

Alexandria Gazette Packet

25 CENTS

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FEBRUARY 11, 2021



King's Jewelry owners Cathy and Norman "Brad" Bradford have been married for 34 years.



Donna and "Mango" Mike Anderson, married for 32 years, together own six restaurants across the city.



Alexandria Cupcake owners Kathy and Adnan Hamidi have been together for 13 years and working together for 11.



Larry and Christine Ponzi own five restaurants, including St. Elmo's locations in Del Ray and North Old Town.



Joan and John Renner have been working together for 40 years and married for 18.



Owners Du and Lee Choe of The Uptowner Coffee Shop have been married 23 years.

All You Need is Love Couples share the secret of working together.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It takes a brave soul to go into business with your other half. Long hours, sweaty kitchens or the never-ending crunching of numbers are not known for being aphrodisiacs.

But just as diamonds are formed out of intense heat and pressure, the faces behind some of the most recognizable businesses in Alexandria have found a way to navigate the challenges of working together while keeping their love alive.

As Valentine's Day approaches, the owners of King's Jewelry, Sweet Fire Donna's, St. Elmo's, Alexandria Cupcake, Renner & Company and The Uptowner share their secrets to maintaining both a successful business and happy re-

lationship.

Cathy and Norman "Brad" Bradford, King's Jewelry

Cathy Bradford: "We've been working together for 35 years and married for almost 34 of those

"We've been able to give and take throughout the years, in our businesses and at home."

— St. Elmo's owner Larry Ponzi

years. Most of the time it is ok. Brad doesn't usually bring things home and we each have our definite skills for the store. There's no question there can be only one boss, and that is Brad. He is the one that has the main vision. The rest of us, me especially, implement what he perceives. We've been out almost a whole year phys-

ically due to Covid, but the kids are here and we are still here mentally and very much involved."

Brad: "Cathy's really good at everything. I can't even turn a computer on and will go to my grave that way. But I know this business. I started here in 1962 and never left. King's Jewelry has always been a family business. My daughter Terry has been here since 1983 and our two sons are here as well. We all work nicely together."

Donna and "Mango" Mike Anderson, The HomeGrown Restaurant Group

Donna: "We've been married 32 years and working together off and on for a couple decades. I got involved working part time when we needed people then got more involved in the restaurants in Del Ray. Then we built Sweet Fire Don-

na's seven years ago and the rest is history. Two of our three daughters work with us. The oldest is our director of operations and our middle daughter is director of marketing and advertising. It's been joyful to have the family working together."

"Mango" Mike: "Donna runs Sweet Fire Donna's – I am not involved at all beyond taking care of the maintenance. I found that we work best if we don't work exclusively together. Having your whole family involved in your business 95 percent of the time is terrific. Five percent of the time you have some issues but it's pretty satisfying when you have your whole team working together. The best part is that no one has a hidden agenda. When you have other people working for you they sometimes have a hidden agenda but when family is involved, everybody is concerned about making it successful, taking care of the customers and making

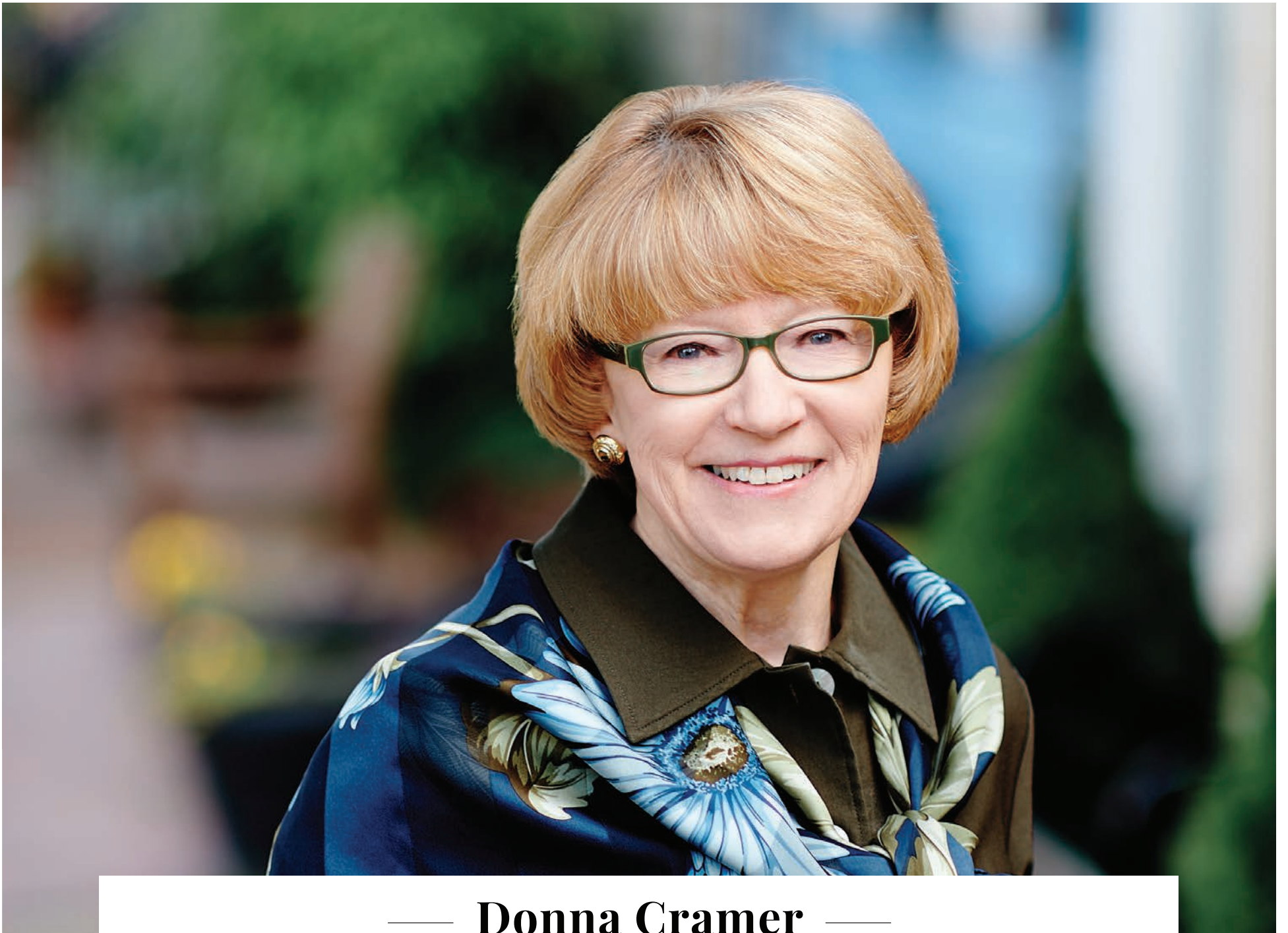
sure we are one of the best operations in town. That's the best part of having family involved in the operation."

Larry and Christine Ponzi, St. Elmo's, Market 2 Market

Christine: "We've been married 27 years and have two children, 19 and 21, and five restaurants. There are ups and downs of every day but overall I love working with him and wouldn't change it for the world. We work well together. We are ying and yang -- what he brings to the table and what I bring to the table are two very different things."

Larry: "We really enjoy each other's company. We split, divide and conquer responsibilities but we always end up back together at the end of the day. We get the best of both worlds. We are doing some things that interest us business-wise but we can also leave

SEE ALL YOU, ON PAGE 10



— Donna Cramer —
Supporting You in Real Estate & Community

During these trying times, you can be someone's Valentine by supporting the Community Lodgings food pantry, **CommunityLodgings.org**. Connect with their Amazon wish list at the link <https://a.co/7S1whIR>.

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Absentee Minded

Lawmakers consider bill to assign absentee ballots to precincts where voters live.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

On election night, Democrats were shocked by how well Donald Trump was performing in Alexandria. As returns were posted online, concerns were rising among supporters of Joe Biden as the incumbent was outperforming expectations at precinct after precinct. Trump was within striking distance of winning George Mason and Lyles Crouch. Ladrey Senior Building was tied. The Republican vote share at City Hall broke a new record of 59 percent. Trump got a higher percentage of the vote in 2020 at City Hall than Ronald Reagan did in 1980 or 1984.

“As the precinct totals started coming in, I was just getting these panicked texts from people. And I said, ‘People, chill out. Calm down,’” said Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson. “All these months we’ve been saying that election night totals would be different from the overall totals because of absentee voting, and sure enough here we are. People are freaking out and there’s still two thirds of the vote that we don’t know yet.”

Meanwhile, 250 miles away in Roanoke, Sen. David Suetterlein (R-19) was having similar conversations with his constituents who were thrilled at the unexpectedly strong performance of the Republican candidate. Trump was winning precincts that were usually Democratic strongholds across his southwest Senate district. He warned his supporters that the numbers would shift when the absentee precincts reported, and then he says they were perplexed when it happened. That’s why he introduced a bill that would require election officials to record absentee ballots in the precincts where voters live instead of separately in an absentee precinct.

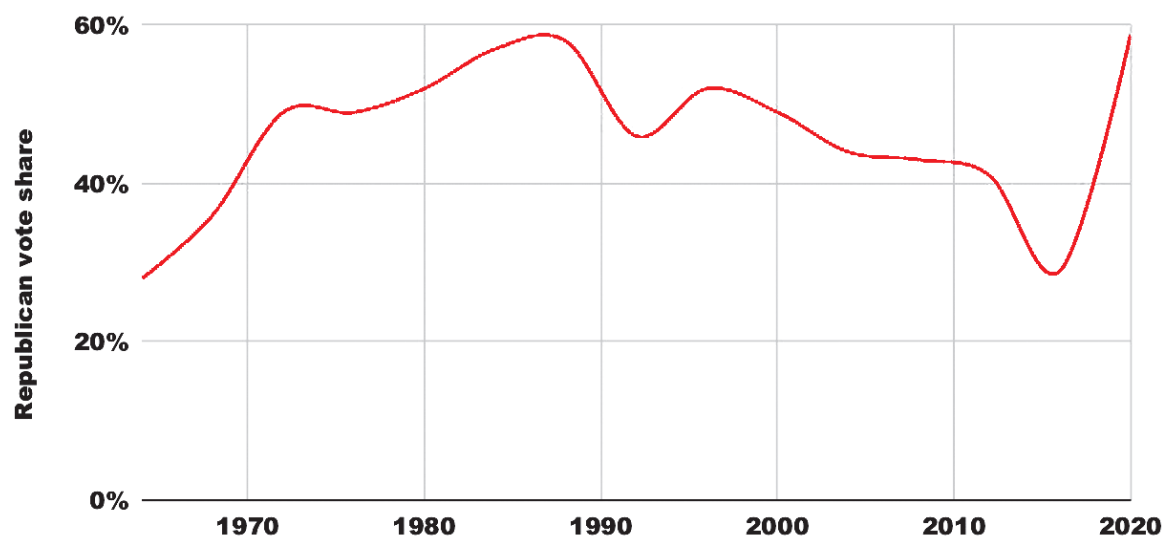
“There’s lots of things that we can do to restore confidence in elections,” said Suetterlein. “But this, more than anything else, we can do so folks can clearly see the election results reflect the reality of the votes being cast in their community and in other communities across the commonwealth.”

AS ABSENTEE VOTING has gained popularity in recent years, the value of precinct returns has declined. That trend took a dramatic scale this year as 80 percent



Eight out of ten voters in Alexandria cast an absentee ballot in the election last year. None of those votes were recorded in the precinct where those voters live.

Republican Vote Share at City Hall Precinct



source: presidential election returns from the Alexandria registrar

of Alexandria voters cast an absentee ballot. That means the vast majority of votes were not recorded in the home precincts of voters where they live, rendering the precinct

happen would require her office to have 30 different ballots available at her office for each precinct at her office for the 45 day period voters can cast an early ballot.

“It could potentially slow down the process because we’d have to check you in as a City Hall voter and then go to the City Hall pile and get your ballot,” said Turner. “There’s also print-on-demand technology that

would alleviate the need to make projections based on how many voters we think are coming from each of our 30 precincts to vote absentee, however those machines come at a cost and it’s not a cheap cost.”

Only one senator voted against the bill: Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30).

He says he supports the concept in theory. But, he says, he’s concerned about voters waiting in line while election officials print ballots, which might smear when they print. “We heard about the goal of the bill, but we didn’t hear about the implementation of how it gets done to my satisfaction,” said Ebbin. “If it can be done I’m all for it. But Fairfax County expressed some hesitation.”

AS THE LARGEST jurisdiction in Virginia, Fairfax County presents a complex challenge for election officials. If Suetterlein’s bill is approved by the House and signed by the governor, the Fairfax registrar would need to figure out a way to present in-person absentee voters with 240 different ballot styles this fall. When the bill was considered in the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee, Fairfax legisla-

tive director James Heo asked lawmakers to oppose the bill because it would substantially increase the workload for election officials and present thorny logistical challenges.

“If Albemarle County can do it, why can’t Fairfax County do it?” asked Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25), chairman of the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee.

“It’s simply about the size of the county and the number of precincts and the number of split precincts that exist in Fairfax County,” said Heo. “Because you can’t estimate how many voters are going to come from each precinct who are going to request absentee ballots, you have to over-print the number of ballots needed in order to assure that no voter has to wait.”

Fairfax County is the home of the Speaker of the House and the largest delegation of House members. So Suetterlein’s bill is likely to get a grilling in the House Privileges and Elections Committee, where lawmakers are signaling they are not sure how the new mandate would work. One of the complicating factors for implementing the new requirement this year is the confusion that could be created by the once-in-a-decade redistricting process, which will create new political boundaries for the House of Delegates and state Senate seats.

“I fear catastrophe in order to get us a little more information,” said Del. Mark Levine (D-45). “We had a really seamless and well-run election. I would hate to ruin that in the hope of getting some more information.”

DATA ABOUT ELECTIONS is vital to elected officials, and even lawmakers who are critical of Suetterlein’s timeline say they support implementing the requirement eventually. They share the goal of reporting absentee votes in a way that reveals a more complete picture of political geography. And they say posting election night returns in a way that does not dramatically shift when at-large precincts are included will avoid confusion and frustration.

“Data breeds confidence, and so as voters see and understand how trends happen it helps build confidence in the system,” said Wilson, who has long been an advocate of including absentee votes in precinct returns. “When you get to a point where a locality as big as Fairfax County’s election returns become a complete black box and it’s just one super precinct, it does raise some concerns about transparency.”

“Data breeds confidence, and so as voters see and understand how trends happen it helps build confidence in the system.”

— Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson

returns almost meaningless.

The bill introduced by Suetterlein to require election officials count absentee ballots in the precincts where voters live passed the Senate last week with an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

Alexandria Registrar Angela Maniglia Turner says making that

296 Bills Passed in the Senate Now Move to the House

BY SEN. ADAM P. EBBIN (D-30)

Last Friday, Feb. 5, the General Assembly reached “Crossover” the point where all bills must have passed their house of origin to continue on their legislative journey. For my part I was glad to pass seven of the nine bills I introduced and a Constitutional Amendment, all but one on a bipartisan vote, out of the Senate.

By a unanimous vote the Senate approved legislation I introduced for the City of Alexandria to give localities enhanced ability to fund short-term flood mitigation measures. This will allow the city, and other localities, to fund projects to protect homes and neighborhoods from the shocking increase in inland flooding we have experienced over the last few years. By a vote of 27-12 the Senate approved my legislation to give Virginia’s illegal eviction statute statutory teeth, addressing a major concern during COVID-19 of evictions being carried out, without the court’s approval, against low-income residents. By a vote of 24-14 I was able to pass legislation, brought to me by a constituent, to remove an unnecessary barrier to patient-centered care from Virginia’s genetic counseling licensure program.

My legislation to create a regulated adult use market for cannabis passed 23 to 15 but is expected to have continued changes as we reconcile differences between the House proposal and the Senates.

On the last day before Crossover, the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee took up a number of

potential amendments to the Constitution of Virginia. In order to be adopted, these amendments must pass this year and then again after this fall’s election in order to be sent to the voters for their consideration.

As sometimes happens, I was called on to chair the committee when Senator Creigh Deeds (D-Bath) presented a bill



Ebbin

a number of barriers to the ballot box for Black Virginians were enacted, with purpose and conviction, effectively ending the right to vote for Black Virginians within two years of its enactment. Many barriers were later stripped away during the Civil Rights Era, but felony disenfranchisement has persisted. Though we have taken many steps to re-

“By a unanimous vote the Senate approved legislation I introduced for the City of Alexandria to give localities enhanced ability to fund short-term flood mitigation measures.”

form our criminal justice system in the two years since Democrats took the majority in Richmond, the fact remains that proportionately there are many more Black Virginians with felony convictions than any other race. As long as the right to vote is tied to criminal history, it will have the effect that the drafters of the 1902 Constitution intended: racially motivated voter suppression.

Sen. Locke’s Amendment went on to pass the full Senate.

I also carried two Constitutional Amendments to the Senate floor which I have been working on for several years. SJ271, which allows a Governor to run for two consecutive terms, provoked extended

form our criminal justice system in the two years since Democrats took the majority in Richmond, the fact remains that proportionately there are many more Black Virginians with felony convictions than any other race. As long as the right to vote is tied to criminal history, it will have the effect that the drafters of the 1902 Constitution intended: racially motivated voter suppression.

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I also carried two Constitutional Amendments to the Senate floor which I have been working on for several years. SJ271, which allows a Governor to run for two consecutive terms, provoked extended

floor debate, but ultimately failed. Currently Virginia is the only state which does not allow their Governor to run for consecutive terms. I believe this hampers government accountability, continuity in planning, long term budgetary decisions, and limits the benefits of experienced and talented Governors.

I was glad to pass SJ270, which begins the important process of repealing the stain on our state Constitution of the now inoperative ban on same-sex marriage, enacted in 2006, and replacing it with an affirmative right to marry regardless of gender.

Though the US Supreme Court affirmed marriage equality in 2014, removing this now defunct ban from our Constitution is important both in affirming our values and ensuring protections against any actions by the current far-right Supreme Court. If the amendment is approved next year, and by the voters, it would make Virginia the second state in the nation to enact an affirmative right to marriage. Virginia is not often a leader on social justice or equality, but I am proud that in this case, we are blazing a trail not just in the south, but nationwide.

The Senate has passed a total of 296 bills to the House, and we will receive 416 for review. Among those passed were a ban on the death penalty in Virginia, strengthened protections against workplace harassment, expanded access to healthcare, and tax credits to increase affordable housing development.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Find Blocks Adjacent to Historic District To Add

“Let’s call these concessions what they are — bribes,” remonstrated a resident opposed to the Heritage megaproject. “We don’t need to have guns put to our heads to meet our goals of affordable housing,” she continued as if describing extortion.

The Historic Alexandria Foundation reassures us, “No one opposes affordable housing in the neighborhood — all of us agree that more affordable housing is very much needed and can be increased here,” as if by waving a magic wand instantly would appear such housing that does not “violate

the character of the historic district.” The developer is willing to sink “north of \$100 million” into increasing substantially the number of affordable units — not the “onesies and twosies” for which city council has granted egregious extra density too often in the past, not the paltry 10% Councilmember Seifeldein caught flak from some of his colleagues for insisting upon, but approximately 25% of the total units. The developer acquired the property a little over a year ago and needs a return on investment. If the city council turns the developer down, the existing affordable housing will be replaced by new or rehabbed “by-right” buildings with zero affordable housing.

You cannot be “for” affordable housing but hamstringing the market conditions needed to bring it about. And you cannot be “for” affordable housing but “not in my

backyard.”

The 2018 mayoral primary was, in a sense, a referendum about whether we should insist upon “thoughtful, appropriate development that fits in and is to scale, and will protect our neighborhoods and quality of life” [\[alexandriagazette.com/news/2015/nov/04/its-mayor-silberberg-alexandria\]\(http://alexandriagazette.com/news/2015/nov/04/its-mayor-silberberg-alexandria\) or instead accede to “projects that are more dense than we probably would have otherwise, have less open space than we otherwise would have, that preserve](http://www.al-</p>
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SEE LETTER, PAGE 10

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name.

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Charles Hooff III died Feb. 1 at the age of 80.

Charles R. Hooff III Real Estate developer dies at 80.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria native and real estate magnate Charles Hooff III, principal broker of the firm that bears his name, died Feb. 1 at the age of 80.

Charles Rapley Hooff III was born in Philadelphia on April 21, 1940, to Charles R. Hooff, Jr. and Elizabeth Dunn Hooff. He grew up in Alexandria, attended Episcopal High School, and graduated from George Washington University. He married Gudrun Kuelps Hooff in 1967 in Taipei while working overseas for Air America.

As Managing Director and Principal Broker of Charles R. Hooff, Inc, Hooff developed and managed residential and commercial properties.

The most significant of his projects was the redevelopment of the Torpedo Factory complex, a mixed-use project of over 100,000 square feet of municipal use, a food court, a 200-car garage and 120 condominium units.

Charles R. Hooff, Inc. was established in 1929 by Hooff's grandmother, Sarah Carlyle Fairfax Herbert. His father helped establish the cooperative multilisting service that was widely used by Northern Virginia real estate brokers.

Hooff, whose family has direct lineage to Lawrence Hooff and John Carlyle, was an active member of The Jamestown Society, The Metropolitan Club, The Life Guard Society of Mount Vernon, The Old Dominion Boat Club, The Fraternal Order of Eagles, The Society of Colonial Warriors, and The Alexan-

SEE CHARLES R., PAGE 10

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Three Restaurants You'll Love This Valentine's Day

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Love is in the air – and what better way to show your adoration than with a special restaurant menu for Valentine's Day? Here are three Alexandria options to share with the one who has your heart.

Cheesetique, 2411 Mount Vernon Ave.

Forget romantic candlelit dinners at a restaurant – Cheesetique is bringing the romance (and menu) home to you instead on this most unusual of Valentine's Days. Four courses will come your way from the eatery's special prix-fixe menu, beginning with cheese and charcuterie for two, followed by a stuffed artichoke heart salad and a choice of entrée (coq au vin or ricotta gnocchi). Tie everything up with heart-shaped flourless chocolate cake with passionfruit curd for a sweet end to a great feast. Want to wash it all down with something special? For \$49.99 extra, Cheesetique will set you up with a wine trio, complete with pairing notes. \$69.99. Preordering required.

Whiskey and Oyster, 301 John Carlyle St.

Add a seafood twist to your Valentine's

festivities with Whiskey and Oyster's special three-course menu, available for dine-in or curbside pickup. Start things off with a dozen shucked oysters and a pear and goat cheese salad, then move on to a choice of two entrees, choosing from seafood pasta, Maine lobster and oyster pot pie, finishing the dinner with a white chocolate raspberry mousse. \$75.

Neighborhood Provisions

Looking for a special meal that comes straight to your door with no muss and no fuss? Neighborhood Provisions, an extension of the Neighborhood Restaurant Group, is taking care of everything with a special Valentine's Day meal that's available Friday through Sunday. Start off with a choice of lobster bisque, roasted beet and goat cheese salad or crab cakes, then move along to a selection of pan-roasted salmon, vegetable lasagna or slow-roasted sirloin. Finish on a sweet note with some dark chocolate mousse or cheesecake. \$65. Preordering required.

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.



Cheesetique offers a four course meal for two for Valentines.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU MARCH 29 (MONDAYS)

Yoga for Gardeners I. 9:30-10:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) This class features a gentle introduction to the Vinyasa method, which helps participants increase the strength, flexibility and endurance necessary for gardening. \$129 per person for 11 sessions. Class held indoors. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code 6E6.JNLA) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAYS THRU MARCH

Virtual Pure Barre. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Virtual via Zoom. Pure Barre has again partnered with the National Landing BID to bring free virtual classes to the community. Visit the website: <https://nationallanding.org/do/virtual-pure-barre-in-tro-classes>

THURSDAYS THRU MARCH 11

Happy Hour Yoga. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Virtual via WebEx. The National Landing BID has partnered with Erin Sonn, owner of eat.YOGA.drink, to bring unique yoga experiences to you virtually. This free, hour-long class will have a different theme and playlist each week and requires registration. Visit the website: <https://nationallanding.org/do/happy-hour-yoga>

JAN. 27 TO MARCH 24

Wednesday Morning Study Group. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Via zoom. Fairlington UMC 3900 King St., Alexandria. Join in a nine-week study of Laudato Si: Caring for Our Common Home, the groundbreaking encyclical letter by Pope Francis on climate issues and a Christian faith-based response. Visit the website: www.fairlingtonumc.org.

FEB. 1-25

Hunt for Washington. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Alexandria. A fun and challenging game to uncover clues about Alexandria and George Washington. The Hunt, which should take about 60-90 minutes to complete, will take you to places in Old Town Alexandria associated with the General. Start by printing the Clue Sheet at <http://washingtonbirthday.com/events-1>, and bring it with you as you traverse the heart of Old Town and then use your sleuthing skills to find answers to the clues. Submit your findings to GWBirthdayEvents@gmail.com before the end of the day on February 25. George Washington himself announce prize winners from a drawing of correct clue sheets during the February 26 Webinar, "The Life of George Washington in 4 Acts" (see www.washingtonbirthday.com). Visit the website: www.washingtonbirthday.com.

FEB. 1-26

Dreams and Nightmares. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive, Arlington. National Juried Show, compelling artworks on the theme of Dreams and Night-

mares, pieces chosen from all over the country. From the beautiful and sublime to the dark and twisted. Featuring artwork by Colleen Smith, Peter Hargreaves and Lindsay Cronk. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/>

FEB. 5-27

In the "After Edward Hopper: Themes of Solitude and Isolation" exhibit, artists present their interpretations of what makes Hopper's imagery quintessentially American: perseverance, fortitude, diversity, and an egalitarian spirit in spite of adversity, impoverishment, and social injustice. This exhibit expresses the anthem of a new dawn: still we rise as one, stronger together. Runs February 5-27, 2021 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Details: www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THURSDAY/FEB. 11

The Ramsey Homes. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Via Zoom. The City of Alexandria invites the general public, especially residents of Parker-Gray, to a symposium on the Ramsey Homes, which served as affordable housing units from 1953 to 2018. Originally built as temporary housing for African American war industry workers in the 1940s, the homes served as permanent affordable housing for Alexandria residents for 65 years. The Ramsey Homes were located in the heart of the Parker-Gray Historic District and the African American enclave known as Uptown. This symposium tackles issues of race and equity

in housing, of community and community memory, segregation's impact on the African American workforce and the landscape of public housing.

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Starting from Scratch with Seeds. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Grow flowers, vegetables and herbs from seed and expand your garden. Be inspired by Green Spring staff member, Susan Eggerton, as she discusses potting mixes, containers, seed treatments, lighting, fertilization, watering, seed sources and timing. Then take home a few seeds to start your own collection. This program will take place on-site with limited registration and social distancing. \$22 per person. Wear a mask. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code J1VK6GF) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Virtual George Washington Birthnight Banquet and Ball. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. The George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee and Gadsby's Tavern Museum will present the annual celebration of the birth of our first President, George Washington -virtually this year. Join the likes of Mr. Gadsby, citizens of Alexandria, and General Washington himself for a Birthnight celebration on your personal screen. Over Zoom, begin the evening with a video presentation full of dancing, conversations, and toasts. Then the General will be available live

for all your questions. After the Q&A, enjoy English Country Dancing called by the expert Dance Master that you can do with 1, 2, or 4 people at home. Period costumes of the 1790s encouraged. Visit AlexandriaVa.Gov/Shop.

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Floral Design Workshop. 1-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Celebrate love in all its splendid forms with the "Flower Design Workshop: Heart's Desire." Create a floral project that you are sure to love. Keep it for yourself or give it to someone that you care about. Currently, this program is only being offered in-person. The cost of each session is \$39 per person, plus a \$30 supply fee, for those attending in person. Call 703-642-5173.

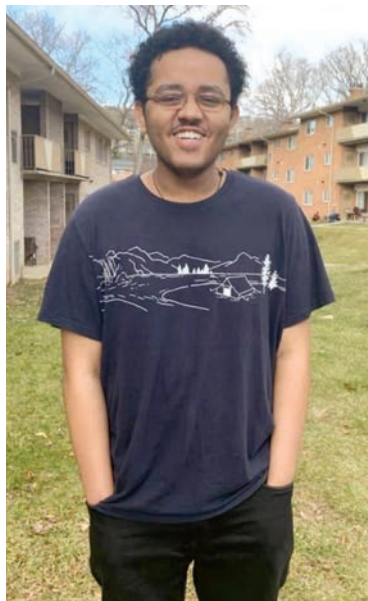
SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Valentine's in the Secret Garden. Served at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. At The Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Bundle up for an elegant, cozy outdoor concert, a celebration of love of all kinds featuring mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Barnes in beloved love songs ranging from "My Funny Valentine" and "La vie en rose" to enchanting operatic selections. Paired with a gourmet tasting of charcuterie, cheese, sweets and wine. Cost is \$89. Details and tickets here: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/savorysoiree/>

NEWS



Bridgette Adu-Wadier.



Natnael Asegdew.

Best of the Best

Two TC seniors win full scholarships to attend college.

When T.C. Williams High School senior Natnael Asegdew was 6 years old, he moved to the United States from Ethiopia and his parents had one purpose in mind: to ensure their two children received a quality education.

Life in a new country was not without challenges for the family but their son thrived academically, first at John Adams Elementary School, then at Francis C. Hammond Middle School, and finally at T.C. Williams.

Now Natnael is a proud recipient of the prized QuestBridge Scholarship and this fall he is heading to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on a full-ride scholarship, where he will major in Computer, Economics and Data Science.

QuestBridge is an extremely competitive college scholarship application process that helps outstanding low-income high school seniors gain admission and full four-year scholarships to the nation's most selective colleges.

T.C. Principal Peter Balas said, "I am so proud of our Titan QuestBridge Scholars. I know that these students are so deserving and that this scholarship will be life changing for our students."

Out of over 18,500 applicants, QuestBridge selected 6,885 finalists to be considered for the QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. Ultimately, 1,464 students were successful.

"I think about the sacrifices my parents made for me all the time," said the 17-year-old Asegdew. "Moving to a new country, learning a new language, working long hours, all with their children's fu-

ture in mind."

"They were so happy when I got the news about the scholarship. It made them realize that coming to America was the right decision."

Natnael still recalls the kindness shown to him by ACPS teachers when he began school here in Alexandria.

He says he remains ever thankful for the teachers and counselors that supported him throughout his school career.

"Life would have been very different had we stayed in Ethiopia. I doubt that I would have reached the stage I am at now," he added.

Another highly accomplished Titan, Bridgette Adu-Wadier, also learned that she was selected from the thousands of students who applied nationwide.

Bridgette, who has been lauded with multiple accolades this academic year, will be attending Northwestern University where she will major in Journalism.

Despite her unquestionable talents, Bridgette didn't think she stood much of a chance of success for QuestBridge given the high number of applicants. However, encouraged to pursue it by the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, her teachers and counselors, she persevered.

The process involved writing multiple essays on various subjects including the challenges faced by low-income students. Applicants were also requested to rank their preferred colleges from a list of 12 that included Duke, Yale and the University of Pennsylvania.

In October, both students learned they were finalists, then

SEE THE BEST OF, PAGE 9

THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

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From MVHS to the NFL ASC to host David Knight Feb. 17.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

David Knight, a 1969 graduate of Mount Vernon High School who went on to play wide receiver for the New York Jets in the National Football League, will be the featured speaker via Zoom at the Feb. 17 meeting of the Alexandria Sportsman's Club.

Knight began his football career at MVHS, where the team went undefeated during his senior year at 10-0 before losing to powerhouse Annandale 14-7 in the Northern Virginia Regional Championship game.

Knight went on to play at the College of William and Mary under Coach Lou Holtz. In his sophomore year he caught the winning touchdown against Richmond in the Southern Conference Championship game to send his team to the Tangerine Bowl.

Drafted in the 11th round by the New York Jets, Knight made his professional debut in 1973 during a Monday Night Football game against the Green Bay Packers. Despite the 23-7 loss, Knight scored the lone touchdown for the Joe Namath-led Jets.

Following his retirement from the NFL in 1977, Knight returned to Alexandria and received a master's degree in Library and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Former NFL player and Mount Vernon High School graduate David Knight will be the guest speaker at the Feb. 17 Alexandria Sportsman's Club meeting.

Information Science from Catholic University in 1981. He went to work in the U.S. Department of Justice legal library system, eventually becoming Director of Information Technology for the Environment and Natural Resources Division.

Knight will talk about his experiences in the NFL as well as his post-NFL career and there will be time for Q&A.

The ASC webinar meeting will be held via Zoom Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. Participation in the meeting is free and open to the public but pre-registration is required. For more information, visit www.alexandriavasports.org.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

DONATIONS NEEDED -- The Departmental Progressive Club, Alexandria's oldest continuing service organization, will host a nonperishable food and gift card drive Saturday, Feb. 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at DPC headquarters at 411 Gibbon Street in Old Town. Donations of nonperishable food items along with gift cards are needed. For more information, contact organizer Willie Bailey at 703-909-0523.

CVS to Offer COVID-19 Vaccine Limited locations to begin Feb. 11.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Beginning Feb. 11, Virginians will be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at select CVS locations across the state. The Commonwealth is among an initial 11-state rollout to expand COVID-19 vaccines at CVS pharmacies across the country.

Thirty-six CVS locations will offer the vaccine through appointment only to individuals meeting state criteria, which will be confirmed by the state in advance of the rollout.

Presently, Virginia is in Phase 1B of the vaccine rollout. This includes individuals 65 and older as well as those 16-64 with pre-existing medical conditions.

Register in advance at CVS.com, through the CVS Pharmacy app, or by calling 800-746-7287. Walk-in vaccinations without an appointment will not be provided.

Participating CVS Pharmacies are located



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

COVID-19 vaccines will be available at select CVS pharmacies in Virginia beginning Feb. 11.

throughout the state, including Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Leesburg.

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.

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Office of Historic Alexandria invites the public to celebrate Black History Month with special events and activities throughout February. Black History Month is an annual recognition and celebration of the history, culture, achievements and contributions of African Americans and persons of African descent in U.S. history.

Feb. 11. Symposium: The Ramsey Homes. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Free. This virtual symposium is a case study of the innovative construction of the World War II era Ramsey Homes and their African American residents. Topics include: the history of public housing and Ramsey Homes; genealogy of early residents; architecture and engineering; and the process of documenting construction techniques. The symposium will conclude with a virtual experience of the new

Lineage on North Patrick Street. The symposium is being offered virtually via Zoom. Register for one or all three parts of the day through AlexandriaVa.Gov/BlackHistory.

Feb. 17. Lecture: Hidden in Plain Sight: Moss Kendrix and the Enterprise to Sell Black Citizenship. 7 p.m. \$6. Dr. Brenna Wynn Greer will trace how Black public relations guru Moss Hyles Kendrix enlisted white corporate America in a campaign to redefine black citizenship after World War II. Dr. Greer will also examine how Kendrix and his work—so visible and so important in the early Cold War era—was almost lost to us. Dr. Greer is Associate Professor of History at Wellesley College. To purchase lecture tickets, visit AlexandriaVa.Gov/Shop.

Feb. 20. Concert: Washington Revels Jubilee Voices. 2-3 p.m. \$6. The Washington Revels Jubilee Voices ensemble is committed to the preservation of African American history and traditions—presenting songs and stories of struggle and perseverance, trials, and triumphs, as expressed through a cappella music, drama, and dance. To purchase concert tickets, visit AlexandriaVa.Gov/Shop.

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News

Best of The Best

FROM PAGE 7

on Dec. 1, they received the life-changing news that they had been successful.

"November 30th was a really climatic day," said Bridgette. "Everybody was giving me well wishes and hoping for the best. I tried not to stress out too much and just think about the fact that getting this far was an achievement in itself."

"The next day, I got word that the Questbridge decision had come out and I really started to get nervous."

After class she joined a Zoom with Stacy Morris, T.C. College and Career Center counselor. Together, the pair nervously opened the email that contained the decision.

"There was a big banner saying 'Congratulations!' and confetti was flying around the screen. For a second, I didn't know what to do. I was overjoyed and crying and just so shocked."

Then, the gifted writer and visual storyteller was also named by PBS as a one of their 20 under 20 Up-and-Coming Storytellers of the Year.

Read more about our two Quest-Bridge Scholars.

20 under 20 Up-and-Coming Storytellers

2020 brought significant challenges and history-making events, from racial injustice and the coronavirus pandemic to a record-breaking hurricane season and an enormous uptick in mental health challenges.

These extraordinary times were met with exemplary young journalists and storytellers who covered these life-changing events through their work with PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs (SRL).

"Bridgette Adu-Wadier is a senior at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. Her love for books and storytelling drew her to journalism, creating an opportunity to continue exploring the power of local politics and under-represented voices.

Next fall, she will pursue broadcast journalism and social science research at Northwestern University. She dreams of becoming an investigative journalist reporting on education. She is an editor for her school newspaper, host and co-founder of the local news discussion show at her school and a reporter for several other publications. Bridgette has also helped produce several stories for SRL, as well as interviewed the NewsHour's Judy Woodruff on preparing for presidential debates."

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Obituary

Diane Williams Watts



Of Alexandria, Virginia, daughter of Herbert Williams and Joan Herring, passed away peacefully at home, with her children present, on Saturday, January 30, 2021. She was 92 years young. Anyone who knew would agree. She was born on January 5, 1929 in London, England, graduated high school from Hollywood High School, and held a BA from UC Berkeley. In 1952, she married Joseph Charles Watts Jr., who preceded her in death in 2001. Diane had many friends with common interests such as the Yacht Haven Garden Club, AAUW, League of Women Voters, and the Mt. Vernon Ladies Auxiliary, to name a few. She was a true friend to all who knew her. Diane is survived by her two children, Kimberley Watts Sherrett of Longwood, Florida, and Christopher James Watts of Alexandria, Virginia, two grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. She will be laid to rest with her husband in Arlington National Cemetery privately. In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made in Diane's name to a charity of your choice. Additional information may be found at www.demainefuneralhomes.com.

Obituary

Obituary



Charles F. Hill (Charlie), a life-long resident of Alexandria, VA, passed quietly on December 15, 2020 at Inova Alexandria Hospital. Charlie was born on December 30, 1947, to the late George and Goldie Hill. He graduated from George Washington High School in 1965, and soon thereafter followed in his father's footsteps making a life-long career in the automobile business.

Charlie was a devoted husband and father, and loved to be surrounded by his family and friends. He enjoyed watching his favorite sports teams, drawing, playing poker, and relaxing with a cigar and a beer.

Charlie is survived by his wife Betty; son Charles Jr. (Chip) and his wife Kelly and grandson Bennett; and sister Norma.

Due to current gathering restrictions, no funeral services have been scheduled at this time. A Celebration of Life will be scheduled at a later date. Charlie will reside at Mount Comfort Cemetery in the columbarium.

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-Werner Heisenberg

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"Clinical Correlation Suggested"

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Means what exactly? That was the suggestion written by the pathologist after "non small cell lung cancer" was written in the "diagnosis" section of the pathology report completed after my original surgical biopsy was performed at Holy Cross Hospital in early 2009. I had never seen this document until this past week, finally retrieving it after nearly 12 years, represents a kind of symmetry. Though 2009 is when my life as an officially-diagnosed-lung-cancer patient began, I am not at all prepared to say that my current life as a lung cancer patient is over. It's just called something else.

Nor am I prepared to say this document gives me much clarity or satisfaction for that matter. Unfortunately, getting re-diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer recently doesn't change the past or guarantee the future. It does however, reshape it, potentially - for the better. When it comes to cancers you'd prefer to have and the ones you wouldn't, thyroid cancer, generally speaking is way more preferable than lung cancer. The survivability gap is all you need to know. The side effects and sacrifices required to live with thyroid cancer pale in comparison to those required of lung cancer patients. In fact, if you don't already know it, lung cancer is the leading cause of death among all cancers, by far. Moreover, more people die from lung cancer as do from the next four cancers combined. Lung cancer is a killer. So being reclassified from lung cancer to thyroid cancer is huge. The fact that I've survived so long already, 12 years post diagnosis, means I may have used up some of my unexpected life expectancy however. Still, it beats the alternative.

Originally, I was told my lung cancer was incurable and given a "13 month to two year" prognosis. Presently, as it relates to my current prognosis, it's sort of indefinite. The drug I'm taking is effective for three years. After which, I'm sort of on my own as there are no new drugs in the offing to manage my cancer. In effect, I am once again incurable, as the years of treatment for lung cancer had no effect on the underlying thyroid cancer and did a kind of damage that now means I can be treated but not cured. Quite different than had I been treated for thyroid cancer all along.

Yet, seeing this paperwork from 12 years ago which clearly lists "non small cell lung cancer, primary to the lung" has sort of stopped me in my tracks. So far as I understand/recall, there was no "clinical correlation." I started chemotherapy the following week. Was something neglected? Certainly, I didn't ask for a second opinion, which is on me, but was the oncologist supposed to research further? Was the pathology report sort of damning - me, with a kind of faint praise -- uncertainty, if you can extrapolate?

Otherwise, how does the profession account for my still being alive. When we got a second opinion a few months back from a head and neck (to include thyroid) cancer specialist at The Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown, she said, if I had lung cancer, I wouldn't still be alive so it's logical to presume the recent surgical biopsies that indicated thyroid cancer were likely confirming a long-standing cancer, and that quite probably I never had lung cancer but rather thyroid cancer that had metastasized to the lung.. But there was no further investigation in 2009. The diagnosis - without a "clinical correlation" was non small cell lung cancer/ carcinoma.

At the initial meeting with my oncologist, it all sounded so serious and the doctor was so clear in his assessment of my situation, that it seemed irresponsible, foolish even, to wait. We scheduled my first chemotherapy infusion for the following week and the rest is history. Now I'm wondering if it was history that need not have been made.

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

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News

All You Need is Love

FROM PAGE 1

work at work and be normal people. We love our business, love our customers and love that we were able to raise two amazing kids and get them into college as a result of the growth of our business. It's not easy on anyone but I think our whole family has learned to take the good with the bad and learned a good work ethic as well. Good marriages and good businesses are about compromise and we've been able to give and take throughout the years in our businesses and at home."

Adnan and Kathy Hamidi, Alexandria Cupcake

Kathy: "We are celebrating our 7/13 anniversary - together for 13 years and married for seven. We have been working together for 11 years. I think what makes it work is that he is a big picture person and I am a detail person so between the two of us we cover everything."

Adnan: "Working with your spouse is not for everybody. It takes a balance and a lot of patience. We have been lucky in that without even t

rying to find it we ended up having the chemistry to work together. A lot of people have tried it and it doesn't work. I also don't think for entrepreneurs it is possible to separate work and home -- there's a blend and in all reality we do sit at night and talk about work. But we are never at work together - we have two different locations and she has her own business that she runs out of the house. But look at Mike and Donna Anderson. They are living proof that with the right person, decades later it can work."

Charles R. Hooff III

FROM PAGE 5

dria Businessmen's Club.

He frequently hosted friends from each of these organizations at his Belmont Bay farm in Lorton.

Hooff is survived by his wife of 53 years, Gudrun Hooff, his four children, Maremi Andreozi (Phil), Churchill Hooff (Jennifer),

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 4

less around historic fabric than we otherwise would have," www.alexandriagazette.com/news/2018/sep/21/new-era-affordable-housing-alexandria/, which is what won out.

The Historic Alexandria Foundation is compellingly correct that the Heritage project "is an alarming departure from the principles of limited size and scale which have guided development since the creation of this historic district 75 years ago."

In no regard is the proposed Heritage behemoth thoughtful, appropriate development that fits in, is to scale, which will protect the neighborhood.

While some might argue that the portion of the Heritage in the historic district today is a non-complying 62 feet, the Board of Architectural Review, which possesses the expertise on protecting the historic district,

Joan and John Renner, Renner & Company CPA

Joan: "We've been working together for 40 years and married for 18 years. John sets some very good rules for us to have a happy home life: We leave work at work and home is our refuge to be at home. It is really nice to work with someone who knows what's going on at home and to be at home with someone who knows everything that's going on at work. For me, I hope to be a good listener. And for us, this is really work-life integration at its best."

John: "We've been able to separate work and home and that is extremely important. We don't even try to work at home - we come to our offices since it's so close. Being able to do that for 20 years has been great. It allows us to keep our work and personal lives separate but it's still good to know what's going on in both places."

Lee and Du Choe, The Uptowner

Lee: "We have been married for 23 years and have two children, 21 and 23. We have been able to divide up our work responsibilities. It is a lot of work, especially for Du, and we do sometimes get tired of each other. But at the end of the day we are happy to be together."

Du: "A benefit of working together is that we don't have to say things to each other -- we instinctively know what each other wants and needs when we are working. We don't have to communicate with each other the same way we have to with other employees. That helps make things easier for everyone."

Janney Jay (Willy), Carlie Casella (Dan), 12 grandchildren and sister, Caroline Norman (Jim).

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt. St. Alexandria, VA 22314, or The Cheetah Conservation Fund at www.cheetah.org/donate/. Services were private.

emphatically found the proposed design unacceptable. The Board of Architectural Review's judgment is what frames the project as having no business being in the historic district. The solution, however, is to redraw the historic district boundary to exclude the Heritage site so it does not set an adverse precedent for elsewhere in the historic district. Concurrent with doing so, to reassure the pu

blic that this is not a precedent endangering the rest of the historic district if future developers propose out-of-scale projects with generous affordable housing components, city council should charge the Board of Architectural Review with finding suitable blocks adjacent to the historic district to add to the historic district.

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Beautifully appointed, 8-bedroom, grand center-hall colonial with 8 full & 2 half baths. The ultimate in luxury living with elegant & casual entertaining space, top-of-the-line kitchen, a luxury owner's suite, and an outdoor oasis with stone hearth, full kitchen, bar & grill.

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OPEN SUN 2/14, 2-4PM

Old Town | \$2,100,000

Striking 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath, brick Federal home offering gracious rooms with tall ceilings, time-honored floors and exquisite woodwork. Open-air sleeping balcony embraces the deep side & rear gardens. Quiet library refuge and brick floored kitchen. 221 N Royal St.

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Belle Haven | \$2,000,000

Featured in Better Homes and Gardens Decorating this classic center-hall Colonial is located on a rare double lot in premier Belle Haven. With 5 bedrooms, 5.5 baths and a two-car garage, this property has been sleekly expanded and curated. It is the total package!

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VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 2/13, 11AM

Del Ray | \$1,400,000

4-bedroom, 3-bath spacious craftsman home! Impressive kitchen opens to family room overlooking large, private fully fenced yard. Main bedroom boasts walk-in closet and en-suite luxury bath. Lower level rec room. Driveway fits 3+ cars. 314 E Del Ray Ave

Jen Walker 703.675.1566

www.JenWalker.com



OPEN SAT 2/13, 1-3PM

Alexandria City | \$700,000

Beautifully maintained & updated end unit with 2-car garage. 2,000 SF of living space, 3 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths. This townhouse lives like a detached home with 2 gas fireplaces, private patio & backyard oasis. Near Potomac Yards & Del Ray. 3824 Charles Ave.

Judy Radvanyi McVey 703.405.9456

www.judyandbarbara.com



River Towers | \$190,000

Set amongst 26 acres of private land, this 1-bedroom, 1-bath condo offers great views of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Original wood floors and freshly painted. Amenities galore -pool, fitness center, roof-top deck, garden plots, & more! Located just south of Old Town.

Heidi Burkhardt 703.217.6009

www.realtorheidib.com



OPEN SAT 2/13 & SUN 2/14, 2-4PM

Old Town

\$1,095,000

Recently renovated historic brick 1818 townhouse with high-end kitchen and baths. Original heart pine floors, 5 fireplaces and high ceilings. Deck off main floor overlooking storybook garden, fully finished lower level walks out to the patio and backyard.

1110 Prince Street

Paul Anderson 703.408.0676

www.paulvanderson.com



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Old Town

\$775,000

Fully renovated detached home featuring thoughtful upgrades, a delightful backyard and two car off-street parking!

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Lyndsi Sitcov 202.534.9397

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Alexandria

\$499,900

Over \$40K in brand new updates. New hardwood floors on main level. New open kitchen with dining room wall removed. New granite counters, backsplash, and stainless steel appliances. New upper baths and more! 6056 Chicory Place

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