

Remembering Harry Covert

Noted journalist, relief worker, dies at 80.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Harry Covert was a proud, born and bred Virginian. For many years, he called Alexandria his home and could be seen hanging around the courthouse in his role as a bail bondsman and later as the Public Information Officer for the Sheriff's Office. On Nov. 7, Covert died at the age of 80 following a year-long battle with bladder cancer.

"Everyone at the Sheriff's Office loved Harry," said Sheriff Dana Lawhorne. "He was kind, generous and compassionate toward everyone he met. He was a true gentleman and had more friends than anyone I know."

Born Jan. 6, 1940, in Newport News, Harry M. Covert Jr. was the eldest son of the late Harry M. Covert Sr. and Mary E. (Goodson) Covert. He was a 1957 graduate of Newport News High School and immediately began a career in journalism as a sports reporter for the Newport News Times-Herald. After a year he was named Sports Information Director for The College of William and Mary.

In subsequent years he covered sports for The Daily Press in Newport News and the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot. He became managing editor of the Petersburg Progress-Index in 1968, returning to The Daily Press in 1969 when he was appointed manager of its Hampton, Va., News Bureau. In 1972, Covert established and was publisher of The Hampton Monitor, a weekly newspaper.

Covert's journalistic endeavors included establishing The Covert Letter, an international oriented commentary blog, in 2009. He was a columnist until 2019 for The Tentacle, a commentary site in Frederick, and a contributor to The Frederick News-Post and the Alexandria Gazette Packet.

"When Harry wrote for the Gazette Packet, he knew the best



Harry Covert, center, with Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Candra Callicott and then-Undersheriff Tony Davis at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremony.



Harry M. Covert Jr. died Nov. 7 at the age of 80.

stories required understanding and appreciating people," said former Gazette Packet editor-in-chief Steven Mauren. "He found pleasure in highlighting the little and large contributions of people who made Alexandria a better place to live in. He also had little patience for anyone seeking to gloss over the uglier realities of what crime does to a community. Yet, as a man of faith, he particularly enjoyed the stories of redemption, such as those prisoners in the city jail who made use of programs to try to change the course of their lives."

In 1975, Rev. Jerry Falwell appointed Covert as editor and pub-

lisher of Falwell's The Moral Majority Report. He then was on the editorial staff of The Washington Times.

Covert was ordained by the Church of God in 1980 and was a frequent substitute celebrant at Grace Lutheran Church in Woodsboro, Md.

Covert established the non-profit Harry Covert Ministries, through which he provided medical supplies to Haiti and other Caribbean and African countries. He directed airlifted food supplies to numerous African countries including the Sudan and Uganda and collaborated with Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse and Larry Jones, founder of Feed the Children, in domestic and international mercy missions.

Covert was a director until 2016 of International Relief, Inc., a nonprofit organization headquartered in London and Amsterdam, coordinating relief missions to Third World countries.

In 1982, Covert established his bail bonds agency in Alexandria, and in 2006 he joined the Alexandria Sheriff's Office as public information officer.

SEE HARRY COVERT, PAGE 4



The marquee outside T.C. Williams High School. The School Board voted Nov. 23 to change the name of the school along with Matthew Maury Elementary School.

Head of the Class

School board votes to change name of T.C., Maury schools.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Following months of heated debate, the Alexandria School Board voted Nov. 23 to rename two city schools, including T.C. Williams High School of "Remember the Titans" film fame.

In a 9-0 unanimous vote, the board moved forward in the process to rename both T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School.

"This is a historic moment for everybody," said Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings Jr. "For many years, people have been trying to change the name of T.C. Williams, and they really have not been successful."

Hutchings, himself a graduate of T.C. Williams, will present options for new names in the spring with any name change taking effect at the start of the 2021 academic year.

In an editorial for Tes earlier this month, Hutchings wrote that "Thomas Chambliss Williams was an aggressive racist, a staunch supporter of segregation who had no shame in stating his belief that black and white students learned 'differently' and should be kept apart. Inexplicably, it has taken until today, 55 years since the school opened, to see a committed renaming process that may finally remove him and his legacy from the only public high school in Alexandria."

Opened in 1965, the high school was named after Williams, the AL-

exandria schools superintendent from the mid-1930s until 1963. Williams resisted desegregation in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education mandating desegregated public schools across the nation.

In the 1920s, Maury Elementary School was named for Virginia resident Matthew Fontaine Maury, known as the father of modern oceanography and naval meteorology. Maury joined the Confederacy during the Civil War and moved to Mexico following its defeat with the intent to recreate a colony based on the South's plantation slavery.

The push to rename T.C. Williams dates back decades with unsuccessful attempts made in 1998 and in the early 2000s. The movement gained strength in July of this year when several online petitions and social media sites began calling attention to the issue in the wake of national protests following the death of George Floyd in May.

Following the board vote, one Facebook group changed its name from "Rename T.C. Williams High School Now" to "Yes, We Renamed That High School in Alexandria."

Moderators, Lindsey Woodson Vice and Marc Solomon, wrote: "Congratulations are in order to this group! This epic development was decades in the making and a result of the tireless efforts of community leaders, activists, students, alums, and finally our ACPS school board. I extend gratitude to you all for helping to make this happen. Onwards and upwards for ACPS!"

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Expunging the Record

Democrats are divided on how to clear charges and convictions.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

House Democrats and Senate Democrats are deadlocked over how people accused of minor crimes should be able to clear their records, a clash that has stalled action for now on one of the most important criminal-justice reform efforts on the agenda for Democrats now that they have seized control of the General Assembly. House Democrats are pressing for an automatic process, where defendants would not need to hire a lawyer or miss work to be in a courtroom to make the charges go away. Senate Democrats are holding out for a petition process, where a judge would be able to evaluate each individual case.

“So there’s a very good reason to have a petition process,” said Rich Kelsey, former assistant dean of the George Mason University School of Law. “But certainly it is 100 percent true that the petition process requiring you to hire a lawyer is expensive, and because it’s expensive it would necessarily preclude many people from having the same access toward expungement.”

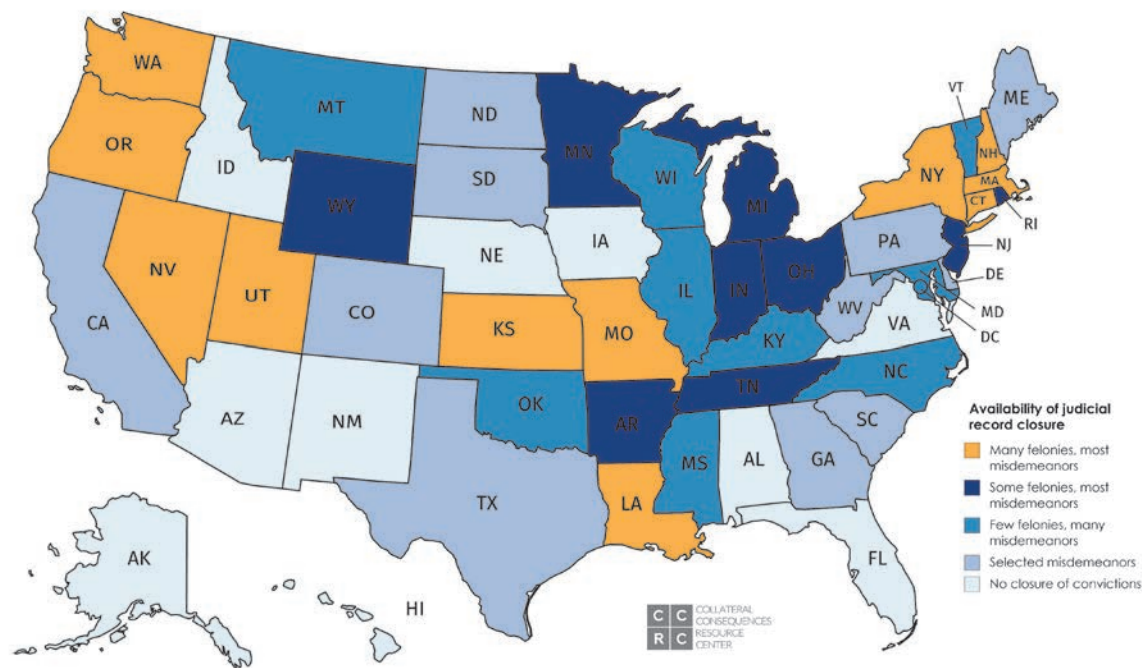
When Democrats took control over the General Assembly earlier this year, they were deadlocked over this issue and ended the session in March without coming to a resolution. Then, when lawmakers assembled for a special session on coronavirus response and criminal justice reform, hopes were high they could come to some kind of resolution on the issue. But when the bill went into the secret, closed-door conference committee process that's not open to the public or the press, it never emerged. Lawmakers ended the special session earlier this month without resolving the split between Democrats on whether the process should be automatic or petition-based.

"When you create a cottage industry for attorneys, it's going to be a harder road to eliminate that industry," said Del. Charniele Herring (D-46), the Majority Leader of the House of Delegates who represents Alexandria. "With automatic expungement, all that needs to happen is someone has served their time and not committed another offense. It's more just, and it's more equitable."

Senate Democrats say creating an automatic approach would be a mistake, especially at a time when lawmakers have been taking steps to move away from mandatory



Hiring a lawyer and showing up at the courthouse to expunge an old charge or conviction is a barrier to many people who would benefit from having their records expunged.



source: The Collateral Consequences Resource Center.

minimum sentences. During the special session, lawmakers took action to give prosecutors more discretion to drop drug prosecutions. So the idea that the General Assembly would move in the opposite direction by taking discretion away from judges to consider individual expungement cases seems like it would be moving in the wrong direction to Senate Democrats opposed to the House approach.

"They also want to automatical-

ly expunge any type of dismissal,” said Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36). “Whether it was dismissed because a witness didn’t show up or persuaded your abused spouse to drop the case against you, they want to automatically expunge those kinds of things. And that’s what we’re fighting about.”

THE DEBATE over expungement comes at a time when Virginia is on the verge of legalizing mari-

juana, which has led to countless charges and convictions during the War on Drugs. Earlier this year, lawmakers took action to decriminalize marijuana. Now that state officials have determined that legalization could generate as much as \$300 million in annual sales tax revenue, Gov. Ralph Northam put his support behind the longstanding effort to finally end the War on Drugs and legalize pot.

"It is high time that we legal-

ize marijuana in Virginia, but we must do more than that,” said Del. Mike Mullin (D-93), chairman of the Courts of Justice Criminal Law Subcommittee. “That is why I am calling for the automatic expungement of all marijuana convictions. Not a petition-based system, but automatic expungement. This unjust law has harmed our Commonwealth, and disproportionately impacted communities of color.”

One of the potential stumbling blocks of building support for an automatic process is the professional affiliations of lawmakers who are also lawyers. The Virginia General Assembly is a part-time gig, and members are encouraged to have full-time jobs outside of the political sphere. The system is designed so people can bring their professional experience to the table during discussion of bills, whether it's as a farmer or a dentist or an insurance agent. Critics of the petition process worry that lawyers are able to make a persuasive case about the need for lawyers to be involved in expungements.

“Not only are they a powerful lobby, these attorneys, they’re members of the legislature and they’re chairs of committees that hear these bills,” said Jenn Michelle Pedini, executive director of Virginia NORML. “So there seems to be a conflict of interest potentially there, but if Virginians are going to keep electing these people to represent them, they’re going to continue to get the same results.”

IF VIRGINIA were to move forward with an automatic expungement process during the 2021 session, the commonwealth would be on the vanguard of a criminal justice reform that's been attempted in only a handful of states. Pennsylvania was the first state to create a model for automatic expungement in 2018, and a few other states have started moving in that direction since then. The real question for the Crime Commission and lawmakers are which crimes should be on the list for automatic expungement and how long defendants should have to wait before their record is cleared.

"The rationale I use when I look at this, are these crimes of poverty?" asks Del. Paul Krizek (D-44). "If these are crimes of poverty, then to me that makes it clear to me that they should be expunged automatically."

One issue lawmakers still need to resolve is what kind of informa-

SEE EXPUNGING, PAGE 11

Thanking Those Who Serve

SSA holds drive-through volunteer appreciation event.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The warm temperatures and sunny skies of an Indian Summer day provided the perfect backdrop for Senior Services of Alexandria to hold its annual Meals on Wheels volunteer appreciation luncheon as an outdoor drive-through event Nov. 6 at the First Baptist Church of Alexandria.

"I am so excited to have a perfect day to welcome our volunteers who have done so much to help us and the seniors of Alexandria during this crisis," said SSA Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson. "We couldn't be happier to see people we haven't seen in a long time, to share with them a lovely lunch from Jeffrey's Catering and thank everyone for their support."

City officials joined SSA staff and board members in handing out lunches to the Meals on Wheels volunteers, who participated in the drive-through event.

Thanking the volunteers were City Council members Del Pepper and Amy Jackson, Police Chief Michael Brown and Sheriff Dana Lawhorne.

"It is great to be here today," said John Street, a Meals on Wheels volunteer for seven years until SSA made the decision to temporarily halt participation from those over the age of 65. "I volunteered three days a week and got close to the people I was serving. I will go back after COVID restrictions are lifted. I absolutely love volunteering for Meals on Wheels – it is so rewarding."



Senior Services of Alexandria staff members MaryAnne Beatty, left, and Tanya Edwards man the water station during the Meals on Wheels volunteer appreciation drive-through luncheon Nov. 6 at the First Baptist Church of Alexandria.



Sheriff Dana Lawhorne with former Senior Services of Alexandria board member Carol O'Shaughnessy at the Meals on Wheels volunteer appreciation drive-through luncheon Nov. 6 at the First Baptist Church of Alexandria.



Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, right, with Harry Covert.

Remembering Harry Covert

FROM PAGE 1

Among his affiliations, Covert was a member of the George Washington Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution in Alexandria, and a Kentucky Colonel.

Covert is survived by sons Harry E. Covert of Frederick, Md., Alan S. Covert (Cristina), of Jacksonville, Fla.; Christopher R. Covert of Frederick; three step children: Beau Bruffy, Edward Bruffy, and Elizabeth Wooley; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; brother Norman M. Covert (Loretta) of Frederick; sister Rachel M. Paquette (Thomas) of Southbor-

ough, Mass., and numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister Fayette M. Stansbury.

Covert's remains have been donated to the Maryland Anatomy Board for medical research and training objectives. A memorial will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations to Frederick Health Hospice may be made at www.frederickhealthhospice.org.

"Harry was a prolific columnist," said ABC News investigative reporter James Gordon Meek. "He was the epitome of a newsman and until the very end he never quit being a journalist."



Harry Covert, left, is congratulated by Chief Judge Becky Moore on his retirement from the Alexandria Sheriff's Office in January of 2012.

Subaru's 2020 Share the Love Campaign

BY MARY LEE ANDERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Subaru's Share the Love Campaign kicks off its 13th year beginning Nov. 19 through Jan. 4, 2021, and Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) as a member of the Meals on Wheels network is participating again in this year's event.

"Meals on Wheels America is proud to partner with Subaru of America for the 13th consecutive year to enable more seniors to live with independence and dignity," said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO, Meals on Wheels America. Since 2008, the Subaru Share the Love Event has helped deliver more than 2.3 million meals and

friendly visits to vulnerable seniors nationwide. We're enormously grateful to Subaru and its retailers for their long-standing commitment to Meals on Wheels and the millions of seniors who depend on it for nourishment and companionship."

Too many older adults struggle to stay independent and healthy. One in four seniors lives alone in isolation and one in seven seniors might not know from where their next meal is coming. During the COVID-19 pandemic, even more older adults are struggling with food insecurity.

Senior Services of Alexandria, in partnership with the Alexandria



City's Division of Aging and Adult Services, hasn't missed a beat since the start of the pandemic in providing nutritious meals, virtual friendly visits and safety checks for Alexandria's older adult population.

This vital support keeps seniors in their own homes, where they want to be.

Here is how the Share the Love program works: For every new Subaru purchased or leased, the local dealer, including Alexandria's Beyer Subaru, will donate to a variety of charities including Meals on Wheels, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Make-A-Wish, and National Park Foundation.



If you are thinking about buying a new vehicle during the Holiday Season, you might want to consider a Subaru and support several national charities including Meals on Wheels. Our seniors are counting on you! For information about the Share the Love Campaign visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove.

Senior Services of Alexandria has been providing much needed services and information to senior residents in the City of Alexandria for

over 45 years. We have been successful thanks to the commitment of our wonderful volunteers and donors. If you're looking to give back to your community, considering donating or volunteering for Alexandria seniors through SSA.

For more information about volunteer opportunities click here. <https://seniorservicesalex.org/volunteer/> For more information about donating click here. <https://seniorservicesalex.org/how-you-can-help/>



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SCAN ME

OPINION

Justice Delayed for Bijan Ghaisar, Justice Denied

In Letter from Birmingham Jail Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "Justice too long delayed is justice denied." How long is too long when the crime is murder of an unarmed motorist by 2 law enforcement officers? It has been over 3 years since Bijan Ghaisar was shot by US Park Police Officers Lucas Vinyard and Alejandro Amaya and that is too long.

LETTER I hold 5 Agencies and their leaders complicit in his murder. The Department of Justice, Attorney General William Barr; the FBI and its Director Christopher Wray; the Department of the Interior and its interim head, David L. Bernhardt; the National Park Service and its leader Acting Director Margaret Everson; and the US Park Police and its Acting Chief Gregory Monahan.

These agencies and their leaders have done nothing to bring justice

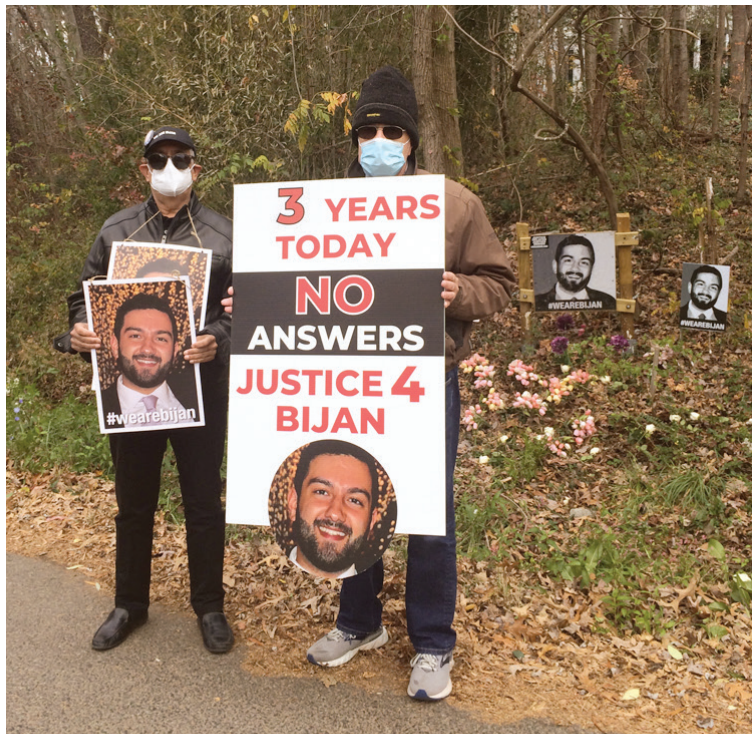
to the Ghaisar family. To the contrary they have resisted, refused to answer numerous questions from US Senators Chuck Grassley and Mark Warner, among a host of other federal and state politicians, put roadblock after obstruction after cold hearted dismissal of queries simply asking why.

Bijan was shot on 11/17/17 and was taken off life support on 11/27/17.

Yes the two officers have been indicted and yes there is a civil suit working its way through the court system but the officers expect to get off by having their trial moved from Fairfax County to federal court and the civil action is a suit not a criminal charge of manslaughter.

"Justice too long delayed is justice denied." Three years is too long.

John Bergen
Mount Vernon



John Bergen with James Ghaisar, father of Bijan, on 11/17/20, the third anniversary of his death, at the site where Bijan was shot.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'These Kids Need To Be IN School'

I grew up with an absent father and an abusive mother. The abuse was so bad that if this pandemic had happened when I was a child, either my mother or I would not be alive today. I hated summers. Yes, what kid says that?! School was my saving grace. I could escape the abuse and get 2 meals a day, which I wasn't getting at home.

I recently spent some time with a "living legend" here in Alexandria. He said reports of child abuse to CPS, are down.

Do you think that's because there

is less abuse? No, it's because most reports to CPS are made by teachers. He also said ER visits due to child abuse are more than double.

Equity in ACPS? No, never. These kids need to be IN school.

Has anyone ever looked at the amount of staff and six figure salaries at Alexandria City Public School Headquarters? Do i think we should reduce in school salaries (teachers, principals, custodians)? No way! But the amount of money spent on staff at headquarters vs money spent on upkeep of schools, or building new schools, should be addressed. Why don't we let those ACPS staff continue to work from home (assuming they are), and use their building and our schools that Alexandria Soccer Association

is using and get some of our kids, if not all on a rotating basis, back in school?

Overcrowding should have been addressed before a pandemic and where ACPS spends its money is relevant. WE are the stakeholders!

Molly Kaiman
Alexandria VA
Public School Parent

Virtual 'Unseriousness'?

To the editor:

Notice that none of the men in the split screen photo are wearing neckties, which would not be the case with in-person meetings. Doesn't this suggest an unserious-

ness about transacting the public's business when meetings are conducted virtually? Much of the political dynamic of a meeting takes place because people are together in a room, the audience and speakers as well as staffers and legislators. Recall the compromise that Chatham Square residents worked out with their neighbors because they were stuck in the overflow room at city hall together and got into a conversation? This sort of thing doesn't and can't happen with virtual meetings or with incremental steps toward normalizing virtual meetings by increasing how often officials can "attend" virtually.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

BULLETIN BOARD

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

NOW THRU DEC. 15

Annual Membership Drive. The Port City Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL), a premier mother-daughter volunteer organization, invites women with daughters currently in 7th-12th grade, to join its chapter of 200-plus active mothers and daughters who reside in or attend school in Arlington, Alexandria, Springfield, Crystal City, or Washington, D.C. Visit the website: www.nationalcharityleague.org/chapter/portcity/

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA RESIDENTIAL LEAF COLLECTION

On Monday, November 2 the City of Alexandria began its annual leaf vacuuming and leaf bag collection program. Alexandria is divided into five collection zones, each with a specific start date and three separate passes. Residents can access the Residential Leaf Collection Viewer (an interactive map) to look up assigned leaf collection dates based on the home address. This week leaf collection was completed in Zone 4 Pass 1, Zone 5B Pass 1, and Zone 5C Pass 1. Residents in Zone 4, Zone 5B, and Zone 5C should bag leaves for collection at their normal refuse collection location.

Currently, they are completing leaf collection in Zone 1 Pass 1 and Zone 5D Pass 1. Tentatively, on Tuesday,

November 24 leaf collection will start in Zone 2 Pass 2. Free leaf bags for residents who receive City trash services are available Monday – Friday at City Hall, recreation centers, and the City's self-serve shed on Business Center Drive on a first-come, first-served basis. Bags are replenish in centers on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Remember that start dates of the zones are tentative. Weather, equipment, and other circumstances can dictate a delayed start. Visit the City's website or call the leaf collection hotline at 703.746.LEAF (5323), which is updated by noon every Friday. To report a collection issue online use Alex311.

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SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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OPINION

Virginia Lost Its Claim to 'First' Thanksgiving

No institution stands in command of the language more so than its newspapers. They, more so than even dictionaries, set for a mass public what words and concepts mean in common, everyday usage. Thus it is with "discover", in that Christopher Columbus is commonly considered to have "discovered" the Western Hemisphere, not because he was the first one literally to "discover" it by landing here like Leif Erikson, generally regarded as the first Eastern Hemisphere person to set foot on the Western Hemisphere landmass, but because Columbus' voyage resulted in a significant change in world history. While the Norse half-heartedly planted settlements, they did little to maintain them, so they died out. By contrast, Columbus' "discovery" galvanized Europe in a way that led to emigration, commerce, and colonization. Even those who insist on recharacterizing Columbus Day as "Indigenous Peoples Day" do so in recognition that Columbus' discovery greatly influenced subsequent world history in a way Erikson's discovery did not.

In other words, Columbus' contemporaries established his landing in the Western Hemisphere as a "discovery" via good publicity, just like New Englanders did with their claim to hosting the first Thanksgiving, despite earlier thanksgivings in St. Augustine and in Virginia which, because they were not promoted with good publicity, became forgotten footnotes in American history, like Leif Erikson's landing in what is now the Canadian Maritimes.

Virginia, particularly, lost its place as the "first" Thanksgiving because it gave up its place in line to New England by its refusal to honor Pres. Lincoln's 1863 call for a "Day of Thanksgiving and Praise". Even decades later, Virginia wanted little to do with this "Yankee holiday". New England earned the right to claim the Pilgrims hosted the first Thanksgiving, much like Columbus, with good publicity, so its version should be the one we acknowledge.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.

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NEWS

Alexandria/Mount Vernon Nonprofits

Many nonprofits in the city and nearby need your help to continue to rise to the need during the dual health and economic crisis of the pandemic.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally, financially, food and other goods, volunteer time. Here are a few ideas. Please let us know what we have missed.

Where to Give Locally

❖ **ALIVE! Alexandria;** 2723 King St, Alexandria, VA 22302; 703-837-9300; ALIVE! serves thousands Alexandrians annually with shelter; low-cost early childhood education and childcare; financial help for rent, utilities, medical care and other critical needs; emergency food; and deliveries of donated furniture and houseware. www.alive-inc.org

❖ **Alice's Kids** (@alicewillhelp) aliceskids.org P.O. Box 60, Mount Vernon, VA 22121 When a child is raised in poverty they suffer both publicly and privately. When there is no food in the refrigerator, no electricity or heat, these are hardships that they can keep hidden from their peers. But, when that same child can't afford to pay for the band field trip, a pair of glasses, a chorus outfit or a new pair of shoes, these are indignities that are evident to their classmates. Alice's Kids pays for these relatively inexpensive items in the hopes of preserving the dignity of the child. It helps children from all over the Mount Vernon area through small acts of kindness. Alice's Kids aliceskids.org 703.746.8108 contact@aliceskids.org

❖ **At Home in Alexandria** (AHA) is a nonprofit village that builds and sustains a 55+ community to successfully navigate aging. Together, we share activities, programs and services, including access to needed assistance. Our vision is for AHA to be an advocate for older Alexandrians to live safe, active and connected lives. AHA is a membership organization, which means you pay an annual membership fee that, in turn, entitles you to request services from AHA for an entire year. These services include transportation, errands, technical support, light maintenance, organizing and decluttering, short-term pet or lawn care, and much more. 3139 Mt. Vernon Ave. Alexandria, VA 22305-2669 (703) 231-0824 Email: aha@athomeinalexandria.org Website: www.athomeinalexandria.org

❖ **Animal Welfare League of Alexandria,** 703-746-4774, www.alexandriaanimals.org, Pet adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, education and community service and outreach.

❖ **ACT for Alexandria,** 703-739-7778, www.actforalexandria.org, Nonprofit and donor services.

❖ **Alexandria Tutoring Consortium,** 703-549-6670 ext. 119

<https://alexandriatutors.org/>, Tutoring for Alexandria City Public Schools kindergarten and first grade students who are struggling to read. Mission: To help Alexandria City Public School students read on or above grade level by the end of kindergarten and first grade. Donate now to fund its mission of making sure that every child in Alexandria can read and succeed.

❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. As a result of closures relating to the coronavirus, the organization has reshaped its Weekend Food For Kids program to assist the struggling families of the students we serve. Since April, Assistance League has provided 1031 grocery store gift cards, valued at more than \$20,000, for four of the Title I schools that we serve in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. Contact info@alnv.org or visit www.alnv.org

❖ **Bethany House,** 6121 Lincoln Rd #303, Alexandria, VA 22312; 703-658-9500; <http://www.bhmv.org/>; Bethany House provides emergency shelter and supportive services to victims of domestic violence throughout Northern Virginia and the surrounding DC metro communities.

❖ **The Campagna Center,** 703-549-0111, www.campagnacenter.org, Educational and social development programs for children, teens, and adults.

❖ **Carpenter's Shelter,** 703-548-7500, www.carpentersshelter.org, Homeless services and programs including education and case management.

❖ **Center for Alexandria's Children,** 703-838-4381, www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org, Child abuse and neglect and parent support.

❖ **Child and Family Network Centers,** 703-836-0214, www.cfnc-online.org, Provides caring, high-quality, free early education and related services to at-risk children.

SEE WHERE TO GIVE, PAGE 14
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Let us know about an upcoming event
www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

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Torpedo Factory Art Center is managed by Alexandria's Office of the Arts, a division of the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities.



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SENIOR LIVING

Seniors and the Flu

Getting vaccinated can reduce hospital visits and admissions during anticipated shortage due to COVID-19.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

While shopping for dinner on a recent Wednesday afternoon, Roger Whitehead spotted a sign near the pharmacy of a grocery store near his home in Alexandria.

"It was easy. Once I'd picked up my groceries, I stopped by the pharmacy before I got in the check-out line," said Whitehead, 65. "I filled out some paperwork and rolled up my sleeve. It took about 30 seconds."

To stave off an onslaught of emergency room visits as a result of both the flu and COVID-19 cases, particularly for the elderly, local health officials, are underscoring the importance of the flu vaccination. While it differs from year-to-year, flu season is typically at its peak from December through February. Getting a flu shot can reduce the risk of being hospitalized.

"Older people with certain health conditions, in particular, are at high risk of serious flu complications," said Kurt Larrick, Assistant Director, Arlington County Department of Human Services. "The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated."

It's not too late to receive a vaccine and an option for seniors is Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent, licensed only for those over the age of 65. "It is es-



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

pecially important this year," said Dr. Travis Gayles, Montgomery County health officer. "[It] can also save health care resources for the care of patients with COVID-19."

Those over 65 are especially likely to get dangerously ill from catching the flu. "The flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 are both spreading disease this flu season," said Shauna Severo, Director of Fairfax County Health Services. "As the incidence of COVID-19 increases the healthcare system could be overwhelmed treating both patients with the flu and patients with COVID-19."

Local jurisdictions launched campaigns to facilitate access to the flu vaccine and to increase awareness among those who have not yet received it. "Arlington has partnered with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions on the Stay Well Nova Campaign, which is providing education, outreach, and resources around flu vaccine," said Larrick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu every year, especially people who are at high risk.

FOR MORE FLU INFORMATION

- ❖ Fairfax County: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/flu>
- ❖ Alexandria: alexandriava.gov/Health
- ❖ Arlington: Stay Well Northern Virginia Campaign <https://www.staywellnova.com>
- ❖ Inova Flu Services <https://www.inova.org/our-services/inova-well/medical-wellness/immunizations>
- ❖ Montgomery County, Md.: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/flu.html>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Holiday Celebrations COVID Style

Dealing with separation from family and friends.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The decision to spend holidays away from loved ones can be a necessity during the coronavirus pandemic. For those who're accustomed to celebrating the season with large family gatherings, the solitude that comes with COVID-19 can be a difficult adjustment.

"First, acknowledge that this is going to be a different kind of holiday," said licensed psychologist Denise T. Dewhurst, Ph.D., Professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "Reach out to someone else you know who is also alone. Even a brief phone call benefit both of you."

A little forethought into how one's time will be spent will offer structure and can help manage feelings of loneliness, advises Dewhurst. "For some, this may be watching television, or reading. For others, it might be a hobby or craft."

"Work on creating something, maybe baking, art projects, family genealogy project, a journal about your life," added therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

"Take a virtual tour of somewhere you would like to visit."

Practice gratitude, suggests Dewhurst. "Remind yourself of things you do have to be thankful for," she said. Connect with family members virtually. Talking to one person or one group at a time might allow for better conversations, she said.

Video conferencing with family and friends, particularly during a meal, can allow one to simulate being together in person. "Talking and seeing others' faces is second best to being there and definitely will feel more like you're part of things than not," said psychiatrist Gail Saltz, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the NY Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell School of Medicine. "Make a dish that matches the dish of where you would normally be going. Eating the same food, while having conversation increases the enjoyment and sense of being together."

Put on a mask and take a socially distanced walk or other outdoor activity, says Saltz. "It may not be the sit-down meal, but a safe masked, distant outside walk can provide some time together," she said.

Reminisce about past holidays and envision those that lie ahead. "Spend a part of the day looking at photos privately of those you love and remembering fun and close times you have had together," said Saltz. "Keep in mind that when this is over, you'll resume making more memories together."



Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 6-8 p.m.

www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting

You are invited to participate in a virtual joint public meeting held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). According to Virginia Code, these organizations shall conduct a joint public meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving public comments on, the transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

The virtual meeting will begin with a brief presentation followed by a public comment period. During the presentation you can learn about various transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- VTrans Draft Mid-term Transportation Needs
- NVTA's FY2020-2025 Six Year Program; TransAction; COVID-19 analysis; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC's Commuter Choice program

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**.

Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted at www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting. The team of VDOT, DRPT, OIPI, CTB, NVTA, NVTC and VRE representatives will make a presentation beginning at 6 p.m. highlighting their transportation programs and receive public comments about Virginia's transportation network for about an hour after the presentation.

Give your comments during the joint meeting after the presentation concludes or submit your written comments by **January 4, 2021** by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.



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THINK

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Despite Challenging Year, Gratitude Abounds for Restaurant Owners

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

There's no getting around the fact that this year has been an incredibly challenging one for restaurants and their owners. While at first glance, reasons for gratitude may seem to be in short supply, in actuality restaurateurs have found many things to be thankful for.

**Kristin Cowan,
Mount Purnon Cat Café and Wine Bar**

APPETITE “We are thankful for saving lives this year! As of (Friday), 37 (cats) have gone home and four more are pending! But that is times three lives saved, as it opens up room for our rescue, as well as the kill shelters they come from!”

**Gregg Linzey,
The Chewish Deli**

“Without a doubt, through everything going on this

year with the pandemic I have been beyond thankful for the support the local community has shown my new restaurant. I tell everyone I feel like I'd be hard-pressed to find a community that has been more supportive of their local businesses through everything than Alexandria.”

**Rob Krupicka,
Captain Gregory's and Elizabeth's Counter**

“I'm thankful for a great staff and very supportive customers. And also outdoor heaters and blankets!”

**Michael Choi,
Wooboi Chicken**

“I am appreciative of my team at Wooboi Herndon and Wooboi Alexandria. I am thankful to the farms that provide us our fresh produce each and every day.”

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.



Noah at Mount Perrnon Cat Cafe

CALENDAR

NOV. 20 TO JAN. 3

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run. At Cameron Run Regional Park, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Opens nightly 5 to 10 p.m. Ice and Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run will return this year, featuring an ice rink, more than a dozen holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, retail area, food, music and more. The Ice and Lights Village is a short drive from Old Town. Masks are required in all areas of Ice & Lights except when eating or drinking in the concession areas. Admission: \$8.16 for general admission to Village; \$20.68 for admission with skating; starting January 9, 2021, \$12.19 for skating. Visit novaparks.com/events/ice-lights

NOV. 27 TO DEC. 4

Alexandria's Holiday Market at Carlyle. Virtual from November 27 to December 4, 2020; in-person December 5-6, 2020, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. At John Carlyle Square Park, 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. Alexandria's Holiday Market is an annual signature event that transforms John Carlyle Square into a lively open-air festival, perfect for children young and old. This year, shop online and preorder the perfect present prior to the in-person market, which will feature physically distant vendors and musical entertainment including Gretchen and the Sidecar Six. The holiday market and festivities are sponsored by The Carlyle Vitality Initiative. Visit thecarlylecommunity.com

NOV. 27 TO DEC. 31

Christmas at Mount Vernon. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At George

Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Visit Mount Vernon this winter to participate in holiday activities and meet special guest Aladdin the camel. Learn about camels and George Washington's interest in exotic animals during Camel Talks, offered Friday through Sunday beginning on November 27. Specialty tours give guests a deeper look into the holidays at Mount Vernon. During the tour “Mrs. Washington's Mount Vernon,” hear Martha Washington discuss the day-to-day planning needed for a busy holiday season. The “Holiday Dinner for the Washingtons” tour shares how food was grown, preserved and served during the holidays. Mount Vernon is open 365 days a year, including on Christmas Day. Admission: \$23 for adults; \$12 for youth (ages 6-11); free for children age 5 and below; extra cost for some activities. Visit mountvernon.org/christmas

NOV. 27 TO DEC. 6

Alexandria Shop Small Week. Experience Alexandria's biggest shopping week of the year, the first-ever Alexandria Shop Small Week, November 27 to December 6, 2020. Kicking off with Plaid Friday: Alexandria's Small Business Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, Alexandria Shop Small Week is an opportunity to show your support for the D.C. region's largest destination for independent boutiques with 10 days and two weekends of deals, promotions and Instagram giveaways. Don your favorite mask or hop online to take part in promotional events including Plaid Friday: Alexandria's Small Business Black Friday (November 27), Small Business Saturday (November 28), Museum Store Sunday (November 29), Cyber Monday (November 30) and Giving Tuesday (December 1). Be sure to follow Visit Alexandria's

Instagram at @VisitAlexVA for gift card giveaways December 4-6. Need more reasons to shop small? Enter the Alexandria Santa-gram Giveaway by submitting a receipt from your purchase at a participating independent retailer featured in Visit Alexandria's digital Guide to Alexandria Holiday Shopping for a chance to win a personalized video greeting from the region's most beloved Santa. Visit AlexandriaVA.com/Holidays/Shop-Small-Week

NOV. 27-29; DEC. 11-13; AND DEC. 26-28

Winter Glow at Mount Vernon. From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Experience an enchanted evening of winter lights at Mount Vernon. See the estate illuminated with soft lights and holiday patterns as you listen to Christmas carolers and visit an 18th-century winter encampment. You can also meet Aladdin the camel, shop for artisan-made goods, purchase warm food and holiday drinks at the Mount Vernon Inn Food Truck and more. Admission: Starting at \$25 for members; \$30 for non-members. Visit mountvernon.org/christmas

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.

NOW THRU 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>

NOV. 28-29

Del Ray Holiday Market. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Del Ray Psych & Wellness parking lot, 1900 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Business Association (DRBA) invites you to explore the Del Ray Holiday Market with sidewalk sales and other promotions, kicking off on Small Business Saturday. The open-air holiday market will be held in the parking lot of Del Ray Psych & Wellness. It will feature DRBA members and local artists from Art on the Avenue. Vendors will be physically distanced, and masks are required for entry. On Saturday, participate in a food drive for The Salvation Army in their adjacent parking lot. On Sunday, look for food vendors and live music. Go to the website: visitdelray.com

TUESDAY/DEC. 1

“A Starlit Holiday Cabaret.” 5 and 6:30 p.m. Featuring Awa Sal Secka and Christian Douglas, vocalists with Dan Campolietta, piano. Ring in the festive season with a program of seasonal and holiday classics by the duo of dynamic vocalists,

returning for another electrifying evening of jazz, musical theatre and popular favorites for the season. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Visit <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/>

STARTING DECEMBER 1

ArtWalk. At various locations along King Street (Union to Diagonal), and select side streets, Alexandria. Old Town Business Association is partnering with The Art League of Alexandria to offer a holiday themed ArtWalk in Old Town along King Street (Union to Diagonal) and select side streets. Each block will feature a work of art adorning a lamp-post. Maps may be found at oldtownbusiness.org beginning December 1, 2020. Keep an eye out for holidays trees located on both upper and lower King Streets. Visit oldtownbusiness.org

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

Chopin Concert. 6:40 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon. A unique concert combining space technologies with the timeless beauty of Frédéric Chopin's music. Free online broadcast of the concert at <http://www.chopin.space/>

DEC. 4-6

Artful Weekend. Fri. Dec. 5 from 3-7 p.m.; Sat. Dec. 5 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun. Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. At Fort C.F. Smith Park, 2411 24th Street, Arlington. Arlington Artists Alliance 18th Annual Artful Weekend: artwork show and sale by 30 local artists. Free and open to public. Masks and social distancing required. Visit the website: <https://arlingtonartistsalliance.org/>

NEWS

2020 Alexandria Film Festival Awards Top Honors at Virtual Ceremony

Oscar Winner and Oscar Nominated Directors Among Honorees.

Seven awards were presented at the 2020 Alexandria Film Festival Awards Ceremony, attended virtually by all winning filmmakers from Los Angeles to Israel. The ceremony was held November 22 and can be viewed at AlexFilmFest.com. The 14th annual festival featured more than 40 films – all still viewable online until midnight, Nov. 26.

“9 to 5: The Story of a Movement” by Oscar-winning directors Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar took top honors with the Best in Fest award. The documentary traces the history of the women’s labor movement through interviews with the 9 to 5 labor organization founders.

Reichert said “It is such an honor when so many great films were screened at this festival.”

Oscar-nominated director Roko Belic’s film “Trust Me,” produced by Joe Phelps, edited by Michael Falavollita, looks at how misinformation contributes to the gap between perception and reality. It took home the Joe Cantwell Award for Documentary Excellence. It’s wonderful to be here and be recognized,” said Belic. “But I so wish we could be in the dark theater again watching these great films.”

“Beat the Machine” by Shannon Washington, set to the music of Aaron Copland’s John Henry: A Railroad Ballad for Orchestra won Best of the Region Award. The film is also part of a collaboration between the festival and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra that will come to fruition in 2021.

Foreign film honors went to “Snowland,” a feature from Israel by Jonni Zicoltz, while the Special Jury Award went to “Anacronte,” an animated film by Argentinian filmmakers Raul Koler and Emiliano Sette.

New this year, the festival gave an Outstanding Performance Award to Director Lawrence Whitmer and Roger Kabler for his acting in “Saving Robin Williams.”

The film that received the most votes from viewers,



“The Legacy Sessions,” was honored with the festival’s Audience Award and \$100. Directed by local filmmaker David Ashton, the film stars actors from Northern Virginia, once again demonstrating the wealth of creative talent in the region.

Finally, a special “Superstar of the Decade” award went to Alexandria producer, AFF Alumnus and Awardee, Joe Cantwell, for his support as industry adviser and donor over the last ten years, since his film “Ride the Divide” won in 2010.

“While we all wish we could have conducted the Alexandria Film Festival and our awards in person, the online event was a huge success thanks to the quality of the films, the enthusiasm of the viewing public, and the generosity of our sponsors and the city of Alexandria,” said AFF chair Margaret Wohler.

The public can check out the award-winning films and all others in the 2020 festival through Thanksgiving Day, November 26 at www.alexfilmfest.com.

Expunging the Record

FROM PAGE 3

tion about charges and convictions is available on the private market. Even if lawmakers take action to automatically expunge non-sexual and non-violent misdemeanors and some drug-related felonies after eight years, those charges and convictions would still be available to people conducting background checks. Another issue that needs to be resolved is which

charges and convictions would disappear. If the discussion about automatic expungement is limited to misdemeanors, many people caught up in the War on Drugs with felony charges would be left out of the conversation and not helped by the reform.

“I don’t think possession of drugs should be a felony. I think it should be a Class One misdemeanor,” said Alexandria Commonwealth’s Attorney Bryan Porter. “If we could amend that down to a misdemeanor, it’s still a crime but it’s a much less

serious one. Then that problem wouldn’t exist.”

As lawmakers prepare for the upcoming General Assembly session, House and Senate Democrats say they’re hoping they can find some kind of resolution to get to a shared goal. One compromise that’s already receiving some discussion is moving forward with automatic expungement for some non-violent and non-sexual misdemeanors now and implementing a petition-based process for drug-related convictions.

That way, reluctant lawmakers might move toward an automatic process for expunging convictions after a demonstration that the new policy is a success.

“We ought to find a way to automatic expungement, but we’re just not there yet,” said Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25). “If we determine as a matter of policy that certain low-level convictions ought to be subject to expungement, then we ought to perfect that process through petition.”



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They Served Their Country – Davis and Shanklin Families

CHAR MCCARGO BAH

For many African Americans who served in the military, it was an honor to put on the United States Uniform and represent their country, but it was also a pride in seeing their own families look up to them as men and no longer as boys.

Three members of the Davis and Shanklin families survived their military tours in three different wars.

William was born in 1915. Before he was drafted in the Army, William was a waiter for the U.S. House of Representatives on Capitol Hill. He was the first family member

THE OTHER
ALEXANDRIA

to be drafted in World War II when he was 28 years of age. He served in the United States Army, 16th Battery, Oct. A.R.D. at Camp

Jackson, South Carolina. A medic, his tour was from 1943 to 1946. After he was discharged from the military, he landed a job at the Federal government as a clerk. William was married to Marion Smith. On Nov. 16, 1979, William died at the age of 63. He is buried at the Washington Street United Methodist Church Cemetery in Alexandria, Va.

William's brother, Chester Leroy Davis was born in 1927. Before he joined the Army, he was self-employed in Alexandria. He served



Chester Leroy Davis

in the Korean War. He was a cook. While he was in the military, he played for the Negro Baseball League. He later received a transfer to work in the Mess Hall where he became a cook for the Special Forces at Fort Carson, Colorado. After he was discharged from the Army, he worked on many jobs in construction. His dream was to become a cook. Chester was married to Deni Evans Figgins. On June 22, 2018, Chester died at the age of 90.



William (Billy) Davis

He is buried at Quantico National Cemetery.

David Andrew Shanklin was born in 1936. His Uncle Samuel married Annie Senora, the sister of William and Chester. Unlike William and Chester, David voluntarily enlisted in the Army in 1955. Before joining the Army, he worked at the City of Alexandria School Board as a sweeper. He served throughout the Vietnam War. He continued his military career in the Army and later in the reserves.

David liked the military so much he made it his lifetime career. When he became old, the military retired him on honorable discharge in 1996. He was a Master Sgt.

David still wanted to work, so he worked at Saint Elizabeth Hospital as a pharmacist technician for 29 years, and retired from the hospital in 2006.

His family and friends fondly knew David as "Sonny." He was married to Mary Ella McFadden. On Nov. 13, 2016, David at the age of 80 died at his home in Washington, DC. Greene Funeral Home in Alexandria handled the funeral services. He is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery.

The Shanklin family had two other family members who served their country. Gwendolyn Shanklin and Edgar David Shanklin both served in the United States Navy.

William (Billy) Henry Davis and his siblings grew up at 716 Wolfe Street. They attended Parker-Gray School.

The Davis and Shanklin families are very proud of the military service William, Chester, David, Gwendolyn and Edgar rendered to their Country.

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

The Potomac River, a Stalling Recovery?

Cleaner than it was in 2011 when it got a D, but "its recovery is plateauing."

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

While the Potomac River is clearly not what the Washington Post in 1951 called an "open sewer," for the first time in a decade, the river's health has declined, reported the Potomac Conservancy last month, falling from a grade of B to B- and still unsafe for swimming or fishing. It's cleaner than it was in 2011 when it got a D, but "its recovery is plateauing," say Conservancy officials. "The Potomac's on the mend, but not in the clear."

The Conservancy assessed five health indicators: pollution, fish, habitat, land and people, data assessed through 2018. The Potomac supplies drinking water to five million people.

Polluted Runoff

Urban and suburban polluted stormwater runoff is the fastest growing pollutant and "threatens to undo decades of progress," concludes the report. Impervious surfaces like streets, parking lots and roofs block the land's natural ability to absorb rainwater. Instead water polluted by everything that has washed off roads,

parking lots, lawns, and every other surface, including debris and excess nutrients, rushes into streams and the river. Heavy deluges shoot stream bank sediments downstream. During heavy storms, overwhelmed stormwater systems funnel diluted sewage into waterways.

Land use got a C+. "Pollution from urban runoff is increasing and is directly correlated to newly developed acres," analysts concluded. "Population growth and the infrastructure to support sprawling development patterns threaten to exacerbate the problem as forests are torn down and replaced with parking lots, housing and roads," the report contended.

The Conservancy gave the Potomac an F for shoreline that should be buffered with forests but instead have had trees and brush cleared away. Underwater aquatic plants that would help filter nutrients and pollutants and provide habitat for fish and other wildlife got a C-. Underwater vegetation coverage is steady, says the report. Basin-wide protected lands are 37 percent of total land area and earned an A grade.

Water Quality



A paddler on the Potomac. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge crosses the river, connecting Virginia and Maryland.

For non-tidal water quality, the report found that 50 percent of small creeks and streams feeding into the Potomac are healthy, garnering a grade of B. Tidal water quality earned a D+, perhaps because of higher than average rainfall in 2017 and 2018 that reduced water clarity. The Potomac is tidal from just below the Chain Bridge in Washington, D.C. to the Chesapeake Bay.

Fish species like shad and white perch are doing well, but some, like smallmouth bass, are "show-

ing signs of stress," the report concluded, possibly due to heavy rains, pollution or overfishing. Two non-native fish, blue catfish and snakeheads, threaten native fish.

On the people front, the "river's popularity is reaching new highs with greater access points and more people turning to the outdoors for physical and mental well-being during the COVID-19 public health crisis," the report notes.

A May University of Maryland study gave the Potomac a D+ be-

cause the river was so hot in 2019. This study found that among all indicators, aquatic grasses and benthic or river-bottom organisms fared "the worst."

The Potomac begins as a trickle 3,140 feet above sea level in West Virginia and winds 385 miles through three states and Washington, D.C. Below Washington, it widens and flows 101 miles to the Chesapeake Bay. American Rivers listed the Potomac as America's "most endangered river" in 2012. What George Washington called "the nation's river" and then President Lyndon B. Johnson labeled "a national disgrace" in 1965 is clearly cleaner.

But Conservancy President Hedrick Belin cautioned, "We've reached a critical turning point for the river and we can't backslide now."

We must strengthen — not weaken — water protections so fishermen can eat their catch, children can safely swim and we can drink water without worry."

Restoring the river to good health wobbles on in fits and starts. The message: Humans degraded it; humans can clean it up.

The report is at www.potomac.org.

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Legals

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Notice is hereby given to members of the NY not-for-profit corporation, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc., that eligible ASCO members may vote by proxy ballot until December 8, 2020 to elect the President-Elect, four seats on the Board of Directors, and two seats on the Nominating Committee for service beginning on June 7, 2021, and may vote on proposed amendments to the ASCO Bylaws and Certificate of Incorporation. Information about proxy ballots is available at www.asco.org/election. Completed proxy ballots received will be delivered to the Chair of the ASCO Board for casting at a special meeting to be held online on Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 9:00-9:30 AM Eastern Standard Time, USA. Members will be sent a link to access the special meeting in advance of the event. Members with questions can email ASCOelection@asco.org or call 571-483-1316. This notice is issued at the direction of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

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A Question of Time

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Let us presume, for the sake of this column, that I only have papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, and that my years as a non small cell lung cancer patient, also stage IV, are over. If true, it begs the question, which I have been asked twice since this recategorization has become - in my circle anyway, public knowledge: how does it make me feel (to no longer be one scan result away from having months to live to now having years to live)? As obvious an answer as it should be: I can't exactly get my mind around it. I keep hearing that "If it's too good to be true, it isn't" advisory in my head. I realize medicine is different, and that's what scares me.

Well, I can't really say I feel as if I have my life back because I never really lived like it was gone. I pretty much - treatments and side effects notwithstanding - tried to maintain my normal life and to continue my routine as well. I didn't stray too far from my well-established dos and don'ts. I didn't write down a bucket list and therefore spent no time pursuing long-standing goals. I just did what I have always done. I didn't want to be controlled by my cancer; doing things, taking trips, etc. just because I had a "terminal" diagnosis. To my way of thinking, that would have been akin to reinforcing a negative: a cancer that was likely to kill me sooner rather than later so I better do such and such or else. Instead, I just lived my regular life and felt no pressure to cross off items on a bucket list before I died. In spite of living life not as if I was dying, but as if I was going to be living, (unlike the country music song that expresses a different sentiment) I survived beyond my wildest timeline: so far, 11 years and nine months after initially being given a "13 months to two years" prognosis.

Fast forward to the most recent - and amazing news: I hadn't miraculously survived non small cell lung cancer after all, I had merely survived a very survivable and slow moving thyroid cancer (that has - or had previously, metastasized to the lung). Though my oncologist still thinks I have two types of cancer, my endocrinologist thinks I only have - and have had, one type, thyroid cancer. The Lombardi Cancer Center head and neck cancer specialist also feels like I have one cancer: thyroid. Her reasoning, after reviewing my medical records was a bit more direct: "if you had lung cancer diagnosed 12 or so years ago, we wouldn't be here having this discussion. You wouldn't be alive." So being alive is proof, a type of proof I suppose, that I've had thyroid cancer all along and never had lung cancer.

Not that I want to be thick-headed but after nearly 12 years of being told that I had lung cancer and living scan to scan every two to three months and anxiously waiting as well for my lab results every three weeks

I find myself unable to let go of the worst case scenario that has been my life since Feb., 2009, and embrace this amended diagnosis. I can't seem to turn off my internal anxiety/fear clock. In fact, it's still stuck in its original position. I'm like an ocean liner headed out to sea. It can hardly turn on a dime and neither can I. Certainly I want to believe it and I don't really doubt the thyroid cancer opinions I've received, but it just seems that having your wildest dreams come true after almost 12 years of trying to accept the reality of your cancer situation/early death is too much good fortune for anyone to imagine/realize. It's the opposite of normal. As much as one might want it to happen, it's just not the way it generally works. I don't suppose doctors hand out terminal diagnosis before giving it extra ample thought. And yet, I'm about to be living proof.

Nevertheless, every day, the shock of it begins to wear off and I can contemplate my future once again. No more will I count the days between scans. No longer will I dread reading my lab work and wondering what it all means. Oddly enough, what it all means is that I'll probably continue/resume my previous life, boring and mundane as it was because, well, it worked for me then so I imagine it will work for me now.

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

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FROM PAGE 8

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❖ Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) seeks to provide low-income individuals, senior citizens, and families residing in Fort Belvoir, Lorton, Newington and other portions of southeast Fairfax County with access to basic needs and the opportunity to empower themselves through LCAC's self-sufficiency programs. <https://lortonaction.org>

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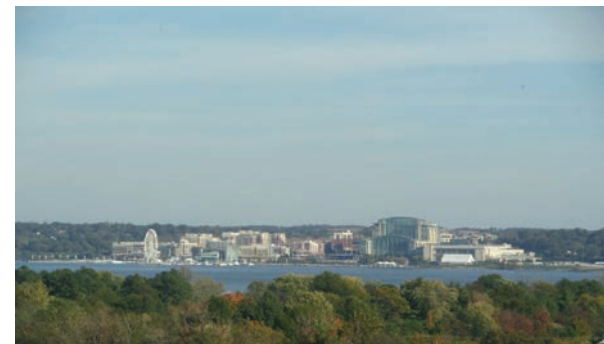
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Potomac Valley | \$635,000

This 4 level detached home with 4 bedrooms and 3 full baths is the prize of Potomac Valley. The house has been newly painted and the hardwood floors have all been refinished. Enjoy the outdoors on the large two-tier deck or in the fenced back yard.
Chris Robinson 703.898.9023
www.RobinsonBriggs.com



Del Ray | \$659,900

Fabulously updated 3 bed/2 bath home in Del Ray! This sweet home was completely renovated in 2014. Walk to all the shops and restaurants on "The Avenue" with easy access to Potomac Yard, Crystal City, DC and Reagan National Airport.
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Old Town

\$2,997,000

Located in the heart of Old Town, this fully detached townhouse offers a compatible blend of antique and present day designs. Behind its stately, brick exterior a truly comfortable home awaits. This historic home offers 4 beds, 3.5 baths and off street parking for 1 car

Vici Boguess 703.447.2829
www.BBZGroup.com

MCENEANEY ASSOCIATES IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE

Old Town Blood Drive

Tuesday, December 15 | 10AM - 4PM | 301 King Street, Alexandria

Make Your Lifesaving Appointment Today! WeAreAlexandria.com

Photo ID required. Allow up to one hour for donor visit. Please wear a face covering.

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