together, and end with lighting candles and singing Silent Night. Free. Visit the website: [www.fairlingtonumc.org](http://www.fairlingtonumc.org)

**Waterskiing Santa.** 1 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront. Now in its 34th year, this favorite D.C.-area Christmas Eve event returns to Old Town Alexandria. Gather along historic Alexandria's Potomac River



PHOTO BY CHRISTY PRZYSTAWICK

**The Family Bell Service will take place Dec. 24 at Fairlington United Methodist Church in Alexandria.**

## Family Bell Service

Tuesday/Dec. 24, 5-5:45 p.m. At Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King Street, Alexandria. The community is invited to celebrate Christmas Eve with a service is comfortable for all ages and includes carol singing, the Christmas story, and bell ringing. Bring a jingle bell to ring. Free. [fairlingtonumc.org/](http://fairlingtonumc.org/)

waterfront for a spectacular show by Waterskiing Santa and his merry crew. The prime viewing area is Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), with more great views from the Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Founders Park (351 N. Union St.), and Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.). Come early to see the pre-

show (on jet skis). Visit the website: [waterskiingsanta.com](http://waterskiingsanta.com)

**Family Bell Service.** 5-5:45 p.m. At Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King Street, Alexandria. The community is invited to celebrate Christmas Eve with a service is comfortable for all ages and includes carol singing, the Christmas

story, and bell ringing. Bring a jingle bell to ring. Free. Visit the website: <https://fairlingtonumc.org/>

## TUESDAY/DEC. 31

**First Night Alexandria.** 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. At venues throughout Old Town Alexandria. This 25th Anniversary Celebration is the largest New Year's Eve party in the D.C. region that is safe and fun for the entire family and culminates with a fantastic fireworks finale over the Potomac River at midnight. Kids Karnivals: 6 to 9 p.m. at four warm indoor venues in Old Town, Del Ray and the West End. Live Entertainment: 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at warm indoor venues throughout Old Town Alexandria. Rockin' on the River: 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Waterfront Park, 1 King St., Alexandria. Midnight fireworks: Potomac River at the foot of King St., Alexandria. All Access Admission: \$25 through November 30, 2019; \$30 December 1-30, 2019; \$35 December 31, 2019; Kids Carnival is \$5 for children ages 2-12 and free for parents and infants. Call 703-963-3755 or visit [firstnightalexandria.org](http://firstnightalexandria.org).

## JAN. 7 TO FEB. 9

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# LETTERS

## Shady Influences at Work

To the editor:

Another example of shady influences at work is in Sen. Scott Surovell's op-ed where he calls for legislation allowing class action lawsuits. His op-ed neglects to mention that he is a trial lawyer specializing in such lawsuits or that the Virginia Trial Lawyers Assn. gave his campaign \$12,000. <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/candidate/campaign-finance/115805/scott-surovell>.

It is hard to imagine something more corrupt than a class action lawsuit where lawyers sue allegedly on people's behalf without first obtaining their consent. Class action "plaintiffs" might not even know they were part of such law-

suits until after the verdict. These lawsuits can generate huge legal fees, while netting individual "members of the class" *de minimis* "winnings" which would qualify for small claims court.

Virginia enjoys one of the country's best business climates in part because it is one of the few states which still do not allow class action lawsuits.

Even though Sen. Surovell doesn't represent Alexandria, his legislative advocacy has impacted us. He was one of the few Democrats who played a leading role in imposing the legislature's unfunded mandate that we remediate all four of Old Town's combined sewer outfalls on a dra-

conian short time-frame, despite the combined sewer overflows having been long-established, flipantly insisting that Alexandria "has the financial capacity to fix these problems, but it's dragging its feet," as if a half-billion dollar project were not unprecedented [www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/potomac-river-sewage-puts-alexandria-in-crosshairs/2017/01/12/08365bac-d8f3-11e6-9f9f-5cdb4b7f8dd7\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/potomac-river-sewage-puts-alexandria-in-crosshairs/2017/01/12/08365bac-d8f3-11e6-9f9f-5cdb4b7f8dd7_story.html). For many years to come, we will be paying through our sewer bills for what he did to us.

**Dino Drudi**  
Alexandria

## The Challenges Ahead

A few weeks ago, a friend I knew for many years died. He was a character, looked a little like a lost member of ZZ Top and like Johnny Cash, always dressed in black. He did odd jobs around the neighborhood, and never drank. He was a good listener, but had his own opinions. He always knew best, and sometimes this rubbed people the wrong way, and they stopped trying to help him. But he did have a lot of friends

For years he did not want to take handouts, but wanted to work. He knew bricklaying, and did great work, even though he might spend more time discussing how it should be done than doing it. He once suggested digging a trench across my basement after noticing it was flooded, but thankfully before I let him rip up the concrete, I had my sump pump checked and learned that it needed to be replaced, not the line beneath the concrete floor. One of the last times I paid him money to sweep the steps to the same basement, he took the money, and said he could come back in a couple days to do the work, in retrospect, he was probably hungry, and took the money to Murphy's where he liked to sit at the bar and get his meals.

As you might guess, my friend was homeless. He wasn't entirely homeless, as one of his closest friends Rosemary Feit Covey, let him build a "shed" in her backyard with plywood another friend gave him. A neighbor next door let him use the outlet for a heater and the TV another friend gave him. He did work with a wheelbarrow Micheal Chamowitz gave him, and used tools another friend took him to Home Depot to buy. For years he used the laundry room in my basement, sometimes to sleep in on cold nights. The tenants in my apartment were the ones who

asked if it was ok if he slept downstairs.

Unfortunately, our friend John White died, reportedly of heart failure and cellulitis that prevented him from taking some of the medications he needed. At his memorial service, which we held at the Wine Gallery on Patrick, we learned how yet another friend from Sugar House had gotten him to quit smoking, and that they had discovered he was Amish from near Lancaster, PA. A local law office helped him get an identification. Police detectives are still searching for any known relatives. Rosemary, whose house he lived behind, had a long list of people she had tried to call and find help for him, for a permanent place for him to live, and social services were not as helpful as the Alexandria Police Department. The week before he died he was hallucinating and it was clear he probably had an undiagnosed mental illness, and it was Police Officers who tried to convince him to get help.

One of the employees at Misha's told me how he had improved over the years, from being angry and holding a tinfoil piece of cardboard over his face so he could not be filmed by cell phones, to be-

coming a kinder person, I would like to think that was because of the community of support around him. One of the officers who tried to help him came to the memorial service. We all thought we had not done enough for him but collectively we had helped him in many ways to survive, and if we had joined forces and known about each other we might have been able to do more. We should all think of those right around us who need our help.

That is partly why I am telling this story. John White was born at home, home schooled, probably never finished school, left an abusive home life, and so had no family. He also could be prejudiced (esp. against other homeless people) and he would not go to a shelter. He probably liked Trump, but also probably never voted. But he was a good person who cared for animals, including Rosemary's dog Seal, nature and other people. I think he showed that despite all the challenges ahead and everything that divides us, and those who purposely trying to divide us, there is always more that unites us, like our humanity. Something to think about this holiday season.

**Boyd Walker**  
Alexandria

## Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors. Send to:

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## Catharsis

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Having re-read what I wrote in last week's column: "Still Processing," I can't say it made me feel a whole lot better than when I wrote it. Granted, it was a column that had to be written given my self-indulgent tendencies (that I fight against constantly) and the possible crossroads that I may be entering. Nevertheless, if part of the underlying reason why I take up this space every week is to vent and share, as a means, hopefully not to a premature end, I suppose there was stress released there. But the subject matter was so third-rail-ish that even though I've tried to avoid it, I feel adversely affected by the experience.

The subject to which I so ambiguously refer is my own death. Aside from not wanting it to happen, if I don't plan in advance for it having happened, the chaos that will ensue and envelop my wife, Dina, is both unfair and inconsiderate. You see, in our relationship, she's been the social director and I've been the business manager. To quote my late father: "and neither the twain shall meet except on the twack." If I were indeed to predecease my wife, a fairly distinct possibility, not only would there be no twain, there would be no "twack" as well. There would only be trouble, and that's "trouble" with a capital "T."

It's not so much that there are complications lurking, so far as I understand them: there are no children, no blended family, no special needs situations, no multi-layered business entanglements, no offshore anything (heck, there's very little onshore), our home and bank accounts are jointly owned, no financial thresholds exceeded, no delinquencies and few liabilities; really not much out of the ordinary. However, I get that ordinary is in the eye of the surviving beholder, which is likely not to be me. Therefore, if I want to contribute to my wife's quality of life after I've departed dearly (and to her peace of mind now, quite frankly), apparently a road map of sorts is in the offing. (And believe me, none of this is about control; it's more about initiative.)

I guess there's something in me that feels I need to get it out on paper so that I might act on it in person. Maybe writing about such a grim task minimizes its grimness, sort of like dipping your toe in the water before you jump? Maybe thinking and writing about the anxiety I'm feeling concerning what my wife will have to do after I've died is kind of a mental ice breaker. Not that I'm getting into any details here, it's more of a broad brush, to once again quote my brother, Richard, about the need for consideration and fairness. The underlying problem is that getting into all this after I'm-dead stuff seems and feels incredibly negative. And I try to ignore negativity. In fact, it may very well have been my positivity which has kept me alive all these live-long days.

I'm sure I'm rationalizing (maybe more like "irrationalizing"), as an excuse for not doing what needs to be done, but I've always been good at that. In addition, I keep coming back to it's my life; I'm the one with "the cancer," to quote "Forrest, Forrest Gump," describing his mother's cause of death, as a means of justifying my stubbornness/unwillingness to make certain arrangements. I mean, when you think of it, having cancer is a heck of an excuse. And though I've rarely used it as one, I've always felt it. And with respect to planning for a future I don't have, I have to blame the cancer. It makes you do and think things you might not otherwise do and think. It's not as if anyone is ever prepared for a cancer/serious health diagnosis. Quite the opposite in fact. As such, you either learn to roll with the punches or get knocked down by them.

This recent/current experience hasn't knocked me down or out exactly, but it has made me a little wobbly emotionally, and reminded me just how insidious cancer can be. Once again, and for the first time in years, I seem to be at greater risk than ever. I suppose with risk comes opportunities. Having my tumors "typed" and in turn treated with specific/targeted medicine seems to be present just such an opportunity; exactly what the doctor ordered, literally.

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

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## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

desirable.

**Children's Holiday Party.** Alexandria Domestic Violence Program (DVP) invites more than 60 families to attend a Children's Holiday Party. Dinner is provided and families participate in activities such as arts and crafts, face painting, Frosty Follies and singing holiday songs. Children also get a special visit from Santa Claus. You can participate in this year's event by contributing gift cards or new toys. For more information or to donate, email Magdalia Martinez at magdalia.martinez@alexandriava.gov. Visit alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence or alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence.

**Groundbreaking Ceremony for Potomac Yard Metro.** 2-3 p.m. At the future location of the station's northwest entrance (3601 Potomac Ave., Alexandria). The City of Alexandria will hold a public groundbreaking ceremony for the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station. The announcement of the groundbreaking ceremony follows issuance of a permit on Nov. 15 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the federal Clean Water Act. The permit followed an extensive evaluation process, including a public comment period and consideration of conservation, economics, aesthetics, environmental protection, cultural values, energy needs, and safety. This was the final permit required under the Joint Permit Application process with the Corps and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The Virginia State Water Control Board unanimously approved the state permit in September. Visit alexandriava.gov/PotomacYardMetro.

### GLASS RECYCLING

Effective Jan. 15, 2020, customers who receive City of Alexandria recycling service must bring glass containers to one of the region's 25 "purple bin" drop-off locations to ensure the glass will be recycled. As in other area localities, glass placed in curbside trash or recycling carts will not be recycled. Glass taken to a purple bin must be clean and empty. Due to issues that include recycling contamination, rising recycling costs, and a lack of regional glass-sorting facilities, glass collected in curbside recycling by City contractors is ending up as trash in landfills. One of the action items in the City's WasteSmart Strategic Plan adopted by City Council earlier this year was to review the City's position on glass and make a recommendation to continue the collection service or remove glass from residential curbside recycling.

Glass Recycling Locations in the City of Alexandria:

- ❖ S. Whiting St. (at the end of S. Whiting St., intersecting at Tower Ct.)
- ❖ 3224 Colvin St.
- ❖ 4251 Eisenhower Ave.
- ❖ Jones Point Park (at the end of S. Royal St.)
- ❖ MOM's Organic Market (3831 Mt. Vernon Ave.) - opening in January 2020

For more information about glass recycling, visit alexandriava.gov/Recycling.

### THURSDAY/JAN. 23

**Meet and Greet.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At The Veterans Curation Program Laboratory, 816 N. St. Asaph Street, Alexandria. The Veterans Curation Program would like to invite the community to the Alexandria Meet and Greet. The VCP provides vocational rehabilitation and innovative training to 12 recently separated veterans using archaeological collections administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This event will provide you with a chance to meet the veterans and to learn more about the program. Visit the website: <http://www.veteranscurationprogram.org/>.

### ALEXANDRIA DESIGNATED "SOLSMART SILVER"

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