

# Alexandria Gazette Packet

25 CENTS

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JANUARY 6, 2022



PHOTO BY DENISE PALMIERI

King Street in Old Town Jan. 3.



JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

A maintenance crew works to remove a fallen tree on Quay Street Jan. 4.



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN ANTONELLI

Alexandria engine 209 maneuvers through the snow on Mount Ida Avenue in Del Ray during the snowstorm of Jan. 3. Up to a foot of snow fell in the Northern Virginia region with thousands still without power as of Wednesday morning.

## Locals Among Those Stranded on I95 During Snowstorm

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**I**t was too good to last. The unseasonably warm temperatures over the holidays gave way to the first snowstorm of the year Jan. 3, blanketing the region with up to a foot of snow and leaving hundreds of thousands without power as the weight of the precipitation brought down tree limbs and power lines across the city.

Nearly 400,000 households in Virginia were without power on Monday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.US. As of Wednesday afternoon, Dominion Energy was still working to restore power to 122 homes in Alexandria.

As residents and business owners began digging out of the deluge, some were still stuck on Interstate 95 as they tried to make their way home.

"I feel like I was being held hostage by VDOT," said Jeanne Jacob, who was stranded for 18 hours just north of Fredericksburg as she and her husband Jerry were returning from a trip to Florida. "There was no leadership from the top. Governor [Ralph] Northam and VDOT were totally unprepared and not in control of this situation. They used no common sense to get people out of there."

According to Virginia State Police, a tractor trailer jackknifed on the interstate north of Richmond early Monday morning, triggering a chain reaction as other vehicles lost control.



JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

A fallen tree on Quay Street in Old Town Jan. 3.

"Everybody was stuck trying to get off the exits," said Frank Fannon, who spent more than five hours trying to return to Alexandria. "Some buses and trucks could not make it up the inclines and ended up blocking the exits so no one could leave the interstate."

Lanes in both directions became blocked across a 50-mile stretch of I-95, but according to Jacob, there were no notifications to travelers on the situation either via roadway signs, emergency alerts or traffic broadcasts.

"North of Richmond we saw a sign that said there was an 'incident,' not accident, at exit 151," Jacob said. "This was Monday afternoon. After that, there was nothing despite traffic being at a

complete standstill from outside Fredericksburg. When there was enough cell service to receive text messages, friends from home were trying to keep us informed but by then we were beyond where we could exit the highway."

Jacob grew frustrated as she saw the I95 express lanes cleared but unopened to vehicles.

"I called 911 and let the dispatcher know the situation – that the express lanes were clear and could VDOT please get them open," Jacob said. "The response was that VDOT would not open the express lanes, so they sat there empty, cleared of snow, all night long."

As evening descended, motorists began checking on other travelers.



JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Susan Medina enjoys the snow in Four Mile Run Park with 18-month-old Elan Medina.

"One man from Vermont put on his skis and was out checking to see if people were okay," Jacob said. "People were walking their dogs and taking their kids out of the car in the freezing cold as they went to the bathroom on the side of the road. Everyone knew they were in a pickle and tried to make the best of it but everyone was angry – 'Where are the snowplows? Why don't they open up the ex-

press lanes?' This was a massive breakdown in service by the Commonwealth and absolutely inexcusable."

Jacob said that around midnight, with no information and traffic still ground to a halt, motorists turned off their engines and tried to get some sleep. The first sign of relief came early Tuesday morning when news helicopters began circling

SEE LOCALS AMONG, ON PAGE 4





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# Redrawing the Lines

Alexandria to have one senator and three House members.

For many years, advocates for redistricting reform clamored for a nonpartisan commission to draw political maps that respected jurisdictional boundaries and communities of interest. After a bipartisan commission ended in deadlock, the Supreme Court of Virginia may have handed over the nonpartisan map that advocates wanted all along — a set of maps for the House of Delegates and state Senate that make much more sense when compared to city boundaries and county lines. Home addresses of incumbent members were not considered.

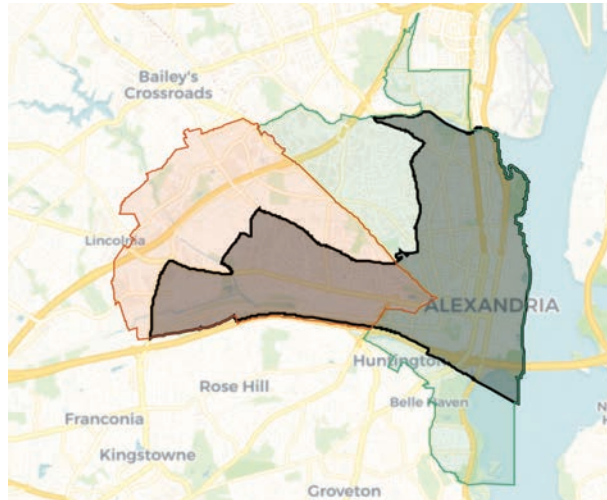
“They kind of let the chips fall where they may,” said Mark Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. “What they’ve created are remarkably compact and contiguous districts, which is the constitutional standard, without regard to incumbency status and who’s likely to keep their seat or who’s likely to lose it.”

Alexandria will be gaining a new delegate and losing two senators. If he is elected to the newly created House District 3, Alfonso Lopez will be joining the Alexandria delegation representing Chinquapin Village and Parkfairfax. Meanwhile, Alexandria will be saying goodbye to two senators, Dick Saslaw and George Barker, both of whom live in districts that no longer include Alexandria. The new Senate map has all of Alexandria in one Senate district, which would be represented by Adam Ebbin if he’s elected to the newly created Senate District 39.

“It shows you how messed up the maps were to start with that the new maps are so different from the old ones,” said Stephen Farnsworth, director of the Center for Leadership and Media Studies at the University of Mary Washington. “This current line-drawing system is undoing the damage of the incumbent protection acts that have been passed by Democratic and Republican majorities.”

Many members are now in districts with other incumbents. In Fairfax County, Dick Saslaw and Dave Marsden will now live in the same Senate district, as will Janet Howell and Jennifer Boysko.

The House delegation in Fairfax County has several paired members: Kathleen Murphy and Rip Sullivan; Kaye Kory and Marcus Simon; Eileen Filler-Corn and



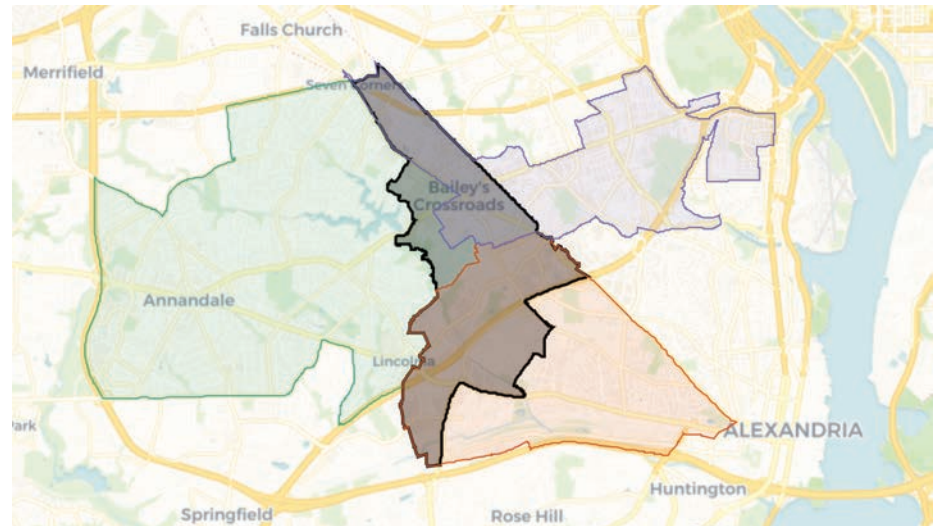
SOURCE: VIRGINIA PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

**The new House District 5, soon to be represented by Delegate-elect Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, incorporates 50,000 voters**

If she is elected to the new 5th House District, Delegate-elect Elizabeth Bennett-Parker would represent Old Town and Del Ray as well as Potomac Yard and the Duke Street corridor into Cameron Station.



from old 45th District (shown in green), currently represented by Del. Mark Levine. It also picked up 23,000 voters from the old 46th District (shown in red), currently represented by Del. Charniele Herring.



SOURCE: VIRGINIA PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

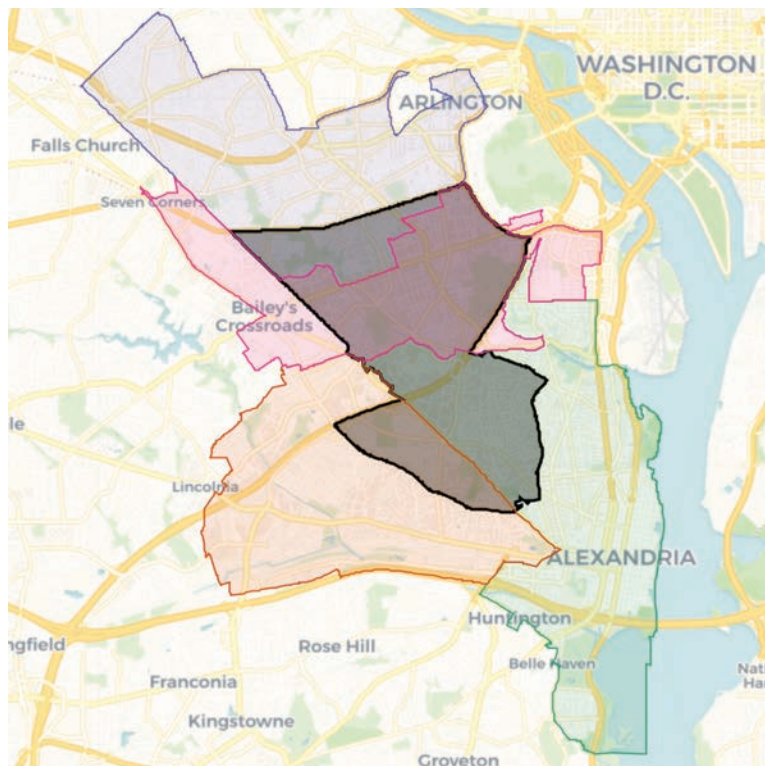
**The new House District 4, currently represented by Del. Charniele Herring, incorporates 44,000 voters from the old 46th District (shown in red). It also picked up 19,000 voters from the old 49th District (shown in purple), currently represented by Del. Alfonso Lopez, as well as 7,000 voters from the old 38th District (shown in green), currently represented by Del. Kaye Kory.**

If she is elected to the new 4th House District, Del. Charniele Herring will represent the West End of Alexandria and Bailey's Crossroads in Fairfax County.



**“It shows you how messed up the maps were to start with that the new maps are so different from the old ones.”**

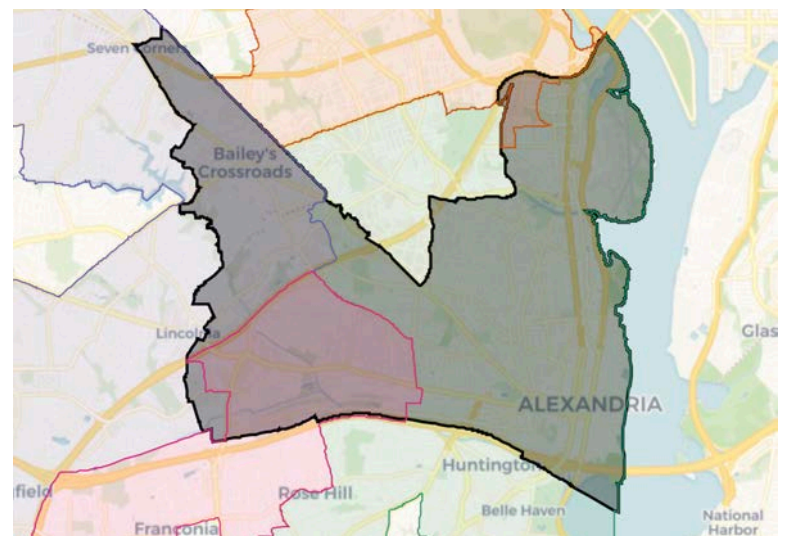
— Stephen Farnsworth, director of the Center for Leadership and Media Studies at the University of Mary Washington



SOURCE: VIRGINIA PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

**The new House District 3, currently represented by Del. Alfonso Lopez, incorporates 39,000 voters from the old 49th District (shown in pink). It also picked up 19,000 voters from the old 45th District (shown in green), currently represented by Del. Mark Levine; 7,000 voters from the old 47th District (shown in purple), currently represented by Del. Patrick Hope; and 4,000 voters from the old 46th District (shown in red), currently represented by Del. Charniele Herring.**

If he is elected to the new 3rd House District, Del. Alfonso Lopez would represent Chinquapin Village and Parkfairfax as well as Shirlington and much of south Arlington.



SOURCE: VIRGINIA PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

**The new Senate District 39, currently represented by Sen. Adam Ebbin, incorporates 92,000 voters from the old 30th District (shown in green). It also picked up 49,000 voters from the old 35th District (shown in purple), currently represented by Sen. Dick Saslaw; 34,000 voters from the old 39th District (shown in pink), currently represented by Sen. George Barker; and 6,000 voters from the old 31st District (shown in red), currently represented by Sen. Barbara Favola.**

If he is elected to the new 39th Senate District, Sen. Adam Ebbin will represent all of Alexandria as well as Crystal City in Arlington and Bailey's Crossroads in Fairfax County.







PHOTO BY "MANGO" MIKE ANDERSON

A fallen tree on North Pegram Street took down several power lines, resulting in thousands of West End residents losing power for up to 24 hours during the Jan. 3 snowstorm.



PHOTO BY DENISE PALMIERI  
Andrew Palmieri shovels snow at his home during the snowstorm of Jan. 3.

**“Governor [Ralph] Northam and VDOT were totally unprepared and not in control of this situation.”**

— Alexandria resident Jeanne Jacob, stuck on I-95 for 18 hours



PHOTO BY DENISE PALMIERI

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial seen from Cameron Street in Old Town Jan. 3.

## Locals Among Those Stranded on I95 During Snowstorm

FROM PAGE 1

overhead around 7 a.m.

“That was the first time we had some hope that the situation would finally get noticed,” Jacob said. “People got out of their cars and started waving to the helicopters so that this major crisis on I95 would finally get reported.”

It would take until 8:30 a.m. Tuesday before plows began clearing a single lane for vehicles to begin inching forward again. Jacob and her husband finally arrived at their Seminary Ridge home around 11 a.m.

“Our neighborhood looks like a war zone with several huge tree limbs down, including across our driveway,” Jacob said. “I am 74 and Jerry is 78 – we are two old people but bless our wonderful neighbors who

shoveled a path to allow us to get into the house once we arrived. Now like everyone else we are dealing with the clean up after the storm.”

As of Wednesday morning, 95 percent of Alexandria’s primary roadways are now “passable”, according to the City’s Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. According to the city’s website, the high volume of downed trees and wires is preventing access to plow vehicles on several streets. These streets will be treated as soon as tree and wire hazards are removed.

The storm led to a two-day closure of the city government and virtual learning for Alexandria City Public Schools.

As for the I95 debacle that made international news, Kelly Hannon, a spokeswoman

for VDOT, apologized to motorists and said the department would take an “exhaustive look” at the incident.

“That stretch of 95 is already arguably the

worst in the state,” Jacob said. “A 50-mile meltdown during a predicted winter storm shows a total lack of leadership and accountability.”



JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

North Howard Street near Inova Alexandria Hospital is passable by late afternoon on Jan. 3.



PHOTO BY JEANNE JACOB

A sign on Interstate 95 indicating the closed Express Lanes during the snowstorm of Jan. 3.

## Alexandria to Have One Senator And Three House Members

FROM PAGE 3

Kathy Tran; and David Bulova and Dan Helmer. All of these incumbents will soon face a choice: run against another incumbent in the primary, move to a new district or figure out some way to gracefully bow out.

“Incumbents had districts drawn in

strange ways to protect their ability to run for reelection,” said Quentin Kidd, director of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University. “Suddenly that protection is gone, and you see them either having to retire or face someone who might be a close friend in the same party.”





PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Helen Morris, center, is applauded by members of her family Dec. 18 in anticipation of her 100th birthday on Dec. 27, 2021. With Morris are (front): granddaughter Emily and husband Gary Davidson; and seated from left: grandson Stephen Morris, daughter-in-law Kay Rupert, son Lew Morris and granddaughter Hannah Morris.

# Celebrating a Century

## Helen Morris turns 100.

The family of Helen Morris celebrated the matriarch's 100th birthday with a gathering held Dec. 18 at the Morris family home.

said Morris, the widow of former Alexandria Circuit Court Judge Lew Morris. "I am so filled with gratitude just to be with family, living here in Alexandria and looking back at all the friends we have made."

Born Dec. 27, 1921, Morris was 18 when she married the 20-year-old Lewis Morris, who was in the service.

"My husband was a wonderful

person," Morris said of her spouse, who died at the age of 80 in 1999. "We were married 59 years. We were so young but the Lord really blessed me."

The secret to her longevity? "Remember that life is short. Love people and enjoy being with people. Don't be alone. To be with people is one of life's greatest gifts."

-JEANNE THEISMANN

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# New Year, New Laws

On Jan. 1, the minimum wage was raised from \$9.50 per hour to \$11 per hour; and more.

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

**W**e have just welcomed the new year, giving us a fresh start and endless possibilities, though starting with a big snowstorm and loss of power for many of us may not be so auspicious. But in all seriousness, here's to a much better year for everyone in 2022!

Indeed, the moment the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1, some important laws that the General Assembly passed during last year's session became effective for the first time. As we gear up for the start of the 2022 General Assembly session in just one week, it would be remiss of me not to ensure that you are informed about the Commonwealth's new laws.

One of the most significant

changes in 2022 is the continuation of the increase in Virginia's minimum wage. On Jan. 1, the minimum wage was raised from \$9.50 per hour to \$11 per hour. Under Democratic leadership, Virginia's minimum wage has seen a 50% increase over the last two years and will have a lasting positive impact on Virginia's working families.

The minimum insurance coverage required for vehicles in Virginia increased for the first time since the 1970s. For all policies effective from Jan. 1, 2022, to January 1, 2025, the coverage requirements for liability insurance for crashes where one person is killed or injured increase from \$25,000 up to \$30,000. For cases involving two or more people, the amount rises from \$50,000 to \$60,000. Make sure to check with your insurance

provider to ensure that your policy meets this minimum.

A new five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags took effect in Fairfax County (along with Arlington County and the City of Alexandria — it is a local option) as a measure to reduce the impact of single-use plastics on our environment. This tax will be charged at grocery stores, drugstores, and convenience stores. The money raised will fund environmental cleanup, education, and reusable bags for recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC).

Starting with this year's elections, May municipal elections for towns and cities will now be held in November along with the rest of the Commonwealth. The date for primary elections will also shift from the second to the third Tuesday in June.

Another law going into effect



Krizek

bans the use of animals for cosmetic testing in Virginia, which will be followed on July 1 with a ban on the sale of any cosmetics that were developed using animal testing. This law places Virginia as a forerunner in the fight against animal cruelty. Virginia was the fourth state to pass this law, and four more have followed suit since.

The DMV can now issue "identification privilege cards" to non-drivers in the undocumented community. Undocumented children will also now be able to receive an ID. In addition, persons 70 years of age or older may exchange a valid Virginia driver privilege card for an identification privilege card at no fee.

And finally, any section of U.S. Route 1 in Virginia that is still named "Jefferson Davis Highway," after the former president of the Confederacy, will be renamed to "Emancipation Highway"

# My Elected Representative

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

**I**n the general election in 2021 through a constitutional amendment, Virginia voters decided to transfer the majority party responsibility of turning the census count of persons in the state into as much as practicable 100 House of Delegates districts, 40 Senate districts and 11 congressional districts to a nonpartisan election redistricting process. The outcome of the vote was not even close — 2.77 million in favor and 1.45 million opposed. The process to keep the outcome as independent as possible was clunky and inefficient but in the end produced a defensible result that will move Virginia into a leadership role of independent redistricting. A reform goal I had worked on for more than 40 years has become a reality.

A scan of the new maps as drawn by the Supreme Court when the commission could not come to a conclusion on a set of maps does not contain any salamander-shaped districts or any grotesque shapes designed to protect the interests of incumbents. The Washington Post described the outcome of the new redistricting procedure as "ending a contentious redistricting process that for the

first time gave no say to the state's elected officials."

There had been much criticism that the Supreme Court could not render an unbiased decision because they are political appointees proved to be misguided. As the Court Order stated, it has "fully complied with federal and state law in the following order of precedence:

- ❖ The United States Constitution, particularly Article I, Section 2, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment;

- ❖ Applicable federal statutes, particularly the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 52 U.S.C. § 10301;

- ❖ The Constitution of Virginia, particularly Article II, Sections 6 to 6-A; and

- ❖ Applicable Virginia statutes, particularly Code §§ 30-399(E), 24.2-304.04, and any other relevant provision in Chapter 3 of Title 24.2 of the Code of Virginia.

Although it may have taken you a decade to learn the number of your delegate and senate districts, be aware that all those numbers have changed. My previously numbered 36th district is now the 7th House of Delegates district. Details of the new districts can be found at [https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/districting/2021\\_virginia\\_redistricting\\_memo.pdf](https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/districting/2021_virginia_redistricting_memo.pdf). Discussion of the impact of the new maps is available at [www.vpap.org](http://www.vpap.org).

**"A defensible result that will move Virginia into a leadership role of independent redistricting"**

Not everyone is happy with the new maps. Having witnessed the redistricting of the Virginia General Assembly over 40 years I can confirm that it is never a smooth and easy process because every incumbent argues for safe districts

for themselves and for their party. Every redistricting has been followed by a decade of court suits. That is not likely to occur this year. The legislature can get underway with the important tasks in front of it and spend less time on redistricting as the people indicated in their vote for the constitutional amendment.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm  
[mimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Jeanne Theismann

[jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner,

Mark Mogie  
Contributing Photographers  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier

Contributing Writers  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Hope Nelson

Food Writer  
[hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com)  
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope

Senior Reporter  
[michaelpope@gmail.com](mailto:michaelpope@gmail.com)  
@michaelpope

ADVERTISING:

For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

Tara Lloyd

Display Advertising, 703-740-7128  
[tlloyd@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:tlloyd@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Publisher

Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Art/Design:

Laurence Poong, John Heinly,  
Ali Khaligh  
Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:

Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager:

Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

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# OPINION

## Costs and Tradeoffs

To the editor:

To our new city council members, who take their seats with the new year: please govern with a relentlessly clear-eyed view toward costs and tradeoffs.

Impetus for this plea came last fall as I studied up on local candidates before the general election, having only recently returned to Alexandria after moving away some years ago. I came across

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR** a primary debate found useful overall though the discussion made me purse my lips a bit. Candidates addressed evidently hot button subjects like “road diets,” but mostly avoided revenues and spending. Some mentioned federal and state funding — i.e., how someone else might foot our bills — but none talked brass tacks about taxes they’d raise, services they’d cut, assets they’d sell or turn to revenue generation, etc.

The kicker was when Councilwoman-elect Sarah Bagley said she aims to eliminate “zero sum analysis.” Rather than characterizing decisions as “we either get this or we don’t,” we should seek win-win harmonies. Specifically, for example, she’d seek to marry affordable housing and environmental interests, rather than continue “seeing these as ... tradeoffs.”

That’s a dubious governance philosophy. (I don’t mean to pick on Ms. Bagley, I’ve heard some version dozens of times.) At any given moment, much political analysis is zero sum. That’s the entire premise of a budget. Given finite resources and time, everything costs something — in dollars, political capital, administrative capacity, opportunity costs. There are always tradeoffs. Parsing them is government’s *raison d’être*, its very purpose.

While political officials should certainly seek innovative ways to kill more birds without more stones, eventually we reach true dichotomies. Tougher environmental rules might make for greener development; but they also increase risk and upfront costs, which must be recovered through sales or rents, or else mitigated by some kind of subsidy. Utilities savings might offset those costs over time, but that’s not guaranteed. A 2019 city study estimated greener standards for Alexandria’s public buildings could add \$25-40 million to 10-year capital costs. That money could no longer go to housing, or whatever else, during that period.

I just moved from California,

SEE COSTS AND, PAGE 10

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Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

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All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Con-

nection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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# Charlette Mitchell

**D.A.R.E. officer,  
aide to Chief of  
Police dies at 58.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**lexandria Police Sergeant Charlette Mitchell, a beloved officer in the community for more than 30 years, died Dec. 28, 2021, at Inova Fairfax Hospital following a brief illness. She was 58.

"It is with a grievous heart that I announce to you that Sergeant Charlette Mitchell died this morning after succumbing to her illness," said Acting Police Chief Don Hayes in announcing Mitchell's death to APD officers and staff. "Charlette was a good police officer, but she was an even better friend."

Charlette Anita Mitchell, born Sept. 13, 1963, joined the Alexandria Police Department in November of 1987 as a Clerk Typist II in the Criminal Investigation Division. She became a police officer the following year and was sworn in on Aug. 10, 1988.

Mitchell was assigned to the evening and daylight patrol shifts until she was transferred to the Crime Prevention Unit to take over the D.A.R.E. program in July of 1997. It was there that she excelled and made her mark in the community.

"Charlette was a wonderful human who did her job as a D.A.R.E. officer so well," said Mallory Lawhorne in a social media post. "She didn't try to pull the scare tactic card, she just tried to be a friendly, informative face, and she was. She will be greatly missed."

Added Hayes, "Charlette really excelled when she became the D.A.R.E. officer. Her goal was to always leave a position better than she received it."

In addition to her work with the D.A.R.E. program, Mitchell started youth programs in the schools and in the city's recreation centers.

"Charlette was instrumental in starting the Angels camp where she would take several young girls to the Police Youth Camp for a week of mentoring," said Hayes. "Charlette loved teaching and mentoring the young people in the city of Alexandria and her impact in their lives paid dividends to our agency. She eventually became our Crime Prevention Officer where she creatively enhanced our CEPTED program and every other aspect of crime prevention throughout the city."

In 2011, Mitchell was promoted to the rank of sergeant and assigned to patrol, parking enforcement and eventually as the Aide to the Chief of Police, the position she held at the time of her death. In addition to Hayes, Mitchell served under Chief Earl Cook, Acting Chief David Huchler, and Chief Michael Brown.

"Charlette was instrumental in making sure the Chief's Office was brought into the 21st century," said Hayes. "She also made sure Chiefs were always where they were



PHOTO COURTESY APD

**APD Sgt. Charlette Mitchell, kneeling center, was a dedicated and popular D.A.R.E. instructor.**



JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

**Sgt. Charlette Mitchell with former Police Chief Michael Brown at Brown's retirement reception in July 2021.**



PHOTO COURTESY ASO

**Sgt. Valarie Wright, left, of the Sheriff's Office with Police Sgt. Charlette Mitchell.**

**"[Charlette] didn't try to pull the scare tactic card, she just tried to be a friendly, informative face, and she was."**

**— Mallory Lawhorne on D.A.R.E. officer Charlette Mitchell**

supposed to be and that they always had what they needed to have. Sergeant Charlette Mitchell was a phenomenal person who always did her best to make us look good as

an agency and she will be truly missed."

A visitation for Mitchell will be held on Saturday, January 8, 2022, from 9 a.m. until noon in the Kauffman Auditorium of the



PHOTO COURTESY APD

**APD Sgt. Charlette Mitchell died Dec. 28, 2021, following a brief illness. She was 58.**



PHOTO COURTESY APD

**Sgt. Charlette Mitchell joined the Alexandria Police Department in 1987.**



PHOTO COURTESY ASO

**ASO Chief Deputy Robyn Nichols, left, with Police Sgt. Charlette Mitchell at the swearing in of former Police Chief Michael Brown in 2017.**

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center, 1108 Jefferson St. A memorial service will immediately follow the visitation at the same location.



# AWLA: 75 Years A Bulwark for Alexandria's Animals

By BARBARA S. MOFFET  
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE  
OF ALEXANDRIA

An eight-year-old gray and white cat named Biscuit blazed a trail at the AWLA this year: She underwent oral surgery in the shelter's new Mobile Veterinary and Event vehicle, the first time such a medical procedure was conducted on site in the organization's 75-year history. Biscuit was only the first of several animals to be operated on by the AWLA's veterinary team that day, all receiving routine but critical care including state-required spay and neuter surgeries.

The specially outfitted van — dubbed Waggin' Wheels — has streamlined the adoption process, allowing pets to undergo medical care without having to visit community veterinary partners. The van also travels, transporting adoptable animals to special events around the city.

2021 marked the AWLA's 75th year serving as a key resource for the Northern Virginia community. Although the pandemic forced some changes in shelter procedures, the AWLA's hearts remained as open as ever, providing support in numerous ways.

A record of more than 800 animals were transferred to the AWLA from around Virginia as well as Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and West Virginia. A partnership with an animal rescue organization in Florida's Miami Dade area brought dozens of animals to the AWLA for adoption. In February, AWLA volunteers modified a van and retrieved 50 cats who were refugees from severe ice storms in Texas, bringing half of them back to the AWLA for adoption while the rest went to other local shelters and rescues. The AWLA also worked with the BISSELL Pet Foundation in September to transport dozens of animals from Louisiana shelters ravaged by Hurricane Ida. "We have a hugely supportive community here who open their hearts and homes to animals that may not have had the best start in life," said an AWLA staffer.

The AWLA continued to organize monthly drive-in vaccination clinics in 2021, providing nearly 1,000 free and low-cost rabies and distemper vaccines by appointment at the shelter. To minimize contact among people, volunteers

SEE AWLA, PAGE 10

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## Obituary

## Obituary



### Millicent "Midge" Aycock

It is with heavy hearts we share that Millicent "Midge" Aycock of Alexandria, VA passed away unexpectedly on December 17, 2021. To us she was a mom, mother-in-law, grandmother, friend... and most importantly, a steady and positive light in our lives.

Survived by her son Jonathan Aycock, spouse Corinne Aycock, and three grandchildren: Olivia, Hannah, and Zachary. She is predeceased by her husband Marlyn Aycock, son Timothy Aycock,

sister Miriam (Bloom) Curtis, and brother Charles Bloom. Midge used her intellect, kindness, and spirit for adventure to create wonderful events and lasting memories. She will be dearly missed by all.

Midge was born on July 21, 1934 in North Branch, MN to parents Herbert and Mildred (Ah) Bloom. She attended North Branch High School and graduated from The University of Minnesota, majoring in education in 1956. After graduation, she became a teacher and married Marlyn Aycock. Over the next few years they were able to live and work in Richmond, VA; London, England; Frankfurt, Germany; and Louisville, KY, before establishing a home base in Alexandria, VA in 1965. Midge was a Regional Manager of Operations for the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM). She was also actively involved in the Alexandria community, giving her time to Good Shepherd Lutheran, the Board of Lady Managers, and the Timothy Aycock Melanoma Research Foundation (TAMRF).

Funeral services and a celebration of her life were held on Wednesday, December 22, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Alexandria.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations may be made to TAMRF (Timothy Aycock Melanoma Research Foundation) by going to: [www.melanomafund.org](http://www.melanomafund.org).

For more details, please visit [www.everlywheatley.com](http://www.everlywheatley.com) to sign the virtual guest book.

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## No Car and No Computer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Due to circumstances beyond my control, for two days after the deer accident, I had no car and as it happened, no computer either. The no-car situation you regular readers know about from the previous edition's column: "Oh Deer." The no-computer element just occurred as machines, technology, almost anything I guess, eventually succumbs to old age/extended use. As a result of this dual inconvenience, I can't get anywhere, literally, and figuratively. Moreover, with these two losses, temporary though they may be, I've sort of lost my way. To invoke author Robert A. Heinlein: I'm a "stranger in a strange land."

Though I now have a courtesy rental car, I don't yet have a computer. It's being delivered later in the week by Amazon. It won't be an expense as it is being paid for my part-time employer. When the computer arrives, my brother's IT guy will come over and set it up. That means I won't have that problem to solve. As for the car, in five days or so, I was told, I'll learn whether my car can be repaired or if it will be declared a total loss. Soon thereafter I imagine, if the car is "totaled," I'll be receiving a settlement check from the insurance company. Then the fun will begin.

If in fact, I receive a settlement check, since the car I was driving was a model year 2000 Honda Accord, unfortunately the amount will be nowhere near what I'll need to purchase a new car. The net effect will be an increase in my monthly car payment from zero dollars to likely multiple hundreds. Money, I don't really have and am not eager to spend. However, the new computer can't arrive quickly enough. And given the evolution in technology since I last bought a computer, 10 years ago at least, I can well imagine the improvement/benefit in my life it will provide. As for the improvement/benefits in my life a new car will provide? Not really important to me if it costs money, which it will. I am not looking to add another car with bells and whistles since I already have a new-ish car with all the bells and whistles already. I was not looking to whistle any more bells however. What I/we need is only one car payment. Which, for the past 13 years, since my mother passed away in 2008, and I inherited her car, I've had. And I've enjoyed every minute of it. Now, I'm afraid, the party is over.

Now this is where not having a working computer at home becomes a problem. I can't research a potential solution. Consequently, I'm stuck in a kind of limbo between the car I used to own and the car I'm about to own. Right now, I'm driving a rental car, a temporary solution. What I need is a permanent solution. Sure, I receive a daily newspaper and I do have a car to drive, but I'm not going to drive randomly around and/or trust the classified ads to direct me to a proper solution. What I need is a version of Indeed.

The conclusion: I need a computer before I need the car. In fact, it's very likely that if I'm told the Honda is totaled, having a new computer will provide me with the tools and information necessary to perhaps make an intelligent and acceptable decision. Acceptable meaning a moderate impact to our finances. For me, it's not so much about creature comforts as it is about this creature's comfort.

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

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## News

# AWLA: 75 Years a Bulwark For Alexandria's Animals

FROM PAGE 9

ferried animals from cars into the shelter and back. "Rabies is a fatal disease, and it can be found in our area," said shelter veterinarian Dr. Erica Caldwell. "The vaccine is required by law for dogs and cats, primarily to protect the entire community — people and animals — from this horrible disease." New in 2021: Clinic attendees could also have their pets receive a microchip to help them reconnect with their family if they became lost.

Besides vaccinations, the AWLA continued to offer free food and other supplies through its popular Community Pet Pantry. Demand soared throughout the pandemic as people lost their jobs or worked reduced hours. Supplies donated by the community helped the pantry give out

more than 50,000 pounds of food and other goods in 2021, assisting pets so they could stay with the families who love them. The AWLA capped off the year with a Christmas Eve distribution of holiday packages of free pet food and supplies to Alexandria families in need.

Inclement weather didn't stop pet parents from lining up at John Adams Elementary School in November so their dogs and cats could receive free vaccinations for rabies, distemper and parvovirus. The third such event last year, this Pets & People Community Wellness Event also offered free covid-19 vaccinations, shelf-stable groceries and other items provided by Alexandria nonprofits. "Our goal is to be a resource to our community, and by connecting with people near where they live, we were able to better serve attendees, both human and animal," said AWLA Executive Director Stella Hanly.

At the fourth Alexandria Love Your Pet Day, organized by the AWLA and held at Oronoco Bay Park, families and their pets enjoyed music and magic, tried their hand at crafts and munched on delicious snacks. AWLA adoptable animals also strutted their stuff, and three of them found new families.

Those adoptions were only a few of a total of 1,461 carried out in 2021, through a combination of virtual and in-person appointments. The staff also continued to respond to numerous calls to help local wildlife in need. In the coming year, the AWLA plans to expand veterinary care for pets in the shelter and across the community and increase the number of animals transferred in — to help even more animals find welcoming families. "We're excited to see what the next 75 years will bring," Hanly said.

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization that operates the

## Costs and Tradeoffs

FROM PAGE 7

where development opponents routinely invoke that state's (in)famous Environmental Quality Act to stymie construction. My point isn't to argue that housing trumps the environment, or vice versa, but to articulate a political choice. Greener development may very well "cost" the forgone alternative of



PHOTOS COURTESY, AWLA

A local dog gets checked out at a Pets & People Community Wellness Event, organized by the Animal Welfare Leagues of Alexandria and Arlington. The events provide free vaccinations for pets as well as health support for people in the community.



AWLA Biscuit Undergoes Anesthesia in Preparation for Surgery.jpg Eight-year-old Biscuit is prepared for oral surgery, the first patient in the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's new Mobile Veterinary and Event vehicle.



Volunteers ferry pets from cars to the AWLA shelter during a drive-up vaccine clinic, held monthly. In 2021, pets also received microchips at the clinics to help them reconnect with families if lost.

Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, The AWLA also answers questions about wildlife and animals in the community. More information can be found at [AlexandriaAnimals.org](http://AlexandriaAnimals.org).

**Dan Brendel**  
Alexandria

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