

Meet the Candidates 15 vying in School Board election; only three incumbents seeking re-election.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Following a year of controversy surrounding remote learning and the role of School Resource Officers, the upcoming election of School Board representatives has taken on a new urgency. Fifteen candidates are vying for nine seats. Only three members of the current School Board are running for reelection: Meagan Alderton, Jacinta Greene and Michelle Rief. Three from each District will be elected to a three-year term. Voters within each district will vote for three candidates from that district. In district C, for example, all three candidates will serve on the school board.

Following are the candidates' answers in their own words. Responses have been edited for space and clarity.

DISTRICT A

Willie Bailey DISTRICT A

Bailey was raised in public housing and educated in the ACPS system. A single dad, he served on City Council from 2015-2018. He is a 21-year Army veteran and currently Deputy Fire Chief with Fairfax County Fire and Rescue.

Why are you running for School Board?

I'm running for school board to ensure we do what's right for our kids. I devote much of my time to combating educational barriers such as poverty and homelessness. Through my nonprofit Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue, I organize a coalition of volunteers and nonprofits to support children in need each year. As a father, firefighter, veteran, and former city council member, I know that I can be the strong voice for all of our students, parents, educators, and staff.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

Trained Student Resource Officers currently play an important role in mediating conflicts and helping ensure our students receive their education in a safe environment. In the brief time that SROs were gone this year, we saw physical altercations between students, individuals bringing guns onto campuses, and other events that endangered our children and resulted in the police being called anyway. If more funds were added for mental counseling and support I'd advocate for taking a cautious, data driven approach to evaluating if SROs were no longer needed.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

COVID-19, the variants, and downstream



impacts for students, parents, and educators is the greatest challenge ACPS is facing today. I will also work tirelessly to expand access to early education, develop mentorship programs, and close the achievement gap so that everyone can succeed.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority will be ensuring that we safely navigate COVID-19, the variants, and any downstream impacts. I'll prioritize addressing capacity issues to ensure our facilities keep pace with our growing student body and also fight to ensure our teachers and staff receive fair compensation.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

I believe that parents, as voters, have the ultimate say in critical decisions like vaccine mandates, SROs, and curriculum - that's why this election is so important since the leaders put in place on the school board and at the state level will make these critical decisions. I also believe there should be greater trans-

parency and communication between the school board and members of the community on an ongoing basis so that parents' voices continue to be heard after Election Day.

Aloysius "Ish" Boyle DISTRICT A

Married to a Fairfax County public school teacher, Ish Boyle is the father of two ACPS students. He currently works in cybersecurity after serving seven years in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Why are you running for School Board?

Running for school board presents an opportunity to help invest in and impact Alexandrians who will be the leaders of our tomorrow. As a father of two ACPS students, I care deeply about the quality of education in our public schools and the opportunity for all of our students to achieve and maximize their potential.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I stand with our principals, administrators,

and teachers who have made it abundantly clear that they rely on SROs for their support and specialized skills. Multiple weapons have been brought onto school property this year to include a loaded firearm, and there have been widely reported violent fights on and around school property. Some city council candidates minimize this by saying, "Well, there have always been fights." When do we progress beyond the status quo? We need to provide an atmosphere where our students and teachers are safe and can do their best.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The biggest challenge facing ACPS is lack of leadership, accountability, and transparent communications from ACPS Central Office. This has manifested itself in myriad ways over the last 18 months; from not having a phased approach to back-to-school learning, the introduction of political agendas into our schools, the poor planning and communication in going back to school this fall, and prematurely pulling forward

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ALEXANDRIA CITY ELECTIONS: MAYOR

Voters to Determine Direction of City

Republican Annetta Catchings challenges incumbent Democrat Justin Wilson for mayor.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The race for mayor comes down to a simple question: Are Alexandria voters happy with the direction of the city or not?

Republicans are hoping that problems with flooding and worries about development and crime will prompt voters to fire freshman Mayor Justin Wilson, who is seeking a second term in office after being elected in 2018. Wilson acknowledges that leading the city through a pandemic has been rough, but he says the city is poised to come out of the experience stronger.

"I'm running for reelection because I believe investing in our kids, investing in our basic infrastructure and growing our local economy to support the services the residents expect and demand, we can make sure Alexandria doesn't just survive this pandemic, but actually thrives," said Wilson.

In June, Wilson beat back a challenge from former Mayor Allison Silberberg in the Democratic primary. She tried to paint Wilson as someone who didn't listen to concerns from residents about overdevelopment and bike lanes. Silberberg lost the Democratic primary, getting 42 percent of the vote.

Now Wilson is facing Republican Annetta Catchings, whose campaign includes a similar critique of the mayor as someone who ignores concerns raised by residents over everything from development and crime to stream restoration and guaranteed basic income.

Catchings says Alexandria is burdened by overdevelopment and crime. She says the city is not moving fast enough to give police officers body cameras, and she's been critical of Alexandria's new pilot program for guaranteed income as a frivolous use of taxpayer money.

During a debate this week, her response to a question about preventing opioid overdoses from fentanyl sparked an exchange that

revealed a wide gap in how the candidates would approach the job of mayor.

"We know why we're seeing an influx. It's borders that are porous, basically open," said Catchings. "Those drugs are coming through from that direction. They're coming from China."

Catchings said the problem of illegal drugs in Alexandria should be "addressed at the border" to "reduce the drugs that are on our streets."

Wilson responded that the idea that border policy has an impact on opioid abuse is "not only inaccurate and ignorant" but also "incredibly hateful." Catchings stood by the comment, aligning it with a central theme in her campaign.

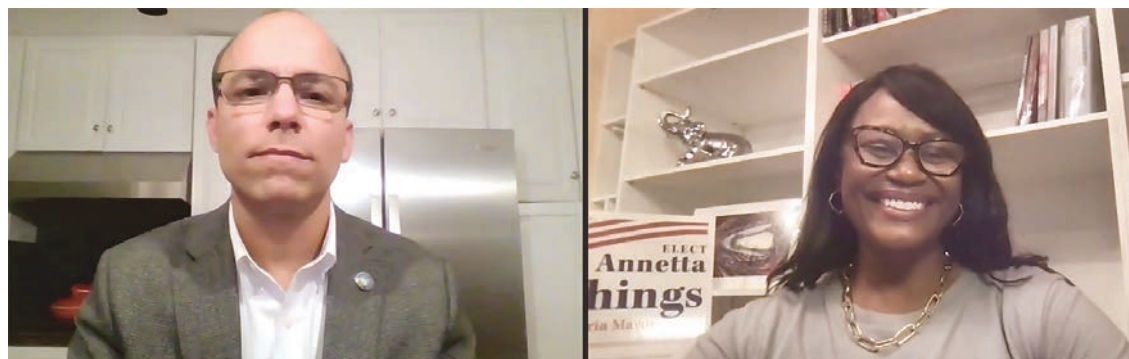
"I think the viewers know that there are drugs that are coming through the border," said Catchings. "He's turning a blind eye, just like he turns a blind eye to flooding and crime in his own city."

ALEXANDRIA HASN'T HAD a Republican for mayor since Reconstruction, when William Berkley was mayor from June 1872 to June 1873. The city's current electorate is so heavily Democratic that Gov. Ralph Northam won Alexandria with 78 percent of the vote in his 2017 campaign against Republican Ed Gillespie. Republicans haven't even fielded a candidate for mayor in more than 20 years. Nevertheless, Catchings says Wilson does not deserve another term in office.

"Under his watch, our police department has been defunded and crime increased," said Catchings. "Under his watch a citizens review board, given subpoena power, was formed. Under his watch, our first responders have put out press releases citing low morale, low pay and understaffing."

Wilson rejects the idea that Alexandria has defunded the police, and budget documents show spending on police has increased about 25 percent over the last decade while spending on social services has actually decreased about 1 percent.

keeping up with its infrastructure. For years the city has been dealing with problems about the storm water system and sanitary sewer system, and combined system in Old Town. With this in mind, Agen-



Justin Wilson (D) and Annetta Catchings (R), candidates for mayor, debate earlier this week.

Top Donors to Justin Wilson

- ❖ \$10,000 from Nova Area Labor Federation
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- ❖ \$5,000 from Kirkland & Ellis attorney Reginald James Brown
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Justin Wilson (D)



Annetta Catchings (R)

Top Donors to Annetta Catchings

- ❖ \$2,500 from Roger Williams for U.S. House of Representatives PAC in Fort Worth, Texas
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- ❖ \$650 from Louis Harold Miller

He acknowledges that Northern Virginia has seen a rise in violent crime, although he adds that the solution to that isn't always policing.

"We've also seen a significant uptick specifically around firearm crimes in our city," said Wilson. "And so working to get the dangerous firearms and the dangerous people who wield them off our streets has been a particular focus of mine."

One issue that divides the candidates is the pilot program for guaranteed basic income in Alexandria, which was approved by the City Council in July as part of the spending plan for the American Rescue Plan. The pilot program provides direct, recurring cash payments of \$500 a month to 150 Alexandria households for two years with no

restrictions on how the money is used. Catchings says she's opposed to the guaranteed basic income pilot program.

"Anybody could have come from outside the city, get an address and put their name in a hat," said Catchings. "So you're not really addressing the people who live in the community."

City officials say the details of who would be eligible have yet to be worked out, and Wilson says the concept of guaranteed basic income is an idea pioneered by President Richard Nixon, who worked on the idea in with Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld as a response to LBJ's Great Society.

When President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan and local governments started

debating how they wanted to use the stimulus cash, Mayor Wilson worked with City Council members to resurrect the old idea from the Nixon administration as a way to address the needs of communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

"These are folks who are just above the poverty line in our community, and we're going to see whether these kind payments in lieu of a lot of other kinds of local assistance are actually a more impactful way to address the impacts of poverty on residents of our community," said Wilson. "We want to come out of this pandemic in a stronger place than we were before, and we're going to need to experiment and take ourselves out of our comfort zone in order to try to find ways to do that."

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What's in My Water Bill? 6:30-8 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria is growing and with it the challenge of

properties flow? Visit the website: <https://agendaalexandria.org/events/whats-in-my-water-bill/>

da Alexandria is taking a step back to look at the whole story starting with what is the origin of water entering homes and commercial establishments? On the outage, where does the water exiting

properties flow? Visit the website: <https://agendaalexandria.org/events/whats-in-my-water-bill/>

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Alexandria Families for Safe Streets.

Help spread the pedestrian street safety message by volunteering for 2-hour shifts to staff an Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS) table at

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ALEXANDRIA CITY ELECTIONS: SCHOOL BOARD RACES

Meet the Candidates

SEE ISH BOYLE FROM PAGE 1

the Superintendent's contract for a three-year renewal. Without accountability, an organization, teacher, or student may never achieve their potential. I am committed to protecting our children's education and future and believe that there is more that unites us than divides us.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

Creating a culture of excellence in our schools will be my top priority. This starts with providing safe schools where every student can achieve their potential and teachers can differentiate to optimize all the gifts and talents of each learner. At the grade school and middle school level, it is highly concerning that pre-pandemic, 40 percent of ACPS children weren't reading at grade level. Post pandemic, those numbers range between 55 – 75 percent pending demographics. We need to enable teachers and classes for differentiation to meet our students' needs. ACPS should provide rigorous and engaging courses for all learners.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

Parents know what is best for their children. They should receive timely and transparent communications from their children's schools and have complete and easy access to the curriculum, as well as authority and informed consent on medical decisions. To date, the voices of taxpayers, parents (as well as teachers, administrators, and principals) haven't been heard due to feckless leadership, unions, and special interests. This needs to change. A strong school system values an active and collaborative role from parents in decisions related to their children's education.

Jacinta Greene DISTRICT A

Greene is an independent marketing consultant and meeting planner. She was elected to the School Board in 2018 and is an advocate for disadvantaged women and children.

Why are you running for School Board?

I believe that a community is only as strong as its public schools. All students deserve a quality education. Also, I believe, especially in light of the challenges of the past few years, our schools, our teachers, and our students need consistency and strong leadership to not only recover, but also excel moving forward. I am running for reelection because we need school board members who are ready to work on day one and continue the progress we have made.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I believe, from the bottom of my heart, that the safety of our students and schools is of the utmost importance but also that we can keep our schools safe without a police presence. There are too many unintended consequences to having SROs in schools. I disagree with the manner in which SROs

were removed from our schools. As a part of the school board's review of the SRO program in 2020, we moved to require data reporting and transparency. It was our hope that we could gather the necessary information to make an informed decision about the program during our next review in 2022.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

I believe the academic achievement gap, particularly amongst our black and brown students, who make up 60 percent of our student body. Access to resources drives the achievement gap among black and brown students. We need to do a better job of making sure students across ACPS have access to the resources they need to succeed. This means making sure students and their families are aware of the resources, the processes to access those resources are publicized, transparent, and fair, and additional accommodations are made available, including language services and other necessary help to access the services and resources.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority if I am reelected is closing the academic achievement gap. It is clear that if we do not tackle this issue head on problems will persist for these students and the community at large.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

I believe that communities are only as strong as their public schools and schools are only as strong as their community. That is why I championed the inclusion of new digital communication tools in our strategic plan. We need to make sure all members of the community, especially those from under-represented groups and communities, are aware of the opportunity to participate in the process.

Deanne Ohlandt DISTRICT A

Ohlandt works as a freelance editor for academic articles. She previously worked as an arts teacher and a special education aide and is the parent of three ACPS students.

Why are you running for School Board?

The plans and decisions being made now will shape ACPS for years to come. As an educator and an ACPS parent, I want to be part of those conversations, to advocate for equitable and creative approaches to giving all students an excellent education.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

My concern is how to best create a school environment where everyone feels safe. It is clear from the conversations that have arisen recently that some people did not feel safe in the school buildings in the way that the SRO program was operating. It is just as clear from these conversations that some people do not feel safe without SROs in the building. We urgently need to seek alternatives to the SRO system as it has operated previously, listening thoughtfully to a

diverse range of voices.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The challenges of the ongoing COVID pandemic have disrupted our children's schooling for the third academic year in a row and exposed our failing facilities and the precariousness of our ability to hire and retain staff. ACPS has been recognized as the most diverse school division in Virginia and the #12 most diverse school system in the country, which is a wonderful label for us to celebrate, but also highlights how challenging it is for us to ensure equitable access to resources and support for all our students and families coming from such a wide range of backgrounds and needing a wide range of supports to achieve their full potential.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

ACHS is the largest high school in Virginia. However, research shows that in very large high schools some students "fall through the cracks" because it is harder for peers, teachers, and staff to know each student as an individual. I want to see some structural mechanisms that help to ensure every student has adults in the school who know them individually and can provide academic, career, and social support.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

For system-wide decisions, ACPS parents and families should have the same input that any concerned and informed citizen of Alexandria can have into the policy-making work of the school board. I am a parent of three kids currently enrolled at ACPS and I will listen to other ACPS families and seek out those who are not as active as others in the public conversations.

Michelle Rief DISTRICT A

Rief is a first-term member of the School Board. She is a former college professor and education nonprofit executive and parent of three ACPS students.

Why are you running for School Board?

I'm running for re-election to the Alexandria School Board because I believe that every young person in our city deserves a great education. I also believe that strong public schools are essential to thriving communities.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I believe that we can have safe schools without police officers stationed full-time in our buildings. The removal of SROs has been a divisive issue in our community and I believe a deeper conversation about safety in our schools is warranted. I support additional funding for counseling, trauma-informed care and restorative practices.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The biggest challenge facing ACPS is continuing to manage the impact of COVID-19 on our school division. Administrators are collaborating with the health department

on contact tracing efforts and working to provide quality instruction for quarantined students. Also, retaining high-quality professionals and support staff is essential for the advancement of our school division.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority is promoting the academic achievement and wellness of each and every student in Alexandria City Public Schools.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

As a School Board member, I value parent input, as well as the professional expertise of educators and public health experts. I rely on this input, local data and evidenced-based best practices to inform my decisions.

DISTRICT B

Deborah Jean Ash DISTRICT B

Ash is recently retired from the Foreign Service arm of the State Department and has a granddaughter who attends ACHS.

Why are you running for School Board?

I am running for School Board in District B because our academic programs in Alexandria need improvement and prioritization. Some schools only recently received accreditation – a minimal level of success in one of the most highly-educated geographical areas in the nation. We must focus on the academic success of our students, not on divisive social agendas that serve to take us backward instead of forward.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I absolutely support SROs in schools. In the past they developed strong mentoring relationships with students and maintained a safe environment. If additional funds are added to ACPS budget, I support hiring qualified mental health counselors to support students and staff and work alongside the SROs. Combining SROs on school properties to deal with mental health professionals will provide an environment where everyone can progress and prosper.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

In other surveys I said equality for all rather than equity for all. I will adapt that to say, education excellence for all. We also need to move past COVID and all the changes and challenges it brought to our lives.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

The focus should be on making the learning environment safe and conducive to bringing out the best of each students' abilities and helping them to achieve their desired goals. All children, regardless of race, ethnicity or economic status, must learn reading, writing, math, science, how to balance a checkbook, American history, the Constitution and Civics, and many other basic subjects to shape them into educated,

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OPINION

Streets Not Safe Due to Lack of Action on Known Safety Issues

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council,

Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS) is reaching out in sadness and outrage regarding the recent pedestrian deaths that have occurred in Alexandria. Just last month, Mr. Simon Merino was struck and fatally killed on Seminary Road at Fairbanks Avenue while walking in a marked but dangerous crosswalk, and Mr. Linn Emerick was struck on Cameron Street near the bike path at the curve that meets Commonwealth Avenue. Different environments, different conditions and situations, but both irreversible tragedy for families, friends, and our wider community.

If Alexandria is committed to Vision Zero, then we would like to see renewed attentiveness to achieve this goal by 2028 as the city's action plan states. 2028 is only seven years away. In particular, we ask that Complete Streets funding and staff be increased, to include three full time positions or more, commensurate with the work needed to address known safety issues within that time frame.

As an example of action not taken to address a known safety issue, the intersection of Seminary Road and Fairbanks Avenue is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing that was documented by AFSS volunteers in the summer of 2020, and was prioritized by Complete Streets staff as the highest priority need for safety improvements of all the 450

uncontrolled crossings our volunteer team identified throughout the community. This is a stretch of road that is known to be dangerous for pedestrians, has been known for several years, and yet no action — neither engineering nor signage nor even a lowered speed limit — has been taken to slow speeding drivers and increase street safety for vulnerable road users. Please take action now to improve pedestrian safety at this intersection and along this western stretch of Seminary Road. No family should have to grieve the loss of a loved one due to unsafe road conditions.

Traffic violence continues to take place across Alexandria, as well as in other jurisdictions across this region, and transportation planning and engineering are not occurring rapidly enough for families who

are losing loved ones every year due to pedestrian crashes. We must fully invest in the implementation of our now decade-established Complete Streets Policy, strengthening and reinforcing that policy, if necessary. Please demonstrate the City's commitment to Vision Zero and saving lives today by providing additional staff and funding to accelerate implementation of known solutions to road safety issues.

Alexandria Families for Safe Streets Board

Laura Mead Brownell, Mike Doyle, Norman S. Lisy, Melissa McMahon, Brian Shankman, Robert (Bob) Trencheny, Joe Witkowski

Electing City Council Members by District

Electing city council members by district has been a topic of discussion for the better part of a decade, so it is surprising for there to be so much uncertainty around it from both mayoral contenders. We already elect our school board by districts, so why wouldn't we use the same districts for electing our city council, two from each, or one from each with three still elected at-large? There is no need to reinvent the wheel here. All the carping about election-by-districts making members too parochial is belied by our long history of electing our school board members by district. I have hardly heard any suggestion that our school board members are "too parochial" and the reason is that the three districts are large and diverse enough to prevent that from happening. Why would we worry that it would be otherwise for our city council?

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Friend Supports Darryl Nirenberg

To the Alexandria Gazette:

My name is Holley Thames Lutz. I am a registered Democrat who has lived in the City of Alexandria for 27 years. And, I write with a full-throated endorsement of Darryl Nirenberg for City Council.

It has come to my attention that some Alexandria City residents (urged by Democratic City Council candidates) are writing letters in opposition to Darryl's candida-

cy because of his work experience with Jesse Helms, the former Senator from North Carolina. This type of negative, knee-jerk politics makes me embarrassed for Democrats in this City.

Am I embarrassed because this type of smear campaign is mischaracterizing and stereotyping a good man? Yes. Am I embarrassed because Democrats are throwing stones at an accomplished, dedicated man while all the while ignoring the whole of his work history, pro bono activities and commitment to community? Yes. Is this the precise type of behavior we raise our children not to engage in, i.e., lashing out without all the facts? Yes.

My family has known the Nirenberg family for 20 years. Let me tell those nay-sayers a few things I guarantee you they do not know (or are ignoring) about Darryl. Early in his Hill career Darryl worked for Sen. Jacob Javits, a liberal Republican who supported much of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs and civil rights. Darryl worked for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where he served senators from both sides of the aisle, and worked alongside Rep. Gerry Connolly and Sen. Chris VanHollen (both Democrats). Then, and now, Darryl knew the importance of reaching across the aisle, finding common ground to move forward common sense legislation for the good of the people.

Later in his Hill career when Darryl had the opportunity to work for Sen. Jesse Helms, he called his father, affectionately known as Grandpa Duck, who was counsel for the local chapter of the NAACP in the 1960s. After hearing about the opportunity, and some reservations from Darryl, his dad told him, "You should take it. God may be putting you there for a reason. If Helms wants to hire a Jewish

New Yorker to be his chief, maybe that tells you something." Darryl left the Hill after being recruited by Democratic powerhouse lawyer-lobbyist, Tom Boggs.

The fact that some attempt to define (and discount) Darryl Nirenberg by pointing to but one of his many stations on the Hill is juvenile. They ignore the fact that Darryl dedicates time and attention to important causes outside of his busy professional career. Darryl represented, pro bono, the Negro League Baseball Museum as well as the Humane Society. Darryl is also a founding member of the Mid-Atlantic chapter of the Positive Coaching Alliance, which brings youth sports to underserved communities.

What is it that Darryl proposes that Democrats are so quick to run away from? Fixing storm drains to stop repeated flooding? Putting School Resource Officers back into our schools? Preserving green spaces and preventing condensed, adult housing co-located on elementary school grounds? Common sense solutions to Alexandria's problems. Really?

Darryl is a smart, compassionate, motivated man with the political experience we need to get things done in this City. I have seen Darryl as a neighbor, a friend, a husband and father and fellow attorney. He is the same guy in his backyard or on the ball field as he is on your doorstep reaching out to Alexandrians to learn what you care about and how he can help. Darryl has run a positive, issues-based campaign because he wants to be clear about his vision for our City.

Speaking for myself, I'll go with a straight talker with political experience and practical solutions. I'm voting for Darryl Nirenberg.

Holley Thames Lutz
Alexandria

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NEWS

Plea for Refugee Assistance

Donate to help refugees and their families who are still in Afghanistan.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE GAZETTE

Melanie Gray, Director of Outreach and Mission for Christ Church Alexandria, sent out an appeal on Friday, Oct. 15. Gray is the coordinator of a Refugee Ministry, composed of a group of community faith-based organizations. They have been working together to assist refugee families with everything from rental assistance to food, companionship and advice with navigating the daily challenges of American life. The current focus is to provide financial assistance so that the families who have been fortunate enough to come to America can help those members of their families left behind.

Parvez Kakar and his family was able to come to America in 2017 on a special visa program for Afghans who had worked for the American government. But he says his siblings and parents are still in Afghanistan and unable to find a way out. He said he was just able to get \$200 sent to them but "that is like nothing. People ask me how they are surviving. They used to have meat, chicken, a healthy diet. Now they don't have these things — just bread, tea, sugar. And there are no jobs to support them."

Parvez says his cousin was able to get to America with his pregnant wife and two-year-old son and was sent to Quantico to be processed. But a few days ago after the vetting process was completed his cousin decided to depart the base because his cousin and wife they don't speak fluent English. They were afraid the International Organization for Migrants would send them to a far away state where they would be by themselves and life would be difficult for them.

So he is temporarily living with Kakar and his wife and three sons. "My cousin's couldn't be seen by a doctor the last 2-3 months so this was very important." But now that his cousin is here, they are finding difficulty getting the attention of a resettlement agency to provide the traditional housing, food, employment assistance and language training for incoming refugees. Kakar says despite over 100 emails and phone calls, he has not been successful in reaching Catholic Charities or the Lutheran Social Services which are designated by the American government as the

official resettlement agencies.

"My cousin and his wife need support to start a new life, a place to live and help with jobs and navigating American life. I am spending hours every day contacting organizations to search for support and I have many supportive people helping me. I will not be able to continue to support their family and my own wife and three sons," Parvez says he has found political support to be useless and has seen the financial generosity toward refugees dry up.

Letter from Melanie Gray:

Hello friends, as many of you are aware, the people remaining in Afghanistan today are facing extreme threats of violence, hunger, dehydration and death. Our Christ Church Refugee Ministry has 28 active families in Northern Virginia and over 250 family members currently in Afghanistan. Some of these families have been a part of our ministry since its inception in 2016. We have helped them establish their lives here and many consider us their American family. Many of your faith communities have hosted our community dinners and participated in our efforts in various ways through the years.

Today, our families are begging for our help. The greatest help we can give right now is to offer financial support that would enable them to send funds home that will potentially save their family members lives. Our families in our Refugee Ministry have family members who are trapped in Afghanistan. We are getting updates daily, stories of sisters being sold to the Taliban as brides, photos of family members who have been beaten, one man was shot with a bullet through his throat, another 5 year old boy had part of his arm blown off, people going from safe house to safe house, a family making it to Pakistan only to find out the Taliban is an even greater threat there. The economy in Afghanistan has collapsed and the cost of inflation has made basic needs unattainable. Their ability to survive depends on food, water, safe shelter and the ability to travel if a way to leave Afghanistan presents itself. As of yesterday the amount that can be transferred from Western Union or MoneyGram went from \$200 per week to \$5,000. We will not give up hope as we stand beside these families.

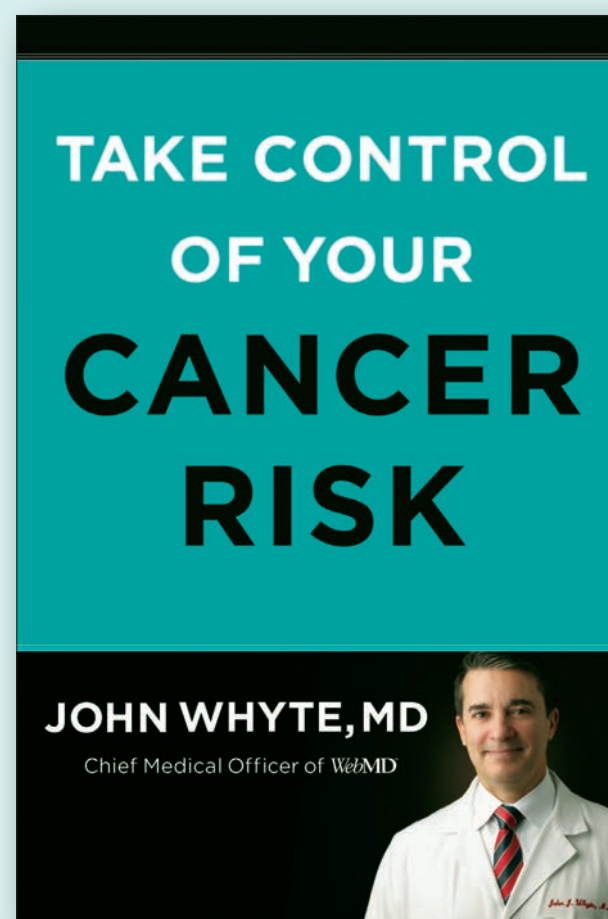
SEE PLEA FOR, PAGE 14

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This book shares straightforward information and equips you with strategies to help you on a journey to better health, including:

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You have the power to reduce your cancer risk--and this book will show you just how easy it is.

**Order this and Dr. Whyte's
other books on Amazon.com**

ALEXANDRIA CITY ELECTIONS: SCHOOL BOARD RACES

Meet the Candidates

SEE DEBORAH JEAN ASH FROM PAGE 4
productive, and contributing citizens of the United States.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

Parents are the natural and God-given authority in their children's lives to make decisions regarding their health and wellbeing. The mandatory vaccines for staff and student athletes was a poor decision taken by the school board last month. A school board is not a medical authority. Additionally, parents must have input into the curriculum being taught to their children.

Kelly Carmichael Booz DISTRICT B

Booz, the parent of two ACPS students, served on the School Board from 2013-2015. She is married to a Fairfax County public school teacher and works for the American Federation of Teachers.

Why are you running for School Board?

With our schools open full-time, we must work to ensure long-term learning and social-emotional recovery from the impact of COVID-19. When I previously served on the Alexandria School Board in 2013-2015, seven of us on the nine-member body were brand new to the board. Given the critical time we are in with school reopening, learning recovery, and other important issues impacting Alexandria, experience counts as we map the future.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

The sudden decision to remove SROs overruled security recommendations of our school-level principals and lacked sufficient community engagement. A substantive and thoughtful conversation about the role of policing in our society is essential. I want every student and staff member in ACPS to feel safe — physically and emotionally. As a school board member, I look forward to working with the new Council to re-engage on this debate and form a working group with the community to address mental health, security and systemic racism in disciplinary actions with a solution that supports our schools in the 2023 fiscal year.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The COVID-19 pandemic has been massively disruptive to our students and their learning. We need to support our teachers, focus on student success, and work with City Council on funding so we can close the learning gap and social-emotional gap that's only increased over the last year.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

Alexandria Public School students spent most of the 2020/2021 school year out of school with virtual learning. No matter how diligently students, teachers, parents and caregivers worked, the reality is we have learning and knowledge gaps to overcome. Our budget and priorities must close this learning gap with a focus on reading and math specialists, after-school tutoring, and

in-person summer learning.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

As elected officials, it's important to seek input from all stakeholders such as parents, caregivers, school leadership, teachers, support staff, students, scientists, and experts in related fields to make the most informed decision. Alexandria is an incredibly diverse community with over 122 native languages spoken at home in ACPS that we represent on the school board. As School Board members we must seek input from all voices within our community.

Tammy Ignacio DISTRICT B

Ignacio is recently retired following an extensive 30-year career in ACPS as both an educator and administrator. Her most recent position was as Lead Administrator for Special Instruction at Alexandria City High School.

What are you running for School Board?

I want all our students, families, and community to thrive in ACPS as much as my children and I have. I want to ensure all students have equitable access to programs and services and to be an active voice for all students.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I 100 percent support SROs in schools. As a 30-year educator, I have seen firsthand the positive impact of the SROs in schools and the positive relationships they form. Much of what we have seen on social media on these issues is the conflation of our local community and a larger national conversation. We have to do what is right for our community and I firmly believe SROs are a layer of support our schools need for safety. I also fully support more funding and resources for mental health. It is needed now more than ever. We value both and we can do both.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

I would say our biggest challenge today is helping our schools support our students as they are displaying more and more unsafe behaviors. Our students have returned to school after 18 months in a virtual learning setting and they have come back with many issues that we have to help them with. We have to take time to pause, stop what we are doing, and establish connections before being able to teach content.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority is and has always been the safety of our students and staff. I want to ensure that our staff can come to work ready to teach and our students ready to learn, without worrying about the next incident that could happen. I would never advocate for eliminating safety measures for mental health measures, or vice-versa. Both of these areas need to be supported and funded.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

I think that parent input and feedback is

critical. They are part of the customer base and their views are very important. That said, I believe that leaders make decisions after hearing from and consulting parents but not everyone can or will be happy with those decisions. Our teachers are the experts and they are involved in writing the curriculum in our schools. Ultimately I would say decisions would be made by the leaders after feedback is sought.

Pree Ann Johnson DISTRICT B

Johnson had a 36-year career with Alexandria Public Schools before her recent retirement as Principal of Polk Elementary School.

Why are you running for School Board?

Working with the staff, students and families in ACPS has been my lifelong career. I have experience, historical knowledge and expertise in Alexandria that makes me a good candidate for school board.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I have been actively involved in efforts to return the SROs to our schools. As a school administrator I have worked with SROs and believe that their role has been misunderstood. As newly elected board members, we will be charged with presenting data as it relates to the impact of SROs and SSOs. We will need to explore options that support relationship building, de-escalation training and increasing mental health supports in ways that result in a decrease in dangerous behaviors.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The most important issue is the physical and mental health of students, teachers, and families. Having the kids in school is definitely the right choice; however with the variants and the lack of a vaccine for younger children, we still have to be vigilant about the health and safety of the school community.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

Implementing a whole child approach to education in which children not only develop academic skills, but also the social-emotional, physical, and other cognitive skills. Also, issues of equity and creating environments that are inclusive in which every child and family feels welcome, respected and valued in their school community. We must ensure that our K-12 curriculum is preparing students for their impending future and give students the critical thinking and practical skills that guarantee their success.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

It is important that we listen to and understand the perspective of our parents in every single issue that is facing the schools. However, as we have seen over the past year or so, there will always be a variety of viewpoints in all areas including mandates, SROs, and approaches to teaching and learning. It therefore becomes the responsibility of school boards and school leadership

to listen, gather data and research the best options for the community at large.

Ricardo Roberts DISTRICT B

Roberts is a frequent participant at ACPS board meetings. He did not respond to requests.

Ashley Simpson Baird DISTRICT B

Baird, a mother of three, is a former teacher, administrator, teacher trainer, researcher and ACPS parent.

Why are you running for School Board?

Running for School Board is something that I have wanted to do ever since I was a teacher. I left the classroom 10 years ago to complete my Ph.D. because I wanted to have a greater impact on public education. I have more than 20 years of experience improving public education and I bring multiple perspectives to making decisions that would impact our schools.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

The question we need to be asking is how do we ensure that our schools are emotionally and physically safe for all students and staff. I feel strongly that Council should not unilaterally be making further decisions about future plans for school safety. That conversation has to happen with ACPS and in particular with the students and staff who are directly impacted by this on a daily basis. There are workable solutions that may include retaining SROs in a reformed program, but these solutions should be rooted in the perspectives of those directly impacted by SROs in schools.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

ACPS has experienced longstanding disparities in educational outcomes that largely fall along racial and socioeconomic lines. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these inequities. There is much to be gleaned from other school districts that have effectively closed opportunity gaps, including having a strong early literacy program, using improvement science to drive decision making, developing school leader pipelines, and strengthening our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to ensure that students receive appropriate and timely interventions.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority will be to ensure that our policy and budgetary decisions will support educators in addressing unfinished learning and providing adequate social and emotional supports.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

When students started learning from home in 2020, many parents and caregivers got a glimpse into their child's classroom experience for the first time. Consequently,

SEE MEET THE, ON PAGE 9
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ELECTIONS

SEE ASHLEY SIMPSON BAIRD FROM PAGE 8 many started paying more attention to the decisions that were being made about their child's education. I see this as an important shift and one to leverage in post-pandemic schooling. I want families to feel like their concerns are valid and their voices are heard.

Bridget Westfall DISTRICT B

Westfall is an ACPS parent and works as a grants manager at the Department of Health and Human Services, in the division for children and families.

Why are you running for School Board?

I am running for school board as an advocate for children and public schools. We need leaders who evaluate every decision with this question: Is this in the best interest of our students and our public school system? Whether you are a multi-generational Alexandrian or a new American, you are welcome here and deserve an excellent public education through safe and successful schools.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I see School Resource Officers, mental health resources and restorative justice as complimentary. I have worked as a deputy juvenile officer in K-12 public schools and that experience shapes my support of School Resource Officers. I think we need to have a community roundtable, where all voices are heard and any reforms are made, including diversity, equity, inclusion training, working with students with special education needs, students with disabilities or students of color or language learners. We also need to invest in community violence prevention programs from pre-K through 12th.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

As we enter a third year in a pandemic, transparency in school board decisions and communication with the parents and community of Alexandria City Public Schools is the most pressing issue. After 18 months in a virtual or hybrid learning environment, parents and community members want the school board and ACPS leadership to maintain open and honest lines of communication with them.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority is managing the superintendent. I value that we SEE MEET THE, ON PAGE 10

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NOV

Pictures at an Exhibition

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OCTOBER 23 | 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

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ALEXANDRIA.GOV/OPIDIDS | PREVENTITALEXANDRIA.ORG

SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

The City of Alexandria continues to remind the public that everyone is safest at home. Individuals on essential errands can drop off medication at these designated locations on October 23 or year-round at a permanent drop box location. Face coverings must be worn in indoor public settings and outdoor public locations where physical distancing requirements cannot be maintained. Please maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others.

To learn about ways to dispose of medications safely at home, visit alexandriava.gov/opioids.

Alexandria Take Back Day Drop-Off Locations*

Alexandria Police Headquarters
3600 Wheeler Ave.
First Baptist Church
2932 King St.

Alexandria Fire Station 210
5255 Eisenhower Ave.
The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray
2204 Mount Vernon Ave.

*NO NEEDLES ACCEPTED AT THESE SITES

Can't make it to Drug Take Back Day?
Dispose of medications year-round at one of these permanent drug drop box locations!

The Neighborhood Pharmacy
2204 Mount Vernon Ave.
Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Alexandria Police Headquarters
3600 Wheeler Ave.
Just inside the entrance
Available 24/7

Inova Alexandria Hospital
4320 Seminary Rd.
Visitor's Lobby
Next to the cashier's window
Daily: 1 - 5 p.m.

NEW! NEEDLE DISPOSAL BOX
ALSO AVAILABLE AT THIS LOCATION!



SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

Meet the Candidates

SEE BRIDGET WESTFALL FROM PAGE 9

have a hometown leader that our students can look up to and our superintendent's professional accomplishments. I will treat him with the utmost respect and professionalism and have a collaborative, performance management framework to manage the superintendent. At the same time, I think that the current board did not manage the superintendent as far as planning and implementation in the pandemic.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

I see parent voices as important partners in public education. We need more ways for parents and caregivers to provide input, especially parents who are often not represented in the discussions. We have a large international population and language learners, who might not be familiar with the democratic process. We need more opportunities for families to have real partnerships with the school.

DISTRICT C

Meagan Alderton
DISTRICT C

First elected in 2018, Alderton currently serves as the ACPS board chair. She is a spe-

cial education teacher and previously taught at George Washington Middle School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School and Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School.

Why are you running for School Board?

We have spent the past three years moving forward with our 2025 Strategic plan which is centered around racial equity. In 2025, our conversations about over-identification of students of color in special-education, improved literacy instruction in grades K-4, graduation rates for Hispanic males, and access to Talented and Gifted programs and Honors courses for students of color should look different.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

Last year, I voted to maintain the MOU with the Alexandria Police Department and I stand by that vote. While I understand the intent of those who do not support SROs in schools, good SRO programs actually work to keep students out of the criminal justice system. Relationships with highly trained police officers are critical to that work. As someone trained in Crisis Prevention, policing is a behavior that is not unique to the policing profession. We need to address racist practices in all of our institutions if we are going to get the change that we desire.

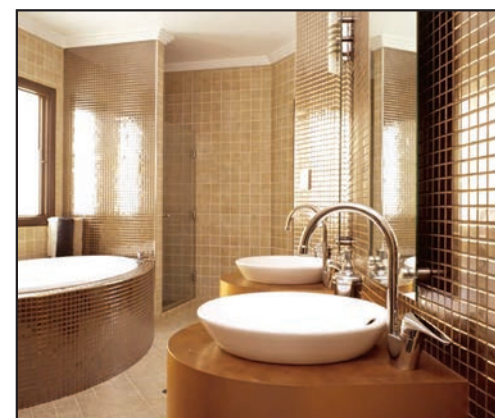
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Off the Menu: Restaurant News and Notes

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

A new Indian restaurant comes to town, oysters take the main stage and a beloved restaurant owner asks for some assistance – there's no shortage of goings-on in Alexandria's dining circles.

Kismet Modern Indian Nears Opening Day

Indian-cuisine fans, unite: The grand opening for Kismet Modern Indian isn't too far away. The restaurant, which will open in the former BurgerFi (and, before that, Pat Troy's) location at 111 North Pitt St.,

is ramping up the excitement on its social media channels.

Just this week, the restaurant posted, "It won't be long now! The finishing touches are coming together and the team is getting ready for opening day." Stay tuned for when Chef Ajay Kumar and team will open the eatery's doors to a hungry public.

Lori's Table Asks for Help

It's no surprise that the covid-19 pandemic has done a number on local businesses, and restaurants have certainly felt the blow, time and time again. Lori Feeley-Leetz, the owner of Lori's Table, has reached out to the community for a hand amid a need for repairs



Kismet Modern Indian, opening soon.

and improvements at her restaurant, known for its breakfast and lunch specialties.

Via her GoFundMe page, Feeley-Leetz writes, in part, "Small businesses like mine are very tenuous.

I don't have a lot of cash reserves to cover expenses for repairs and upkeep for the shop. Many small businesses will go and some have already closed their doors forever. I cannot let Lori's Table be one of these places. It's getting tougher and tougher to keep up with all those expenses." To contribute, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/loris-table-needs-a-hand>.

The Old Town Oyster Festival Rolls On

Adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay as Alexandria is, it's only right that the city celebrate Oyster Week. More than a dozen local restaurants, ranging from Chadwicks to the Wharf to Union Street Public House to Landini Brothers and more, are taking part in the festivities, which run through Oct. 24. Expect oyster and Guinness pairings throughout the week, with the proceeds going to the Oyster Recovery Partnership.

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.

PHOTOS: KISMET FACEBOOK

CALENDAR

NOW THRU OCT. 30

In the "Expanding the Common Ground: Voices of the Global Majority" art exhibit, themes of people of the global majority reflecting, celebrating, and claiming power over oppression are explored, as well as finding common ground and healing divides. View exhibit at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays 12-6 p.m., and Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

NOW THRU OCT. 31

Ghost & Graveyard Tour. 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays additional tours at 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 per adult; \$14 for seniors, military and law enforcement; \$10 per child. Tour departs from Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King St., Alexandria. Follow an 18th-century costumed guide by lantern light through the charming streets of Alexandria's historic district known as Old Town. On this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends and folklore. You will also hear about unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Appropriate for ages 9 and up. Visit alexcolonialtours.com

NOW THRU OCT. 31

St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch. 12 to 5 p.m. At St. Luke's Episcopal, 8009 Fort Hunt Road, Alexan-



Jane Franklin Dance presents Climate on Sunday, Oct. 24, 2021 at The Athenaeum.

dria. Pick up pumpkin bread, soup and pumpkins, and gourds galore. Proceeds support the Navajo Nation who grow our pumpkins and youth and outreach programs. Pumpkins priced by size. Pumpkin bread and soup \$5. Great prices on decorative pumpkins and gourds of all types. Saturdays 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Sundays Noon - 7 p.m. Mon - Thurs 3 - 7 p.m., Fri 1 - 7 p.m. through Halloween or until they sell out.

THURSDAY/OCT. 21

Halloween Ball and Anniversary Celebration at Barkhaus. 7:30 to 10 p.m. At Barkhaus, 529 E Howell Ave, Alexandria. Celebrate Barkhaus's first birthday with a Halloween ball. Guests will dress formally and add their own Halloween twists to their costumes. Dogs are encouraged to dress up as well. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, puppuccinos for dogs, a limit-

ed-edition Barkhaus anniversary shirt and more. Admission: \$75 per person. Visit the website: brewskisbarkhaus.com

NOW THRU NOV. 6

"Wait Until Dark." 8 p.m. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Set against the socially turbulent 1960s, "Wait Until Dark" follows the story of Suzy, a blind woman who, while left alone in her apartment, becomes

embroiled with a group of con men hatching an elaborate scam. As the tension mounts, Suzy must fend for herself, but the phone line is cut, and the house is plunged into darkness. Can Suzy outwit her murderous visitors? Note: All patrons are required to wear a mask (even if vaccinated) for the duration of the performance. Admission: \$21 to \$24 per person. Visit the website: thelittletheatre.com

FRIDAYS IN OCTOBER 22, 29

Spirits of Carlyle House. 6-8:30 p.m. At Carlyle House, Alexandria. Carlyle House's long and diverse history is full of truths, myths, and rumours that makes it one of the most visited places on Alexandria's ghost tours. Come and experience a haunting tour of the house and grounds by candlelight, perhaps encounter the departed spirits of notable residents and neighbors, and hear their tales of sadness and triumph. This program is being put on in partnership with the Little Theater of Alexandria. Reservations required due to limited space. Tours are on the half hour.

OCT. 22, 23, 29, 30

Grief & Ghost Tour at Lee-Fendall House. At 7, 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Celebrate Halloween with a look at Victorian mourning

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

Obituary

Obituary



Lilly Lubsen
July 20th, 1925 – September 22nd, 2021

Born in Brooklyn, NY, Lilly moved to Alexandria, VA in 1952 with her husband Walter H. Lubsen Sr. She is survived by her daughter, Diane Lubsen Pellenberg of Morris Plains, NJ and son, Walter H. (Chip) Lubsen Jr. of Oak Hill, VA, Son-in-Law, Charles Pellenberg, Daughter-in-Law, Laurie Lubsen, five Grandchildren, and two Great Grandchildren. Lilly was Secretary to the Principal at TC Williams High School from the day the school opened in 1965 until her retirement in 1987. She worked with four Principals during that time. She truly loved her job. While visiting her daughter in New Jersey, Lilly passed comfortably, with her family at her bedside, at the age of 96. She will be laid to rest with her husband and parents, Rose and Adolph Miller, at the Ivy Hill Cemetery in Alexandria, VA.

Legals

Legals



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
City of Alexandria

The Alexandria City Council is seeking applicants to fill the eight vacancies for the Independent Community Policing Review Board. These will be the inaugural appointments for this newly approved board.

The purpose of this Alexandria Independent Community Policing Review Board is to enhance policing legitimacy and to increase and maintain trust between and among the police department, city council, city manager, and the public.

City Council intends to take final action on appointments to the inaugural Independent Community Policing Review Board at the December 18, 2021 City Council meeting.

All applicants must complete a Personal Data Record form electronically via the City's website at www.alexandriava.gov/Boards no later than 5:00 p.m., November 12, 2021. Applications received after this deadline will not be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

The following vacancies are available for the inaugural appointment for the Independent Community Policing Review Board:

- Three members from historically, racially, or socially marginalized communities that have commonly experienced disparate policing in Alexandria or in the Commonwealth of Virginia, who will initially serve an 18-month term.
- One member who represents an organization, office, or agency that seeks racial or social justice or that otherwise advocates on behalf of historically, racially, or socially marginalized communities, particularly communities that may have experienced disparate policing, who will serve a three-year term.
- Three at-large members, who will serve a 3-year term.
- One nonvoting, ex-officio member who shall have past experiences in law enforcement. This member shall not have been previously employed as a law enforcement officer within the City of Alexandria, shall not be a current employee of or an immediate family member of a current employee of a law enforcement agency and shall be at least three years honorably removed from service, who will serve a three-year term.

Applicants who meet the criteria for more than one seat on the Community Policing Review Board may indicate this on their application and will be considered for each seat for which they qualify. This is a volunteer board so its members do not receive compensation except for travel and training reimbursement.

The seven voting members of the Board shall be residents of the City of Alexandria and shall demonstrate fairness, integrity, and objectivity. Board members will be chosen on the basis of expertise and personal experience relevant to the performance of the duties of the Board, including lived experience.

Information on the inaugural Independent Community Policing Review Board can be found on the City's website. Community members interested in applying for the Board may direct questions to Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager, at debra.collins@alexandriava.gov.

Applicants must comply with City Ordinance No. 2452, which states that no appointee shall reside outside of the City of Alexandria unless a residency waiver is granted by Council, and City Ordinance No. 2641, which states that City employees may not apply for vacancies on boards, commissions, and committees that relate to the responsibilities of the department in which they are employed.

For further information or responsibilities of boards, commissions, and committees, contact Gloria Sitton, City Clerk and Clerk of Council (Executive Secretary of Boards and Commissions) at 703.746.4550.

Gloria A. Sitton, CMC
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11
traditions coupled with stories of tragic deaths and mysterious occurrences at the Lee-Fendall House. Customs such as draping the mirrors after a death, funeral practices, hair mementos, mourning clothing and séances will be explored. These tours offer a rare opportunity to see the house after dark. Tour groups will be limited to 10 participants and tickets must be purchased in advance. Face masks are required. Admission: \$15 per person. Visit leefendallhouse.org

FRIDAY/OCT. 22

Tell Me Your Name. 5 p.m. At Carlyle House, Alexandria. Join Carlyle House Historic Park staff for a tour focusing on the experiences of the enslaved community at Carlyle House and his plantations. The guided tour will explore the historical context of slavery in 18th century Alexandria and the importance of ongoing research efforts to connect with descendants. Reservations are required as space is limited. Call 703-549-2997 or email carlyle@nvrpa.org Tickets https://apm.activecommunities.com/novaparks/Activity_Search/4694

Japanese Garden Concert. 5-6 p.m. Friday/Oct. 22. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Don your silks and pearls for a benefit concert in support of concerts and artists in the transformed Secret Garden. Cost is \$55. The Japanese Garden Gala follows from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

The Thirteen Concert. 7:30 p.m. At Episcopal High School, Alexandria. Friday/Oct. 22 Following performances of Monteverdi's The Lost Vespers I and The Lost Mass, join The Thirteen's peerless singers and period instrumentalists for Monteverdi: The Lost Vespers II in a concert replete with artistry, elegance, and exploration.

SATURDAY/OCT. 23

Old Town Trick or Treat by Old Town Business Association. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Bring your little ghouls and goblins to historic Old Town Alexandria for tricks and treats from your favorite boutiques and restaurants. Check the event website for more details and a trick or treat map. Visit the website: oldtownbusiness.org

SATURDAY/OCT. 23

Garden Talk: Tips on Growing Beautiful Bulbs. 10:30-11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adults) Now is the time to plant bulbs for bright, beautiful color next spring. Learn about a variety of beautiful bulbs from Extension Master Gardeners and how to plant and care for them. \$12 per person. Register online at www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 9FED6G5.

OCT. 23-24

Fall Harvest Festival at Mount Vernon. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Celebrate the crisp autumn season with 18th-century activities and demonstrations at

the Farm at Mount Vernon. During this event, you can explore the farm, meet General Washington, watch beer-making demonstrations, see spinning demonstrations and more. This event is included with admission and is free for Mount Vernon members. Admission: \$28 per adult; \$15 per youth; free for children five and under and for members. Visit mountvernon.org.

OCT. 23-24

Santa Paws Photos. 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. At the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Join the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and a team of photographers for Pet Photos with Santa Paws, taking place at the AWLA's Holiday Studio at Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. All species are welcome. Pre-registration is required. Sign up your pets at AlexandriaAnimals.org/SantaPaws. Cost: \$50. Website: AlexandriaAnimals.org/SantaPaws

SUNDAY/OCT. 24

8th Annual Doggie Trick or Treat. 1 to 5 p.m. Meet at The Dog Park, 705 King St., Alexandria. Bring your costume-clad four-legged friends to historic Old Town Alexandria for tricks and treats from your favorite boutiques. Winners receive gift cards from The Dog Park in three different categories. Visit the website: thedogparkva.biz

Del Ray Halloween Parade. 2 p.m. Sunday/Oct. 24. Parade begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray's annual Halloween Parade begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte, and continues down to the Mount Vernon Recreation Center play fields. Children, pets and strollers in costumes are invited to march and show off their finest and scariest Halloween garb; awards are given for Best Pet Costume, Best Decorated Business, Best Decorated Home and Best Decorated Stroller. visitdelray.com/halloween

SUNDAY/OCT. 24

Climate. 5-6 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Featuring Jane Franklin Dance with Philip Baraoidan, Lauren DeVera, Carly Johnson, Kelsey Rohr, Amy Scaringe, Brynna Wilder. Music Steven Rogers, Jon Matis, Heather Figi
Choreography Rob Priore, Jane Franklin. Tickets \$20. Visit <https://janefranklin.com/climate>

OCT. 28 AND 30

Poems and Stories of Edgar Allen Poe at Ivy Hill Cemetery. 7 to 8 p.m. Tour begins at the Ivy Hill Cemetery Office, 2823 King St., Alexandria. "Even in the grave, all is not lost!" The Guillotine Theatre presents "Poe outside the Vault" at Ivy Hill Cemetery. Actors from Guillotine Theatre will read from the works of Edgar Allan Poe. This is a sell-out event in a most suitable atmosphere. Seating is limited. RSVP to info@IHCHPS.org. Admission is \$20. Visit the website: ivyhillcemetery.net

THURSDAY/OCT. 28

Fashion Show Fundraiser. 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Country Club, 5111 Old Mill Road, Alexandria. The Yacht Haven

Garden Club is presenting its 37th annual Fashion Show and Luncheon - Bewitched, Bothered and Bedazzled. Fashions will be provided by Bloomingdale's Tysons Corner. Tickets are \$50. Make checks payable to YHGC and mail to Rhea Killinger at 510 Tennessee Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305. For more information, email: rgkmsbell@hotmail.com.

OCT. 29-31

Boos & Booze at Café 44. At Café 44, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 401, Alexandria. Café 44 is hosting its annual Boos & Booze Halloween event featuring themed craft cocktails and treats. Costumes (and reservations) are encouraged for this weekend-long riverside soirée featuring themed craft cocktails and treats. Visit cafe44.com

SATURDAY/OCT. 30

Yoga 101. 9 a.m. Enjoy an introduction to yoga, the "equipment," and basic poses in a relaxed, outdoor setting on the Carlyle House Magnolia Terrace! No experience necessary or required. \$10. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yoga-101-tickets-143386303293>

Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon. 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday/Oct. 30. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Celebrate Halloween with 18th-century entertainment and activities. Visit Mount Vernon in costume, watch Halloween-themed Punch & Judy shows, see 18th-century chocolate-making demonstrations and more. Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon takes place rain or shine. Admission: General public: \$25 per adult; \$15 per youth; Members: \$17 per adult; \$9 per youth. Visit the website: mountvernon.org

Fall Frolic at Lee-Fendall House. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Hourly sessions occur from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m. Saturday/Oct. 30. Admission: \$15 per person. Enjoy some seasonal family fun in the garden of the Lee-Fendall House during the Fall Frolic. Put on your Halloween costumes and join in on activities catered to children ages 3-12. Activities include a "ghost" hunt, crafts and a costume parade. Timed tickets must be purchased in advance. Visit the website: leefendallhouse.org

Nightmare at Barkhaus. 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday/Oct. 30, At Barkhaus, 529 E Howell Ave, Alexandria. Visit Barkhaus for the dog bar's annual costume contest. Enjoy spooky food and drink specials and send your costumed four-legged-friend down the dog runway in pursuit of prizes. Visit the website: brewskis-barkhaus.com

SUNDAY/OCT. 31

Trick or Treat at Carlyle House. 4 to 6 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Join Carlyle House on All Hallow's Eve for good old-fashioned trickery and treats. Bring your little ghosts, goblins, princesses and action heroes to one of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings. Carlyle House staff will be handing out candy in individual bags. In case of inclement weather please call the museum for event status. Visit novaparks.com/parks/carlyle-house-historic-park

ELECTIONS

SEE MEAGAN ALDERTON FROM PAGE 10
It literally takes a village, and our police officers are an active part of that equation.

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

Over the next few years, academic and social-emotional recovery are going to be our most important focus. We had the data prior to the pandemic that showed us the pervasive opportunity gaps that impacted our students with disabilities, our English language learners and our students of color. COVID has put an even larger lens on these issues. Capacity will continue to be a challenge. We need to be creative in our approach in acquiring additional space for more schools in the city, while also expanding existing sites as much as we are able to.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

I will work to ensure that we achieve our strategic goals and that our students exceed our expectations for academic and social-emotional growth. I will also be diligent about our modernization projects by making sure that our CIP meets our current and future needs.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

Parents are stakeholders and their input should always be welcomed into the decision-making process. Those channels for communication and input should always be open and structured to increase engagement across all types of families including our immigrant families, who may feel ostracized from the process due to language and cultural barriers.

Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi DISTRICT C

Elnoubi is the child of immigrants from Alexandria, Egypt. He is a project manager for the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority and father to two ACPS students. He has served as PTA president and is running for School Board to help ACPS students have the opportunity that he did to "achieve the American Dream."

Elnoubi's complete responses were not received prior to publication.

Christopher Harris DISTRICT C

Why are you running for School Board?

ACPS provided me with a quality education, opportunities to build relationships, and prepared

SEE MEET THE, ON PAGE 14

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Obituary

Obituary



Jean Janice Gibson Wiggins, 87, of Alexandria, VA, passed away on October 12th, 2021, after a brief illness. Jean was born on January 16th, 1934, to the late John Payne and Isadore Gibson of Alexandria, VA. In 1960, she met the love of her life Fred Wiggins. They later married on October 7th, 1961, in Alexandria, VA, and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Jean is predeceased in death by her parents John and Isadore; brothers James "Gip" and Theodore "Plunky"; Sisters Rebecca "Betty" and Oskie "Lois"; and daughter Shauna Marie. Left to cherish her memory are her devoted husband Fred Douglas Wiggins; Daughter Lori (Elliott); Stepdaughter Clara; grandchildren Edina (William) and Eric; great grandchildren Ayden, William (Buzzie), Madden, Virginia; devoted nieces who were like daughters, Stephanie Mitchell and Tamesha Williams. As well as a host of nieces and nephews; a special daughter Ethel Alston and her Best Friend of over 60 years, Geneva Hayward.

Her Celebration of Life will be held on Friday October 22, 2021 at First Baptist Church Alexandria, Virginia 2932 King St. Alexandria, VA 22302 Viewing is 11am-1pm; Service 1pm. <https://www.everlywheatley.com/tributes/Jean-Wiggins>

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Hardly the Same Thing

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



It may not have been the miracle I was hoping for: shrinkage or tumor disappearance, from my most recent diagnostic scans but no growth and/or new metastases is nothing to be taken for granted. However, I did experience a miracle of sorts when the envelope I received at home from the "State of Maryland, Maryland SafeZones Automated Speed Enforcement" authority specifying and picturing yours truly exceeding the speed limit by 12 mph was for information purposes only. It was not an invoice. It was a warning. And the \$40 fine associated with this kind of infraction was left on the cutting room floor. Perhaps this is the extent of the miracle that Solange was able to perform when she prayed for me and my burned feet - and thyroid cancer, on July 20 in the Houston airport. Though this outcome was not exactly the delusional outcome I was hoping for, when we consented to her extremely kind offer to pray for me. Nevertheless, a win is a win. And though a shrinking/disappearing cancer tumor would have been an amazing - albeit unlikely outcome, the tumors remained "stable" and I saved a \$40 outlay. On balance, not a bad day's work.

For which I am extremely grateful. Soon after I entered the cancer-patient world, I learned that any not-automatically-bad news - whether internally or externally to that world, should be acknowledged and appreciated. Any port in a storm you might say. Moreover, I always sought to find the positive in this sea of negativity. Whatever I could see - through any rose-colored glasses I could find, served its purpose to emotionally support me for the many long and lonely nights that followed. Certainly, there's family and friends to help share the burden brought on by a "terminal" diagnosis, but at the end of the day, literally, it's sort of you and your thoughts. Finding a way to navigate this minefield of unpredictable results and anxiety is paramount. On the one hand, you can't take what the doctors and radiologists say as seriously as a cancer diagnosis obviously is, but neither can you pretend that you're not in the fight of your life. That being said, one must be open to new ideas and unexpected offers. Filtering and interpreting whether any of the suggestions made by your doctors and/or your well-meaning friends and family becomes your lot in life. And it's an awful lot at that.

Still, a cancer diagnosis is not nearly the death sentence as it used to be for the previous generation. Though it may be naive to characterize a cancer diagnosis as an opportunity, nevertheless unceasing research in a variety of hospital/cancer centers, medical schools, clinical trials, pharmaceutical companies and the like have led to an evolution in the treatment in cancer, particularly non small cell lung cancer which is the type of cancer I was originally diagnosed with in late Feb., 2009. (Though I am now being treated for papillary thyroid cancer as you regular readers know. As to whether I ever had lung cancer, the jury is still out, not literally.)

And since I have an incurable form of thyroid cancer, as written about numerous times in this space, I am forever open to new experiences that might create a path forward for me. The underlying problem in my situation is the odd circumstances that ultimately led to my more recent diagnosis. Since I had years of heavy-duty chemotherapy while treating my presumptive lung cancer, I have suffered kidney damage which only manifests itself in lab work and in what medications/treatment I can be given. As such when I went to the hospital after my thyroidectomy for post-surgical eradication of the remaining thyroid cancer that the surgeon was unable to remove, the dose of nuclear isotopes I was given was only one-third the dose it should have been had I not been so previously chemotherapy-damaged. As a result, I'm sort of stuck. I have a usually curable type of thyroid cancer which is now considered incurable. The solution? I need to find a clinical trial for patients who have been treated for lung cancer for nine years, perhaps mistakenly, suffered irreparable kidney damage from those years of toxicity, who now has been diagnosed with thyroid cancer and who is now unable to process the medicine likely to cure him and thus is: incurable.

You bet I need a miracle, and sooner rather than later. Maybe I should fly back to Houston.

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

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SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

Meet the Candidates

SEE CHRISTOPHER HARRIS FROM PAGE 13

me to support my children when they matriculated through the system. It is my desire to support the planning and implementation of policies and practices that focus on the individualized needs of students, parents, teachers, and support staff.

Do you support having School Resource Officers in schools? Why or why not?

I believe that police do not belong in schools as there is data that supports their presence has been detrimental to black and brown students.

There is data to show the criminalization of students of color and their practices in the name of safety contribute to the school to prison pipeline. Safety of students will require a multidimensional approach that involves healthy school climates, financial resources, mental health support, engaging leadership, relationship building, and increased student and community control. I am open to a community conversation involving all concerned parties to determine the best way forward prior to any final decisions.

Plea for Refugee Assistance

FROM PAGE 13

Our goal is to raise \$39,200 by Oct. 30, 2021. This would provide \$1,400 per family for November rent, thereby enabling them to send funds home.

Ways to give:

ONLINE: <https://bit.ly/HelpRefugeeFamilies>
Checks payable to Christ Church, Refugee

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

one of the following Farmers' Markets: Dates available: 10/30, 11/6, Nov TBD.
Del Ray Farmers' Market: 10/30
Old Town Farmers' Market: 11/6
Visit the website: <https://www.alxjffss.org/>

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

ACPS- Help Provide Meals to Children
Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) will provide two days worth of breakfast and lunch meals with a snack pack free for any enrolled ACPS student on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Friday distribution will include a meal(s) for Saturday. Volunteers will meet at various schools to assist with packing boxes and loading buses with boxed meals. Then, volunteers will ride the bus along to distribute the meals while on site at a few ACPS mobile pop-up locations. Click on each location to sign up: Francis C. Hammond Middle School, TC Williams High School, or Jefferson Houston School. www.volunteeral-alexandria.org
Alexandria Dept. of Community and Human Services-
Volunteer Guardian
Looking for individuals who can assure the well-being of an incapacitated Alexandrian living in an Assisted Living Facility or Nursing Facility. Volunteer Guardians are appointed by the Court to make decisions for older Alexandria residents who have lost the capacity to understand the consequences of their decisions. The volunteer will visit the resident monthly and follow the person's wishes as much as

What is the biggest challenge facing ACPS?

The biggest challenge facing ACPS currently is school climate and ensuring students, parents, and the ACPS workforce have the adequate resources to support academics and socio-emotional needs of each other.

If elected, what will be your top priority?

My top priority is to learn and govern with integrity. As I progress and evolve in the position, I anticipate my top priorities will change.

What role/input, if any, do you believe parents should have in decisions such as vaccine mandates, SROs and curriculum?

As a school board member I perceive parents as our partners and believe they should always have input in regard to decisions that will affect their children.

I believe in the safety of vaccinations and want to ensure that our staff, students, and the community are all as healthy as we can be. It is also my belief that vaccinations are a personal choice and that individuals/families should be allowed to make that very personal choice without being mandated.

Ministry in the memo line, 118 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Your prayers are needed.

Please share this with others who may be interested in donating or joining us.

Onward and Upward,
Melanie Gray, MSW

Director of Outreach & Mission, Christ Church Alexandria mgray@calex.org

possible. www.volunteeral-alexandria.org
Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors
The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. www.volunteer-alexandria.org

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeral-alexandria.org>

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriend-A-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil (Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) at 703-324-4547.



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Eddington Terrace | \$1,795,000

Beautifully presented center-hall colonial featuring a soaring two-story entry, gracious living and dining rooms, center island kitchen adjoining the family room, this house simply flows in harmony with everyday life! Patio and gardens for outdoor living. 609 Oakley Place
Kate Patterson 703.627.2166
www.KatePattersonHomes.com



OPEN SUN 10/24, 2-4PM

Arlington | \$1,050,000

3-bedroom, 3.5-bath fabulous turnkey home in the sought-after Country Club subdivision! Completely renovated home features a chef's kitchen complete with pristine marble countertops, tons of pantry space. Private, fully-fenced backyard. 4766 26th Street N.
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



OPEN SAT 10/23 & SUN 10/24, 2-4PM

Rosemont | \$794,900

Charming townhome has been renovated from top to bottom featuring beautiful wood floors, gleaming kitchen, 2 awesome bathrooms, gorgeous rec room, new HVAC systems, professionally landscaped front and rear yards & much more! 105 Commonwealth Ave.
Julian Burke 703.867.4219
www.JulianBurke.com



OPEN SUN 10/24, 1-3PM

Sherwood Hall | \$699,900

Spacious 4-bedroom, 3-bath split level! Hardwood floors throughout with primary bedroom boasting en-suite bath & walk-in closet. Lower level second living room with bedroom & full bath. Enjoy entertaining outdoors on your beautiful deck! 7816 Oaklawn Drive
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Hollin Hall Area | \$650,000

Totally renovated in 2021! Gourmet kitchen, new baths, brand new inside. Full basement includes rec room, full bath and tons of storage. Located on cul-de-sac. Nice yard and deck. One-car carport + driveway parking. Two exterior storage sheds. 2202 Kilt Court
Vicki Binkley 703.994.0778
Phyllis Sintay 703.472.3563



Runnymede | \$565,000

This 3 level, 3-bedroom townhome stands above the rest. Remodeled in 2008 with main level hardwood floors, 2 fireplaces, kitchen with island and stainless steel appliances, finished lower level, sealed attic, new patio, garage, and much more. 5907 Ambassador Way
Bob Johnson 703.822.1550
www.BobJohnsonRealty.com



Sunnyside \$762,000

Sparkling townhouse with loads of light! 3 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths, wood floors, walk-out lower level rec room, storage and garage. 2020 HVAC and newer systems throughout. Well located with easy access to all your favorite places. 505 Shorter Lane

Vici Boguess 703.447.2829
www.BBZgroup.com



Stonegate \$665,000

Located on a quiet, tree-lined street, this lovely 4-level home has 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths, a large living room, dining area, eat-in kitchen, family room area, deck and 2-car garage. Minutes from shopping, dining, recreation, I-395, airport, & Old Town. Bus stops just outside! 4661 Kirkland Place

Monika Edwards Harrison 703.472.8014
www.MonikaHarrison.com



OPEN SUN 10/24, 2-4PM

Kingstowne \$474,900

3-bedroom, 2.5-bath townhome with 3 finished levels. Features include an updated kitchen, hardwood floors throughout the main level, a wood-burning fireplace & a large deck with views of the trees. Close to shops & restaurants as well as 2 Metro stations. 6115 Liverpool Lane

Wendy Santantonio 703.625.8802
www.WendySantantonio.com

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