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Alexandria Gazette Packet

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25 CENTS

APRIL 30, 2020

Hard Times Heartbreak

Fred Parker dies at 78.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It was a dilapidated building on a decaying stretch of King Street. In 1980, much of Old Town looked the same. But Fred Parker had a dream and this is where he was going to make it happen.

"It was a rough area," Parker would recall of the location he and his younger brother Jim selected for the Hard Times Café chili parlor. "During the early years some customers even had their cars broken into while they were in the restaurant. But thankfully, they kept coming back."

James Beard and Julia Child were among those to sing the praises of Hard Times chili. Supreme Court justices, members of Congress and sports figures became regular customers.

On April 26, the man with the vision of bringing authentic chili to Old Town died peacefully at his Alexandria home following a battle with cancer. He was 78.

"Fred is my role model," said Parker's son Edward, who goes by Ned. "He had almost no connection with his own father and he wanted to make up for that. He was a dedicated father, particularly during my teenage years when I was quite problematic and making bad decisions. He was a rock for me during that time."

Frederic Goodfellow Parker was born Nov. 12, 1941 in Pensacola, Fla. He was the oldest of two sons born to Frederic Thompson Parker and Lois Goodfellow Parker. He spent his early years in the Bahamas and Hawaii, where his father worked as an Army engineer.

In the early 1950s, the family moved to Northern Virginia. Park-



Fred Parker, founder of Hard Times Café, died April 26 at the age of 78.

er graduated from Wakefield High School in Arlington then went on to study graphic design at the

"Rarely was there an Old Town fundraiser that dad wasn't giving away chili."

—Ned Parker

University of Arizona. Following graduation, he returned to Northern Virginia and began working at

the National Gallery of Art. It was during this time that he met his future wife, Carol Christensen. The two married in 1984 and together raised two sons.

But a passion for chili had been ignited in Parker and his brother at a young age and in 1980 they left the security of their day jobs — Jim was an accountant — to turn what had been a hobby into a business. The first Hard Times Café opened that

SEE HARD TIMES, PAGE 12



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

The LoanMax in Arlandria remains open during the stay-at-home order, offering loans to struggling families at more than 200 percent annual interest as unemployment claims skyrocket.

Loan Sharks in the Water

Lawmakers crack down on predatory lending, although reform won't happen for eight months.

The LoanMax on Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria is open for business during the pandemic, and colorful signs in the windows announce in English and Spanish that the car-title lender remains open during a stay-at-home order — offering loans at 200 percent annual interest during a time when unemployment claims in Alexandria are skyrocketing. Those kinds of interest rates will be illegal under the Fairness in

Lending Act, which Gov. Ralph Northam signed last week after lawmakers signed off on some last-minute changes. But the ban on such high-interest lending won't take effect until New Years Day 2021, which means high-interest lenders have eight months to engage in an unprecedented lending spree during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

"They're predators, and

SEE HELPING, PAGE 13

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As always, I am here to provide support in whatever way I can, whether it be questions about the Old Town real estate market or just a friendly ear if you'd like to talk. I am at your side, and at your service, today, and in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

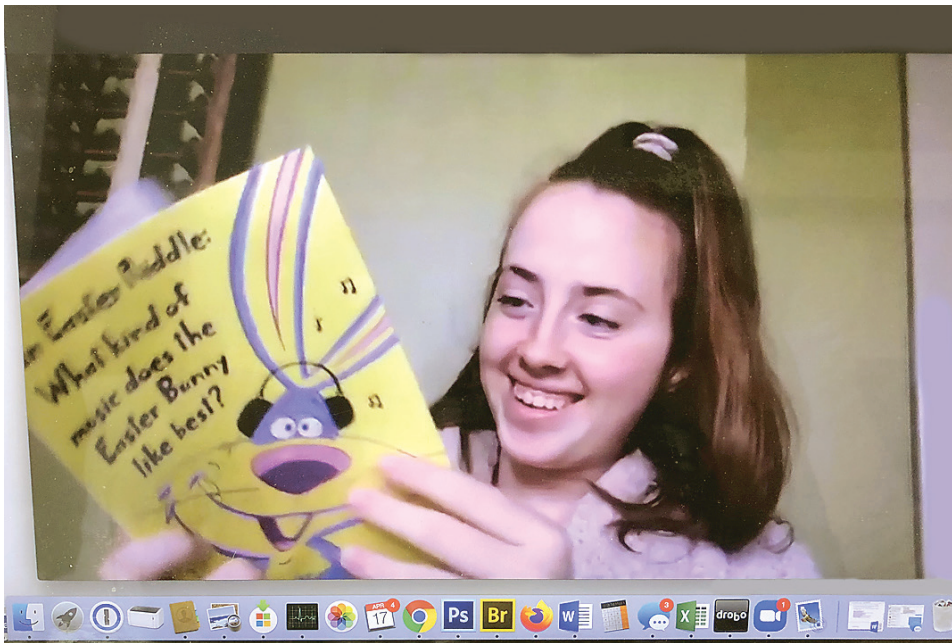
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Mia Murphy, age 15, Arlington.



Eloise Frazer, age 10, Alexandria.

Coronavirus Causes Mail Bonding

BY JOAN BRADY
THE GAZETTE

The mail hits the floor with a thwack each day and startles nine-year-old Hailey Kerr, even though she knows it's coming.

Before the virus, Hailey wasn't home when the mail was delivered. Now she watches through her window as the masked carrier hurries from her house to the next.

Hailey is especially excited when she gets mail addressed just to her, "It's so special to get a card in the mail. It means that someone has taken the time to write to you."

Hailey is at an age where she does not have a phone. And now, without school and activities, her connection to friends is limited to a parent from each family being willing -- and able -- to loan a phone for talking or texting. So the virus and lockdown have made getting physical mail even more important to her. "Now, more than ever, it's like a piece of gold," Hailey told me.

Hailey, a student at Douglas MacArthur Elementary in Alexandria, is fortunate that she has a number of friends and family who send her mail throughout the year, including a young friend who is a big letter writer and card sender. And apparently, 10-year-old Eloise Frazer, also of Alexandria, has upped her game since being on lockdown.

Eloise's recent card was newsy and topical. She thanked Hailey for cupcakes recently delivered, provided an update on the status of her cat, Bob, expressed wishes that "this," as she referred to the virus et al, would be over soon. And she suggested they start a Zoom book club.

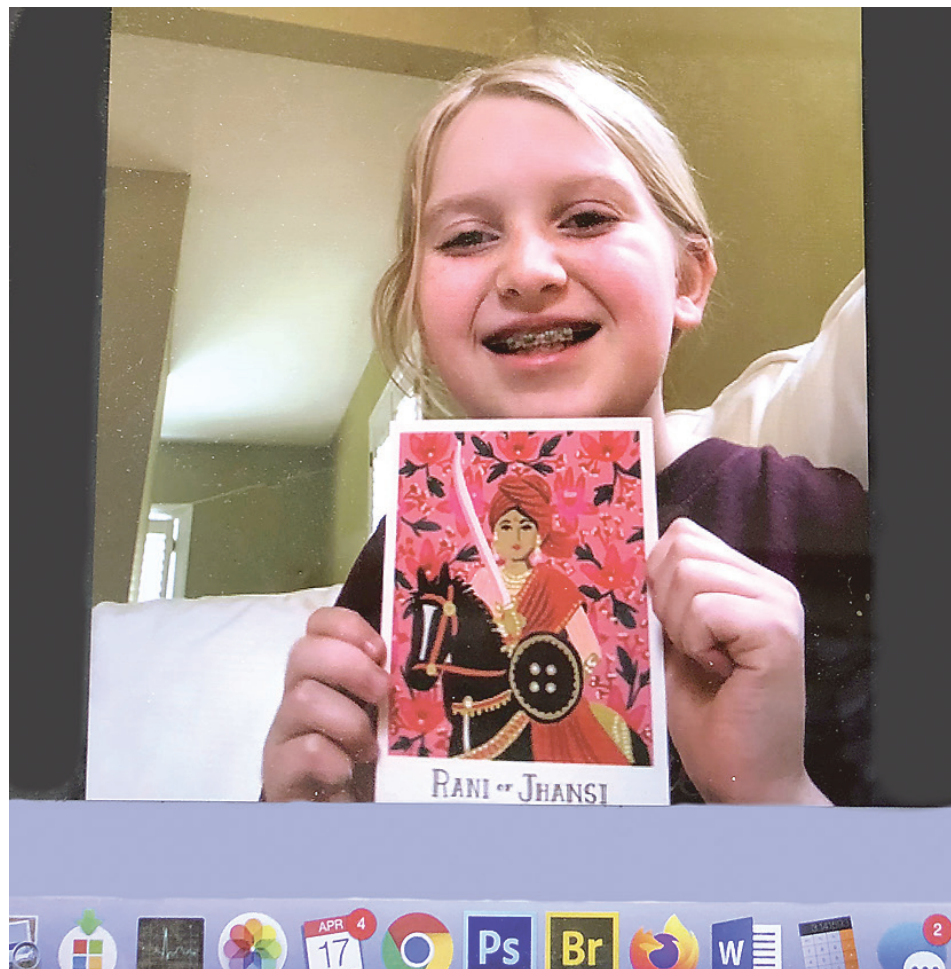
I mean, really, who wouldn't be delighted to receive such a welcome break from the sameness that the virus has brought to each day.

After hearing about Eloise and her letters and cards, I had to meet her. And fortunate-

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"I really get excited when I get mail."

— Mia Murphy, 15, of Arlington



Hailey Kerr, age 9, student at Douglas MacArthur Elementary in Alexandria.

ly, she was available on short notice for a quick Zoom call.

Understated Eloise, seemed surprised to learn about the impact her thoughtful letters have on Hailey. She started writing letters and sending cards when she was just seven, after making a new friend at her mom's college reunion. Three years later,

Eloise has a pretty extensive list of friends and family to whom she writes to regularly.

She appreciates the value of written communications, "That's how you get to know [people] better," she says.

For 15-year-old Mia Murphy, of Arlington, receiving first class mail is also special. Mail comes mostly from grandparents, who often give her a heads up that something is on the way. Mia loves the advance notice, which gives her the opportunity to look forward to its arrival. For her, a letter or card in the mail is more personal than a text or phone call. She says that "handwritten letters are really

important, they have so much value."

Mia jokes that glitter included in the envelope from a card received years ago is still stuck between floor boards. And she laughs talking about the cursive of one grandmother that is sometimes "difficult to decipher."

An eagerly anticipated Easter card has finally finished mail quarantine and Mia opened it on our Zoom call. In the first moments after opening, it was as though Mia had forgotten I was there, as she lost herself in her grandmother's message, smiling at

"USPS will be unable to make payroll in October absent urgent congressional intervention, putting at risk the livelihoods of the Postal Service's 630,000 employees."

— Megan Brennan,
Postmaster General

the hand-drawn cartoons and stickers. "I really get excited when I get mail. It's a fun little pick-me-up," Mia says.

And Mia recognizes the value of mail carriers, "They have the power to carry human connection through letters."

That power of the United States Postal Service remains one of few areas of bipartisan consensus today,

SEE DISCOVERING, PAGE 14



Inova Alexandria Hospital health care workers pose for a photo with members of the Alexandria Fire Department April 28 after a surprise show of gratitude from first responders for their efforts during the COVID-19 crisis.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Inova Alexandria Hospital CEO Dr. Rina Bansal, second from right, stands with other hospital personnel as first responders from across the city surprised health care workers April 28 with a show of appreciation and thanks.

Heroes Honoring Heroes

First responders turn out to applaud health care workers.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Law enforcement personnel from across the region descended upon Inova Alexandria Hospital in the early evening hours of April 28 to show their appreciation for healthcare workers during the COVID-19 crisis.

"This is amazing," said hospital CEO Dr. Rina Bansal as she looked at the crowd gathered with signs of appreciation and thanks. "If we talk about one community, this is truly one community. To see our first responders appreciating our health care workers truly warms my heart."

First responders were joined by neighborhood residents in cheering the hospital workers during what was expected to be a routine shift change.

"We're out here to support our essential medical staff that has been dealing with the virus in an up close and personal experience," said Sergeant Ronchez Hancock of the Virginia State Police. "We would like to show our appreciation to them for the hard work they are doing in saving lives on a day to day basis."

A number of law enforcement and fire agencies banded together to plan tributes to the medical professionals working in the Northern Virginia Inova Hospitals. Visits at individual hospitals were scheduled during the evening shift change, which saw hundreds applauding medical professionals and other hospital staff.

The George Mason Police, the Virginia



Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, left, and Fire Chief Corey Smedley practice social distancing by substituting a foot tap for shaking hands.



Officers with the Virginia State Police show support for Inova Alexandria health care workers during a shift change April 28.

State Police, Alexandria Fire Department and Alexandria Sheriff's Office were on hand for the Alexandria tribute.



Inova Alexandria health care workers pose for a photo with first responders who turned out April 28 in a show of support for their efforts during the COVID-19 crisis.



Inova Alexandria health care workers pose for a photo with first responders who turned out April 28 in a show of support for their efforts during the COVID-19 crisis.

"This is a major lump in my throat," said Dr. Anthony Comerota. "This is a true reflection of the way health care professionals and

first responders in the community have acted. When you see this type of camaraderie, it's all worth it."

News

'Service Above Self'

Rotary awards \$65k to local nonprofits.

The Rotary Club of Alexandria has awarded grants totaling \$65,000 to 41 nonprofit organizations that advance literacy for children and adults in Alexandria.

The grants seek to improve the lives of children, youth, seniors and those with special needs in the Alexandria community. The grants are traditionally presented at the organization's annual Contributions Day Luncheon in mid-June. Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, recipients were notified earlier this month and funds were dispersed in an effort to quickly support the needs of each nonprofit. The Contributions Day Luncheon will be rescheduled for a later date.

Additionally, in late March, the club made a \$10,000 gift to the ACT NOW COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND to make emergency funds available to organizations on the front lines.

"This year, we all face additional challenges as we navigate the uncertainties created by COVID-19," said Rotary Club of Alexandria president Sharon Meisel. "Given the critical needs of those served by the grantee organization, the club's board of directors believed it was important to release the funds now. Our Rotary members are committed to working together with the community to help our Alexandria neighbors in these unusual and stressful times."

The funds awarded are raised primarily at the Rotary Club of Alexandria's signature event, its annual Taste for Giving held at the US Patent and Trademark Office every October. Chartered in 1928, the Rotary Club of Alexandria has over 100 members who meet weekly and live their motto of "service above self." The club is part of Rotary International, a global network of 1.2 million members. www.alexandriarotary.org

- JEANNE THEISMANN

BULLETIN BOARD

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

TEMPORARY DROP-OFF SITE DISPOSAL

The City of Alexandria will open a temporary drop-off site for residents to dispose of their grass, leaves, brush, branches and other yard waste materials. The temporary drop-off location will provide Alexandria residents with a way to dispose of yard waste during the City's suspension of curbside yard waste collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yard waste may be dropped off at the City's leaf processing yard (4251 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria) on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Residents using the facility should follow these guidelines:

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

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What A Wonderful Childhood: Frances Colbert Clements Terrell

BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

Back in the 1940s, there were no computers and no social media to entertain oneself. However, people like Frances Colbert Clements Terrell who grew up in the West End of Alexandria had a wonderful childhood without today's electronics and gadgets.

Frances' father Delaney Clement Colbert was a first generation Alexandrian who was born at home at 512 Gibbon Street. On the other hand, her mother Mary Agnes Johnson grew up in the West End in the Seminary area that was once part of Falls Church in Fairfax, Virginia.

Mary Agnes was the great-grandchild of Wallace Wanzer who came to Alexandria, Virginia prior to the Civil War from Fauquier County, Virginia. This was the backdrop to Frances growing up in the Seminary area.

Frances was the fourth child and last child born to her parents. Her siblings were Delaney Clement Jr., Delores and Frederick. The Colbert children grew up in the Seminary



Frances' parents Delaney C. Colbert and Mary Agnes Johnson.

Frances B. Colbert Terrell

area where relatives had been for more than eighty years. Many of their relatives had intermarried with others in the neighborhood making all of them related to one another through blood or mar-

riage. Because of those family relationships, the family extended to Seminary, King Street, Braddock Road and Quaker Lane.

When Frances was growing up, her family and her cousins enjoyed

the safety of their neighborhood. They would walk to the Virginia Theological Seminary and hang-out by sitting on the wall that was in front of the Seminary campus.

SEE FRANCES, PAGE 7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Calling into Question the Enterprise of Public Education

What the Alexandria school board's vote addressing the remainder of the academic year shows is the challenges facing public education. Some of these challenges call into question whether public education should be a governmental or private enterprise.

Alexandria schools are not strapped for resources. Taxpayers spend \$15,000 per student on average, yet the school system's best response is that students completing 60% of the work (minimum passing in most grading systems, and failing in the old-style university and civil service grading systems) will be counted as 100% and failure will be ignored. The real failure is not on the students' part, but the adults in charge (the school board and umpteen layers of central office bureaucracy).

All the private schools, which run lean w/ limited administrative

bureaucracy, had their children doing effective distance learning w/ in a week or so of the governor's order closing the schools. \$15,000 per student can buy plenty of Wi-Fi hotspots and laptops the school system already issues students. Remote training is a change with a learning and adjustment curve, but youth, even non-college bound, have much more tech savvy than adults and can adapt. Assignments can be emailed and examinations can be administered orally by telephone or Zoom. "Inconsistent internet access" I found the most questionable, as if children today don't have smartphones (for \$15,000 per student, the school system could procure them for the few who can't afford them).

Public education struggles because it is both the provider and evaluator of educational services. The failure of former Governor McDonnell's attempt to set up an agency to put failing schools into state receivership shows that public education is too fraught with politics to be accountable. Large school systems may reach dis-economies of scale. Private and parochial schools do, in some places, successfully educate students from low-income households. Per-

haps they are more effective because their typically smaller size makes them more adaptable with less bureaucratic overhead.

The school system's response to the challenge raised by the coronavirus closure calls into question the enterprise of public education. We should seriously consider instead a charter school or full privatization model where the government can regulate the schools to make sure they are providing a bona fide education w/o the conflict-of-interest inherent in the government overseeing and regulating a service it is ultimately responsible for providing.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Another Reason to Eat Healthier

Dear Editor:

Massive slaughterhouse closures are driving U.S. consumers to plant-based meat products, as sick workers pay the price. Tyson Foods, JBS USA, and Smithfield Foods, the largest meat processors, have closed 17 plants, devastating rural communities and threatening

the nation's meat supply. Production is already down by 25 percent.

In reaction, U.S. sales of plant-based meats surged by 265 percent, according to consumer data group Nielsen. Shares of Beyond Meat, a prominent plant-based meat brand, rallied by 60 percent.

A Washington Post investigation found that coronavirus outbreaks in more than 48 U.S. meat packing plants have sickened at least 3,300 workers and killed 17. The companies failed to provide adequate protective gear to the workers and forced some with Covid symptoms to keep working. USA Today reports that more than 150 of U.S.'s largest plants operate in counties with the highest rate of coronavirus infection.

In addition to the generally accepted consumer health argument for avoiding animal food products, the pandemic has now added the worker health element. Production of plant-based meats requires much less labor and allows for ample physical distancing.

We can all support the switch to healthy food on our next visit to our supermarket.

Ashton Gunter
Alexandria



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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jean Card

Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann

jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner,
Mark Mogle

Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown, Michael Pope,
Hope Nelson

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

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

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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Frances Colbert

FROM PAGE 6

This was a regular hangout for the neighborhood children. Other social events were going to Arlington, Virginia for games and going down to the City of Alexandria. However, Church played an important role in their lives. Both of her parents were Deacons at Oakland Baptist Church, and she and her siblings participated in Church activities. Frances sang in the Church Choir and her sister, Delores, played the piano. The Church formed a choir called the Jewelite Gospel Singers. Frances said, "We got up early on Sunday to prepare to go to Church. Once we got to Church, we had Sunday school, services and our choir sang. Then we would leave Church to go to another Church where we would also sing. From early Sunday morning, we did not return home until late in the evening on Sunday. We had a good time." She also enjoyed visiting friends, hanging out at the Donaldson Store and ice sliding with friends and family at the Virginia Theological Seminary. She enjoyed riding the bus with her family and friends to school. The West End children attended elementary school at Lyles Crouch Elementary School and Parker-Gray High School in Alexandria.

Frances contributes her childhood to having great parents, a good neighborhood, lots of relatives and devotion to her Church.

Frances Colbert Clements Terrell was born in 1943 to Delaney C. Colbert and Mary Agnes Johnson. She had one son, Louis Eric Clements who is deceased. She has six grandchildren.

Today, West End has gone through many changes. Frances, her brother Frederick Maurice Colbert and her Haskins' cousins are the only family members left that made up a huge community that once roamed the entire West End area. Other relatives have left the neighborhood by going to Alexandria, Washington, DC and Maryland. However, Oakland Baptist Church still stands as a testimony to what life was like when the Jewelites sang at Oakland Baptist Church and when Delores Colbert played the piano.

She had a wonderful busy, simple and loving life. Frances said, "I would not have changed anything in my childhood."

Char McCargo Bah is a published author, freelance writer, independent historian, genealogist and a Living Legend of Alexandria. She maintains two blogs, <http://www.theothermal-alexandria.com> and <http://www.findingthingsforu.com>.

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Shelter Finds New Ways to Help Animals in Pandemic

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET

The team at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) hasn't let a global pandemic deter them from their mission of helping animals in the community every day. Instead, they continue to look for new ways to connect with people across Northern Virginia, while modeling safe best practices for the community and their own staff.

A new virtual adoptions process, for example, has brought about more than 65 adoptions since it launched in early April. That includes an energetic gray tabby kitten, adopted by a deaf couple who viewed him during a virtual meet-and-greet and typed their questions about him to AWLA staff using an online conferencing platform. Hershey the kitten went home the same day.

Here's how AWLA continues to provide vital services to the community:

Safe space: The shelter is following best practices for both human and animal health management. This includes limiting the number of people in the shelter, use of face masks and other protective equipment, frequent disinfecting and sanitizing, and allowing the public to remain in their cars for pickup and surrender of animals. The shelter also is using special protocols for handling animals that might have been exposed to the virus. All safety policies are reviewed and updated as new research on the virus becomes available.

Virtual adoptions: Virtual adoptions offer a safe way for people to bring a new companion into their homes. Potential adopters start the process by viewing adoptable animals at AlexandriaAnimals.org/Virtual-Adoptions. Then they choose a date for their virtual meet-and-greet and fill out an online adoption survey to indicate to AWLA staff what they are seeking in a pet. Calendar slots have been filling quickly, but potential pet parents have been patient as they wait to connect with their future furry family members in the digital "meeting," an audio-visual encounter between pets and potential adopters. "We know it's hard for potential adopters who want to just reach out and pet the animal, but if we can help everyone stay safe and still connect animals with adopters, we think it should be considered a success," said AWLA Adoptions and Admissions Manager Sean Furnage.

Adopters who wish to move forward with an adoption have a phone consultation with a staff member to learn more about the animal. Once the process is complete, the adopter picks up the animal at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter; they stay in their car while an AWLA team member in protective equipment delivers their new pet to them and finalizes the adoption contract. And, of course, staff remains available to answer any questions by phone that adopters might have.

Pet Pantry: Canned and dry pet food, potty pads and litter are flying off the shelves of the shelter's Pet Pantry, which supplies these and other pet necessities to pet owners in



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AWLA

Virtual adoptions, through an online process, are providing happy endings for people — and many of the animals at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.



Pet Pantry: A feline recipient of cans of food from the Pet Pantry at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. The Pet Pantry provides free pet food and other supplies to those in need.

need. Requesters can email community@alexandrianimals.org or call (703) 746-5508 to request pet food or supplies, which are available for pickup by appointment only. To donate to the Pet Pantry, supplies can be placed in an outdoor cart at the shelter at 4101 Eisenhower Ave. or delivered directly through the AWLA Wish List at AlexandriaAnimals.org/PetPantry.

Volunteers in action: Dozens of AWLA volunteers have sprung into action from home, writing short bios of adoptable animals, sewing curtains for kennels and face masks for employees, whipping up enrichment items such as "busy boxes" for the shelter animals and many more tasks. "As always, our volunteers have been essential to keeping the shelter thriving," said AWLA Manager of Volunteers and Community Events Echo Keif.



A new puppy, adopted virtually from the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, makes the day of a couple.

Learning for kids: The AWLA launched a new virtual humane education program for kids of all ages called Junior PAWS, which will offer weekly lessons on topics ranging

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

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 touches the lives of more than 6,000 animals every year, including strays, lost pets, local wildlife, rescued animals and animals surrendered by their owners. The AWLA is committed to addressing animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare and serving as an educational resource for the community. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org.

from animal-themed crafts to animal careers. Many of the shelter's youth programs, including Pawsitive Action Club (PAC), scout badge programs and youth shelter tours, also have been converted to virtual formats; more information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org/Youth.

Newborn kitten support: As the weather gets warmer, the northern Virginia region experiences "kitten season," when the number of kittens born starts to go up. In order to help kittens stay their healthiest and to prevent the community spread of COVID-19 in the coming months, the AWLA is following the best practices of veterinarians and animal welfare professionals across the country: If a kitten appears healthy, it should be left alone. For kittens who appear ill, injured, trapped or abandoned, the AWLA is still available to assist, both to offer guidance and take in kittens in need of nurturing or veterinary care. But healthy kittens in the care of their mothers should remain where they are, for their own safety as well as the continued health of the community.

The AWLA team continues to be a resource across the City of Alexandria: staff are still available to take in stray and surrendered animals by appointment and to offer guidance and behavioral advice to adopters by phone. The Animal Services team remains hard at work helping wild and domestic animals across the city, all while following best practices in this time of pandemic. During these unprecedented times, the AWLA still strives to do the best for animals in the community, and for the people who love them.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

The drop-off site is for Alexandria residents only; residents must show government ID or a piece of mail showing their name and address to confirm residency. Contractors and other commercial entities will not be permitted to use the site.

Residents may drop off yard waste in containers that can be emptied on-site, or in biodegradable paper bags to be ground and processed.

Residents are responsible for removing yard waste from their vehicles and putting them in the appropriate containers (staff will be on-site to help control traffic and monitor materials).

Residents are asked to follow guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to maintain 6 feet of physical

distance and wear cloth face coverings while they are depositing items at the site.

Dirt, sod, stumps, rocks, and stones will not be accepted.

Visit alexandriava.gov/ResourceRecovery for more information.

LIBRARY RECEIVES FREEGAL MUSIC UPGRADE

The Alexandria Library has received the Freegal Music Upgrade. Freegal is a free music service which offers access to about 15 million songs, including Sony Music's catalog of legendary artists, and over 40,000 music videos. In total the collection is comprised of music from over 40,000 labels with music that originates in over

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

NEWS

Alexandria Library Hosts Virtual Census Information Sessions

Alexandria Library is hosting a series of virtual information sessions to discuss the 2020 Census and the importance of ensuring everyone in Alexandria is counted. On Saturday, May 2 from 3pm – 5pm, please join City Councilman Canek Aguirre and local non-profit leaders for the first of a three-part virtual series designed to educate residents on how the outcome of the 2020 Census will impact Alexandria's ability to deliver important community services to residents. This event will be held via Zoom. You can register to take part in this event by following the hyperlink found here: <https://alexlibraryva.org/event/4266879> Also, if you have not already completed your Census survey, it's not too late to do so. Completing the Census is safe, easy, and fast and there is no better time to take 10 minutes to complete the Census

than today. The Census is our opportunity to count all residents in Alexandria regardless of age, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, or any other demographic characteristic. For every 1 percent of Alexandrians not counted, the city loses approximately \$18 million dollars in federal funding over the next ten years.

The Census be completed online, by phone, or via paper survey. The Census is available in 13 languages and language support is available in 59 languages. To complete your 2020 Census, visit <https://www.2020census.gov/>. The 2020 Census can also be completed over the phone by dialing 844-330-2020. For more information on the City of Alexandria's involvement in the 2020 Census, visit alexandria.gov/Census2020. For information on employment opportunities related to the 2020 Census, visit <https://2020census.gov/jobs>.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 8

100 countries. There is no software to download, and there are no digital rights management (DRM) restrictions. Freegal offers music in both downloadable and streaming format. You may download up to

5 songs per week. These songs are free for you to keep and upload to your own music collection. To learn more about this service, visit the website <https://alexlibraryva.org/streaming-music>

Spring Valley Farm and Orchard Eli and Misty Cook

Due to the Covid 19 crisis, Eli & Misty Cook, who normally participate in the following Farmers Markets:

Alexandria-Old Town Alexandria Farmer's Market
301 King Street Alexandria, VA 22314
Saturday 7:00 am to 12:00 pm

Silver Spring-FRESHFARM Silver Springs Market
1 Veterans Place Silver Springs MD 20910
Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Westover-Westover Farmer's Market
1644 N. McKinley Rd. Arlington, VA 22205
Sunday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Burke-Burke VA pickup location will be in the VRE parking lot VRE STA P Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke, VA 22015
Saturday 8am-11am.

DuPont-FRESHFARM DuPont Circle Market, D.C.
1600 20th St. NW Washington, D.C 20009
Sunday 8:30 am to 1:30 pm

Mosaic- FRESHFARM Mosaic Market
2910 District Ave. Fairfax, VA 22031
Sunday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Reston Farmer's Market (Opening May 8)
1609 Washington Plaza N Reston, VA 20190
Saturday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Fairlington Farmer's Market
3308 S. Stafford St. Arlington, VA 22206
Sunday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (Opening May 5)



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This Week in Alexandria in Coronavirus

United States passed one million Covid-19 Cases, and more than 50,000 deaths, while here at home, business task forces, hunger, more medicaid, expired licenses and more.

BY KEN MOORE
GAZETTE

Tuesday, April 28

Alexandria Cases: 653
Virginia Cases: 14,339
Alexandria Deaths: 18
Virginia Deaths: 492

Monday, April 27

Alexandria Cases: 627
Virginia Cases: 13,535
Alexandria Deaths: 18

MAINTAIN CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION Schedules: Pediatricians across Virginia have noted a decline in infants and children receiving their scheduled vaccinations, over concern about exposure to the coronavirus. During National Infant Immunization Week, parents are being reminded of the importance of keeping children up to date on vaccine schedules, to protect them from diseases that are preventable.

VIRGINIA GETS HELP: U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine announced \$14,857,347 in federal funding for the Commonwealth's response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The funding, awarded through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases cooperative agreement, was made possible by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The Virginia Department of Health can use the funds to establish or enhance the ability to aggressively identify cases, conduct contact tracing and follow up, as well as implement appropriate containment measures. It can also be used to improve morbidity and mortality surveillance, enhance testing capacity, control COVID-19 in high-risk settings and protect vulnerable or high-risk populations, as well as help healthcare systems manage and monitor system capacity.

Sunday, April 26

Alexandria Cases: 591
Virginia Cases: 12,970
Alexandria Deaths: 18
Virginia Deaths: 448

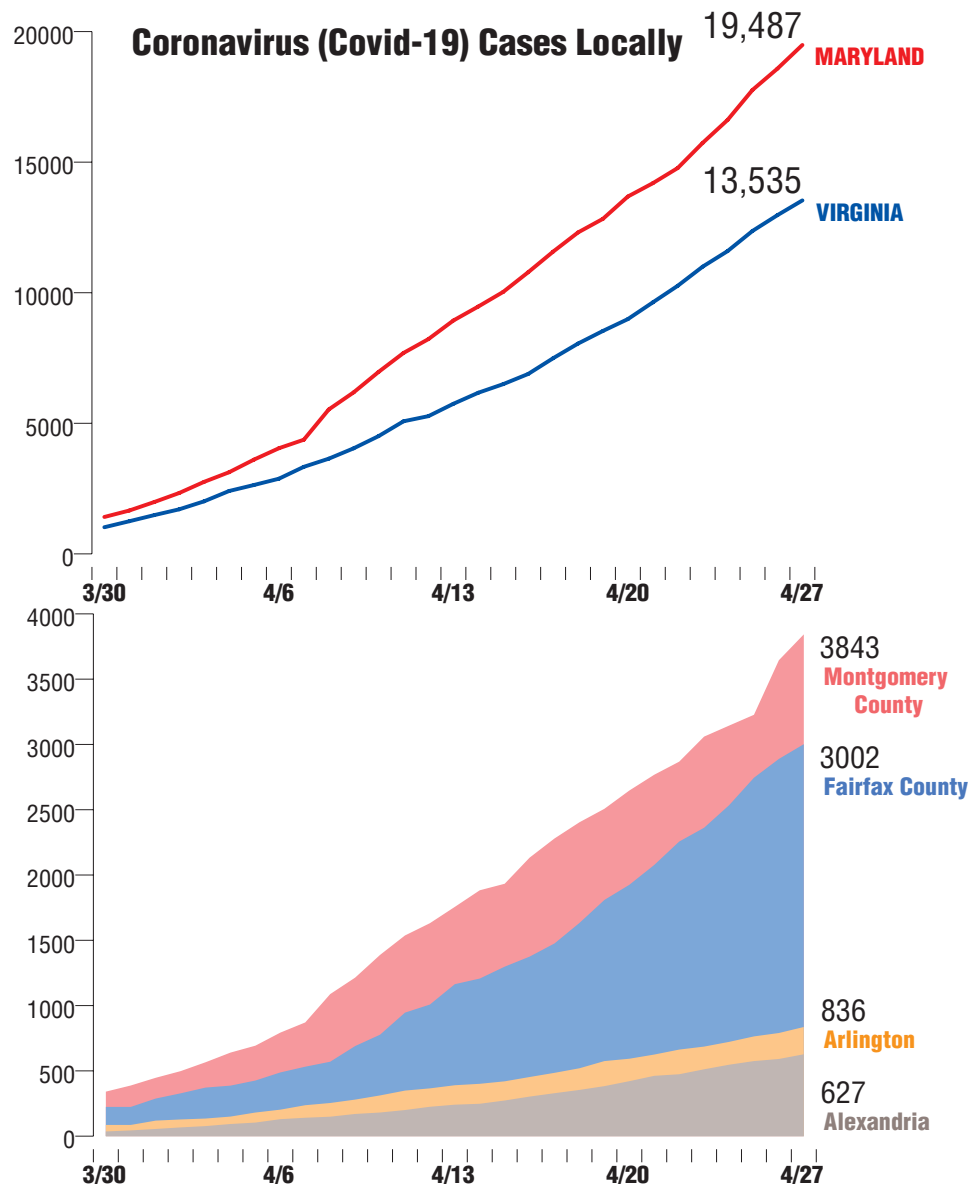
Saturday, April 25

Alexandria Cases: 575
Virginia Cases: 12,366
Alexandria Deaths: 18

The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 575, including 18 fatalities.

Friday, April 24

Alexandria Cases: 547
Virginia Cases: 11,594
Alexandria Deaths: 15



SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, [HTTP://WWW.VDH.VIRGINIA.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/)
MARYLAND: MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, [HTTPS://CORONAVIRUS.MARYLAND.GOV/](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/)
ALEXANDRIA SOURCE: CITY OF ALEXANDRIA PRESS RELEASES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: “Over the last few weeks, several drugs, as well as home remedies, have been touted as ways to prevent or treat COVID-19. At this time, there is no specific treatment for coronavirus infections,” according to the Alexandria Health Department. “Treatment consists of supportive care, relief of symptoms, drinking plenty of fluids, staying at home to rest, and practicing home isolation and physical distancing within the household to avoid spreading infection to others. The Virginia Department of Health has developed Frequently Asked Questions about proposed treatments, remedies, and over-the-counter drugs.” See www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions/

BLEACH CLEANS HOUSES, NOT HUMANS: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) warns the public not to ingest disinfectant products; never apply the product to themselves or others; and never use

these products with food. The agency also cautioned users to never mix products unless specified in the use directions, as certain combinations of chemicals and disinfectants will create toxic acids or gases. The agency also advises people to wash their hands after using a disinfectant. This minimizes the user's exposure both to the chemicals in the disinfectant and to the virus the product is intended to kill. Information about disinfectants and safety can be found on the EPA's Coronavirus page <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

BUSINESS TASK FORCE: Gov. Ralph Northam formed the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Business Task Force, which will continue to provide advice and guidance to the Cabinet on a safe, responsible strategy for easing restrictions on businesses and individuals.

The task force consists of representatives from a variety of Virginia industries includ-

ing restaurants, breweries, wineries, small and large retailers, fitness centers, hair salons, barber shops, spas and aestheticians, museums, hospitality groups, campgrounds and entertainment venues.

“These are Virginians who are thinking everyday about how to protect the health of their staff and the communities in which they operate,” said Northam. “They understand that our public health and business interests are aligned — we must take measures that both ensure the safety and confidence of consumers and prevent the spread of disease. Their input will continue to be critical as we plan a safe, consistent, successful path forward.”

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO REOPEN? According to a presentation by the governor's office, the Commonwealth is taking aggressive action, by closing schools, limiting gatherings, and a stay-home order. Virginia's metrics for before moving to phase one include: percentage of positive tests over 14 days moving downward; rate of hospitalizations over 14 days going downward; adequate supply of hospital beds and intensive care beds; increasing and sustainable supply of PPE; increased testing and tracing. Then Virginia can move to phase one. Phase one would look like this: Some businesses reopen with strict safety restrictions; continued social distancing; continued teleworking; face coverings recommended in public.

Thursday, April 23

Alexandria Cases: 512
Virginia Cases: 10,998
Alexandria Deaths: 14

ALEXANDRIA FATALITIES INCREASE: The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 512, including 15 fatalities. A graph showing the history of cases and fatalities in Alexandria is available at alexandriava.gov/Coronavirus. The Virginia Department of Health is now counting cases that are considered “probable” in addition to positive test results in this total number. Probable cases include symptomatic patients diagnosed in a clinical setting, but not tested. City officials reiterate that it is essential for all community members, even those who don't have a diagnosed illness, to stay home except for essential trips such as brief visits to the pharmacy, doctor, or grocery store.

EXPIRED LICENSES VALID?: Virginia's DMV offices and mobile units are closed until May 11, and Gov. Northam extended the validity of driver's licenses and vehicle credentials that were due to expire. Those needing to renew a license or vehicle registration are encouraged to do so online. The Virginia State Police suspended enforcement of the time period in which new Virginia residents must get a driver's license or register their vehicles, the expiration of temporary license plates, and the time period in which temporary residents may operate vehicles with out-of-state plates, and enforcement of motor vehicle inspections by Virginia State Police. Until further notice, the City of Alexandria

SEE CORONAVIRUS, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS

80th Anniversary of the Robert H. Robinson Library Opening

Less than a year after the 1939 Library Sit-in was organized by Samuel Tucker Jr., the Robert H. Robinson Library opened on April 24, 1940, at the corner of Wythe and N. Alfred Street. The rushed approval and quick construction of the Library satisfied the desire of the Alexandria Library Board of Directors and the City Council to maintain the Kate Waller Barrett Library as a whites-only institution. The fact that 600 African American Alexandrians obtained library cards in the first year of its operation is a testament to its role in our community. The majority of these early patrons were children.

While the facilities and resources were separate and unequal to those at the whites-only branch, this place of learning was important to Alexandria's African

American community. It offered story hours for kids, an adult reading club, and a gathering space. The Alexandria Library system was quietly and gradually integrated. First, in 1959 for adults and high school students, then in July 1962, it integrated fully. Immediately following the full integration of the libraries, the Robert Robinson Library operated as Alexandria's Bookmobile Station. It later served as the Alexandria Black History Resource Center between 1983 and 2004. Today marks 80 years since African American patrons could register for library cards. Since 2005, the building has served as the Alexandria Black History Museum—an important community asset, then and now. For more info: [#HistoricALX2U](https://www.alexandriava.gov/114283) #MuseumFromHome.

Coronavirus

FROM PAGE 5

alexandria will not issue citations for driver's licenses, license plates, or safety inspection decals that expired after Feb. 29, 2020.

PETS WITH COVID: A small number of pets have been reported to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after contact with people with COVID-19, according to the Alexandria Health Department. At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes the disease. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets. Visit the CDC website to learn more about COVID-19 and pets.

ELECTIVE SURGERIES RESUME: The current ban on elective surgeries has been extended by one week, but can resume midnight on April 30. "My top priority is protecting public health, and that includes ensuring that our frontline medical staff have the equipment they need to stay safe as they treat Virginians who are sick," said Northam. The public health emergency order does not apply to any procedure if the delay would cause harm to a patient. The order also does not apply to outpatient visits in hospital-based clinics, family planning services or emergency needs.

FEDERAL TELEWORK HELPS ALL: Northam, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan and Washington, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser urged the Trump administration to continue to keep telework policies in place for the federal workforce. More than one-fifth of the nation's federal workforce lives in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

"We know that a continued federal telework policy will help save lives by allowing more of our region's 360,000 federal employees to work from home," Hogan, Northam and Bowser wrote in a letter to Michael J. Rigas, acting director of the Office of Personnel Management.

"Failure to do so could lead to a rise in cases and delay our ability to re-open the region."

MEDICAID RECIPIENTS in Virginia now have easier access to medical care amid the current public health crisis. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) will have flexibility to make critical services more accessible to people who need them as a result of the pandemic.

The executive order eliminates copayments for in-

dividuals receiving coverage through the Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) program. The order also ensures that Medicaid members can obtain replacements for prosthetics, orthotics, and other durable medical equipment and supplies that are lost or damaged without requiring in-person verifications or paperwork.

The executive order streamlines the process for admitting individuals to a nursing facility by suspending preadmission screening requirements. The order also allows personal care, respite, and companion providers to work for up to 60 days, rather than the current 30 days, while background checks are conducted. Supervision and training requirements still apply.

Wednesday April 22

Alexandria Cases: 474
Virginia Cases: 10,266
Alexandria Deaths: 11

The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 474, including 13 fatalities. A graph showing the history of cases and fatalities in Alexandria is available at alexandriava.gov/Coronavirus.

HELP FOR BUSINESS: The Alexandria Economic Development Partnership has an updated collection of COVID-19 resources for businesses, including information on disaster assistance; tax and regulatory changes; support for affected workers; government response; how to support local small businesses, and more. Visit Alx at Home at www.visitalexandriava.com/alxathome/ to experience Alexandria's restaurants, shops and attractions while staying at home.

COPING STRATEGIES, NOT ALCOHOL: The risk for misusing alcohol and other substances increases during times of stress, like the COVID-19 crisis. The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria reminds residents of the dangers of substance misuse and the importance of healthy coping practices. See <https://www.alexandriava.gov/DCHSConnect>

SURVIVED COVID? CONSIDER DONATING PLASMA: People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that could attack the virus.

This "convalescent plasma" is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening disease. For more information, including eligibility criteria, visit the American Red Cross www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/plasma-donations-from-recovered-covid-19-patients.html



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Fred Parker and Carol Christensen dancing at a chili cook off.



Fred Parker, right, with younger brother Jim. The two were lifelong best friends.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Fred Parker in his 1941 truck and the Hard Times Horse were a highlight of many local parades.



Fred Parker, right, generously supported numerous local fundraisers.

Hard Times Heartbreak

FROM PAGE 1

same year on King Street and still operates today.

“My grandfather learned how to make chili from a chuck wagon cook along the Chisholm Trail at the turn of the 20th century,” Parker said of the family lore. “The recipe got passed down to my aunt Irma, who sparked our love for chili.”

The restaurant was a success and subsequently expanded to include 16 locations from Fredericksburg, Va., to Hagerstown, Md.

“Restaurants typically don’t last very long,” said Ned Parker. “But the success of Hard Times is a testament to the values of Fred and Jim. They could have used cheaper materials or paid cheaper wages but instead took a much different

approach. They preferred to invest in people.”

Parker joined the King Street Metro Enterprise Team, known as KISMET, and served on the board of its successor, the Old Town Business and Professional Association. He is a former board member of Friends of the Torpedo Factory and First Night Alexandria.

Over the years, Parker spearheaded chili festivals benefiting the National Kidney Foundation and donated food to numerous events including the Rotary Club of Alexandria’s Taste for Giving and the Carpenter’s Shelter Cook-off. His contributions to the community led to his being named a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2015.

“Rarely was there an Old Town fundraiser that dad wasn’t giving away chili,” Ned Parker said. “Through his actions he taught me about kindness. I’m hearing story after story of how Fred and Jim would step in to help out an employee with rent or other debts. They both felt that taking a chance on people is the most important risk you can take in life. It’s a risk that pays off better than anything else.” An accomplished musician, Parker performed regularly in a band with his wife and former NGA colleagues and his two sons are also musicians. In recent years, Parker was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and in late 2019 it was discovered he had cancer.

Survivors include his wife of 36 years, Carol Christensen; and sons Edward (Ned) Parker and fiancée Hillary Clausen of Alexandria; Jonathan Parker and fiancée Molly Hongola of Brooklyn, N.Y.; and Charlie Parker of Taos, New Mexico. Parker will be cremated and his ashes scattered among favorite family vacation spots including Chincoteague Beach, the Adirondack Mountains, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was predeceased by his brother Jim in 2014.

No services are planned at this time. A memorial website - www.FredGParker.com - has been created and will include announcements on any future memorial activities. A traditional funeral will follow at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Parkinson’s Foundation or the Carpenter’s Shelter.

“These last days I realized just how popular a person dad was,” Ned Parker said. “People truly loved him. I remember growing up how easy it was to get ahead socially by putting other people down. But dad managed never to speak bad of anybody. He was that rare breed of cool and kind and taught me that you can do both.”



Fred Parker and Carol Christensen on their wedding day in 1984.



Fred Parker with wife Carol and sons Jonathan and Ned.



Fred Parker, second from right, with Wakefield High School friends Dave Henderson, Mitch Zetlin, Louie Gerteis and Cotton Kent.

PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE

PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE

Loan Sharks in the Water

FROM PAGE 1

there's blood in the water. They can smell it," said Jay Speer, executive director of the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "I don't think there's any doubt about it. They're going to clean up."

Conservative Democrats in the Senate wanted to push the effective date back to July 1, 2021, which would have given high-interest lenders and their team of lobbyists in Richmond an opportunity to kill the reform effort in the next General Assembly session. Attorney General Mark Herring pressed for an effective date of July 1, 2020, which would have capped interest rates at 36 percent APR this summer, a time when the economy is likely to remain in crisis. The governor suggested an effective date of Jan. 1, 2021. During a one-day reconvene session last week, lawmakers signed off on the governor's suggestion, and the Fairness in Lending Act was signed into law with an effective date of New Years Day 2021.

"This is great news for the many Virginians finding themselves in a tough financial situation because of COVID-19 and who may turn to small-dollar loans in order to make ends meet," said Attorney General Mark Herring in a written statement after the bill became law. "These consumer lending reforms will close easily abused loopholes and provide much needed protections for Virginia borrowers."

HIGH-INTEREST LENDERS have been under fire for years, and critics say the business is designed to take advantage of low-income people who are in need of quick cash during a moment of crisis. The industry responded by flooding candidates for the General Assembly with campaign cash. Most of that money went to Republicans, although the campaign cash extends to prominent Democrats in key positions. LoanMax, for example, gave \$30,000 to the Virginia Senate Democratic Caucus and \$25,000 to Senate Democratic Leader Dick Saslaw, who represents the West End of Alexandria in the state Senate.

"Generally I have not supported bills that put people out of business," said Saslaw when asked about the bill after it was introduced. "So we'll see."

Senate Democrats were wary of putting high-interest lenders out of business too soon. Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) suggested that the Fairness in Lending Act have a reenactment clause, which would have required lawmakers pass the bill again next year in order for it to be effective.

Critics said that would have been a death knell for the reform effort, giving the industry an opportunity to mobilize lobbyists and step up campaign contributions when lawmakers returned home after the session was over.

"We still have to maintain access to this credit," said Marsden, who received \$11,500 from LoanMax since 2007. "I think a reenactment clause slowing this train down a little bit would give us time to react next year giving these companies a time to transition."

The Senate Commerce and Labor Committee ended up striking a deal, delaying enactment until July 1, 2021 in an effort to gain enough votes among conservative Democrats in the Senate to get the bill to the governor's desk.

Northam amended the bill to move up the effective date to Jan. 1, 2021, a change that encountered some opposition in the Senate. During a dramatic Senate session last week at the Science Museum of Virginia, senators initially approved of the governor's change

then rejected it then took it up a third time and narrowly approved the amendment. Marsden voted against the amendment in all three of those votes. Saslaw ended up changing his vote against the accelerated effective date, voting against it twice and then eventually supporting the governor's amendment on the third and final vote.

"Saslaw has been very close to these lenders over the years, but I think he does care about how people view him," said Kim Bobo, executive director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. "This is one issue where he doesn't want to be on the wrong side of history."

THE FAIRNESS IN LENDING ACT caps interest rates at 36 percent APR, a dramatic reduction in the nose-

bleed levels that are legal today. Car-title lenders can charge a maximum of 264 percent interest. And the online lenders have essentially no rules, allowing them to charge as much as 800 percent interest on loans in Virginia. The new law does allow these companies to charge monthly fees, depending on what kind of loans they are offering. It was introduced by Del. Lamont Bagby (D-74) and state Sen. Mamie Locke (D-2).

"This bill was brought forward because Virginia has some of the weakest laws in the country for payday and title loans," said Locke. "The same lenders are charging Virginians three times more than what they are charging in other states. This is unacceptable, and Virginia consumers deserve better."

Similar reform efforts have already happened in Colorado and Ohio, and many of the same lenders who operate in Virginia also operate in those states. That may provide a window to what will happen here after the new law becomes effective next year. According to research conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts, prices in those states came down by a factor of three after they implemented similar reforms. Consequently, lenders became more efficient. For example, payday lending locations currently serve about 500 unique customers a year and car-title lending locations currently serve about 300 unique customers a year.

"That's a deeply inefficient business," said Alex Horowitz, senior research officer at Pew Charitable Trusts. "What happened in Colorado and what happened in Ohio is that lenders did consolidate some locations. But a neighborhood that used to have seven or eight stores afterward did have three or four and the remaining stores doubled their customer count."

Payday lenders will be able to charge a \$25 monthly fee, and car-title lenders will be able to charge a \$15 monthly fee.

Online lenders will be required to get a Virginia license in order to offer loans, and the attorney general has been given broad discretion to go after rogue lenders and declare the loans null and void. Horowitz says most of these companies will remain in Virginia rather than closing their doors, although the ones with storefront locations are likely to dramatically scale back the number of properties they lease.

"The same lenders who operate in Virginia operate in Ohio and Colorado and charge three times less in those states," said Horowitz. "So it's clear they are going to continue to operate in Virginia because the law enables them to earn enough revenue to be profitable in the state."

"They're predators, and there's blood in the water. They can smell it."

— Jay Speer, Virginia Poverty Law Center

OBITUARY

Erika Vogel

(27 September 1939 - 17 April 2020)



Erika Vogel, a long-time resident of the Alexandria area, passed away on 17 April 2020 at Silverado Memory Care, Alexandria, Virginia. She was born on 27 September 1939 in Hamburg, Germany, to Herr and Frau Carl Meyer and Margaretha Vogel Meyer. Erika and her sisters, Rosemarie and Margret, were raised in the Baltic Sea town of Eckernförde. Erika graduated from the University of Gottingen, Germany, as a physical therapist.

Erika, her mother, and her sisters immigrated to the United States in the early 1960s. Erika, as a divorced mother,

raised alone a wonderful son named Matthias Vogel. His death at the age of 33 years and 11 months in October 2003 from leukemia was a devastating loss for her. Erika and Matthias had adopted her mother's maiden name Vogel.

Erika for many years was a highly respected, home-visiting physical therapist in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Her personality reflected honesty, empathy, and lack of pretension. She loved working and recreating outdoors in nature. The Billy Goat Trail at Great Falls, Maryland, was a special place for her, as was her garden. She was an independent soul who was exuberant about life.

Erika was a loving daughter, sister, mother, and friend. She had a difficult but rewarding life and is loved and missed.

Erika is survived by her sister Margret Janello, Margret's husband Martin Janello, her nephew Eric Hochadel, his wife Claudia Hochadel, her grandnephew Rutger Hochadel, her cousin Christian Sueverkruep, his wife Claudia Sueverkruep, and many friends, including Daniel Leubecker, Waldi Crawford, Stefan Crawford, Owen Keegan family, David Deal, Bard Malovany, Marie Benoite, Meriwether Rumrill family, Richard Locasso, Serge Liros, Dale Brown, Stacey Andrews, Sheryl Hudson, Eileen Deymier, Steve O'Brien, Eileen O'Neil, Dick Christensen, Dieter Roesler, Jeane and Loren Larson, Erna Harris, Jane and Don Butler, Christine Gretsche Genner, and Christa Malek Mohamadi among others.

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And So It Begins



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The six-week schedule/treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer began on Thursday, April 23 with an hour-long telephone appointment with one of the doctors from the Nuclear Medicine department. He was confirming, clarifying and preparing yours truly for the arduous task at hand: a commitment to a month-long, low iodine diet beginning April 27 (no salt, no sugar, no dairy, no normal-type bread and a bunch of other less impactful nos) and 15 on-site hospital-related visits (in lab, in doctor's office and in scan area) followed by an overnight in late May when I receive my final treatment. After which, for the following week, I am to be quarantined at home (unsafe for children, pregnant woman and pets) with miscellaneous other quarantine-associated behaviors/advisories (changing bed sheets every other day, using one bathroom exclusively, flushing toilets twice, using plastic silverware and paper plates, among others) with the fun and games ending June 5th when the quarantine period ends. Then I can resume my normal/familiar routine for the treatment of my underlying/pre-existing stage IV non small cell lung cancer. Treatment for which will likely begin again in mid July after I've had a CT scan to assess the damage/success of my thyroid cancer treatment.

By then, it will have been about six months that I've actually had any current treatment/medicine for my lung cancer. Once given a clean bill of health (so far as the thyroid cancer is concerned), I'll likely restart my bi-weekly treatments for my non-small cell lung cancer (which as my oncologist said; he could treat but never cure). Treatment which began in early March, 2009 and has continued for nearly 11 years. Pending the results of that July CT scan, my life will likely return to abnormal. Still, it's way too early to speculate on life going forward. Six months (dating back to my last treatment in Jan., 2020) is an eternity in the cancer world (heck six days is an eternity).

And aside from the obvious, that planning for or even predicting scenarios two to three months hence, it has never been my oncologist's style. Then consider, as he said during our most recent phone appointment (April 17), that he's no longer certain if the tumors in my lungs are non small cell lung cancer, papillary thyroid cancer which has moved and/or, wait for it, that my lung cancer tumors have gone into remission. Can you quote the late Phil Rizzuto: "Holy cow!" None of which will be known until a week or so after my July CT scan. And not that wondering/waiting isn't already the hardest part but before I will have learned the status of my tumors, I will have been in and out of hospitals being treated for thyroid cancer right smack in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic when I'm supposed to do the exact opposite: isolate at home and stay away from hospitals. I couldn't be looking for more trouble if I planned it. Nevertheless, I just hope the old adage applies: "Time flies when you're having fun." (And I suppose I should add: flies safely.)

I don't really feel the fun? Maybe it's the needles you feel, or the fear/anxiety associated with being in and out of hospitals multiple times in a comparatively short period of time? Or maybe you feel the worry and difficulty I'll have maintaining a low iodine diet for 31 or so days, and the hunger pains and chocolate withdrawal I'll experience during that month. I'd like to think that the time/treatment will pass quickly, but I'm guessing that the demands of the diet will slow me down to a crawl and that the experience will be an extremely challenging transition/return to normal. (Particularly so for me since food has always been the bane of my existence.)

But so what? My health status, which originally had been a terminal one: "13 months to two years" has improved dramatically. I'm still likely to die from cancer but instead of the two years maximum I had anticipated (been "prognosed"), I am now living and breathing two months into year 12, post diagnosis. And depending upon what is interpreted from my upcoming CT scan, I may yet have a bit more life to live.

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

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NEWS

Discovering Mail

FROM PAGE 3

as evidenced by Pew Research's recent government agency favorability survey, which showed that 91 percent of adult respondents have a favorable opinion of the USPS, with no differentiation in opinion between party leanings.

The USPS is the largest employer in the United States after Walmart, employing roughly 630,000 people directly and another 7.3 million in the larger mailing industry, according to U.S. Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations.

Postal workers are deemed essential, helping to ensure all Americans have delivery access to everything from prescriptions to essential medical equipment to those day-brightening letters and cards, always and especially during this crisis. The Postal Service is a particularly important resource for seniors and people in rural areas, who often have less access to other delivery services.

A representative from the American Postal Workers Union said the USPS is actually more prepared than most organizations for this pandemic, because they have to be prepared for emergencies like hurricanes and anthrax in order to continue and resume operations quickly in times of crisis.

Even still, people outside the postal office want to show support and it's hard to know what to do.

Lillian Sun Tadlock, 49, of Vienna, has always had a soft spot for her letter carrier. In the summer she shares cold drinks and even popsicles.

In the era of coronavirus, she made special masks for her mail carrier and the clerk at her local post office.

Unfortunately, as much as her local postal workers appreciate her kindness, the U.S. Postal Service is going to need more than kindness to ensure its continued existence.

The USPS, already struggling prior to this year, are at risk to become a casualty of the virus. According to Connolly's website, Megan Brennan, Postmaster General, informed the Congressional Subcommittee during an April 9 briefing that "The Postal Service anticipates a \$13 billion revenue loss directly to COVID-19 this fiscal year. ... USPS will be unable to make payroll in October absent urgent congressional intervention, putting at risk the livelihoods of the Postal Service's 630,000 employees and the 7.3 million people who are part of the larger mailing industry."

It's pretty unthinkable to visualize a future without the U.S. Postal Service. When presented with the very idea, Hailey responded, "[The USPS] is important... people around the world have pen pals and need to be able to write to people they love ... because letters are cool."

If you have an opinion on the future of the U.S. Postal Service, contact your members of Congress. And share your letters with and experiences with the Connection. editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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