

Paving the Way

Memorial Walkway celebrates legacy of Parker-Gray School.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The 100th anniversary of the founding of Parker-Gray School, for decades the lone place of education for Alexandria's African American community, was celebrated Oct. 24 with the dedication of a brick Memorial Walkway on the grounds of its original site at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

"This project is so much more than just the number of bricks laid on the walkway," said Julian "Butch" Haley Jr., chairman of the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame and sponsor of the walkway project. "It is a strong historical legacy that will benefit visitors, community and future generations to come."

In addition to Haley, speakers at the dedication included Mayor Justin Wilson, Parker-Gray High School graduate and student body president Eugene Thompson, ACPs Superintendent Gregory Hutchings Jr. and Bonnie Bracey Sutton, whose father taught woodworking, electrical shop and bricklaying at Parker-Gray.

"Today feels wonderful and exciting," said Sutton. "People say you can't be a hero in your own area but the legacy of Parker-Gray and this walkway proves otherwise."

The original Parker-Gray School opened in September of 1920 for grades one through eight. The school was named for John Park-



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Attendees look at bricks that were dedicated at the entrance of Charles Houston Recreation Center Oct. 24 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Parker-Gray School.

er, principal of the Snowden School for Boys, and Sarah Gray, principal of the Hollowell School for Girls. The Snowden and Hollow-

ell schools were among the early schools established in the 1870s for African Americans after the Civil War.

Parker-Gray's first four-year high school class graduated in 1936. The increased enrollment created a need for a larger school and in 1950 Parker-Gray High School moved to a new building at 1207 Madison St. The old school on Wythe Street was then renamed Charles Houston Elementary School in honor of the famed NAACP lawyer.

With the integration of Alexandria's high schools in 1964, Parker-Gray High School was phased out with its last class graduating in 1965. Parker-Gray became a middle school and operated as such from 1965 until 1979 when it was torn down and replaced with the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

"I remember the strong, positive atmosphere in the school," said Dr. Mary Alice Hatwood Futrell, a former business education teacher at Parker-Gray. "Academically, culturally and socially with teachers dedicated and well prepared to ensure that students received a quality education."

Phase II of the Parker-Gray Memorial Brick Walkway is underway with completion scheduled for spring of 2021. Bricks can be purchased online at alexandriafricanamericanhalloffame.org or by calling Butch Haley at 571-217-9951.

"This is a special day, one that is long overdue," Haley said. "This represents 100 years of history in the making for the African American community in Alexandria."

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Witchful Thinking

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Halloween will look different this year, with COVID-19 safety a priority as children and adults look for alternative ways to celebrate the ghoulish holiday.

While Halloween is not a city holiday, officials have been notified that the annual community gathering on Lee Street and the Del Ray Halloween Parade has been cancelled for 2020. But options abound to safely enjoy the holiday, ranging from the Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch to a scavenger hunt on Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray or a Ghost and Graveyard Tour in Old Town.

The Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch is open through Oct. 31 at the corner of Seminary Road and Quaker Lane. The pumpkin patch offers all sizes of pumpkins as well as homemade soups, baked goods,

knit wear and autumn Halloween-themed crafts. www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org

In Del Ray, the Del Ray Business Association is hosting its first Halloween Scavenger Hunt featuring businesses that have festively decorated their storefronts. The hunt began Oct. 23 and continues through Halloween.

Walk the Avenue (in costume or not) and find Halloween-themed items in Del Ray's murals and decorated businesses. Four randomly selected winners will receive a \$50 gift card. Visit www.visitdelray.com for scavenger hunt clues and instructions.

The Old Town Ghosts & Graveyards Tour continues to operate under COVID-19 safety protocols and is also offering an online Zoom tour for anyone who would be more comfortable enjoying a virtual experience. www.alexcolonialtours.com.

Another pandemic-safe entertainment option is the Alexandria Drive-In Theatre. Presented by Alexandria businesses ALX Community and The Garden, the series will run

Ghouls still want some fun on Halloween.

from Oct. 31 to Dec. 5 at 5001 Eisenhower Avenue. A variety of movie classics and family favorites will be featured beginning with a double feature of Casper and The Mummy on Halloween night. For tickets and more information, visit www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com.

The traditional Del Ray contests for Best Decorated House, Best Group Costume, Best Pet Costume and Best Decorated Block return this year in a virtual format. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, DRBA will partner with the Alexandria Boys & Girls Club and Community Lodgings in offering community members the opportunity to purchase a costume for a specific child. Visit www.visitdelray.com for more information on the contests or to purchase a costume.

For additional suggestions and guidelines from the Alexandria Health Department on how to celebrate Halloween safely, visit www.alexandriava.gov/halloween

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 12



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

A bloody zombie welcomes visitors to the Fish Market Restaurant.

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NEWS

Myth-busting the Vote

A look at how the election will really happen in Alexandria

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

For most Alexandria voters expected to cast a ballot this year, Election Day has already come and gone. The unprecedented spike in early voting comes at a time when the city is battling a deadly pandemic and a whirlwind of misinformation. Here are a few myths about the election this year and why they are wrong.

MYTH: Voter fraud is rampant.

FALSE: Voter fraud is extremely rare. The most comprehensive investigation of this was conducted by Justin Levitt, a law professor at Loyola University and fellow at the Brennan Center. He looked at one billion votes cast between 2000 and 2014, and he could find only 31 credible allegations of a voter pretending to be someone else at the polls. That's 0.000003 percent. Even the commission launched by the Trump administration in 2017 specifically to explore the threat of voter fraud uncovered no evidence to support claims of widespread voter fraud. Here in Alexandria, prosecutors convicted a volunteer of submitting falsified voter registration applications in 2016. None of the applications were ever processed.

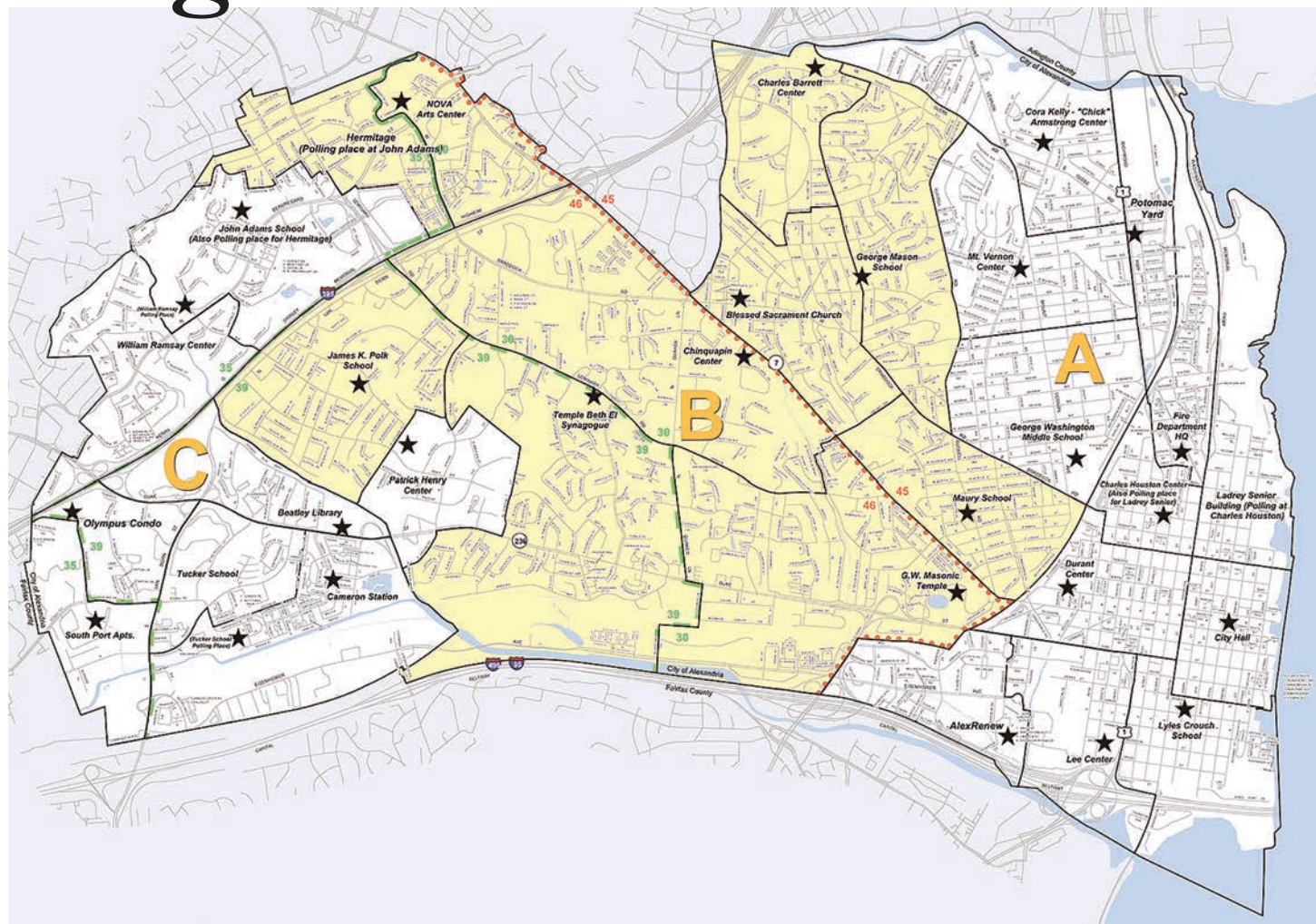
MYTH: Election results in Virginia are expected to be delayed for days because of absentee votes.

FALSE: Election officials plan to report election returns the night of the election. By 11 pm on election night, according to guidance from the Virginia Department of Elections, registrars across Virginia will stop counting mail-in ballots and report what they have. Because election officials in Virginia are allowed to pre-process absentee ballots, tabulating them is only a matter of sending them through a machine that counts the votes. Any absentee ballots that haven't yet been counted by 11 pm on election night will be added to the updated returns later in the week.

MYTH: Mail-in absentee ballots are thrown out if they wouldn't change the results of an election.

FALSE: All valid ballots are counted. Election officials in Virginia do not ever throw out absentee ballots because they would not change the outcome of elections. Sometimes ballots are invalidated because voters fail to sign the envelope that has an oath asking voters to pledge they are who they say they are. Because of recent legislation approved by the recent special session of the General Assembly, election officials can now reach out and contact voters whose ballots were rejected because of material omissions and

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ALEXANDRIA VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE

As a result of the pandemic, voters who usually vote at the Ladrey Senior Building will be voting at the Charles Houston Recreation Center, and voters who usually vote at the Hermitage will vote at John Adams Elementary School. Also, because of construction at MacArthur Elementary School, voters who usually vote there will be voting at the George Washington Masonic Temple.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

Voters can drop their absentee ballots in a drop box rather than dropping them in the mail.

allow them to cure their ballot.

MYTH: Mail-in absentee voters are required to obtain the signature of a witness.

FALSE: Back in August, a federal court approved a consent decree negotiated by Attorney General Mark Herring allowing election officials to accept absentee ballots

Researchers looked at one billion votes cast between 2000 and 2014, and could find only 31 credible allegations of a voter pretending to be someone else at the polls. That's 0.000003 percent.

without the signature of a witness for this election because of the pandemic. No witness signatures are required for mail-in absentee ballots, and no ballots will be rejected because they don't include the signature of a witness. Unfortunately, some envelopes have now-outdated language about the witness signature requirements, which do not apply in this election.

SEE MYTH-BUSTING, PAGE 4

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ♦ OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 4, 2020 ♦ 3

Officer Shot, Suspect Dead in Old Town Shooting

Second suspect in State Police custody.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

North Old Town was on lockdown for several hours Oct. 26 following a double shooting that left an Alexandria police officer wounded and a suspect fatally injured on the 600 block of First Street near the Old Town Holiday Inn.

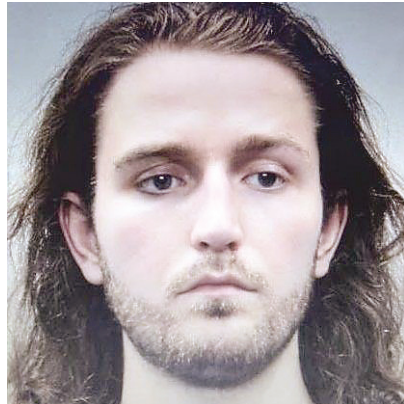
An additional suspect in the case, 26-year-old Mitchell David Thompson, is in custody after turning himself in to Virginia State Police late Monday evening.

Alexandria police officers responded to a report of shots fired at 5:01 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Hotel. Once on the scene, two individuals involved in the shooting fled the area on foot. A pursuit of the suspects took place in the area of North Royal and Second streets during which an officer was shot by the suspect in the lower body.

“Our officer received a through and through wound to his leg and has been treated and released from the hospital,” said Police Chief Michael Brown. “I spoke to him at the scene -- we were very lucky.”

The suspect took off and officers and K9s continued their search near the intersection of Montgomery and Fairfax streets, where another exchange of gunfire took place. It is still unknown if the suspect was hit although he was later found deceased in the vicinity of the railroad tracks.

The investigation is being handled by the Virginia State Police, who said that no injuries were reported inside the hotel. A stolen firearm was found in the possession of the deceased suspect, who has not been publicly identified as of Wednesday afternoon.



Mitchell David Thompson, 26, is a suspect in the Oct. 26 shooting near the Holiday Inn in North Old Town. He turned himself in to Virginia State Police Monday evening.

The state medical examiner will conduct an autopsy to confirm whether the deceased suspect was killed by police. Three police officers are on routine administrative leave following the incident and police have not indicated which suspect they believe was involved in the exchange of gunfire that wounded the officer.

“My concern right now is with our officer who was injured,” said Mayor Justin Wilson. “I know the entire community joins me in wishing for a quick recovery for the officer and expressing our gratitude for their service to our community in a very dangerous situation this morning.”



Alexandria police respond to a shooting near the Holiday Inn on First Street Oct. 26 that left one suspect dead and an officer wounded.

“Our officer received a through and through wound to his leg and has been treated and released from the hospital.”

— Police Chief Michael Brown

People in the area between Bashford Lane and Montgomery Street and between Washington Street and the Potomac River were asked to stay indoors, with doors and windows locked, as police searched the area.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the Virginia State Police at 703-803-0026 or via email at questions@vsp.virginia.gov.

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Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the Virginia State Police at 703-803-0026 or via email at questions@vsp.virginia.gov.

Myth-busting the Vote

FROM PAGE 3

MYTH: Ballots that are postmarked by Election Day will be thrown out if they don't arrive by the time polls close.

FALSE: Earlier this year, the new Democratic majorities in the House of Delegates and state Senate changed the law on this. As of July, votes that are postmarked by Election Day will be counted as long as they arrive by the Friday after the election at noon. That means the unofficial returns that will be reported on election night will not be the final numbers. Alexandria election officials plan to update the unofficial returns with the late-arriving absentee ballots on Friday or Saturday.

Correction

In the Oct. 21, 2020 edition of the Gazette Packet, the address of the Alzheimer's Walk team from Sunrise of Alexandria on page 4 was incorrect. The address is 400 N. Washington St.

MYTH: Undocumented immigrants are allowed to vote.

FALSE: The application for registering to vote in Virginia includes a part that asks applicants to affirm citizenship. People who are not citizens are not allowed to register to vote. In the event that a non-citizen engages in fraud and registers to vote anyway, election officials can remove them if they learn of a voter's undocumented status from the Department of Motor Vehicles. In 2018, the League of United Latin American Citizens filed a lawsuit on behalf of several Virginians who accused an Indianapolis-based group known as the Public Interest Research Group of defaming them in its 2016 report “Alien Invasion in Virginia” or its 2017 sequel, “Alien Invasion II.” The reports misidentified them as undocumented; the plaintiffs were actually American citizens.

MYTH: Absentee ballots will be thrown out if the signature on the ballot does not match the one on file.

FALSE: Virginia does not require that signatures on the envelope containing mail-in ballots match the signature on file with the state. Although the envelopes must include

the signature of the voter who is signing an oath affirming they are who they say they are, nobody is checking to see if that signature matches a signature on file anywhere else.

MYTH: Voters can cast an absentee ballot and then vote again at the precinct on Election Day.

FALSE: Any voter who has asked for and received an absentee ballot will have a red flag on their record. If they show up to vote, they'll be referred to the help desk to figure out why they haven't returned their absentee ballot and what they can do to resolve the situation. In some cases, the voter might be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. Those ballots would only be counted in the final vote tally if evidence exists to show the absentee ballot was not delivered in time or did not arrive in time. If the Electoral Board determines the voter has committed fraud, the commonwealth's attorney might charge the voter with a felony.

MYTH: All precincts in Alexandria will be located in their usual places.

FALSE: Three precincts will be voting in

different locations this year, two because of the pandemic and one because of construction. Two precincts are located at senior centers, which are now off-limits because senior citizens are particularly vulnerable to covid-19. As a result voters who usually vote at the Ladrey Senior Building will be voting at the Charles Houston Recreation Center and voters who usually vote at the Hermitage will vote at John Adams Elementary School. Also, because of construction at MacArthur Elementary School, voters who usually vote there will instead be voting at the George Washington Masonic Temple.

MYTH: Election officials have a running tally of how many votes each of the candidates have received so far.

FALSE: Ballots can be pre-processed before Election Day, but no ballots are tabulated until after the polls close. Pre-processing is all the time-consuming work of removing the ballots from the envelopes, checking to make sure all the necessary information has been included and stacking the pieces of paper so they can easily be fed into the tabulation machines. Election officials don't start tabulating the votes until after the polls close.

The Cigar Man Made a Better Life – James Thomas Ford

BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

In 1930, James Thomas Ford was a 17-year old who lived with his mother and siblings in a rural community in Victoria, Lunenburg, Virginia. He helped his family by doing odd jobs. Early on, James knew what he wanted in life, so he decided to migrate at 17 to Alexandria, Va.

Once he arrived in Alexandria, he obtained odd jobs until he landed a job with the U.S. General Service Administration (GSA) as a general clerk. While he worked at that job, he obtained two part-time jobs, one as a custodian cleaner and the other as a driver for the Alexandria African American Cab Company called Star Cab. His cab number was number 19. He had a chance to learn about Alexandria from his cab driving colleagues like Buddy Wilson, Will Charity, Jerry Grimes, James Mitchell, Norman Reynolds and others.

He was always looking for a better position. He left GSA for a chauffeur position at the Department of Agriculture, Farm Credit Administration, where he received a Meritorious Service Award in 1967 for his devotion to his job as a loyal employee. He was fondly remembered as a driver who liked smoking cigars. He knew Washington, DC, inside out, and when the top brass came to town, they would call on him. James was also a popular



James as a Chauffeur for the Farm Credit Administration.

driver on his part-time job as a cab driver. When customers called for a cab, they would ask for the “Cigar Man.”

James was always making plans for his next step in life. In 1968, he started making plans to establish his own business. He made that transition when he retired on July 31, 1970 with over 20 years of service with the Farm Credit Administration. He became an entrepreneur, owning the Tip Top Custodial Service business in Alexandria. Some of his clients were the Christian Science Church, Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Alfred Street Baptist Church, Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church and doctor’s offices and law firms. He and his children worked side by side and became successful



James T. Ford outside of Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church.

in their business.

James was a member of Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church, where he served as president of the Usher Board and was honored in 1998 by the members of his Church for his services. He became a member of the Blue Lodge Masonry in 1946, and a member of Acacia #32 Lodge in Alexan-

dria, Va.

Mr. James Thomas Ford Sr. was one of eleven children born in Richmond, Virginia to Thomas and Rosa Ellis Ford on September 13, 1913. James married his first wife, Florence Brown from Alexandria in 1934. They had five children, James Jr., Frazier, Raymond, Milton and Viola. In 1958, he married his second wife, Josephine Amanda Wilkins from Warren, North Carolina; they had seven children: Pamela, Deborah, Rosie, Phillip, Lavonne, Mary and Tracy.

By 1994, Mr. Ford’s health was declining; he let his sons James Jr. and Raymond take over his business. On Aug. 19, 1999, the “Cigar Man” was surrounded by his wife and children when he passed away; he was 85-years old.

The City of Alexandria gave him a good life. He was able to achieve his dreams in Alexandria by purchasing his house at 702 North Patrick Street, worked for the Federal government and owned a business.

Many people who knew Mr. Ford will remember him dressed in his suit, smoking his cigar and offering others a cigar as well.

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

CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN and Dia de los Muertos WITH LOWER RISK ACTIVITIES

The City of Alexandria and the Alexandria Health Department strongly urge residents to choose celebration activities identified as lower risk by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Follow these tips to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak:

1. Wear a themed cloth face mask because a costume mask is not a substitute.
2. Participate in outdoor gatherings as safer alternatives to indoor events.
3. Keep 6 feet of distance from people of other households.

LOWER RISK

- Carve a pumpkin
- Decorate your home
- Virtual costume contest
- Family movie night at home
- Decorate masks for loved ones
- Make traditional family recipes
- Treat scavenger hunt in your home

MODERATE RISK

- Physically distanced outdoor parade
- Physically distant apple or pumpkin patch
- Grab-and-go self-serve premade goodie bags
- Visiting and decorating graves of loved ones

HIGHER RISK

- Traditional trick-or-treating or trunk-or-treat events
- Dinner parties with people from other households
- Indoor haunted houses or costume parties

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CELEBRATING SAFELY, VISIT

ALEXANDRIAVA.GOV/CORONAVIRUS

Don't Be Fooled by Ballot Language

Vote NO on the Gerrymandering Amendment.

BY DEL. MARK LEVINE

The ballot language in Amendment 1 is confusing. It was designed to be. Its proponents are trying to masquerade gerrymandering as reform. They don't expect you to read the Amendment itself.

One proponent is the Senate Democrat who drew 2011 lines to favor Democrats and his own district. The other is the House Republican, former Elections Committee Chair, who crafted the 2011 racial House gerrymander to favor Republicans and personally squashed reform efforts for almost two decades.

They won't tell you under Amendment 1, four party leaders and their nominees draw all the lines. Don't be fooled by ballot language that says "citizens" will be appointed. It's not like anyone can apply. Last night, I regretfully informed someone who proudly described his independence from either party that he could not serve. He's not a family member or close colleague of a party leader who promised to do their bidding. He doesn't stand a chance.

The ballot language won't tell you just two legislators can scuttle the commission, even if no one else wants to. That sends redrawing of



state lines, with scant guardrails against gerrymandering, to the Virginia Supreme Court, a body chosen by the self-same illegally-racially-gerrymandered Republican legislature that voters booted out of office in 2019: a judicial body knowing it will be reappointed by the very legislative body it designs.

To cynics questioning legislators' motivations, remember it was gerrymandering legislators who crafted Amendment 1: old-guard Senate Democrats trying to protect incumbents and House Republicans striving to create maps with a decidedly Republican tilt. The YES side has taken millions (90%+ of their funds) from out-of-state billionaires and dark-money interests that gerrymandered North Carolina. Their motives are clear.

But what about cynics who say they can't trust the NO side either, scrappy reformers outspent 100 to 1 and new to the legislature since 2011? What will stop us from going over to the dark side, grasping Tolkien's fabled ring, and gerrymandering ourselves?

To prevent this, we tied our own hands. In 2020, we became the first legislature in the nation to pass a law banning redistricting from unduly favoring any political party and to

protect communities of interest, guaranteeing racial and ethnic minorities a seat at the table (HB1255).

So if Virginians vote NO on 1, we legally can't gerrymander in 2021, even if we want to. In fact, we can go even further and install a non-partisan independent citizens commission to redistrict. Republicans who opposed our efforts would have to agree, lest Democrats alone draw the lines.

What about 2022 and beyond? Ropes tying our hands in 2021 could unravel if a new legislature were to repeal our efforts. So I've proposed a constitutional amendment (HJ143) devised by anti-gerrymandering political scientists to build and improve on HB1255. Its "objective criterion of fairness" uses past Virginia elections to mathematically model newly-drawn districts so if Virginians vote equally for two parties, legislative results would expect to come out 50-50 as well.

Virginians are increasingly removing wool pulled over our eyes and are angry about being deceived. Support for the amendment has plummeted 40 points in the polls from last December to today. The race will be tight.

But don't you be fooled. If you believe in democracy – namely that the party with the most votes should control the legislature – vote NO on Amendment 1.

Mark Levine represents Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Building Trust in our Police Officers

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

This column, number two of three columns, focuses on reforms to Virginia's policing practices, legislation I helped craft with Senator Mamie Locke. Last week, I reported on the criminal justice reforms that the Virginia General Assembly approved in our recent special session. Next week, I will discuss changes in Virginia's budget.

The video capturing the chokehold and murder of George Floyd shocked America and was a painful example of abusive policing experienced by the African American community for too long. These images galvanized a grassroots movement that demanded changes. The General Assembly tried to respond with needed changes in our laws.

Diverse Input Sought

During the drafting process, I sought diverse views in at least a dozen meetings with state and local law enforcement leaders. We held meetings with local officers on the street, community advocates, and heard testimony from national experts and state law enforcement leaders in a public hearing.

Despite some media reports, Virginia's law enforcement agencies supported most of these measures because most larger departments already



ready train to these standards. Sixty of Virginia's 430 law enforcement agencies are accredited by state and national organizations that confirm they hold their officers to high standards and follow best practices. No department trains officers to use chokeholds or shoot at moving cars, and accredited departments already utilize a use-of-force continuum and train to use deadly

force only as a last resort.

Improvements in Policing Practices

Under Virginia's current laws, if an officer commits misconduct, resigns mid-investigation and is terminated, there is no requirement to share that officer's employment records. This is how officers who use faulty judgment remain employed, by "hopping" or moving to another department.

Our bill requires police or deputies switching jobs to sign employment file releases, requires record-sharing and eliminates the law forcing termination of a decertification proceeding upon an officer's resignation. It encourages departments to require psychological screening for new hires.

The bill requires training in racial bias, mental health awareness, substance abuse disorders and cognitive disabilities and creates a state-wide mandatory baseline training. The bill pro-

hibits law enforcement agencies from acquiring military equipment like mine-resistant personnel carriers, 50-caliber rifles and weaponized drones.

Today, officers can only be decertified for conviction of crimes or positive drug tests. Our legislation creates an officer code of conduct and use of force standards that can be grounds for decertification. We also allow decertification for lying in court and withholding "Brady materials," evidence tending to show a person is innocent.

SEE ELECTION DAY, PAGE 7

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

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, Bridgette Adu-Wadner
Contributing Writers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Hope Nelson

Food Writer
hope@kitchenrecessionista.com
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope

Senior Reporter
michaelpope@gmail.com
@michaelpope

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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Building Trust

FROM PAGE 6

Our legislation criminalizes sex between officers and people in custody. It prohibits chokeholds or shooting at moving motor vehicles except in self-defense, prohibiting what occurred in the shooting of Bijan Ghaisar in the Mount Vernon area.

We require warning before deadly force is used if feasible, and created statutory standards for the use of deadly force. The bill creates an affirmative duty for officers to intervene when they see another officer using excessive force.

Virginia will become the third state to ban “no knock” warrants. A national ban proposed by Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul is pending in Congress. We also prohibited officers from serving search warrants after dark unless specific authorization is requested, justified and approved by a Circuit Court judge.

Earlier in 2020, we passed legislation requiring annual reports on the race of citizens and outcome of traffic stops. We recently built upon that law by also requiring annual reporting by all Virginia’s law enforcement agencies on use of force and expanded reporting to pedestrian encounters where a search or arrest occurs.

Making Records Available

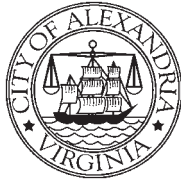
Commonwealth’s attorneys were frustrated by localities’ refusal to provide records in cases of police shootings. For example, Fairfax County’s delay in providing records in the John Geer case stalled prosecution for two years. Our legislation requires localities to turn over records to prosecutors for all criminal cases involving a police officer if the officer is being investigated or is a witness in a case.

We hope these reforms will make our law enforcement stronger by further professionalizing law enforcement agencies, building community trust through expanding transparency and ensuring that “bad apples” cannot jump departments.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. Please email me at scott@scottsurovell.org with your suggestions.

Legals

Legals



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA SECOND HALF 2020 REAL ESTATE TAX, REFUSE FEE AND STORMWATER UTILITY FEE ARE DUE NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Second half 2020 real estate tax, refuse fee and stormwater utility fee must be paid by November 16, 2020, to avoid late payment penalty and interest. If unable to pay the full amount due to COVID-19, please email covid19realpropertytax@alexandriava.gov to discuss your circumstances and learn about payment options.

Pay by credit card or eCheck on the City’s website at alexandriava.gov/Payments. Real estate tax payments can also be mailed to City of Alexandria, PO Box 34750, Alexandria, VA 22334-0750.

Pay in person at the Treasury Division, City Hall, Room 1510 between 8AM and 5PM Monday through Friday. The drop box on the Royal Street side of City Hall is available 24 hours a day and is recommended for in person payments. Payments must be in the drop box by midnight on November 16, 2020 to be considered on time.

Real estate tax information is available on the City’s website at alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax. Under Additional Resources, the Real Estate Tax History and Payments link provides detailed tax balances and payments.

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email payments@alexandriava.gov. For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email realestate@alexandriava.gov. For refuse fee questions, please call the Solid Waste Division at 703.746.4410. For stormwater utility fee questions, please call the Stormwater Management Division at 703.746.6499, or email stormwater@alexandriava.gov.

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Local Filmmaker Uses a Pie Recipe to Highlight Family Change

The family and sweet potato pie is one of many highlights in the upcoming Alexandria Film Festival.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

The parallels between a growth in family relationships, and a recipe for the family's sweet potato pie all come together in Sam Houston's indy film "12 Ingredients Over the Generations." What stays and what gets left behind? Houston asks in the film's introduction. It's one of the locally produced pieces in this year's Alexandria Film Festival which is coming up in early November.

"The pie is a metaphor for how things change as you go through the generations," Houston said.



Alexandria Film Festival

Alexandria Film Festival Unveils 2020 Program: 45 Films To Be Screened Virtually, including 18 Premieres

Tickets Available Now at AlexFilmFest.com

The Alexandria Film Festival, which will debut virtually this year Nov. 12-15, announced on Tuesday its 2020 programming of 45 short and feature length fiction and nonfiction films, representing every genre. Topics in the films range from family traditions and unsung artists to stories of survival and union organizing. Stories range from a father suffering through a hilarious Kafkaesque journey trying to make his daughter's birthday wish come true to a dazzling animated fantasy from Argentina tracing the journey of souls through varying dimensions of existence.

Anchoring the festival's opening night and its 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Showcase of films is "9 to 5: The Story of a Movement" by Oscar-winning filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar. The documentary follows a group of office workers in the 1970s that organize a national movement for gender equality in the workplace. The movement inspired the 1980 Hollywood film "9 to 5" starring Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton, and Lily Tomlin. The 7 pm screening on Nov. 12 will be followed with a live Q&A with one of the principal subjects of the film,



Sam Hampton and Dara Sanders on the stage at a past festival.

Houston is a former resident of Hollin Hills and this is the fifth year he has been part of the film festival. He moved to Hollin Hills in 2005 and became immersed in the "Docs in Progress," program in Silver Spring

before recently moving out to Seattle to be with his children, who are now adults. The sweet potato pie film was filmed entirely in Alexandria.

Documentaries are the film genre that



Film festival's Claire Ensslin and Margaret Wohler.

Houston likes the most, and through the years, subjects he's touched on include a film about a city woman dreaming of moving out to the country, a film about transgender transition, an African American doctor, and one about an Asian artist, to name a few. His "exploring issues of race, gender and culture, primarily from a personal perspective, is driven by the belief that storytelling through film is one of our most efficient tools to ignite empathy and inspire social change," he said.

But as films evolve, so do his subjects. Houston's next documentary is about a friend that finds a rare British car sitting unnoticed in a barn in Texas. Turns out, this car is a rare MG he says is "the oldest-known Morris automobile imported from the UK to the US." It is now in Woodstock New York being brought back to life after 71 years, and will be featured in MG Motors 75th anniversary celebration. "It's a really big deal," he said.

Houston loves the film festival atmosphere and has been in many throughout the years. "It's a great opportunity to go and meet your peers, and learn from other filmmakers," he said. He's been recognized in the DC Independent Film Festival; the Social Justice Film Festival - Seattle; Seattle Transgender Film Festival; Utopia Film Festival - Greenbelt, Md.; and the Miami Independent Film Festival in Miami, Fla.

He is dedicated to socially conscious filmmaking, even if the antique car film he's working on is not in that genre. "I decided to do something completely different," he said.

Alexandria Film Festival

The Alexandria Film Festival is in its 13th year and continues to showcase up and coming faces in the film industry on a local scale. This year the festival runs from Nov. 12-15 at 500 Alexandria Avenue. "The Alexandria Film Festival brings high-quality short and feature length films, documentaries, filmmaker panels, and arts presentations to the historic port city of Alexandria, Virginia," the website states. In addition to Houston's documentary, this year's films touch on subjects such as love at first sight, mothers finding comfort in each other after a tragedy, deportation, and big brother's watching eyes — they're everywhere.

This year, the Alexandria Film Festival and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra are partnering with a combined expertise to produce a special blend of orchestral music and original film. The two organizations will commission five new films to be screened "live to picture" with American orchestral pieces performed by the orchestra.

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CALENDAR



The 25th Annual Art on the Avenue festival moves to a virtual format for 2020, running through the holidays. www.artontheavenue.org/



NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Art on the Avenue. The 25th Annual Art on the Avenue festival will move to a virtual format for 2020, running through the holidays. Over 150 artists will be featured, offering handmade items in a wide range of mediums, including wheel-thrown vases and bowls, tiles, sculpture, tote bags and purses, drawings and pastels, knitted and crocheted hats and gloves, woven scarves and shawls, gourmet food, fused and blown glass, jewelry, paintings, photography, and much more. Traditionally held each fall on Mount Vernon Avenue, Art on the Avenue is a multicultural arts festival that strives to reflect the vibrant mix of the Del Ray community through the artists and their work, and draws an estimated 75,000 visitors each year. Visit www.artontheavenue.org.

NIGHTMARE ALLEY The Workhouse Arts Center announces that "Nightmare Alley" Haunted Drive-Thru is coming to Lorton for this year's Halloween season. "Nightmare Alley" is the first immersive drive-thru Halloween experience in the region. Zombies, swamp creatures, creepy clowns, and scary dolls are among 13 different scary scenes taking up residence on the Workhouse campus. These new campus inhabitants will scare and entertain visitors experiencing the attraction from the safety of their cars. There will be 13 nights of fright, now through Saturday, Oct. 31. Fridays and Saturdays from 7-11 p.m. each weekend in October, and Sunday Oct. 25 from 7-10 p.m. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/nightmare-alley/>

OCT. 28 TO DEC. 9

Forty+ Project II. 3-4 p.m. Via Zoom. Forty+ celebrates the collective creativity of people past the age of 40. Fall Project 2 is directed by choreographer Kelsey Rohr through weekly sessions on Zoom (with outdoor or in-person meetings as conditions allow). The project is open to people of all physical facilities. Cost is \$100. Visit the website: <https://www.janefranklin.com/adult-dance/forty-plus>

FRIDAY/OCT. 30

Vampire's Ball. 8 p.m. The Synthetic Theater Vampire's Ball will return Friday, October 30 from 8-10 p.m. as a live-streamed, interactive digital Halloween Party! Re-imagined as the Virtual Vampire Ball, the event will include clips from classic Synthetic Shows, Halloween trivia, a creepy choreography tutorial, digital dance party, and a cyber costume contest. Tickets are Pay-What-You-Can starting at \$5 and the event is recommended for ghouls ages 10 and up. Tickets can be purchased at www.synthetictheater.org/virtual-vampire-ball/

FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, OCT. 31 TO DEC. 5

Alexandria Drive-In Movie Encore Series. At the Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, 5001 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria. The Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, presented by Alexandria based businesses ALX Community and The Garden, will kick off its Encore Series on Oct. 31 through Dec. 5 and will feature a popular collection of movie classics

and family favorites. Cost: \$35 per car/per screening. No refunds. 100% of ticket costs go to local Alexandria based charities. Visit the website: www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com

Schedule:

Saturday, October 31 - Casper & The Mummy (Double Feature)
Saturday, November 7 - Nanny McPhee & The Race (Double Feature)
Sunday, November 8 - Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw
Saturday, November 14 - The Secret Life of Pets & Pitch Perfect (Double Feature)
Friday, November 20 - Sea Biscuit
Saturday, November 21 - How to Train Your Dragon & 42 (Double Feature)
Friday, December 4 - The Bourne Identity
Saturday, December 5 - The Grinch & Love Actually (Double Feature)

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

"Magic of Music" – Halloween Family Program. 1 p.m. Drew Owen, magician and cellist | Elizabeth Pulju-Owen, special guest violinist. Fun for the whole family when musical wizard Musico the Magnificent and special guest astonish and amuse with stunning feats of magic and phenomenal music for cello; also featuring costume prizes, socially distanced photo station and sanitized, no-contact treats. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Visit <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

"A Venetian Halloween" -- Chamber Music. 5 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Members of the National Symphony Orchestra: Marissa Regni, violin and String Quartet. The Secret Garden travels to Venice for a spellbinding program by string players from the National Symphony Orchestra; add a Carnival masque to your face covering for an elegant Halloween with gorgeous music, including the "Autumn" Concerto from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Puccini's "Crisantemi" and other Italian composers. Visit <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

T-Rex Meet Up. 3-4 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Calling T-Rex fanatics of all ages! Join us in your best T-Rex costume on the front lawn of Carlyle House for some great photo ops, line dancing, a small parade around the block and a roaring contest!. And of course, we will have individual bags of treats for participating dinosaurs! All COVID-19 procedures will be in place.

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Trick or Treat. 4-6 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Join on All Hallow's Eve for good old fashioned trickery and treats! Bring your little ghosts, goblins, princesses and action heroes to one of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings. We'll be handing out candy in individual bags. In case of inclement weather please, call museum for status of the event. All COVID-19 procedures will be in place.

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Death Comes to Carlyle House. 6-8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. In September 1780, John Carlyle passed away and the family would have gone into

mourning. Join us for an evening tour of the house to learn about death and mourning in the 18th century. Tours will be led through the house at 6pm, 7pm, and 8pm. Reservations are required as space is limited. All COVID-procedures will be in place during this tour. \$10 tickets available on the website.

NOV. 3-27

"Gratitude" Art Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive/Crystal City Shops, Arlington. Gallery Underground in November presents Gratitude: Representing Thankfulness in Artwork, an all-member all-media show. The year 2020 has presented us with multiple physical, moral, spiritual and emotional challenges. Member artists have created work in the season's spirit of giving thanks, representing images of those things for which they are still grateful, despite the current world we face. In our Main Gallery are new works by our members on all themes, in media including oil, acrylic, pastel, watermedia, sculpture, glass, ceramics, wood and metalwork. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/>

NOV. 6-28

"Women's Right to Vote: 100 Years Since the 19th Amendment" exhibit (November 6-28) features artwork by Del Ray Artisans, local high school students and 2020 graduates, and celebrates the achievements of women over the past 100 years. The movement towards equality in America continues today. Lift your voice and vote. Opening Day Appointments: Friday, November 6, 12-8 p.m. View exhibit at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Details: www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Jane Franklin Dance: Hidden Talents at Inner Ear Studios. 7:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Jane Franklin Dance presents a performance streamed live from Inner Ear Studios. Enjoy a Zoom performance event that is filled with real time performance all from the ease of your own living room. Tickets: free with donations accepted (\$10 suggested minimum to help JFD & Inner Ear Studios). Registration is required. Info: <https://www.janefranklin.com/talents>

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Watercolor Workshop: Orchids. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Some subjects just scream to be painted in watercolor, and orchids are one of those subjects. Come to Green Spring Gardens and let botanical artist Dawn Flores teach you how to plan and execute an orchid-inspired painting. At the "Watercolor Workshop: Orchids," get information on orchid anatomy and lessons on color. A variety of watercolor techniques and transfer practices will be presented. If you own an orchid, you are welcome to bring it along to use as your specimen. You also may work from photographs provided by the instructor. This class is designed for participants age 16 to adult and is appropriate for any skill level. Cost is \$94 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

This Week Is Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week

In recognition of the facts that: According to the Alexandria Police Department, there were 184 vehicle/pedestrian crashes in Alexandria from 2017 to 2019, and these crashes seriously injured 20 pedestrians & killed eight pedestrians; and

Pedestrian collisions at 20mph kill one in 10, but at 40mph kill 9 in 10, according to the Federal Highway Administration & National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; and

Distracted driving due to smart-phone use causes an increasing number of pedestrian collisions; and the shift away from passenger cars to SUVs and light trucks leads to more injuries in pedestrian crashes; and

Vehicle/pedestrian crashes in Alexandria are more likely to occur during the fall and winter months due to the end of Daylight Saving time, shorter days, and often more inclement weather, which all present high-risk conditions for pedestrians; and

The last week of October and the first weekend of November coincides with Halloween and chil-

dren are considered vulnerable road users that are more severely affected by crashes; Nov. 1 is when Daylight Saving ends, and sunset arrives an hour earlier.

In support of safer streets and the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on Nov. 15, 2020, do hereby proclaim the week beginning Monday, Oct. 26, 2020 as Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week.

Alexandria Families for Safe Streets and the Alexandria Police Department want to remind drivers about a recent Virginia Traffic Law that requires drivers to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks, instead of just yielding. Drivers must come to a full stop for pedestrians in any marked and unmarked crosswalks and remain stopped until the pedestrian passes your vehicle stopped at a crosswalk; the driver of any other approaching vehicle may not pass the stopped vehicle.

On Nov. 1, 2020 when Daylight Saving ends and sunset arrives an hour earlier during Standard Time, drivers are advised to be alert to



Alexandria City Council issued a Proclamation on Oct. 13, 2020

pedestrians in crosswalks and pedestrians who wear reflective gear after dark are more likely to be

seen by drivers.

To learn more about Alexandria Families For Safe Streets or to get

involved please visit www.alxhss.org

BULLETIN BOARD

OCT. 30 AND 31

Death Comes to Carlyle House. 6-8 p.m., on the hour. Cost is \$10 a person. At Carlyle House in Alexandria. In September 1780, John Carlyle passed away and

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

the family would have gone into mourning. Join us for an evening tour of the house to learn about death and mourning in the 18th century. Tours will be led through the house at 6 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m. Reservations are required as space is limited.

alexandriava.gov/ACAP to register for the event, or for more information about ACAP.

LEAF COLLECTION BEGINS

The City of Alexandria will begin its annual leaf vacuuming and leaf bag collection program on Monday, Nov. 2. Leaf collection is expected to continue into January. Alexandria is divided into five collection zones, each with a specific start date. Each zone will receive three passes. Residents who receive City trash and recycling collection services may recycle leaves in three ways:

- Raking leaves to the curb for vacuum collection <
- Placing leaves in paper leaf bags for collection (leaves in plastic bags are considered refuse, and are thrown away as trash)
- Composting leaves and yard waste at home
- Please do not mix brush or other items with leaves, as these items may injure City workers, damage equipment or private property, or cause delays.
- Residents may receive leaf collection status updates by signing up for the free Alexandria eNews service and subscribing to "Resource Recovery Updates," or by following the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.
- Visit alexandriava.gov/LeafCollection to determine specific collection zones and dates, and to find locations where free, biodegradable leaf bags may be picked up.

NEW ELECTRIC BUSES UNVEILED

The Alexandria Transit Company (DASH) unveiled its new electric buses on Oct. 19, marking a historic first for the agency, Alexandria and the Northern Virginia region. DASH is the first transit agency in Northern Virginia to deploy zero-emission buses and has

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

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SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Researchers at Marymount University helped establish programs to reduce the number of falls and resulting injuries among seniors.

Preventing Falls

Physical exercise and home safety reduce risk.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

One of the leading causes of fatal injuries in older adults is falling. In fact, every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall and emergency room visits related to falling occur every 11 seconds. A group of researchers at Marymount University in Arlington is teaming with senior service organizations to lower those statistics locally. The coalition has won more than \$1 million in federal grants to create falls prevention programs that are available to seniors.

"It was a real academic-community partnership to provide a needed service to our community," said lead researcher Rita Wong, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for Research at Marymount University. "Through the grant, we established the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance. This Alliance brings together senior-serving communities for advocacy, education, networking, and expansion of falls prevention initiatives."

Three falls prevention programs were designed based on research by Wong; Sara Pappa, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance and coordinator of the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance; Uma Kelekar, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Healthcare Management; and faculty from the Physical Therapy program: Diana Venskus, Ph.D.; Cathy Elrod, Ph.D.; Julie Ries, Ph.D.; and Jade Bender-Burnett, DPT.

The research team created a regional training office for falls prevention at Marymount. "We train lay leaders to run these community falls prevention programs and we help organizations and senior community centers set up falls prevention programs," said Wong. "Once they're established, the centers take on primary responsibilities for sustaining the programs."

Designed to address the needs of seniors at three levels of functioning, the team created three programs: SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life), which is a balance and strengthening exercise program geared to fairly active older adults. A Matter of Balance (AMOB) focuses on independent seniors who are worried about falling and want to learn prevention techniques. And Otago Exercise Program (OTA-GO), which is toward those who are frail and need closer supervision and an exercise program that is tailored to their specific needs.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc., leads a virtual SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) class for strength and balance.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, programs are now offered virtually. "Our SAIL classes are structured so we can provide strength, balance, and fitness classes," said Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc. "We have two SAIL leaders in every class. One instructs while the other adapts."

Those adaptations, based on ability, are categorized as "Level 1" and "Level 2", says Robinson. "Level 1 is seated exercise with a steady pace and same routine as Level 2. Level 2 is standing exercise with a higher pace," said Robinson. "The routine starts with a warm-up and about 20 minutes of aerobics. Then we do balance exercises and strength training exercises. We end the class with a cool down like stretching."

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service reports that half of all falls happen at home, and they encourage home safety. "Remove clutter from your home or least areas where you walk a lot like the hallway or living room," said occupational therapist, Brittany Ferri, of Simplicity Health. "Remove throw rugs, excess cords, and other items that can be tripped on; get non-slip surfaces for the bathroom like padding under the bathmat, grippies for inside the tub, and similar mats for catching water on bathroom tile."

For more information in Virginia:
<https://www.novafallsprevention.com/>

For more information in Maryland:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcfrs-info/tips/seniors/falls.html>

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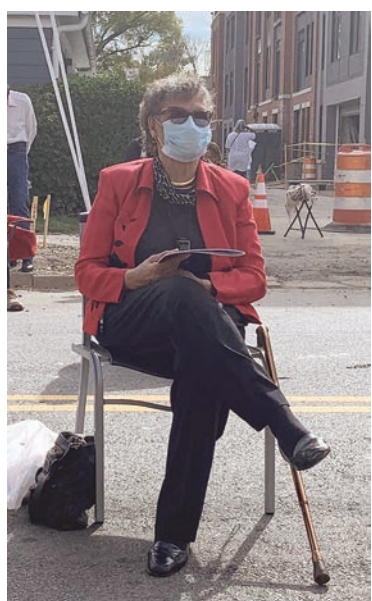
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Paving the Way



A brick in memory of the teachers of Parker-Gray School.



Dr. Mary Alice Hatwood Futrell, a former business education teacher at Parker-Gray, listens to remarks at the Oct. 24 dedication of the Memorial Walkway.



Mayor Justin Wilson, right, gives an elbow bump greeting to Julian "Butch" Haley Jr, chairman of the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, following the presentation of a proclamation commemorating the 100th anniversary of Parker-Gray School Oct. 24 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Eugene Thompson, a graduate of Parker-Gray High School and former director of the Black History Museum, speaks Oct. 24 at Charles Houston Recreation Center dedication of the Memorial Brick Walkway.



Lucretia Miller Martin points out the brick donated by her family at the Oct. 24 dedication of the Parker-Gray Memorial Walkway at Charles Houston Recreation Center.



The Parker-Gray Memorial Walkway was dedicated Oct. 24 at the entrance to Charles Houston Recreation Center commemorating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the school.



Childhood friends Ruby Osia and Bonnie Bracey Sutton, whose father was a teacher at Parker-Gray, reunite at the Oct. 24 dedication of the Parker-Gray Memorial Brick Walkway.

Witchful Thinking



The Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch is open through Oct. 31 at the corner of Seminary Road and Quaker Lane.



A Halloween display welcomes visitors on Prince Street's Captain's Row in Old Town.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/
GAZETTE PACKET



The Red Riding Hood skeleton celebrates Halloween in Alexandria.

OBITUARY



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Nancy Durant Edmonds, daughter of Dr. Oswald Durant, died unexpectedly at the age of 92.

Dr. Nancy Durant Edmonds

Daughter of Dr. Oswald Durant dies at 92.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Dr. Nancy Durant Edmonds, daughter of noted Alexandria doctor Oswald Durant, died unexpectedly at her home in Plainfield, N.J. at the age of 92.

Nancy Agnes Durant was born in Alexandria on March 24, 1928, the second of two children born to Dr. Oswald Durant and his wife Helen.

Oswald Durant was one of the first African American doctors in Alexandria. For many years he was denied practice at the local hospital because of segregation, which forced patients to show up at his home in the middle of the night to be treated for their injuries.

Durant Edmonds was raised in Alexandria and followed her father's footsteps into the medical profession. She received her B.A. and M.A. from Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Mass., in anthropology, and M.D. from Boston University. She completed her internship in medicine at New England Center Hospital Boston, Mass., 1953 and received her National Board Diploma in 1954.

From 1954 to 1957, Durant Edmonds completed residency in Psychiatry at Boston V.A. Hospital and was awarded both a training and teaching fellowship from Harvard Medical School.

SEE OBIYUARY, PAGE 14

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Obituary

Obituary

Ruth Marie Ramey Schonasky Martin

Ruth Marie Ramey Schonasky Martin, 93, departed from Sunshine Cottages in Plano, TX. The Bon Voyage for her next great adventure occurred at 10:30 AM, Monday, 19 Oct 2020.

Ruth arrived 5 Sep 1927, in Hagerstown, Maryland. Parents James Lewis (1895-1939) and Anna Laura (Smedley) Ramey (1892-1973); had Elsie and Warren in Front Royal, the rest arrived in Hagerstown. Her siblings were Elsie Kathleen Rosen Figgins; Warren Hansboro (Kathleen); Edna Mae Saulnier; Earl Lewis; Howard Robert (Janice); and Thomas Calvin (Juanita). Her father and brother Warren worked for the "Alexandria Gazette" before moving the family to old town and founding Artcraft Printing on King Street, where at age 8, she could run the presses.

Ruth worked as a Switchboard Operator for C&P Telephone Co. and later as a receptionist for CAS Accounting. She volunteered with the USO, helped in the school library, and was a Cub Scout den mother. She also helped to establish a historic landmark in King George.

Ruth married William Raymond "Bill" Schonasky at Dahlgren in 1951; they had 7 children. Raymond Chandler "Ray" (Gloria Berry); William Calvin "Billy" (1956-1977); Deborah Ruth "Debbie" Frazier; Anna Marie Wehr Shoemaker; Teresa May "Terry" (Chris Addington); Robert Warren (Patricia Hundley); and Oscar "Wayne". Ruth's children are her life, she had nicknames for all her girls and her youngest son. Debbie was her Debbie Dear; Anna her Brown Eyed Beauty; Terry her Blondie Girl; and Wayne her Pride and Joy. Bill knew she loved roses, especially red, so he planted rose bushes all along both side yards; encouraging their children to pick them and take them to her.

She married again in 1984 to Francis Ansley Tolson "Frank" Martin who had 2 grown children. Barbara Jean Evans Becker; and Robert Martin (Cindy). Frank took her places, traveling anywhere he or she wanted to go, but she loved Virginia the most. Upon returning, she would say, "Home Sweet home, nothing like it".

Ruth's love of reading began as a young child when she would sit on her father's lap as he read the newspaper to her and her siblings. She especially loved the comics. During storms and troubled times, Ruth would read and pass the scriptures (her favorite being Psalms 23) around amongst her children, just as her father did with his family. She cherished her daughter Anna, with whom she lived her last 7 years, reading her novels.

Ruth had a perfect memory, as the only one in her family to remember her brother Earl, that lived just 1 day, she championed her son Robert to find him, and now he has a headstone. If the hairdresser told a story of her husband's partner's neighbor's sister's friend, she would remember it all 20 years later, even the name of the dog. Ruth kept Hallmark and the Post Office in business; by writing songs, poems, letters and cards to family and friends; commonly sending 100s of cards at

every occasion, she never forgot anyone or missed a birthday or holiday. Ruth enjoyed Roller Skating and shopping with her best friend Ann, she never bought a thing for herself without buying something for someone else. They were so close we all thought Ann was our aunt. Ruth also loved Betty Boop, Coca-Cola and the color blue. Ruth loved a wide genre of music:

Orchestras, Big Band, Swing and Jazz. She loved instruments like the trumpet, fiddle, violin, and banjo, especially the piano. Ruth along with her siblings would sing and dance while their father played a Banjo or Violin on the Radio Station, becoming friends with Arthur Godfrey. Her father even taught her to tap dance. She would play records or turn up the radio to sing and dance her way through daily chores. Now she is singing and dancing, like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers, in the clouds.

Ruth's Legacy consists of 7 children, 2 step children, 18 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren, totaling 44, with numerous future bundles of joy.

Grandchildren: Sharon Evans (Bob Cantrell), John Evans, Katherine "Kate" Evans (Robert Raiser Jr), Christopher Martin (Erica), Nathaniel "Nathan" Frazier (Tiffany), Lauren Hundley (Chris Richardson), Sarah Hundley (Jonathan Morris), John Wehr II (Jona), Bryan Frazier, Julia Hundley (Brian Self), Brittany Berry, Daniel Addington (Sarah), David Addington, Amy Addington, Brittany Shoemaker, Raymond Schonasky, Jacob Addington and Evan Schonasky.

Great Grandchildren: Hillary Martin; Elizabeth, William, Katherine, and Ben Cantrell; Jennifer Zimmel and Grace Evans; Alexandra Netherton; Kellan and Keagan Frazier; Jessie and Jazmine Wehr; Warren Addington; Alex Hundley; Avery and Autumn Morris; and Sawyer Self.

A viewing will take place from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM (Noon) on November 6, 2020; at Demaine Funeral Home, 520 S Washington Street in Alexandria, VA; with the Funeral Service taking place at 12:00 PM. Livestreaming can be viewed thru Demaine's Facebook page available for those unable to attend (especially due to COVID19). Additional information can be found at www.demainefuneralhomes.com. Bishop John Read from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will officiate.

A gravesite prayer and dedication will be conducted at 1:30 PM on November 6, 2020; at Mount Comfort Cemetery, 6600 S. Kings Hwy, in Alexandria, VA. Burial in Monticello plot 516, site 2 (next to son Billy).

Ruth was preceded in death by her husbands, parents, brothers, brother-in-laws, sisters, sister-in-laws, a son Billy, and a step daughter Barbara. Her trials and tribulations are over, she valiantly endured them all. Her spirit now resides in Paradise where she is surrounded by her loved ones witnessing angels singing and trumpeting her victorious return. All that she strived for, hoped for, and prayed for is hers: Peace, Joy, Happiness, Eternal Life and Celestial Glory.

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An expert is someone who knows some
of the worst mistakes that can be made
in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Missive or Dismissive



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the last few months, I have been receiving unsolicited emails from Tommy Chug; he being the other half of the 70's era comedy duo, "Cheech and Chong" with whom I spent countless hours in college laughing at their recorded routines, but beyond that I don't remember much. There were a few follow up movies - which I never saw, and more recently, I have found somewhat belatedly a early 2000s cop show starring Cheech Marin alongside Don Johnson: "Nash Bridges." Nothing at all from Tommy Chong until these emails began arriving.

The email is a solicitation followed by content about his life these last years, and the discovery he made after he had served a nine-month prison sentence for selling decorative bong (there's a bit more to that story, but it's not particularly pertinent to this column). After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Tommy sought help trying to mitigate the effects of his chemotherapy treatment and perhaps even improve his quality of life. (he's 81 now, by the way.) In so pursuing, he met a doctor from Utah while on a plane, and the rest is Tommy's email.

The content is not exactly personalized but it does resonate. It resonates because it sounds reasonable and plausible and the remedy not too impactful to major organs, specifically liver and kidney, for which I'm very keen and concerned, given my nearly 13-year chemotherapy-plus treatment for cancer. However, the email has struck a nerve. It did so because as a cancer patient, it's easy to believe (hope certainly), there's a magic (often non-Western) cure to whatever ails you, especially when cancer is the culprit. I wouldn't necessarily characterize my feelings/emotions as susceptible but it's hard not to lean that way when you've been given a "terminal" diagnosis by your Western/conventional doctors. To say you have nothing to lose is a bit of a simplification. Still, hearing the words I heard on Feb. 27, 2009 (you bet I remember the date) at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, does cause your antennae to go up and out and all-around seeking an answer to what might very well be, the unanswerable.

When an oncologist tells you you're likely to die within "13 months to two years," all bets are off and caution no longer becomes an impediment. Standing pat and adhering exclusively to what your doctors are telling you seems like giving up sort of. For me, I didn't give up. I started trying alternatives, many of which I am continuing a decade-plus later. Now whether these non-conventional/non-Western methods have proven beneficial I certainly can't confirm, but if living is any indicator, they likely did no harm (the crux of the Hippocratic oath). So yes, on the face of Tommy's email about improving one's quality of life, I am open to some other possibilities to prescription medication.

In fact, to this day, I still consume about 60 pills a day and always wash it and most other things down with alkaline water. Moreover, I try to limit my sugar, which is impossible and I remain open to new ideas. Over the years, I have ingested spoonfuls of pureed canned asparagus, drank water with baking soda, drank water with apple cider vinegar, blended fruit and vegetable smoothies (how else does one tolerate a kale?) and tried to be mindful of a maintaining an alkaline diet. The goal has been to enhance my immune system while eliminating toxins in order to enable my body to heal itself. Again, it's difficult to know what alternatives have worked and what hasn't. Whether it has been real or a type of placebo effect where I thought it was beneficial, I am not prepared to say. However, I am living proof of something.

As concerns what Tommy is selling, the problem is, as it was with all my previous choices, there are no guarantees. Unfortunately, that was a problem at the beginning, and I fear it will be a problem at the end.

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

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

committed to completely converting its fleet to electric buses. The two buses unveiled at the event were the first of three planned to be deployed into regular service in Alexandria in the coming months and were manufactured by New Flyer. An additional three buses will be manufactured by Proterra. Both models are 40-foot battery-electric buses, relying completely on rechargeable electric batteries rather than combustible fuel. Like other zero emissions buses, these models will not produce any tailpipe emissions because they do not burn gas or diesel.

ALEXANDRIA BOARDS VACANCIES

The Alexandria City Council is seeking applicants to fill the vacancies on City of Alexandria boards, commissions, and committees. Council will act on these vacancies at the Nov. 10, 2020 City Council meeting. All applicants must complete a Personal Data Record form electronically via the City's website no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 3, 2020. For a complete listing of vacancies and to access the application form visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/boards/info/default.aspx?id=2202>

ALEXANDRIA AWARDED PANDEMIC GRANT

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and Bloomberg Philanthropies have awarded the City of Alexandria a \$25,000 grant to support efforts to transform public spaces in communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City will use the grant funding to install public Wi-Fi, seating and shade at the Four Mile Run Park Plaza, providing a safe and comfortable outdoor setting for students and residents without internet access at home. Alexandria was one of just 10 cities to receive the award.

FREE ONLINE JOB TRAINING

City of Alexandria and Arlington County residents can get free job skills training online as part of "Skill-Up Alexandria City and Arlington County," an initiative of the Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council, Alexandria Workforce Development Center, and Arlington Employment Center. Some 5,500 courses are available through this system, and you can access them 24/7 anywhere there is a high-speed internet connection. To enroll, online learners can log into Alexandria/Arlington's Metrix E-Learning System. Users will have six-months of free access to workplace, business, technical and IT courses that teach the skills local employers are looking for. Those who lack computer skills, internet access, or want assistance, can call the Alexandria Workforce Development Center

at 703-746-5990 or email wdc@alexandriava.gov, or call the Arlington Employment Center at 703-228-1400 or email jobseeker@arlingtonva.us.

COUNTY OFFERS 14 SATELLITE ABSENTEE VOTING

In anticipation of a high voter turnout, Fairfax County will offer 14 satellite locations for in-person absentee voting for the Nov. 3, general election. The Board of Supervisors established these locations during their July 14, meeting. For the 2020 presidential election, the county is increasing its absentee voting locations compared to the nine that were available in 2016. Election officials called for added locations because they are anticipating a high turnout—especially with the new state law that allows "no-excuse" absentee voting. Until now, voters were required to have a reason to vote absentee. These 14 satellite locations will be open for in-person absentee voting:

Centreville Regional Library, 14200 Saint Germain Drive, Centreville
Franconia Governmental Center 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria
Great Falls Library 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls
Herndon Fortnightly Library 768 Center Street, Herndon
Laurel Hill Golf Club 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton
Mason Governmental Center 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
McLean Governmental Center 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean
Mount Vernon Governmental Center 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria
North County Governmental Center 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston
Providence Community Center 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax
Sully Governmental Center 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly
Thomas Jefferson Library 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church
Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church
West Springfield Governmental Center 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield

These locations are currently proposed to be open weekdays from 1 to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, the Fairfax County Electoral Board may decide to adjust these hours later this summer based on the interest in absentee voting by mail.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.

OBITUARY

Dr. Nancy Durant Edmonds

FROM PAGE 13

Like her father, Durant Edmonds was a pioneer from an early age. In 1944, at age 16, she was the first person of color to be a finalist in the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, run by Society for Science & the Public in Washington, D.C. She finished top 10 out of 1,000-plus applicants.

On Aug. 27, 1966, Durant Edmonds married Clyde Edmonds. Together they raised a son, David Douglas Edmonds, who was born in 1970.

Durant Edmonds held various professional appointments throughout her career, primarily in New Jersey where

she had settled following her medical training. She served as examiner for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and in 2003 was named Psychiatrist of the Year by the New Jersey Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Durant Edmonds maintained a private practice until her death on April 11, 2020. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clyde Edmonds; her parents, Dr. Oswald and Helen Durant, and a brother, Oswald Durant II.

She is survived by her son, David; sisters-in-law, Johnnie Mae Durant, Alease Edmonds; nieces, nephews, cousins, and close friends and colleagues.

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Exciting river views from this distinctive 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath Harborside townhouse featuring a new Lobkovich chef's kitchen, hardwood floors, 2 fireplaces and an elevator. A living room bay window looks over a private patio with the Potomac River beyond. The kitchen with adjacent family room offers glistening water vistas from floor-to-ceiling glass doors. More breathtaking views from a wall of windows in the primary bedroom suite including a marble bath with double vanities. Two car garage parking completes this pristine home.

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