



Many construction workers don't get paid sick days, and their employers are not required to offer paid quarantine leave if they get sick from COVID-19.

The Fight for Paid Leave

After effort for paid sick days falters, lawmakers move toward paid quarantine leave.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The fight for paid sick days is on hold for now, and advocates have moved to a fallback position for the special session of the Virginia General Assembly: quarantine leave. Lawmakers are now considering a bill that will require employers to offer two weeks of paid leave for people employees suffering from COVID-19, workers who have children suffering from the virus and people forced into isolation because they have been exposed. Democrats are divided on how many employees a business

should have to be subjected to the requirement.

"Many of these workers are in front-line jobs preparing our food and sanitizing buildings with no benefits," said Del. Elizabeth Guzman (D-31). "These are the heroes who have kept our country running, and they should not have to lose their paycheck if they get COVID-19."

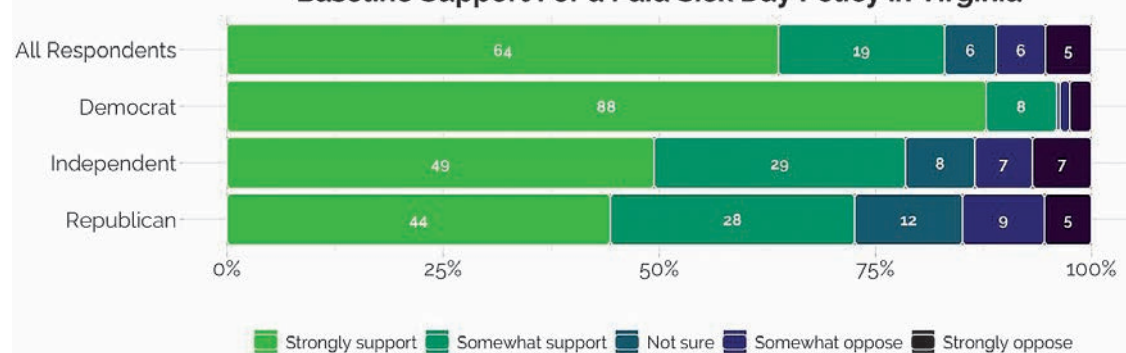
In the weeks leading up to the special session, several advocacy groups pushing for paid sick days formed a new coalition, Virginians for Paid Sick Days. Last week, the coalition released a poll conducted by YouGov showing eight out of ten Virginians support requiring em-

ployers to offer paid sick days. The poll shows that 72 percent of Republicans support paid sick days. Support was strongest among African Americans and people with a high school education or less.

"This poll clearly shows that people in Virginia want a policy on paid sick days," said Kim Bobo, executive director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. "It's not just that they support the concept. They want a policy, and they want our legislators to enact the policy."

WHEN LAWMAKERS assembled in Richmond at the beginning of the special session, SEE THE FIGHT FOR, PAGE 4

Baseline Support For a Paid Sick Day Policy in Virginia



Generally speaking, do you (support or oppose) requiring Virginia employers to offer paid sick days to their employees?

YouGov



TITANS CLASS OF '21 VIA TWITTER @TCTITANS2021

"So much fun at our Last First Day Event!"

For Seniors, It's Their Last First Day at T.C.

Outdoors, some almost-normal activities allow seniors to celebrate the last time they will have the first day of high school, albeit with masks and distancing.

The Last First Day Celebration for seniors at TC was advertised as "socially distant fun with your peers on the field at Chinquapin." It included voter registration, outside games, car painting, a speech from class president Karam Burjas, and more on Tuesday, Sept. 8.

SEE FOR SENIORS, PAGE 4



PHOTO BY BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER

T.C. Williams seniors Julianne Harvey and Isabel Metzler pose by Harvey's car window, which is painted to celebrate a new class of seniors.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Ryan Bailey, right, celebrates his 31st birthday with Pat Miller during a surprise yard and drive-by celebration Aug. 30 in Del Ray.

Sweet Surprise

Del Ray celebrates Ryan Bailey's 31st birthday.

The Del Ray community turned out for one of its own Aug. 30 to hold a surprise drive-by celebration in honor of Ryan Bailey's 31st birthday.

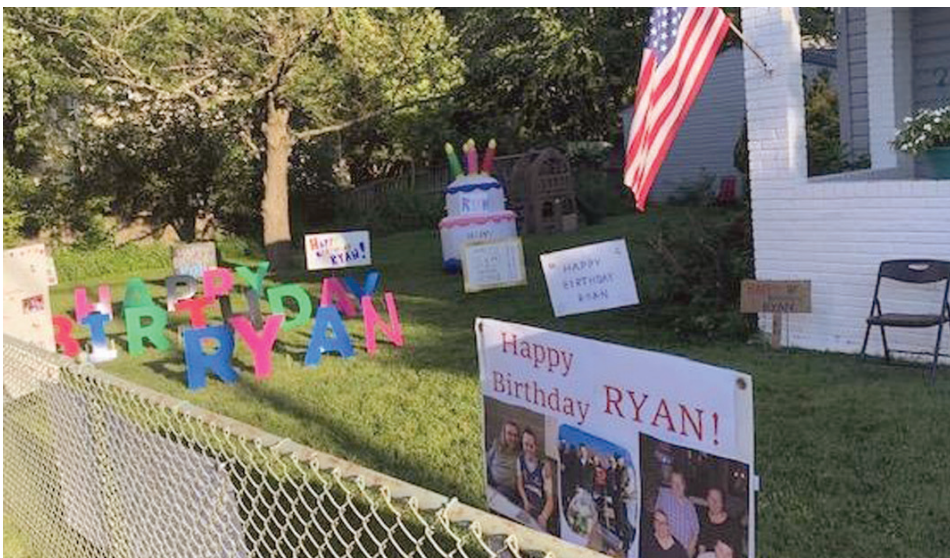
According to Bailey's mother Carol, Ryan was disappointed that he would not be able to celebrate his birthday this year due to the pandemic. As a surprise, neighbors and friends decorated their yards and vehicles for a drive-by celebration for the long-time community volunteer and 2020 Living Legend of Alexandria.

Said Bailey's friend Pat Miller, "This made him so happy."

- JEANNE THEISMANN



Neighbors and friends gather to wish Ryan Bailey a happy birthday Aug. 30 in Del Ray.



A yard in Del Ray is decorated as part of a surprise celebration of Ryan Bailey's 31st birthday on Aug. 30.

Eddie George To Speak Sept. 16

ASC to Host Heisman winner, NFL great via Zoom.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Heisman Trophy winner and four-time NFL Pro Bowler Eddie George will be the featured speaker at the Sept. 16 meeting of the Alexandria Sportsman's Club.

Born in Philadelphia, George graduated from Virginia's Fork Union Military Academy before beginning his college football career at Ohio State. He was the Heisman trophy winner in 1995 and a first round NFL draft choice of the then-Houston Oilers (now Tennessee Titans). He will speak to the club on the challenges he has faced throughout his career.

"I attribute everything in my life to my Fork Union experience," said George in a recent phone interview. "The education focused on the whole person – spiritual, body and mind. It cultivated the best in me and taught me to strive to be something more in life."

George said that he chose to attend Fork Union "hoping it would spark something in me to turn my life around. I needed to be planted in that type of soil."

George earned NFL Rookie of the Year honors in 1996 and from 1997-2000 was selected to four consecutive Pro Bowls. He still owns virtually every Tennessee Titans rushing record and led his team to Super Bowl XXXIV before retiring after a final campaign in 2004 with the Dallas Cowboys.

George is only the second NFL running back to rush for 10,000 yards while never missing a start, joining Jim Brown. Only Walter Payton (170) started more consecutive regular-season games than George's 130. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2011.

Following his retirement from professional football, George earned an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

"I was always thirsting for more knowledge and business school intrigued me," George said. "I had a lot of questions about business and wanted to fill in the cracks of the foundation of my business acumen – areas like finance, marketing and business relationships."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Former NFL great Eddie George will speak Sept. 16 via Zoom to the Alexandria Sportsman's Club.

Today George is an entrepreneur and philanthropist and with his wife established the Tamar and Edward George Legacy Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. Together they provide financial and community help to organizations and individuals that support excellence in education, entertainment, and entrepreneurship.

Still, the transition from professional sports to businessman and entrepreneur was not always an easy one.

"It's very hard to let go of a professional sports identity and find your next purpose," George admitted. "Finding that purpose is a process that takes time, patience, diligence and a lot of work on self-improvement and self-development. It's a difficult process but nothing worthwhile in life worth having is not difficult."

But George says that while adversity comes to everyone, how you choose to respond is what is important.

"We try to resist pain, try to go around it, try to pray away our difficulties," George said. "But the very things we are praying for to go away in our lives are the blessings that bring out the best in us. It's like the continual process of refining gold. We may not like it but pain is necessary for our growth."

The Alexandria Sportsman's Club meeting will be held via Zoom and pre-registration is required. The event is free and open to all but is limited to 100 attendees so early pre-registration is encouraged. For more information or to register for the Eddie George event, visit www.alexandriavasports.org.

The Fight for Paid Leave

FROM PAGE 1

of this year, advocates for paid sick days were hopeful that the New Democratic majorities in the House and Senate would be willing to make requirements of employers in Virginia. But business groups came out of the woodwork wanting exemptions. Lobbyists for airlines persuaded state Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) to carve out an exemption for airport workers. And then Gov. Ralph Northam suggested an exemption for businesses with fewer than 25 employees, eliminating about 90 percent of businesses from the requirement.

"We need to grow into these programs. I mean we've never done this before," said Del. Mark Sickles (D-43), who worked with the governor's office to amend his bill on the issue back in January. "It's a major step forward, and I'm certainly open to more employers being required to do this than is in my bill. I put it in as a favor to the governor, and we're going to work it out."

They didn't work it out. On the last day of the General Assembly session in March, days before the coronavirus shut down the Virginia economy, members of the state Senate quietly killed the bill without taking a vote on it. Senate Democrats were worried about the possible cost to the state budget of paying for paid sick days for Virginia's part-time workers. The exact dollar amount of that burden was undetermined, although estimates ranged from \$5 million to \$30 million.

Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) suggested that his part-time workers at his law office in Fairfax City shouldn't be paid to take a sick child to the doctor's office.

"They can use the eight hours they're working for me to run that errand as opposed to the 160 hours

they have of their own free time?" he asked on the Senate floor moments before senators killed the bill without voting on it.

AFTER THE PANDEMIC tanked the economy and lawmakers were forced into a special session to slash more than \$2 billion out of the budget, Favola returned to the issue again. When lawmakers returned to Richmond last month, she prepared a bill that would apply to employees who work 20 hours a week or more. Because state employees already have paid sick days for full-time workers, this had the benefit of making no financial burden on the budget. It sim-

ply made the same requirement of the private sector that Virginia was already making on itself — and it was subsetting to the duration of the pandemic.

"I can't tell you exactly the number of businesses that would be affected by this, but I can say that this is a very reasonable bill, which most businesses are going to want to live by anyway. I just think that in the middle of a public health emergency, this is something we should do."

Even though Favola fixed the problem that tanked her bill back in March, Senate Democrats were still unwilling to move forward with the proposal. Business groups

raised alarms about how much this new mandate would cost at a time when they're struggling to make ends meet during an economic crisis. That resonated with many of the conservative Senate Democrats on the Commerce and Labor Committee, including Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw, Sen. George Barker (D-39) and Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37).

"I want people to get additional money too. I want people to take time off work when they're sick," said Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25). "But I wonder where this additional money is going to come from."

FOR NOW, the fight for paid sick

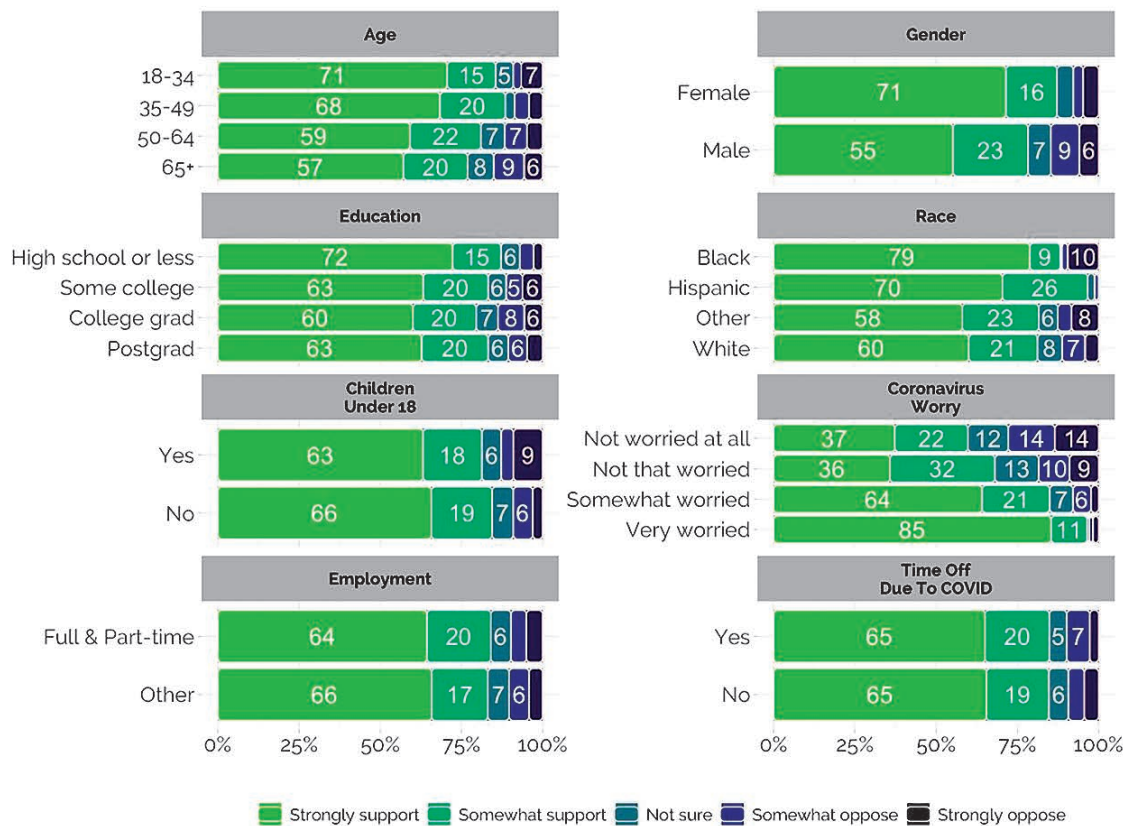
days is on hold. The coalition fighting for paid sick days is trying to navigate their way through the special session by securing a quarantine leave bill that doesn't harm the cause for paid sick days by setting a precedent making exemptions that could be replicated next year.

For example, Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee added provisions exempting businesses that have fewer than 50 employees. That would mean 96 percent of businesses in Virginia would not be required to offer paid quarantine leave, potentially setting a precedent the business community would expect next year during the debate on paid sick days.

"Employers who are least likely to provide paid sick time for people are small businesses," said Bobo. "So we've exempted the people who probably need this bill the most."

Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee also added a provision exempting workers who don't receive benefits like health insurance or a retirement plan. That would mean that restaurants would not be required to offer paid quarantine leave to workers who don't have health insurance, setting a precedent that could damage the coming debate on paid sick days and undermining the current effort on making sure vulnerable workers have access to quarantine leave. "Most of the people who don't have paid sick days are the ones you particularly worry about in a pandemic, restaurant workers or home health care workers," said Jared Leopold, communications consultant for Freedom Virginia. "These are the kind of people who tend not to have benefits. So you're exempting a really large class of people really important for covering."

Baseline Support for PSD by Demographic Characteristics



YouGov®



PHOTO BY BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER

For Seniors, It's Their Last First Day at T.C.

FROM PAGE 1

Members of the T.C. Williams class of 2021 socialize and play spike ball during their last first day of school event.



HOME LIFE STYLE

Last Chance to See the ASPIRE HOUSE in McLean

Design showhouse closes on Sunday, Sept. 13.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKETT

Designing a dream home can be likened to assembling a haute couture wardrobe. The right foundational pieces and accessories combine to create an aesthetic that is at once polished and nonchalant.

This weekend offers the last opportunity for the public to see and derive inspiration from such a space. The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13. The 9,600-square-foot home, located in McLean, was curated by 28 hand-picked designers, architects and remodelers. Each of the home's 30 rooms is a showcase of thoughtfully designed vignettes.

The spaces, "represent the very best of the design community," said Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair. "[It celebrates] great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

A predilection for antique furnishings served as inspiration for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule. Using a French antique sculpture as the focal point, she gave the space a sense of intimacy by hanging framed antique drawings on the walls which she swathed in floral wallpaper. The floor is covered with an antique rug in jewel tones of deep reds and greens.

"I wanted the space to be a place that would catch the attention of visitors," said Asack, of Masseria Chic in McLean. "I wanted it to be a space where guests could have a private conversation."

When designing the gallery, Lenore Winters of Lenore Winters Studios in Bethesda used intricately detailed panel moldings as a natural frame for the art that would inhabit the space. "Our primary intent was to...showcase the artworks to be displayed, said Winters. "Having that element as our primary focus, the design was carefully edited to respect and enhance the visitors' experience of each individual artwork."

A theatre without traditional stadium-style seating is the image that Courtney McLeod of Right Meets Left Interior Design used as the concept for her creation of the home's cinema, an entertainment space where family and visitors alike would gather to watch movies.

McLeod imagined that the homeowners would be well-traveled, so the space should appear as though it had evolved over time. "We wanted the room to have a collected feel, filled with pieces from around the

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PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13.



PHOTO BY FEDERICA ASACK

A French antique sculpture was the focal point for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule.

"Great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

—Mary Douglas Drysdale,
design chair, ASPIRE
HOUSE McLean Designer
Show House

world," she said.

The walls and ceiling are painted in Rickwood Red by Sherwin Williams. "By using the same color on the wall and ceilings, we were able to camouflage the fact that the ceiling height changes, which felt awkward when we first saw it," said McLeod.

A leather ottoman in olive green sits in the center of the room, surrounded by seating in shades of

cream. "It's a big, multifunctional piece of furniture," said McLeod. "The ottoman is a perfect spot for a tray holding a glass or wine or snacks or put your feet up while you're watching a movie."

The show house is for sale, priced at \$6.75 million and is located at 952 Mackall Farms Lane, McLean, VA. It will be open through Sunday, Sept. 14th from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. with in-person tours every 15 minutes. The last admission is at 4 p.m. All visitors must wear masks. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$45 for military and \$45 for seniors and a group tour is a max of 12 people at a time (12 ticket holders). Proceeds will benefit the ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME Diversity in Design Scholarship Fund.

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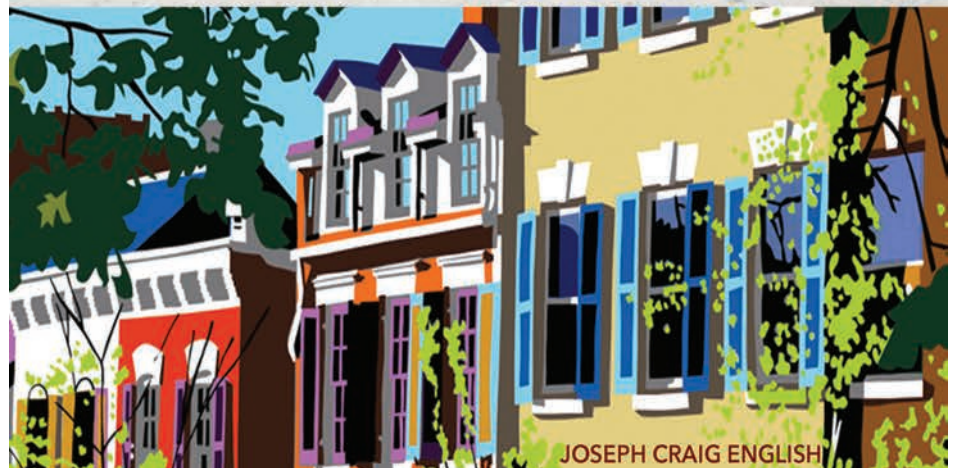
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OPINION

Special Session Looks at Nursing Homes, Reporting Outbreaks, Election Reform

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

As the third week of the General Assembly's Special Session draws to a close, several major legislative accomplishments are moving forward. The floor of our makeshift chamber in the Science Museum of Virginia was emptier than usual when Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) contracted the novel coronavirus and was absent for a week. Thankfully, he returned this week, having recovered fully. The complexity of crafting legislation to address the dire health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as addressing urgent calls for racial justice and police reform, all while navigating a new location and virtual meetings, has led to some unusual occurrences. It is rare to have any member absent for an extended period of time during session, even rarer to have several missing, but as this protracted session is occurring in August and September—when legislators are usually working on our other jobs, many Senators have been absent for extended periods. Senator Amanda Chase (R-Chesterfield), who claims to have a medical condition that prevents her from wearing a mask, has been confined to a plexiglass box, akin to a hockey penalty box, to keep herself and others safe

from possible infection. Through the fog of these distractions, the Senate has remained focused and deliberate, passing a number of bills to adapt to COVID-19, ensure folks can stay safely at home during the pandemic, and enact equitable reform in our justice system.

Nursing homes have been hit especially hard during the pandemic, where close quarters causes infections to spread incredibly quickly through the most vulnerable populations. As the pandemic continues into the fall, the toll taken by isolation has increased, with many Virginians unable to visit their parents and grandparents for up to six months. The Senate passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia Beach), to require all certified nursing homes to remedy this situation by providing an opportunity for weekly visits to patients either virtually or in-person, provided special safety precautions are observed. We passed legislation to ensure transparency and accountability by requiring the Virginia Department of Health to report outbreaks of communicable diseases publicly on its website, and require school boards to post their coronavirus mitigation plans on their public websites. Key



Ebbin

election reforms have advanced from both chambers, expanding the ability to vote absentee and enacting safety measures to protect the health of voters and election officials.

In addition to these pressing reforms, we passed several bills to protect frontline workers and healthcare professionals. Legislation to ensure frontline workers in healthcare, nursing homes, schools, and public safety have access to rapid diagnostic testing for COVID-19 passed unanimously. Bills to supply school employees and childcare providers with personal protective equipment (PPE) also advanced.

In addition to these public safety measures, the General Assembly has begun to reassess who is sent to prison and for how long they stay incarcerated.

America incarcerates more people per 100,000 than any first world nation by a long shot, and most of the people incarcerated are people of color; In Virginia, over 60% are Black or Latinx. That's why I was glad the Senate took much-needed steps to provide prosecutors with discretion over which transgressions they take to trial, and which ones they defer penalties on for extenuating circumstances. The

Senate also passed legislation to allow for the release of terminally ill patients from confinement, give the Attorney General oversight of patterns and practice investigations of local police departments, and to expunge criminal records for certain nonviolent offenders who have served their time and repaid their debt to society.

I had originally hoped for this Special Session to last for a few weeks, but due to a week-long delay by the House of Delegates while setting their rules, and the complex nature of some of the proposals before us, the end is still not in sight. Leadership has told us to plan on spending the next several Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in Richmond for floor sessions.

While most committee meetings are occurring in person during those days, some are also meeting virtually on Mondays or Tuesdays. SB5015, the special session budget bill, which offers a number of amendments to our state budget has yet to be taken up, and, as of writing, the House has only reported about ten bills for our review, with nearly 100 still yet to be acted upon in their chamber. We are in it for the long haul, but the final product will be worth the time spent.

It is my continued honor to serve the citizens of the 30th District.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Death of a Tree

On Monday, Sept. 2, an "Eco City" and one designated as "Tree City", along with Alexandria Public Schools, had a beautiful old oak tree cut down in order to make room for a concession stand at the new TC Williams stadium. Sounds like an article from The Onion, doesn't it? Obviously, city officials prize monetary gain over environmental awareness. How else can the cutting of the tree be explained?

There are many ironies here — obviously the designation of Alexandria as an Eco City and Tree City are two, but another is that ACPS lost a valuable opportunity to teach TC Williams students about eco-stewardship. Instead, the message which has been sent is that if a tree gets in the way of development, the tree must go.

The author Jodi Thomas has



said, "When trees burn, they leave the smell of heartbreak in the air." I agree and wish to add, "When a tree is cut down, it leaves the smell of heartbreak in the air."

Mary Zoeter
Alexandria, VA

Char McCargo Bah: Engaging and Captivating

I would like to commend Char McCargo Bah for the beautiful article she wrote on my grandfather, Wilmer B. Henry. She illustrated what we expressed to her with a clear and concise description.

In addition to the above mentioned article, I have really enjoyed reading all of her articles. She seems to capture the inner feelings of the individuals who are sharing their heartfelt feelings. Her stories are very engaging and captivating.

I have shared her articles with many friends not only in the VA area but with friends in New York and as far as Paris.

They all commented on how well they were written and that the articles paint a good picture of the period of time it was written about.

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I am so looking forward to reading many more of Char's articles. I am certain they will keep me reminiscing about the good old days.

Rita M. Harris



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‘Let it Be’ In Support of T.C. Williams.

To the Editor:
I am writing to comment on this misguided effort to change the name of T.C. Williams High School. There seems to be a lot of ignorance about who T.C. Williams really was and what his accomplishments were.

There is a good reason that Alexandria’s only public high school is named after T.C. Williams. T.C. Williams graduated from the Virginia Military Institute, “the West Point of the south,” in Lexington, Va.

He was superintendent of the City of Alexandria’s public school system from the early 1930s through the early 1960s. During his lengthy tenure, the Alexandria public school system flourished because of his strong leadership.

Mr. Williams was successful in obtaining resources at a time when the mindset was decidedly against appropriating large sums of money for public education. More than a dozen new schools were built during his tenure. On his watch, what were then state-of-the-art facilities such as George Washington High School and Francis C. Hammond High School were built. The

massive football stadium at George Washington High was the largest in the Washington area and believed to be the first such facility to have lights. George Washington High had such a prestigious reputation that some Fairfax County residents paid tuition to attend school in Alexandria.

T.C. Williams was a dominating figure during his era and for that reason in 1965 the city’s new high school was named in his honor. Today’s odious forces of political correctness need to remember what era we are talking about – it is important to place things in proper historical context. At the time that Mr. Williams took over as superintendent in the 1930s, integration in schools was contrary to long established and fixed policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It took a long time for desegregation to evolve. Prince William County, for example, closed its public schools for several years in 1959 rather than integrate.

College football teams in the state of Virginia were not integrated until the turbulent late ‘60s and early ‘70s period. Virginia Military Institute first enrolled black cadets

in 1968, while the University of Virginia did not enroll its first black freshman football recruits until 1970. But when T.C. Williams High School opened in 1965, it was fully integrated, as were George Washington and Hammond high schools at that time.

In recent years we have seen a revolving door of ACPS superintendents. We could use the leadership and management skills of a T.C. Williams today. He got things done.

Where are we headed with all this? Are we going to change the name of every school and street in Alexandria? This is political correctness run amok. With all the problems we are facing right now we don’t need to waste time, energy and money arguing over the names of schools and streets. There are many old school alumni and longtime residents that do not want to see the name of the school changed. It is a renowned institution that has existed for 55 years. To quote the 1970 hit record and movie by the Beatles, “Let it Be.”

Greg Paspatis
T.C. Williams class of 1978.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VIRTUAL 911 CEREMONY

The City of Alexandria invites the public to view a virtual remembrance ceremony on Friday, Sept. 11, to mark the tragic events of 9-11. The annual ceremony will be prerecorded to avoid a large gathering and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The virtual ceremony will honor those who died and pay tribute to those who fearlessly responded and gave their lives to save others. The ceremony video will be available on Friday, Sept. 11, at alexandriava.gov. The ceremony will feature remarks from Mayor Justin Wilson, City Manager Mark Jinks, and representatives from the Fire Department, Police Department, and Sheriff’s Office. The tribute will also include the “Return to Quarters” bell-ringing ceremony.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

Garden Talk: Basics of Fall Veggie Gardening. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Planting a fall vegetable garden extends the gardening season so you can continue to harvest fresh produce. Many cool-season vegeta-

bles, such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts produce their best flavor and quality when they mature during cool weather. Extension Master Gardeners show you how. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktaks (code 3A3.487E) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Edible Garden Tour. 10-11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) Explore the bounty of Green Spring’s Edible Garden with an Extension Master Gardener docent who showcases many food plants – from vegetables to fruit trees – suitable for home landscapes. See how edibles can grow in containers and small spaces and discover their ornamental value in the garden. \$15 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktaks (code 748.8D51) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 15

UK Genealogy Research. 1-2:30 p.m. Zoom Meeting. Genealogist Shannon Combs-Bennett of the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society will speak about genealogical research on UK ancestors. Online access information to be emailed to members and registered nonmembers. Email registration by Sept. 11 to contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. See <http://www.mvgenealogy.org>.

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Nothing Stops Music—Even the Coronavirus

MMM meets over Zoom to enjoy classical music.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Victoria Gau sits in her unfinished basement office with the window overlooking the garden with her silk plant from Amazon, new rug and the screen blocking off the stuff she doesn't want everyone to see. Gau is the Music Director of Monday Morning Music (MMM) which was established 50 years ago in Alexandria to widen the appreciation of classical music.

Gau teaches her Monday morning classes from her basement where she moved from the luxurious choral room at the Alexandria First Baptist Church when the coronavirus pandemic hit in March. "This room is comfortable, and I'm finally redoing it. Sometimes I am teaching upstairs at the concert piano."

But she is not in a rehearsal room or concert stage anymore. "It's so sad." Maestra Gau has held the position of Artistic Director/Conductor of Capital City Symphony for over 20 years and now also holds a new position as Music Director of the Cantate Chamber Singers. But she says, "I think the ladies in my class like the Zoom format for MMM. It is strangely intimate. We are on there chatting and you see each other closely."

In March when the coronavirus hit, Gau said she quickly learned about Zoom.

"That feels like 50 years ago. I realized I can keep going." She says she had such an intense life with three big jobs. All of a sudden the conducting quickly disappeared. Gau realized she had to react very quickly to engage with the world and not be a cultural relic.

She says most of the Zoom MMM group is ladies from her previous class in Alexandria, but this summer when she taught a special series focusing on Black composers, she had some members of local orchestras and choruses around the area who joined the class. And now people can tune in from around the country. She explains that people got really excited about the Black artists. "It was all new music to them."

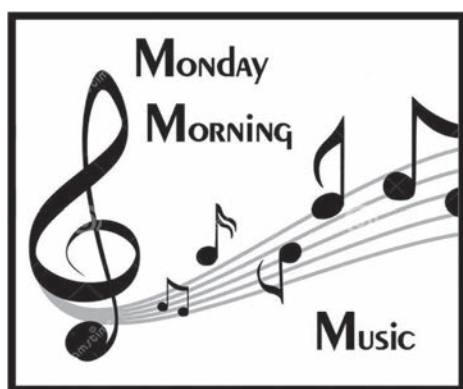
Gau flashes a screenshot of 12 Black Artists. "See William Grant Still, May 11, 1895-Dec. 3, 1978. He is pictured as a young man and an old man. This gives you the character of the person. I can embed videos, play entire musical examples." She stops sharing the screen. "Let's chat."

Catability wanders across Gau's desk flashing its tail as Gau answers questions from the students in the class. They wondered why they hadn't heard about the Black artists. But she says "the reason is that in concerts the public tends to want to live in their comfort zone so we feed into that fear, and we give them what they want to hear. We have to get people excited about things out of their comfort zone. Wow, look at all this stuff there is to discover."

Gau says sometimes people want to know if the composition was popular at the time it



Victoria Gau teaches her Alexandria Monday Morning Music (MMM) series of lectures, now moved to Zoom from her home.



was composed; sometimes how it relates to the art of the period like Bach to Baroque. Or maybe how long it took to compose, such as the Messiah that Handel wrote in three weeks. "I ask them what they were doing three weeks ago."

Gau says it can take her four hours to prepare for a class if she has presented the topic before. In another capacity she often gave pre-concert lectures for the National Philharmonic Orchestra as its Associate Conductor. "I like to interact with people and share my passion." She says a new topic can take 10 hours of preparation "and with MMM, I have all of the visuals. But that's the great thing about it for me; learning is what I do with my entire life."

Gay Pasley, now Chair of the MMM Board, has been a member of MMM since about 2000 when the group was in a different format. "It was almost a generational thing. The group was founded 50 years ago by retired professors from Virginia Theological Seminary who wanted something to do. Later the lectures were combined with a tea and held in people's homes."

But she said when that generation aged and retired and "it seemed like we weren't going to exist anymore, it was just too painful so we reformed. We just wanted to get together to enjoy classical music." Now while coronavirus restrictions are in place



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

the programs are in Gau's home. "We have enthusiasm for how she is teaching us. It is interactive." Pasley continues, "we have an age mixed group and a variety of experience ranging from people who have never had any exposure to music to those who have played in the symphony."

MMM has been offering two seven-class semesters, one in the spring and one in the fall with the goal to meet twice a month. For the first time in the summer of 2020, MMM offered a three-part program entitled, "Black Composers Matter, Too."

Gau says as we enter the political season in our country, arts are a part of how we express ourselves. The fall season beginning Sept. 21 will be "Defining America — Classical Music and the American Voice." It begins with the Czech Dvorak being brought to America in the 1890s to show this new country America how to write American music.

What is unique to America; what is our voice? What is the most authentic music and what is our voice today? It concludes with Joel Thompson's 2016 choral work, "Seven

Last Words of the Unarmed" which takes the last words of seven unarmed black men who were killed, Kenneth Chamberlain, Trayvon Martin, Amadou Diallo, Michael Brown, Oscar Grant, John Crawford and Eric Garner.

"Mom, I'm going to college."

"It makes me cry just to say it. It is a strikingly powerful composition for orchestra and men's chorus."

She says these composers look at the American dream. It has dark sides but ends up with hope. "Who are we?"

As she looks forward to live performances in the future, Gau says, "we all just want to make music." She says on Sunday she has four paid soloists at church who will have a quick outdoor rehearsal, then zip into the sanctuary for half an hour to make a recording. But no people there to listen. She thinks it is possible in the spring there could be live concerts again. "It's me holding on to hope because you have to."

For information about signing up for the seven part fall MMM semester contact: gl-pasley@gmail.com.

CALENDAR

SEPT. 1-28

Reflection. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Reflection, a solo exhibition of acrylic abstract paintings by Vian Borchert. Many were produced during quarantine and Coronavirus times, as she reflects on our new reality and our new normal. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/2020/07/reflection-september-show/>

SEPT. 9-OCT. 14

Weekly Free Outdoor Yoga Class. 6-7 p.m. At Del Ray Psych & Wellness Parking Lot, 1900 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Maureen Clyne, an affiliated agent with

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in the Alexandria office, will be leading free outdoor yoga classes in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. This community event, Harvest Moon Yoga 2020, is suitable for all levels and open to the public. The class is taught by Clyne, a senior yoga instructor, and is sponsored by Del Ray Psych & Wellness. Contact: Maureen Clyne: 703-967-8884.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

Fridays at the Fountain. 5-8 p.m. Featuring Collective a Chord at The Stand at the Crystal City Water Park, 1601 Crystal

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

Senior Academy Fall Session Is Going Virtual

Registration is opened for October sessions.

BY MARY LEE ANDERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Senior Services of Alexandria is hosting its Fall Senior Academy virtually via zoom in October. This four-week class for Alexandria residents 65 and older provides an overview of how the city operates, city services, as well as community resources including recreation and education opportunities. Participants will also hear about various nonprofit organizations geared to seniors.

The fall class begins Wednesday, Oct. 7 from 10 – 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. It will continue every Wednesday morning in October ending on Oct. 28. Some of the speakers include the City Man-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

SSA Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson.

ager, Voting Registrar, Health Department, First Responders, City Housing and Transportation Offices, Department of Cultural, Parks and Recreation and the Alexandria Library. While we are at home staying safe, it is a great time to learn more about how our city operates and the services available to older adults. Alexandria is a great place in which to age. If you are interested in attending, please contact Lindsay Hemphill at admin@seniorservicesalex.org or MaryAnne Beatty at communications@seniorservicesalex.org.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

Drive, Arlington. Pack a picnic, grab a beer or a bottle of wine (and your mask) and head down to the Water Park for live music and a good – socially distant – time. Visit the website: <https://nationallanding.org/do/fridays-at-the-fountain>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Outdoor Choral Concert. 6-7 p.m. At The Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Choral Music Returns: “A Brand New Day” in Alexandria. Presented in a special physical configuration to maximize safe social distance between singers and audience, Classical Movements presents the Choir of Hope & Harmony, conducted by Anthony Blake Clarke, in a first-of-its-kind outdoor, socially-distanced concert. Twelve professional singers perform 400 years of choral music by Byrd, Britten, Panufnik, Coleridge-Taylor, Barnett and more on themes of hope in times of Uncertainty. Cost is \$45. Visit the website: www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/

SEPT. 12-13

The 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival, formerly known as the King Street Art Festival, will take place Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 12-13 at a new location at John Carlyle Square in Alexandria. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. The address is 300 John Carlyle Street in Alexandria. The city and the Old Town Associations feel the new location will provide

a solution to the challenges faced with the intense traffic and parking for both artists and patrons alike. Admission is free; time slot reservations are required through eventbrite with COVID-19 safety measures.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

Local Author Lecture Series: The Cabinet. 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Local author Dr. Lindsay M. Chervinsky will discuss her new book, The Cabinet: George Washington and the Creation of an American Institution. The U.S. Constitution did not create the president’s cabinet — the delegates to the Constitutional Convention explicitly rejected the idea. But faced with unprecedented diplomatic, constitutional, and domestic challenges, President George Washington concluded he couldn’t make decisions alone. Two-and-a-half years into his presidency, Washington convened the first cabinet meeting with some now-famous figures: Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Knox, and Edmund Randolph. Over the next several years, they provided crucial support and advice as Washington established cabinet precedent. Cost is \$6 available at alexandriava.gov/shop.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

Secrets, Spies, Sputnik and Huntley. 10 a.m. to noon. At Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria. Take a stroll through the less-visited side of Huntley Meadows Park to uncover its history of spies and espionage.

Learn how the Cold War struggle between the US and the former Soviet Union shaped Huntley and the Fairfax County we know today. Meet at the South Kings Highway entrance to the park, and plan on a 2.4-mile walk over flat terrain. The cost is \$10 per person. Call the park at 703-768-2525.

MONDAY/SEPT. 21

Outdoor Storytime. 9-9:45 a.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Throw down a picnic blanket or just sit in the grass with your children and listen to Green Spring’s storytellers weave their tales. Afterwards, take some time to explore around the gardens, ponds and historic house. The cost is \$3 per person, and the program is designed for participants age 2 to adult. Call 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 22

Evening Hike. 6:30-8 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Celebrate the first night of fall with a pleasant evening tour of the park at sunset. Learn about common wildlife in the marsh and where to find these critters. The cost is \$8 per person. Meet at the outdoor classroom. Masks or face coverings are required for outdoor programs at Park Authority facilities when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made for health reasons or for activities such as eating or exercising. Call 703-768-2525.

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ENTERTAINMENT



Clockwise from top left: Steve and Nicky McDonnell; Producer Nick Friedlander; Stage Manager Brittany Huffman; and Director Joanna Henry.

LTA Presents “Love Letters”

**Stars real-life husband
and wife team of Steve
and Nicky McDonnell.**

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

After a few months of being shut down due to Covid-19, the Little Theatre of Alexandria is staging an in-person production of “Love Letters” from Sept. 11-27. Taking place over the span of 50 years, the play is a humorous and emotional look at the love letters exchanged between two childhood friends. This production is part of Little Theatre’s Fall series, “Small Theatre for Unusual Times.” Tickets are available for free. Written by A.R. Gurney, the show is produced by Nick Friedlander and executive produced by Russell Wyland.

According to Director Joanna Henry, “I wanted to direct this play because it’s clever, witty, and realistic. It’s different than other plays because the actors are reading the letters they wrote to each other over the years. The two characters are slowly revealed as their personalities emerge from the letters.”

She added: “Through these letters, both characters expose the pitfalls, expectations, and various pressures that they felt as they aged 50 years over the course of the play – pitfalls, expectations, and pressures that we all feel as we journey through life. It’s an intriguing character study, and I love delving into the characters of plays that I direct.”

She said this is an unusual play because of the actors reading the letters aloud to the audience. “We watch and hear the two characters grow up during the play through what is revealed in those letters. My hope is that the audience will observe the characters listening to and reacting to each other – and will understand them.”

Because the rehearsals were held on Zoom, Henry said it was challenging because she bases a lot of her directing on feeling the connections with the actors, as well as their chemistry with each other. “However, our two actors are married to each other in real life so I knew the chemistry was there, and it was nice to be able to have them in the same room, at the same table, for our Zoom rehearsals instead of in totally separate places miles apart,” she said.

As far as audience takeaways, she added: “I would

love for our audiences to leave the LTA theater feeling that, even with our differences, we can find compatibility, acceptance, and harmony. In this play, we see two very different people who grew up together, went their separate ways, and yet always reconnected.”

Nicky McDonnell, who plays the role of Melissa Gardner, says she’s actually many characters in one. “She transforms from a hopeful, creative, talented, funny young child to a ‘lascivious old broad’ as she puts it in ACT II,” she said. “...And yet for all her shortcomings Melissa sees the world for what it is -- no blinders which is why perhaps she is able to paint and draw her truth so well. She has a terrific sense of humor but also a boiling over grief which is hard to contain -- though she does.”

In real life, she and her husband have been together for 27 years and they have never worked together. “It took a new level of trust to sit down and do this play together,” she said. “Our performance experiences over the years have been separate and, in some ways, private. Also, reading the play per the playwright’s instructions was challenging -- no mugging, no crying -- just read. It’s hard to trust that the words, the story and the delivery are enough to entertain an audience. Just two mid-lifers reading at their desks for 80 minutes or so ... it’s tempting to try and do more to keep it moving at the proper clip.”

She said she hopes the audience walks away with a powerful reminder of relationship. “As we redefine our homes and our relationships during this Covid time, we realize more than ever how important our friends and family are in our lives. How much we need them. It’s a perfect time for letter writing to those we love and cherish. It’s a perfect time to connect -- no matter your means -- Zoom, phone calls, distanced get togethers, etc.”

Steve McDonnell, who plays the role of Andrew Makepeace Ladd III, said his character is a dedicated family man and a responsible rule-follower. “He lives by directions his father taught him -- to honor obligations to his family, his country and himself, in that order. He was taught that those born to privilege have special responsibilities and he lives his life following those guidelines.”

He continued: “Andy loves to write, especially letters to Melissa, the person he has loved his entire life but was never able to be with. He follows the path he was destined for and only veers from it in private, and only with Melissa. She is his lifelong friend and confi-

SEE LOVE LETTERS, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT



King & Rye in Alexandrian Hotel.

Off the Menu: Restaurant News Notes

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

The shift from summer hasn't stopped progress: A Del Ray gelato shop nears its dawn, a Chinese restaurant in North Old Town makes a foray outside and a hotel restaurant gets a makeover in name and menu. Here's a taste of the latest restaurant news happening around the city.

King & Rye Opens in Alexandrian Hotel

Say goodbye to Jackson 20 and hello to King & Rye, the new restaurant located within the Alexandrian hotel in the heart of King Street. Executive Chef Peter McCall retains his spot at the helm from the old restaurant to the new, spinning up a menu focused on Southern fare and fine whiskey. Nosh on tomato toast – complete with Duke's mayonnaise – or devilled eggs, North Carolina rainbow trout or Shenandoah Valley chicken.

And have a taste of dozens of bourbons, ryes and American

whiskeys. Don't forget the cornbread! 480 King St.

Yunnan by Potomac Ventures Into the Great Outdoors

Yunnan by Potomac, a Chinese restaurant highlighting cuisine from the Yunnan province, has opened up its outdoor dining space along North Fairfax Street. Take a break from takeout or delivery and sit, socially distanced, in the fresh air to enjoy a real, live meal out. 814 N. Fairfax St.

Del Ray Boccatto's Opening Draws Nearer

The signs of life continue to multiply at Del Ray Boccatto on Mount Vernon Avenue. Signage is up, counters are ready and – as a sign of the times – sanitization stations are in place. It won't be long now to say hello to owner Cristian Velasco's new café, which will offer up gelato, coffee drinks, pastries and more. 2400 Mount Vernon Ave.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

LTA Presents "Love Letters"

FROM PAGE 10

dant. But he never allows himself to divorce from his responsibilities long enough to accept her as his companion."

As far as audience takeaways, he added: "I hope the audience takes a hard look at their lives and remembers what it was that used to be important to them and how they may have never pursued it because of the responsibilities they accepted as they grew. Maybe they too have someone they have known forever and maybe they can

revisit the times they shared."

Because tickets are free, donations of any amount are welcome. Donations may be made through Eventbrite when you order your ticket, in cash at the performance you attend, by calling LTA, or online by clicking the donate button on the website at: <http://thelittletheatre.com/opportunities/#donations>. The theater is located at 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Call the box office at 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.



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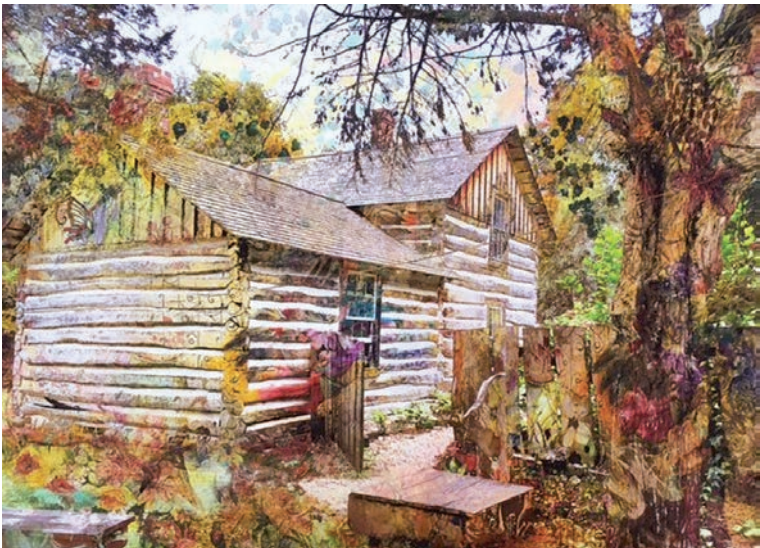
Art Festival Returns

The 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival, formerly the King Street Art Festival, will take place less than a mile from its previous location in John Carlyle Square. Festival-goers should reserve a free time slot at ArtFestival.com.

Presented by Howard Alan Events, the Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival has strict health and safety guidelines for this year's event, including mandatory mask-wearing, limited numbers of patrons each hour, and enforced social distancing rules. Ranked by Sunshine Artists

Magazine as one of the top art festivals in the nation, local and national artists will display their works in a show encompassing fine jewelry, exquisite works of art and handcrafted apparel and decor. Art enthusiasts discover spectacular paintings, life-sized sculptures, jewelry, glasswork, photography, ceramics and more. All artists will be on site for the duration of the festival, allowing visitors to discover the inspiration behind each original piece.

Admission for patrons is free, and ample parking is available. Attendance will be limited each hour and those planning on attending are encouraged to reserve their times at the show by visiting www.artfestival.com.



Alexandria Old Town Art Festival Sept. 12 - 13 will host local and national artists showcasing thousands of works in John Carlyle Square.

To Go Details

WHAT: 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival
WHEN: Saturday and Sunday Sept. 12-13, 10am to 5pm
WHERE: Old Town Alexandria in John Carlyle Square; 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
COST: Free and open to the public
WEBSITE: www.ArtFestival.com

Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, in a virtual meeting, Saturday, September 12, 2020, at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of a Form Lease for Renewing and Issuing Leases to Artists and Arts Organizations through March 31, 2022 at the Torpedo Factory Art Center located at 105 N. Union Street.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 2-5-36, in Article C (EMPLOYEE HOMEOWNERSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM) of Chapter 5 (OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES) of Title 2 (GENERAL GOVERNMENT) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

The proposed ordinance amends the Employee Homeownership Incentive Program to increase the loan amounts that can be provided to employees.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, by adopting and incorporating therein the amendment heretofore approved by city council to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan chapter of such master plan as Master Plan Amendment No. 2020-00002 and no other amendments, and to repeal all provisions of the said master plan as may be inconsistent with such amendment.

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Master Plan Amendment No. 2020-00002 to amend the Development and Land Use Tables approved by the City Council on July 7, 2020.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sheet No. 054.04 of the "Official Zoning Map, Alexandria, Virginia," adopted by Section 1-300 (OFFICIAL ZONING MAP AND DISTRICT BOUNDARIES), of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, by rezoning the property at 701 North Henry Street from, CSL/Commercial Service Low to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Medium) in accordance with the said zoning map amendment heretofore approved by city council as Rezoning No. 2020-00001.

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Rezoning No. 2020-00001, to rezone the property at 701 North Henry Street from CSL/Commercial Service Low to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Medium).

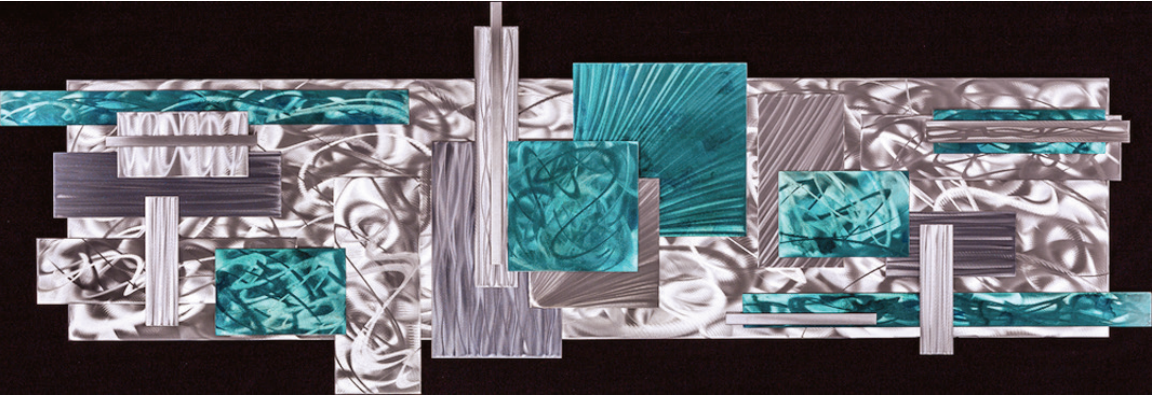
AN ORDINANCE making supplemental appropriations for the support of the government of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, for fiscal year 2021.

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the adoption of supplemental appropriations for the operation of the city government in fiscal year 2021.

AN ORDINANCE to prevent the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes, commonly referred to as COVID-19, by requiring face coverings in certain indoor and outdoor locations.

This ordinance requires that face coverings be worn in all indoor locations other than a personal residence or vehicle and all outdoor locations except where physical distancing can be achieved. It establishes a list of exceptions to such requirement and it establishes a process for gaining compliance of such requirement including the potential imposition of a civil fine. The ordinance would take affect October 1, 2020 and would expire at the end of the Declaration of Local Emergency or the expiration of the waiver of State Code Section 18.2-422 prohibiting face coverings whichever is sooner.

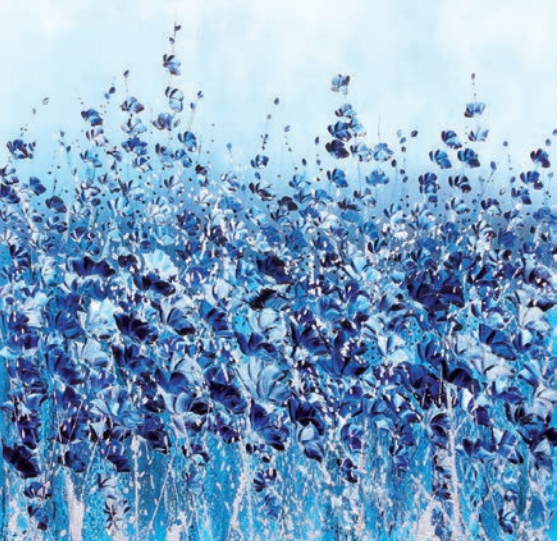
THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLICATION. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL. If the mayor finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting, this meeting will be continued to the following Saturday September 19, 2020. GLORIA SITTON, CMC, CITY CLERK



Virginia sculptor Steven Lloyd has mastered metal work, creating striking wall art through fired aluminum, paint, stainless steel, copper and other alloys.



Fredericksburg Clay artisan, Christine Lush-Rodriguez creates functional and fanciful hand-thrown pieces.



Painter Lillian Delgado of Riverview uses thick oils along with a palette knife to create an impasto effect.



Bethesda, Md. painter Letitia Lee uses oils, acrylics, bold hues, strokes and lines on canvas to convey energetic movement like her vibrant "Harmonic Bursts."

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Obituary



Deborah (Debbie) Ann Beltran died peacefully at Carleton Shores Rehabilitation Center in Daytona Beach Florida on August 29th, 2020.

Ms. Beltran was born on January 26th, 1953 in Alexandria Virginia to her parents James and Laura Mason. She spent most of her life working in the medical field and was known for being outgoing and personable. Debbie loved to smile and crack jokes. She loved kids and babysitting her grandchildren. She enjoyed taking trips to the casinos but most of all she enjoyed spending time with her family.

Ms. Beltran will be loved and missed by her daughters Christine Lucas of Daytona Beach Florida, Kimberly Scott and husband Dan of Stafford Virginia, sons Joseph Caporaletti and wife Karen of Annandale Virginia, David Lucas and wife Tiffany of Manchester New Hampshire, grandchildren Allison, Nicholas, Annabella, Dominic, Raquel, Joshua and great grandson Landen, sisters Maria Edmonds, Sharon Quick, brothers Gary Mason and Lawrence Mason as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews. Ms. Beltran is predeceased by both her parents and her brothers James Mason Jr. and Jerry Mason.

A private service will be held later at the family's request.

Memorial Donations may be made in Ms. Beltran's name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at www.stjude.org/donate/pm.html.

Obituary

Legals

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

VOLUNTARY REMEDIATION PROGRAM (VRP) ACTIVITY

VRP Project Number VRP00736
WMATA Old Town
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Participant
Trammel Crow Residential
1530 Wilson Boulevard Suite 330
Arlington, Virginia 22209

The subject property is participating in the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) administered by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The property has been used as a bus repair facility since sometime between 1936 and 1947 and was occupied by WMATA (the most recent tenant) from 1973 until 2014. The property is being redeveloped with a retail/residential high-rise building with one to two levels of underground parking beneath the building. Environmental investigations have identified petroleum contamination of soil and groundwater. The petroleum constituents are associated with diesel fuel and heavy oils. Remedial actions to mitigate potential risks to human health and the environment from the contaminants have been proposed by Trammel Crow Residential and accepted by DEQ. The remedial actions consist of: a groundwater use restriction; installation of an impervious surface cap or a minimum 2-foot thick clean soil cap, an Impacted Material Management Plan; an Environmental Health and Safety Plan; vapor intrusion mitigation; and institutional controls such as an Operations and Maintenance Plan for engineering controls. A Certification of Satisfactory Completion of Remediation will be requested of the VDEQ VRP for the site. Questions or comments regarding this notice will be accepted for 30 days from the date of publication and should be addressed to the contact below:

John Diehl
Environmental Con-
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Cancer For Dummies: Me

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



As I was telling my long-time friend, Rita, over the phone on Saturday afternoon, as a cancer patient - and I know this is going to sound ridiculous, short-sighted and stupid, I am not always forthcoming and honest when it comes to sharing new symptoms with my doctors, particularly my oncologist. Aside from the obvious discomfort neglecting a new problem would cause, not telling my doctors everything, all the time prevents me from learning - for a brief moment anyway, exactly what either of my two types of cancer are doing to me. Out of sight, though not totally out of mind provides a certain salve for what ails me. A mixed up version of what I don't know can't hurt me - which of course, it most definitely can.

Still, after 11 and 1/2 years of walking this walk, I can't always get the message through my thick head. I'd rather rationalize and/or self-diagnose or attribute the miscellaneous maladies (aches and pains) to older age than I've ever been or due to the fact that I'm overweight and out of shape. And though my friend Frank might think that I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in, the problem is that cancer has its own agenda and doesn't listen to anybody. Moreover, in my experience anyway, it seems to be able to affect one's judgment.

But how else, other than in a roundabout way, does one deal with such weighty issues such as life and death? Granted, I can see how I'm working against my own best/self-interest here when I neglect to mention something now which could harm my future defense (a sort of British Miranda-type warning). Unfortunately, that's another facet of cancer's insidious toll: common sense. Your perceptions and all are altered as you look at your life/choices through this prism of cancer. If you're honest and upfront about your symptoms, it could hasten your death by confirming your progression. If you're not it could definitely hasten your demise. (Cancer symptoms generally don't just disappear.) Either way, you're in cancer's grip. Extricating oneself is difficult. Fending off the demons is a full-time job. I'm not exactly Linda Blair from "The Exorcist," but occasionally, I do feel as if I'm possessed and unable to right my own wrongs.

You would think that eventually, one would be able to think outside their own box and realize that self-medicating/self-diagnosing and/or presuming one's age is the explanation for all the ifs, and or buts, concerning one's symptoms/health is akin to taking a long walk off a very short pier. It may suffice for the present, but the future is hardly there for the taking, if it's there at all. Realizing that fact has been difficult for me to assimilate. Part of my survival strategy, if one were even to call it that, has been to try and avoid any rabbit holes of emotional despair. My thought has been that I'd rather deal with it later than deal with it now, and since it will be bad enough later, I'm not going to subject myself to it now. Ill-advised? Probably. Recipe for success? I doubt it. But that's how I've mostly rolled since my "terminal" diagnosis in late February, 2009.

Well, better late than never. As I finally wake up and smell the coffee - which I never drink (smell the bacon would be a better example), closing my eyes to an impending disaster is hardly the stuff of dreams (more like nightmares). I imagine the stuff of dreams is more about admitting and facing adversity with your head on straight instead of facing it with your head on crooked. Pretending/hoping a problem/symptom doesn't matter/likely to go away on its own is not how proper health and hygiene works, especially not cancer. It has a well-earned reputation and one's prognosis would be better served by being proactive rather than reactive. Cancer waits for no man - or woman. It's on its own schedule. Come hell or high water.

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

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Petitioner,	Case No.
-and-	Divorce 40101 Case No.
Srikanth Yalamanchili 7116 Strawn Ct, Alexandria, VA 22306,	
Respondent.	Case No.
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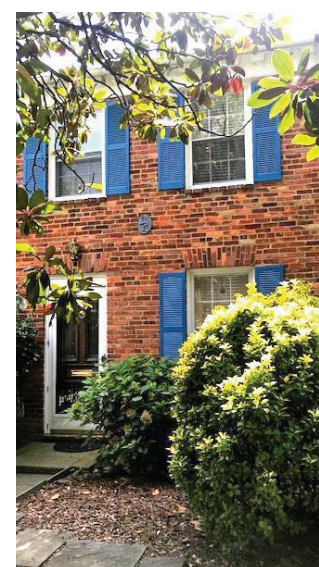
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