



Parajon Proposes FY 2023 Budget

General fund increases to \$830 million.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria City Manager James Parajon presented City Council with a proposed fiscal year 2023 General Fund Operating Budget of just under \$830 million during council's Feb. 15 meeting at City Hall.

The \$829.9 million budget proposal represents a 7.7 percent increase over the current year and includes \$248.7 million to fully fund the request made by Alexandria City Public Schools.

"The values and strategies in



Alexandria City Manager James Parajon proposed a \$830 million budget to City Council Feb 15.

this proposed budget align with those that have been in place for several years," Parajon said. "It includes policies and actions that

underscore careful financial management; strategic investments in current and future needs; and support for innovative ways to deliver essential services to maintain the health, safety and quality of life for all Alexandrians."

Parajon also presented the city's 10-year Capital Improvement Program for FY 2023-2032.

The \$2.73 billion CIP includes \$497.8 million for continued support of ACPs facilities, including a new high school, renovation and retrofitting of the 1705 N. Beauregard St. office building for a swing space, and renovation and expansion of two elementary schools.

While Parajon's proposal omits any mention of a tax increase to fund ongoing budget operations,

"The values and strategies in this proposed budget align with those that have been in place for several years."

— City Manager James Parajon

City Council has requested "Plan B and C" budget options that propose one- and two-cent tax rate increases per \$100 of assessed value, if needed, to fund additional initiatives.

Parajon will make a virtual presentation of the proposal to the public on Thursday, Feb. 17 at 7

p.m. Nine work sessions will be scheduled throughout the spring for review with a special public hearing scheduled for March 7. A

tax rate add/delete hearing will be held April 23 with final budget adoption scheduled for May 4.

All sessions are open to the public and will

be recorded and available on the city's website. The public may either submit comments online, speak at the public hearings or submit questions to be answered during the town hall.

For more information or to submit questions or comments, visit www.alexandriava.gov/Budget.

Anna Leider

Former Voter Registrar dies at 62.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Anna Leider, the former Voter Registrar of Alexandria, died Feb. 12 following a two-year battle with brain cancer. She was 62.

Leider served as chair of the Alexandria Democratic Committee from 1993 to 1997 before working with Alexandria city elections as General Registrar and Director of Elections. She retired as Voter Registrar in June of 2020 following a diagnosis of glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

"Anna was a great example of a diplomat in the political world where even party members turn on their own," said friend and community leader Laura Mandala. "She never entered the fray of divisiveness which, of course, is what made her so perfect for the role of registrar. We should remember her decorum during tense political times and, by doing so, honor her memory."

Born Dec. 18, 1959, to Robert and Kit Leider, Anna Leider grew up in Alexandria, attending Alexandria City Public Schools and graduating from what is now Alexandria City High School. She held a bachelor's degree in American studies from Amherst College and a mas-



Anna Leider, longtime Voter Registrar for the City of Alexandria, died Feb. 12 at the age of 62.

ter's degree in business administration from New York University. She also studied early Renaissance art in a master's program at the University of Chicago.

Prior to working as a full-time election official, Leider owned an Alexandria-based educational publishing company. She also served on the city's Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee and 250th Anniversary Commission.

While still in high school, Leider won an essay contest sponsored by the National



Anna Leider, a Washington Nationals fan, died Feb. 12 at the age of 62.

Football League asking students to describe "The NFL's role in American History." Her essay, "Why is Football so American?" earned her a \$10,000 college scholarship, press box tickets to Super Bowl X in Miami and an appearance on the TV show "To Tell the Truth."

Leider began her career in politics working on Capitol Hill. She became Bill Clinton's Alexandria City presidential campaign manager prior to becoming ADC chair.

"I first met Anna when I joined the Alexandria Democratic Committee in 1990

"Only a woman of true integrity would throw her own mother out of the registrar's office."

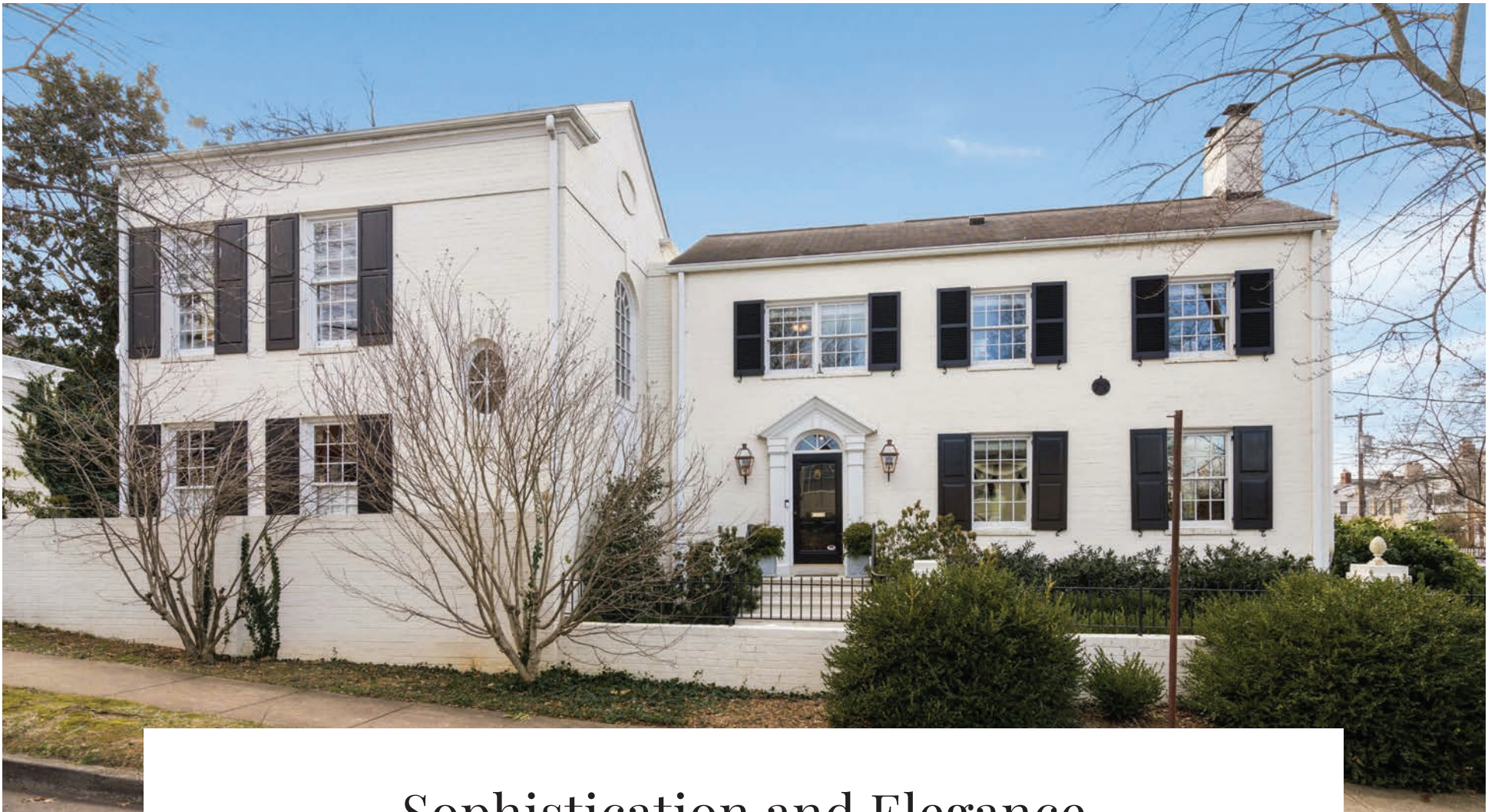
— Michael Curry on Anna Leider

and remember her coordinating the Alexandria primary campaign in 1992 for Bill Clinton," wrote State Senator Adam Ebbin on Facebook. "She withdrew from Democratic politics when she later joined the registrar's office but I relied on her for advice on laws dealing with applying for absentee ballots and ways to see that more absentee ballots were fairly counted. She was a wonderful, thoughtful person who will be sorely missed."

During her tenure as a city election official, Leider helped manage over 41 elections, including four presidential elections and three statewide or regional recounts.

"One of my favorite stories about Anna is the time in 2000 when Bob [Eifert] and I were early voting," recalled Michael Curry, who served on the ADC. "Bob and I ran into Kit in the registrar's office and started talking politics. Anna told us we were not allowed to talk politics in the office and came over and led us both outside, telling us to stay outside."

SEE ANNA LEIDER, PAGE 3



Sophistication and Elegance

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Come together beautifully in this expanded brick townhouse in popular Yates Gardens at the corner of Jefferson and Royal! The living and dining rooms are delightfully elegant while the family room, which opens to the chef's kitchen and the glorious walled garden, boasts seating for eight and a butler's pantry! The flow of this house is ideal for entertaining and offers four bedrooms on the upper level as well as a very spacious lower level for overflow guests in the fifth bedroom/exercise room and game room!



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Black History Month

Staff and friends of the Alexandria Black History Museum join museum director Audrey Davis, seated in front, for a photo Feb. 8 at City Hall following the presentation of a proclamation by City Council recognizing Black History Month.

Anna Leider

FROM PAGE 1

Only a woman of true integrity would throw her own mother out of the registrar's office."

Many posted tributes to Leider on social media.

"Two decades ago I got to know Anna Leider as we worked to plan a caucus," said Mayor Justin Wilson. "That started a friendship that spanned many elections, a lot of Nationals talk, many parties and one VCU victory over her [Kansas] Jayhawks. Nobody was more committed to our city and its people. We will miss Anna."

Added former Mayor Allison Silberberg, "Anna was brilliant, kind and had a wonderful smile. Her enthusiasm for life was contagious. She was a terrific chair of the Alexandria Democratic Committee and she did a magnificent job for many years as the Registrar in our City's Office of Voter Registration and Elections. She was always fair and highly organized. What an unthinkable

and heartbreaking loss."

Leider was known for her love of the Washington Nationals, the Kansas Jayhawks and for the yearly Winter Solstice party she hosted with her mother Kit, which served as her own birthday celebration.

Leider is survived by her mother, Kit Leider and her cat, Sammie. She is preceded in death by her father, Robert Leider, for whom the Robert Leider Park at 3002 Valley Drive is named. Leider and her mother have benches overlooking the Potomac River in Waterfront Park near Prince Street.

A celebration of life memorial will take place in the spring.

Said Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, "Anna lived her life as an advocate for our democracy in so many ways. A true public servant, she will be remembered for her kindness, commitment, dedication, integrity and grace in all of her roles in local government and will be missed terribly."

Alexandria Celebrates George Washington's Birthday With Events Throughout February

Alexandria the adopted hometown of George Washington, celebrates his birthday each year with events throughout February. The highlight will occur on Feb. 21, 2022, when Alexandria residents and visitors will line the streets of Old Town Alexandria to cheer on the oldest and largest George Washington Birthday parade in the country. The parade features drum corps, color guards, bands, community and fraternal organizations, youth groups, local merchants, city dignitaries, and, of course, General Washington and Martha Washington.

This year, the Celebration will honor Alexandria's health care workers and first responders, who will march as Parade Grand Marshals.

All events are subject to change. See washingtonbirthday.com George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee (GW-BCC).

Hunt for Washington

Until Feb. 28, 2022

A fun and challenging game to uncover clues about Alexandria and George Washington. The hunt, which should take about 60 to 90 minutes to complete, will take individuals and families to places in Old Town



George Washington Interpreter Dan Shippey. Celebrate with free admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Feb. 21, 2022, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Feb. 22, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Alexandria associated with the General. Start by printing a clue sheet from washingtonbirthday.com at home and bring it with you as you traverse the heart of Old Town and then use your sleuthing skills to find

answers to the clues. Submit your findings to gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com any time before the end of the day on February 28. There are prizes and mementos associated with this event. FREE.

American Legion Post 24 Run, Walk, n' Roll

Until Feb. 28, 2022

This George Washington Birthday Commemorative event is intended to build community and enhance the physical, mental and emotional resiliency of participants—veterans and non-veterans alike. This month-long event during February 2022 encourages participants to run, walk and/or roll on their own for at least 24 miles in increments and routes they choose. Registration is \$24 and open until February 5, 2022. Visit runsignup.com/Race/VA/Alexandria/GWB24RunWalkRoll for more information.

"George Washington's Alexandria" Tours

Feb. 20 and 27, 2022, from 2 to 4 p.m.

On every Sunday in February 2022, beginning at 2 p.m., you can explore historic Old Town Alexandria as George Washington knew it. This popular two-hour guided walking tour will visit sites associated with Washington and his closest colleagues, including Christ Church, Light Horse Harry Lee's house, the Lord Fairfax home, Washington's townhouse, Gadsby's Tavern, Duvall

SEE GEORGE WASHINGTON'S, PAGE 5

Oops! They Did it Again

Lawmakers ‘accidentally’ gave overtime protections to farmworkers and domestic workers, now taking it back.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

They didn’t mean it. Seriously. And now they’re about to undo what they did last year.

Lawmakers say the vote last year to create a cause of action for farmworkers and domestic workers to seek overtime pay was a mistake. Senators say they were misled, snookered by the blitzkrieg pace of the General Assembly. Now they’re taking action to rectify the situation, stripping farmworkers and domestic workers of the ability to sue for overtime.

“The bill takes us back to where we were before the bill was presented last year and that was misrepresented to the Senate,” said Sen. George Barker (D-39).

Last year, senators were considering a bill introduced by Del. Mike Mullin (D-93) that created a state cause of action for workers to demand overtime pay. Until Gov. Ralph Northam signed his bill into law, the only way workers had to demand overtime was through federal courts. But state courts are more generous, and workers can get triple damages instead of double damages. Plus the statute of limitations is three years in state

courts as opposed to two years in the federal courts. Majority Leader Dick Saslaw presented the Mullins bill in the Senate.

“Basically, it requires the employer to compensate all employees who are entitled to overtime compensation under the Fair Labor Standards Act at a rate not less than one and a half time the employees rate of pay,” Saslaw told senators last year. “It takes in most of the exemptions and inclusions to the federal overtime act, not all of the exemptions but most of them.”

The Fair Labor Standards Act was written during the era of Jim Crow segregation in the 1930s, when southern Democrats refused to create protections for African-American workers. The racist impulse to deny protections to Black workers led Congress to exempt farm workers and domestic workers from the law, occupations that were done primarily by African American workers in the South. During the 1930s debate on the bill in Washington, members of Congress didn’t bother to hide their bigotry.

“You cannot prescribe the same wages for the Black man as the white man,” explained Rep. Martin Dies (D-Texas) during hearings on the legislation.

“You cannot prescribe the same wages for the Black man as the white man.”

— U.S. Rep. Martin Dies (D-Texas) in 1930s



Sen. George Barker (D): Bill providing for domestic workers and farm workers “was misrepresented to the Senate,” last year.

NOW THAT JIM CROW legacy is about to be grafted onto Virginia’s overtime protections, removing protections from farm workers and domestic workers that were created last year. The move comes after Virginia became one of the few states to implement a “domestic worker bill of rights,” allowing them to file complaints about workplace safety to the Commission of Labor and Industry. Now those same workers

will be denied the ability to seek overtime pay in state courts.

“To think we would be rolling back protections is deeply disappointing.”

— Alexis Rodgers, Virginia state director at the National Domestic Workers Alliance

long and hard to keep people safe, and they deserve overtime just like any other worker.”

Farmworkers are frequently singled out as a class of worker that is denied minimum wage or workplace safety. Unlike the business groups that are pushing to remove overtime protection from the code, farm workers don’t make campaign contributions or hire lobbyists. Even when Democrats were in control of the General Assembly, the effort to extend the state minimum wage to farm workers was unsuccessful. Now those workers will be stripped of the ability to seek overtime.

“The fact that we can’t get farm workers covered by the minimum wage in Virginia is just outrageous,” said Kim Bobo, executive director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. “What work is harder?”

On Guard

Lyles-Crouch crossing guard honored.

Cora Reed, a crossing guard in Alexandria for 50 years, was recognized Feb. 9 as one of the top five Most Outstanding Crossing Guards in Virginia by the Virginia Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School program.

The presentation was made as part of Crossing Guard Ap-

preciation Day in front of Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, where Reed is a crossing guard.

“[Cora Reed] is an integral part of the school community and is vital in the drop-off and pick-up process at the school,” the school district posted on ACPs Express. “She has a positive and encouraging attitude and is a friend to all.”

Lyle-Crouch Principal Patricia

Zissios led the ceremony, telling Reed “You are a hero to me.”

Reed was showered with cards and well wishes by students, parents and city officials.

“Thank you all for just supporting me,” Reed said. “It makes a big difference in the job to know that you’re appreciated. Now I’ll get out there and work even harder.”

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Cora Reed, right, is congratulated by Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy principal Patricia Zissios on her recognition as one of the five Most Outstanding Crossing Guards in Virginia.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

NEWS

George Washington's Birthday

FROM PAGE 3

Tavern, Wise's Tavern, the Carlyle House, Market Square, Ramsay House, the Apothecary Shop and Gentry Row. To register, visit eventbrite.com and search George Washington's Alexandria. FREE.

Friendship Firehouse Museum is Open

Feb. 19, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Friendship Fire Company was established in 1774 as the first volunteer fire company in Alexandria. Younger visitors will receive a free fire hat and a take-away bag of fun activities. Guests must wear masks that cover their mouth and nose while in the building. Admission is \$2 per person and free to Alexandria residents. Location: 107 S. Alfred Street.

Virtual Birthnight Banquet & Ball

Feb. 19, 2022, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Join in the celebrations that have been ongoing for hundreds of years—General Washington's Birthnight Ball. Gather your bubble to honor our first President over Zoom. Begin the evening with a video presentation about the history of this event and hear from those that have participated in it for years. Have conversations about your favorite Birthnight experience. Then, the General will be available live for all your questions. Lastly, enjoy English Country Dancing

called by our expert dance master from the historic Ballroom that you can do with 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8 people at home. Period costumes of the 1790s encouraged. One virtual dance class on February 17th is included. Tickets are \$15 per person. A dinner from Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant and traditional Birthnight Ball cake from Bittersweet are available for pickup with separate purchase of \$50. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to AlexandriaVA.gov/Shop.

Free Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon

Feb. 21, 2022, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Feb. 22, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Celebrate the first president of the United States at his beloved home. Admission is free for Presidents Day and George Washington's birthday. Admission tickets must be reserved online in advance. Tickets will be released to Mount Vernon members on February 11 and to the general public on February 15. A limited number of tickets are available.

Washington Symposium

Feb. 26, 2022, at 1 p.m.

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial hosts leading scholars of the life and legacy of George Washington. The theme of the 2022 George Washington Symposium is "The Political Education of George Washington." SEE GEORGE WASHINGTON'S, PAGE 11



Mount Vernon living at its best

Classic and sophisticated Mount Vernon home located in a gated community of just 11 residences with outdoor pool, tennis and basketball courts, gazebo, and koi pond. Highlights of this spectacular home include an indoor pool, dramatic foyer with curved staircase, formal living and dining rooms, renovated kitchen and sun room with skylights, elegant family room, bonus room and study.

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OPINION

Fixing the Virginia Employment Commission

BY SEN. ADAM P. EBBIN

An important role of any legislative office is that of constituent service. Before COVID19, we received a variety of requests regarding various state agencies or affiliates, including some regarding unemployment. The pandemic highlighted a dysfunctional system under immense stress at the Virginia Employment Commission like never before. The VEC has been underfunded for years because their main source of funding is based on a federal formula that provides funds based on our state's unemployment rate, which has been historically low. This impacted their ability to do long planned, much-needed system upgrades. During some months my office received nearly 100 requests for assistance with claims. As the pandemic continued, the situations of constituents grew more dire as the delay of their benefits created broad repercussions.

It quickly became clear that there were several recurring issues at the VEC. First was inconsistent communication. Constituents received emails from the VEC constituent service team stating that benefits may be denied if they did not call back within a specific time frame, however, the number provided by the VEC rarely connected to anyone. Some constituents received conflicting information from different VEC employees depending on who they spoke to. Constituents received emails from constituent service team members stating that benefits may be denied if they did not call back within a specific time frame, however, the number provided rarely connected to anyone. Some constituents received conflicting information from different constituent service members, resulting in confusion and time lost for constituents. Additionally, many constituents who come to us have been told that all their claim issues had



been resolved, only to wait weeks for benefits to arrive, and meanwhile are not able to contact anyone at the VEC through phone or email to determine why they are not receiving their benefits. We even heard from some constituents with concerns regarding fraud that occurred on their claims or that misused their identity. Some of these issues were prevalent enough that the VEC was sued in Federal Court April 2021 for delayed payments.

My staff and I have met with some of the hardworking team members at the VEC to get answers on specific cases and learn how their systems operate. There is much work to be done to get the VEC running smoothly and efficiently for Virginians.

I am the Vice-Chair of the Commission for Unemployment Compensation. Our official mandate is to monitor and evaluate Virginia's unemployment compensation system relative to the economic health of the Commonwealth. This past summer, I insisted on a meeting of the commission to probe on issues outside that regulatory purview, during which we heard from the then-VEC Commissioner and I asked pointed questions about the transparency of communications and payments to claimants. I was far from satisfied with the pace of response from the VEC to the clear need and obvious calls for changes. I've written to Commissioners of the VEC, Secretaries of Labor, and other officials on the issue over the past year requesting prompt changes and solutions. Most recently, newly-appointed Commissioner Carrie Roth provided in-depth answers to specific questions that will allow my office to better assist constituents coming to us with concerns regarding fraud. I'm glad to see that in this area, Governor Youngkin is on the right track. This is a bipartisan issue that requires pragmatic solutions.

To that end, there are several bills this session

based on recommendations made in a thorough study by the well respected Joint Audit and Legislative Review Commission (JLARC) on the VEC process. The final report offered comprehensive legislative and executive recommendations. I introduced legislation to expedite the process to bring employers filing forms with the VEC online and require the VEC to plan for a pilot program that aims to reduce the confusion and complexity of the separation reporting process. My office worked with JLARC and the VEC on this legislation, which aims to accomplish two specific recommendations from their report. I am co-sponsoring an even more comprehensive bill with Sen. Jeremy McPike (D-Woodbridge) that implements further JLARC recommendations regarding administrative reforms and reporting methods. The bill requires the VEC to calculate and report important metrics and maintain an unemployment insurance Resiliency Plan for future spikes in unemployment. The legislation also creates within the Commission on Unemployment Compensation, a subcommittee that will be responsible for monitoring the VEC's management of the unemployment insurance program. The bill would also clarify the appeals process and establish a workgroup on staffing. I am also co-sponsoring legislation with Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) aiming to fight fraud. That bill would require certain verifications of identity for claimants, as well as an annual report from the VEC on fraudulent payments.

I take VEC complaints very seriously — there are constituents whose livelihoods depend on the status of their claims. Some constituents are at risk of losing their homes or are facing hunger. My Legislative Aide, Mollie Montague, has assisted hundreds of constituents with VEC cases. If you are struggling with an issue at the VEC, contact our office at district30@senate.virginia.gov and we will do our best to assist you.

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

Last Week in Richmond: 25 Bills Moving

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

In the General Assembly, the first week of February is always the week we deal with difficult and controversial legislation and this year was no different.

I have introduced 27 bills and 25 appear headed for passage to the House of Delegates, one was tabled and referred for study at my request and one was killed. That bill was intended to make serving in the General Assembly more realistic for people whose employers



would not be supportive of service in a part-time legislature like ours.

On a 35 to five vote, the Senate approved a bill I am carrying with Del. Israel O'Quinn to reduce Virginia's methane emissions. Methane is a plan-

et-warming greenhouse gas that is 85 times more potent than another greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. I am hopeful that the bill will incentivize utilities like Washington Gas to work with local sewage au-

SEE SUROVELL, PAGE 14

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LETTERS



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Glass Factory Was Her Pathway to Success

The article, "From the Civil War to Civil Rights" by Jeanne Theismann in the Feb. 3 edition of the Alexandria Gazette featured the Old Dominion Glass Factory. This story reminded me of my great-grandmother, Virginia Thomas Knapper (Nannie) who worked there, and the stories she shared about making glass figurines. Nannie was born in 1897 in a house located at 911 North Fairfax Street, in an area of Alexandria known at that time as Cross Canal. Today you see a hotel, condominiums, business offices, and a restaurant standing on the property that her family once settled on.

In describing her childhood, Nannie was raised by her grandmother, Emily Lomax Washington, who had been a slave in Caroline County, Virginia, and who migrated to Alexandria during the Civil War. She began her career at the Old Dominion glass Factory as a "Mold Girl" making three to four dollars a week. At that time, the factory was known for providing

what is now a rare and unique pig figurine. In her oral history interview, Nannie described the process of making glass pigs as "Runny soupy like dough that you would use for pancakes." She further explained that they would "Mold it on a stick and when it came out you could see the lip of the bottle." Finally, they would "Set it on something that looked like tar paper to dry, then place it on something that looked like a shovel." She said they were made mostly around Christmas time and sold for fifty cents.

Her next job at the glass factory was called a "Snapper." When the mold came out, she would snap it off. By the time the factory closed, Nannie was making fifteen dollars a week, a hefty sum for an African American woman at that time.

Working at the Glass Factory and saving her money provided a means for Nannie to purchase a home at 1003 Cameron Street. The house is standing today. Sadly, my great-grandmother has

passed on, but whenever I ride by her house I am reminded of her life, determination, accomplishments, and all the cooking lessons she gave to me and my cousins. I am blessed to have had the rare opportunity of growing up with Nannie, as well as my great-great grandmother, Emma Washington Thomas (Mother Dear).

I am forever grateful for the work of Char McCargo Bah, Investigative Researcher and Professional Genealogist, and the Alexandria Living Legends for documenting the history of the Knapper-Taylor family. The history of our ancestors helps us gain a greater understanding of the

challenges they faced and the perseverance and strength they had to overcome and make a better life for themselves. It is important that descendants like me remember that we stand on their shoulders, and we are who we are because of them.

Yvette Lewis

The Gang of Three and Six

Indeed, SROs make schools safer. In my experiences as the father of three and grandfather of 6, I have a strong affinity for SROs. Years ago, the off-duty police officers on campus were as appreciated then as they are now. When our kids were in HS, safety issues largely consisted of the general well-being and peace on campus, prevention of sexual harassment, and bullying. Today it's much worse: sexual assault, cyber-bullying, drugs, weapons at or near schools, and combating gang activities. The City Council's so-called "Gang of Four" was not only short-sighted, but they failed to understand that publicly elected officials don't have the privilege for private scheming. Recently an AFD police officer asked my opinion regarding the restoration of SROs to AHS. My response: Of course! SROs are necessary for safety and serve as additional and important role models for our students; not unlike

teachers and the entire staff who also share an avocation for selfless service. The presence of SROs may conjure up student visions for service in professions such as emergency services, fire, or the military. Just like anyone else, each SRO brings his/her unique personality, varied experiences, and informal ways to contribute to the student's potential growth. Many SROs engage students in casual conversa-

tion while they protect. Some even volunteer as athletic coaches and for other after school activities on their own time. One Sheriff's Deputy actually volunteered at ACPS's Cora Kelly Elementary School as a first-grade tutor. Her mere presence is yet another example for students to see that public officials charged with ensuring their safety, can also generously help in myriad ways.

Bill Jacobs, Chatham Square

Submissions for Pet Connection

Our next Pet Connection will publish the last week of February, Feb. 23, 2022. Photo submissions are due by Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022. Sooner is better. Please complete a submission form and send us your photo(s). <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets/> or email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults. Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name)

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And the Winner Is...

Lena's named Heart of Del Ray.

The votes are in and Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap has been named the 2022 Heart of Del Ray, an annual award presented by the Del Ray Business Association.

Lena's owners and staff were presented the award Feb. 11 in a ceremony at Yates Corner, where Lena's is located. The award, given to the business that represents the heart and soul of Del Ray, is determined by a public vote of neighbors and customers.

"We're very, very grateful to have [Lena's] as part of the community."

DRBA president Lauren Fisher

"The Yates family has been a part of Del Ray since 1964," said Del Ray Business Association board member Gayle Reuter. "They've always been such an important part of Del Ray, always decorating, always winning



Owners and staff of Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap pose for a photo Feb. 11 after receiving the Heart of Del Ray Award.

landscape awards, and has given back to the community in so many ways -- especially these past couple of years with COVID. Every time we put out a call for help, Lena's is always there supporting us. This award reflects how much you care about your neighbors and the community itself."

Lena's is owned and operated by Jason and Loren Yates. Named for the matriarch

of the Yates family, the restaurant opened in 2015 at Yates Corner, which also includes Yates Dry Cleaning, Yates 7-Eleven and Yates Automotive Service Center.

Patrons cited Lena's thoughtful dining experiences throughout COVID. For many, a visit to Lena's Oasis marked their return to in-person dining during the pandemic.

"Lena's didn't just put up a tent with ta-

bles outside," wrote one nomination. "They recognized people needed an escape during COVID, so they created an elevated dining experience."

Another nomination noted their involvement in community events.

"Lena's always opens their door to the community, sends pizza for volunteers, sponsors events and is always there to support our community."

Over 1,000 neighbors participated in online voting. Past winners of the award include A Show of Hands, Jen Walker of McE-nearney Associates, Bobi Bomar Homes of Alexandria, The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray, Greener Cleaner of Del Ray, Del Ray Pizzeria, Mind the Mat Pilates & Yoga, Ca-boose Cafe, Del Ray Cafe, Pork Barrel BBQ/Holy Cow/the sushi bar, Taqueria Poblano, Ms. Preeti's 7-11, and Dolce & Bean. A business cannot win the award multiple years.

"It's not just the innovations and the experience," said DRBA president Dr. Lauren Fisher in presenting the award. "There's something special -- there's so much heart put into all of your businesses and being family-owned adds to it. People feel it. We're very, very grateful to have you as a part of the community."

www.visitdelray.com

- JEANNE THEISMANN



Boy Scouts Damian Klimn, Colin Bruce and Johnny Cooney of Den 1 Pack 614 take a break from helping sort donations during the Feb. 12 Alexandrians Have Heart food and clothing drive.



Volunteers and donors gather for a photo with organizer Frank Fannon at the 14th annual Alexandrians Have Heart food and clothing drive Feb. 12.

From the Heart Food and clothing drive benefits local charities.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Sunny skies and warm temperatures set the stage as hundreds of donors turned out for the 14th annual Alexandrians Have Heart food and clothing drive held Feb. 12 at the corner of Duke and S. Henry streets.

"This year was a huge success," said organizer Frank Fannon. "We

collected three pickup trucks full of clothing and over \$2,000 in cash contributions.

A lot of the clothing donations were new so Christ House was especially grateful for the generosity of our donors."

Held over Valentine's Day weekend, the drive benefits Christ House, Carpenter's Shelter and ALIVE!

"As we have gone through the

pandemic, there are more Alexandrians in need of clothing and especially food," Fannon said. "We had a large contribution of children's clothes this year following a big request from the charities. So if anyone has clothing to contribute please follow up with the local charities and continue to make your donations."

Donations were sorted and loaded by volunteers, including Boy

Scouts from Den 1 Pack 614 near Polk Elementary School.

"The boys are here to help load, unload and pack the donations as they come in," said Den leader John Cooney.

Members of the Commonwealth Republican Women's Club were also on hand supporting the event.

"We are here as part of our community outreach donating clothing and money for the Alexandri-

ans Have Heart food and clothing drive," said Susie Miller, president of the organization. "We are here every year to help Alexandrians in need."

Although it wasn't needed, Fannon had the traditional firepit going as donors enjoyed complimentary coffee and donuts.

"This was a great turnout," Fannon said. "I am happy so many Alexandrians participated this year."

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Black History Month: Filling in the Gaps

African American parents are giving their children accurate and comprehensive lessons on Black history.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Tracy Grant's fifth-grade son Hunter came home from school one day during Black History Month several years ago, she recalls his recounting of a lesson that he'd just learned. He said that his social studies teacher told the class that most slaves were treated well because their owners saw them as an expensive investment. Grant was speechless.

"I was baffled by that level of ignorance. Did that teacher not know that slaves could have their finger chopped off for knowing how to write or that some small slave children were fed slop in the same trough that were used to feed pigs on the plantation?" asked Grant, a registered nurse and Springfield mother of two. "That was when I decided that if I wanted my children to learn about Black history, I would have to teach them myself."

In the age of racial tension and restrictions around the teaching of African American history, black parents are serving as history tutors to ensure that their children receive a comprehensive and unbridled education on the atrocities, both past and present, faced by members of the African diaspora. A few local parents share their ideas.

"I don't focus on blaming or bad mouthing anyone, but I make sure my children know about the racist things that happened in the past," Anderson said. "They have to know our country's past actions so that they can understand what is going on today and why. Minimizing the realities of slavery does a disservice to not only Black students, but to society as a whole. How can we even begin to deal with racial problems in this country if children grow up with inaccurate views of the tragedies of our past?"

From slavery and lynching to the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights



PHOTO COURTESY OF VONETIA HARTLEY

African American parents and grandparents, like Vonetia Hartley, pictured here with three of her grandchildren, are giving their offspring in-depth lessons during Black History Month.

Movement, Grant uses trips to historical sites to give her children a lesson in Black history. "When I take my children and their friends to Mount Vernon, I don't go on the guided tour," she said. "I give them my own tour and explain our history. No matter how the media portrays us today, our children

overviews. "Most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks when they think of Black history, but there are so many more people of color who have made great contributions to this country," she said. "Everyone should visit the African American History Museum. Even though we've made strides, stereotypes and feelings of victimization have caused members of our race to have a sense of hopelessness."

"I have to make sure that my children know about Black heroes

"Most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks when they think of Black history, but there are so many more people of color who have made great contributions to this country,

— Tracy Anderson, mother of three

need to understand that we come from hardworking ancestors."

As an African American parent, Gloria Anderson, a Chevy Chase, Maryland mother of three, believes that it is her job to offer her children in-depth lessons rather than broad

like Dr. Charles Drew, continued Anderson, referring to an African American surgeon who was known for his lifesaving blood plasma research.

Many Post-Civil War periods
SEE BLACK HISTORY, PAGE 10

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Not the Love Story You Are Expecting

Discovering and nurturing the most important relationship after trauma.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Five years ago, Andrew Davie had almost everything he ever wanted. He had a fulfilling career as a high school English teacher at Alexandria's Commonwealth Academy; he was in seemingly excellent health; he had a supportive, loving family; and he was even in the process of publishing his first crime mystery novel.

On the brink of 40 years old, he felt there was only one thing missing in his life: a romantic relationship – a partner in crime, if you will.

"My primary focuses were teaching high school students with learning differences, and working to get my first book published," said Davie, an Alexandria resident. "Then it occurred to me that I'd like to one day soon be in a relationship – to settle down and start a family."

So, much like Davie executes any of his goals, he wasted no time dipping his toes into the dating pool – even diving into it. Always the optimist, he was even enjoying the process of what many find to be a draining and discouraging undertaking.

But, it wasn't long before life changed for the Alexandrian. He was actually en route to a beach vacation, when things went awry.

"It was the morning of June 29, 2018, and I had just turned 40 the week before," Davie recalled. "I was at Ronald Reagan airport, going to visit my parents who lived in Kiawah Island. I felt fine until I got to my gate, when I found myself sweating uncontrollably."

He thought he had a quick onset illness — nothing serious (prepandemic) — so he pushed through. He was, after all, looking forward to visiting his parents, brother, and sister-in-law.

"Then when I went up to scan my ticket, the floor began to shift as though I was in a Fun House at a carnival," Davie said. "I tried to take a step forward, and I fell straight-away on the jetway. Thank goodness I didn't board that plane."

Unbeknownst to him, or the people

around him, Davie was actively suffering from a ruptured brain aneurysm and subarachnoid hemorrhage. In other words — he was suddenly struck with a massively traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Call it an act of divine intervention. Whatever it was, the fact that Davie was in a public place and that he never boarded that plane helped save his life.

"Given that it was a weekday morning at the airport, it made it so that emergency responders got to me quickly," he said. "Everything that morning played a role in saving my life. Meanwhile, the only thing I remember saying is, 'I can't miss my flight ... my parents will be so worried.'"

That's the last coherent thought that Davie had for quite some time.

"I had no memory of the next three weeks," Davie said. "There are certain things that will trigger brain events like this, but I just happen to be one of the 'lucky people' who suffered from this type of brain injury. Luckily, I had been taken to the George Washington University Hospital, which is one of the best trauma hospitals in the United States. I was very fortunate."

"Apparently I was up, alert, talking to people and doing things, but I just don't remember it," he said. "I later watched videos of myself learning to eat and walk on my own for the first time again."

With a lot of dedication and a little bit of luck, most of Davie's recovery occurred within the first year after his TBI. He said he has barely any side effects, except that his balance is just a little off, and it takes a second or two for his sight to catch up with him when he turns his head suddenly.

"I say I'm like a human bobblehead," he explained in his typical good humor.

Then, after that first year of recovery, he wasted no time resuming his goals and passions. He even started dating again. And, these dates actually provided great fodder for another book — his dating memoirs, published in 2019.

"It was before the pandemic but after the TBI when I picked up right where I left off," Davie said. "Each date became a bit like a



Andrew Davie

"Everything that morning played a role in saving my life."

— Andrew Davie

Seinfeld episode scenario: it was all about, 'when do I bring up the aneurysm?' Do I wait for appetizers or until after the main course?"

But then, of course, the global pandemic hit and stopped his romantic quest in its tracks (as it did for so many of us).

And, fast forward four years, with both Davie's world and the world at large having shifted a bit more toward normal status, Davie made an important discovery (a brand new lease on life — and love).

"I feel much more comfortable with myself now," Davie said. "Before, I had assumed that being in a relationship with someone was going to make my life more valuable. So, I kept trying to shoehorn it in. Now, I realize, if I meet the right person, and we get along, and we make each other better, then that's wonderful. But, for now, I can be happy and fulfilled in other ways."

BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

One resource that helped him arrive at this point was Brain Injury Services, a non-profit organization in Springfield that empowers people who have been impacted by brain injuries.

"We serve children, adults, and veterans and do so with our core service which is case management," Michelle Thyen, CVA, Director of Community and Volunteer Engagement, said. "We also have a variety of programs in-house, including mental health therapy services, vocational services, volunteer services, a variety of support groups, and more."

Thyen added that Davie — and his recovery — was nothing short of remarkable, and that he has so much to be proud of.

"He came to us a few years ago ready to learn and grow from his experience as a brain injury survivor and he did just that," Thyen said. "He volunteers by serving other survivors who are interested in furthering themselves through writing and poetry and blogging. He also chats weekly with other survivors to keep their isolation at bay and to help them build social skills. He has participated in numerous groups, receives case management, and is an active speaker in the Brain Injury Services Speaker's Bureau."

For more information on Brain Injury Services, see <https://braininjurysvcs.org/>

Even with the most recent Valentine's Day in his rear view mirror, Davie — who is currently enrolled at the Chicago School of Psychology to become a licensed therapist — encourages others to shed the notion that life isn't complete without "perfect match."

He hopes everyone can get to the point where he is — more than happy with the life he's created on his own; and with a little help from the friends and family who also know he doesn't need another "half" to make him wonderfully whole.

"Before it all, I didn't think that would be enough," he said. "If I could tell anyone anything that I've learned, I'd say, try to feel comfortable with who you are first, and then if you can find somebody who appreciates you exactly as you are, then that would be ideal. What I've learned when it comes to both recovery and dating is that there is usually a significant difference between expectation versus reality. It's all about learning to be comfortable with it."

Black History Month: Filling in the Gaps

FROM PAGE 9

in African American history, such as the forced sterilization of African American women, are omitted from mainstream teachings, says Anderson. "Reading historical fiction gives children a sense of the psychological damage that African Americans have endured throughout history," she said.

"I make sure that all of my children read books like 'Like Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry' by Mildred Taylor. It paints a real picture of what life was like for sharecroppers.

There are some children who grow up thinking that sharecropping helped Black people get on their feet and create a better life for themselves after slavery ended. In reality, Whites used lynching,

beatings and burnings to intimidate sharecroppers so they stayed chained to the land without the possibility of improving their lives."

Presenting Black history in a way that young children can understand, preschool teacher Vonecia Hartley, Alexandria mother of three adult children and four grandchildren, uses the achievements of prominent African Amer-

icans figures to help her students and grandchildren realize that there are no limits to what they can achieve. "I want them to understand the importance of knowing who they are and how unique they are," she said. "I want them to know that there are so many options in their future. Whether they want to be president, governor, doctor, police officer, airplane pilot or inven-

tor, they can become it."

Extending lessons on African American history beyond 28 days in February is what Grant encourages. "It should be woven into our everyday lives so that it's not seen as something special to think about in February," Grant said. "Our ancestors made contributions that affect us every day."



PHOTOS BY STEVE MUTH

George Washington Birthday Parade is Feb. 21, 1 to 3 p.m.

George Washington's Birthday

FROM PAGE 5

Washington, 1758-1774." The George Washington Symposium is held annually to honor Washington's birthday by providing the public with enlightening contemporary research on the life of George Washington. Admission is free and free parking is available.

George Washington Birthday Gala

Feb. 26, 2022, beginning at 5 p.m.

Formal (white tie optional). Reception at 5:00 p.m. Entertainment in the Memorial Theater at 6:30 p.m. Banquet in the Memorial's Grand Masonic Hall at 7:30 p.m. The presentation of the George Washington Memorial Award will take place during the banquet. Tickets are \$200. To purchase tickets, visit gwmemorial.org. Tickets are limited.

George Washington Birthday Parade Day

Activities – Feb. 21, 2022

Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association Breakfast

Feb. 21, 9 to 10:30 a.m. Meet special guests and enjoy a hearty breakfast with members of this historic association. First appearance of the day of General and Martha Washington. Speaker: Mark Jinks, retired Alexandria city manager, relating his "hidden ghost" stories and other anecdotal experiences. Location: The Westin Alexandria Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Ticket Price: \$45, table of 10 \$400. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Bill Kehoe, Secretary, kehoefd@aol.com.

Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution

Feb. 21, 11 a.m. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they honor the soldiers of the Revolution. Location: Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 321 So. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. No registration required. FREE.

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Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony

Feb. 21, 12 to 1 p.m.

Join us as we honor our Nation's Veterans, Active Military, and their families with music and demonstrations. Speakers include Alexandria's Mayor and the commanders of major military installations in the metropolitan area. Sign the Covenant Document and show your support for our Military as we honor our first veteran. Location: Parade reviewing stand at King & Royal Streets. FREE.

George Washington Birthday Parade

Feb. 21, 1 to 3 p.m.

The nation's largest George Washington Birthday parade marches a one-mile route through the streets of his chosen hometown. Location: Old Town Alexandria. For more information, including parking, maps, route and status, visit washingtonbirthday.com, email gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com or call 571-384-8170. FREE.

Museums Open on Parade Day Feb. 21

While in Alexandria for the parade, stop by Gadsby's Tavern Museum and the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Regular admission applies, which means City of Alexandria residents can visit for free. Guests must wear masks that cover their mouth and nose while in the buildings.

Gadsby's Tavern Museum will have costumed guides throughout the museum sharing stories about the many people who worked in and visited the tavern, including George Washington. Location: 134 North Royal Street. For more information, call (703) 746-4242.

The Apothecary Museum will be offering both first-floor admission as well as guided tours at 11:15, 12:15, 1:15, 2:15, 3:15 and 4:15 p.m. Residents interested in reserving space on a guided tour for free can call the museum at 703-746-3852. Location: 105-107 S. Fairfax Street.

Super Shopping Warehouse Sale takes to King Street.

Clear skies and cold temperatures greeted shoppers during the Alexandria Warehouse Sale held Feb. 5 and 6 in Old Town. More than 60 boutiques participated in the sale, showcasing merchandise in pop-up tents and open retail space along King Street.

"It's been a little cold, a little slow today," said Lindsay Wasiljob of online retailer MissionEdit.com of the Saturday crowds. "But there's always tomorrow."

– JEANNE THEISMANN

JANET BARNETT
GAZETTE PACKET



Owners Catherine Cabo and Lindsay Wasiljob of MissionEdit.com participate in the Alexandria Warehouse Sale Feb. 5 on King Street in Old Town.

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU FEB. 28

Hunt for Washington. A fun and challenging game to uncover clues about Alexandria and George Washington. The hunt, which should take about 60-90 minutes to complete, will take individuals and families to places in Old Town Alexandria associated with the General. Start by printing a clue sheet from www.washington-birthday.com at home and bring it with you as you traverse the heart of Old Town and then use your sleuthing skills to find answers to the clues. Submit your findings to gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com any time before the end of the day on February 28. There are prizes and mementos associated with this event! Free.

NOW THRU FEB. 28

American Legion Post 24 Run, Walk, n' Roll. This George Washington Birthday Commemorative event is intended to build community and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional resiliency of participants—veterans and non-veterans alike. This month-long event during February 2022 encourages participants to run, walk and/or roll on their own for at least 24 miles in increments and routes they choose. Registration is \$24. Visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Alexandria/GWB24Run-WalkRoll> for more information.

NOW THRU MARCH 6

Artist's Exhibition: Oenone Hammersley and Darren Smith. At the Athenaeum Gallery, Alexandria. Artists Meet and Greet, Sunday March 6, 2 — 4 p.m. Oenone Hammersley's paintings depict abstract water patterns in mixed media on canvas and wooden panels. The panels are cut to resemble water cascading or waves breaking. Darren Smith uses his creative vision while leading the foreign-language editions of National Geographic Magazine. He applies the same skills to making his handmade photo collages. The Athenaeum Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday 12 to 4 p.m.

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Washington Revels Jubilee Voices in Concert. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Alexandria Black History Museum presents the Washington Revels Jubilee Voices in concert. Join the Revels as their members explore the rich history of African American music. Visit alexandria-va.gov/historic

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Virtual Birthnight Banquet & Ball. 7 – 9 p.m. Join in the celebrations that have been ongoing for hundreds of years – General Washington's Birthnight Ball. Gather your bubble to honor our first President overZoom. Begin the evening with a video presentation about the history of this event and hear from those that have participated in it for years. Have conversations about your favorite Birthnight experience. Then the General will be available live for all your questions! Lastly, enjoy English Country Dancing called by an expert Dance Master from the historic Ballroom that you can do with 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8 people at home. Period costumes of the 1790s encouraged! One virtual dance class on February 17th is included. Tickets are \$15 per person. A dinner from Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant and traditional

Birthnight Ball cake from Bittersweet are available for pickup with separate purchase of \$50. Visit AlexandriaVA.gov/Shop.

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Learn To Speak for the Trees. 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Via Zoom. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Discover how you can help restore our urban forest – one yard at a time. Zoom into the “Virtual EcoSavvy Symposium: Restoring Urban Forests.” The program, hosted by Green Spring Gardens, will help you understand the ecological imperative to preserve and grow our tree canopy. Learn what you can do to help improve the issue of tree canopy decline throughout the region. Discover steps you can apply in your community -- and in your own yard -- to reverse this disturbing trend. The cost is \$58 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

FEB. 20, 27

“George Washington's Alexandria” Tours. 2 to 4 p.m. Explore historic Old Town Alexandria as George Washington knew it. This popular two-hour guided walking tour will visit sites associated with Washington and his closest colleagues, including Christ Church, Light Horse Harry Lee's house, the Lord Fairfax home, Washington's townhouse, Gadsby's Tavern, Duvall Tavern, Wise's Tavern, the Carlyle House, Market Square, Ramsay House, the Apothecary Shop and Gentry Row. To register, visit eventbrite.com and search George Washington's Alexandria. Free.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Virtual Winter Lecture: Lift Every Voice. 1:30-2:30 p.m. (16-Adult) From sea to shining sea, Black people have made rich contributions to American garden history. Join horticulturalist and historian Abra Lee on this journey through the DMV and beyond as we celebrate these horticultural trailblazers. A Zoom link will be emailed before the event. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code UXS.V271.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Bits & Pieces. 5 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Bits and Pieces - Jane Franklin Dance is a performance of new works inspired by artworks by Oenone Hammersley and Darren Smith, alongside recent repertory about attraction and partnership. Featuring: Jane Franklin Dance with Philip Baraoidan, Carly Johnson, Kelsey Rohr, Amy Scaringe, Kevin White. Tickets are \$20. Visit <https://janefranklin.com/performance/bits>

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Free Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon. February 21 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. February 22 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Celebrate the first president of the United States at his beloved home. Admission is free for Presidents Day and George Washington's birthday. Admission tickets must be reserved online in advance.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association Breakfast. 9:00 – 10:30



The George Washington Birthday parade will be held on Monday, Feb. 21, 2022.

a.m. Meet special guests and enjoy a hearty breakfast with members of this historic association. First appearance of the day of General and Martha Washington. Speaker: Mark Jinks, Retired Alexandria City Manager, relating his “hidden ghost” stories and other anecdotal experiences. Location: The Westin Alexandria Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Ticket Price: \$45, table of 10 \$400. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Bill Kehoe, Secretary, kehoejd@aol.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution. 11 a.m. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they honor the soldiers of the Revolution. Location: Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 321 So. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. No registration required. FREE.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony. 12 – 1 p.m. Honor our Nation's Veterans, Active Military, and their families with music and demonstrations. Speakers include Alexandria's Mayor and the commanders of major military installations in the metropolitan area. Sign the Covenant Document and show your support for our Military as we honor our first veteran. Location: Parade reviewing stand at King & Royal Streets. FREE.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

George Washington Birthday Parade. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. The nation's largest George Washington Birthday parade marches a one-mile route through the streets of his chosen hometown! Location: Old Town Alexandria. For more information, including parking, maps, route and status, visit www.washingtonbirthday.com, email gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com or call 571-384-8170. Free.

TUESDAY/FEB. 22

Left Behind: Stories from the Underground Railroad. 7 to 8 p.m. Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold looks at what formally enslaved people left behind when they escaped to freedom. Freedom—it's what we

all desire, but if you had to leave something or someone behind, could you do it for the hope of a word called “freedom?” Through story, song and audience interaction, Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold, looks at the fugitive slaves from the Underground Railroad and shares what they left behind – family, clothes, name and even life. Visit alexlibraryva.org.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 23

George Washington's Hair. 7-8 p.m. Virtual. Keith Beutler's new book, George Washington's Hair: How Early Americans Remembered the Founders, explains how, between 1790 and 1840, popular memory took a turn toward the physical, as exemplified by the craze for collecting locks of George Washington's hair. This book uncovers a forgotten strand of early American memory practices and emerging patriotic identity. Visit the website: mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Garden Artists: Fleeting Masterpiece Program. 1-2 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Participants 5 and older can explore the temporary art of Andy Goldsworthy, and use rocks, leaves, branches and even ice to create a personal, fleeting nature masterpiece. All attendees, including parents, must register. The cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Washington Symposium. 1 p.m. The George Washington Masonic National Memorial hosts leading scholars of the life and legacy of George Washington. The theme of the 2022 George Washington Symposium is “The Political Education of George Washington, 1758-1774.” The George Washington Symposium is held annually to honor Washington's birthday by providing the public with enlightening contemporary research on the life of George Washington. Admission is free and free parking is available.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

George Washington Birthday Gala. Formal (white tie optional). Reception at 5 p.m. Entertainment in

the Memorial Theater at 6:30 p.m. Banquet in the Memorial's Grand Masonic Hall at 7:30 p.m. The presentation of the George Washington Memorial Award will take place during the banquet. Tickets are \$200. To purchase tickets, visit <https://gwmemorial.org/>. Tickets are limited.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Winter Garden Tour: Green Spring Up & Down. 10-11:30 a.m. (Adult) Extension Master Gardener docents lead a tour of Green Spring's winter landscape. View some upper demonstration gardens, then take the garden path less travelled to explore the naturalistic lower garden areas: the Virginia Native Plant Garden, woodland stream valley, and ponds. Finish at the Historic House with warm drinks. Tour involves a steep slope with loose gravel. \$15 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code V9N.BJ0T.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26.

Great Woody Plants for the Home Garden. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (16-Adult) Green Spring horticulturist Brenda Skarphol highlights beautiful flowering shrubs that grow well in Virginia home gardens. Get to know seasonal standouts for winter and spring. Learn the culture and care of these beauties and how to best showcase them in your garden. The program takes place outdoors. \$18 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code JC2.FE9S.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Garden Talk: Get Ready for Spring. 10:30-11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) Spring garden maintenance in Northern Virginia begins in winter and is a terrific way to shake the winter blahs. It's time to prune, transplant, fertilize, mulch and prevent weeds. Extension Master Gardeners give tips for selecting plants and starting seedlings. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code B58.AJW9.

Employment

Advertising agency looking for someone to assist with temporary admin job. 30- 40 hours a week. Data entry and Customer Service. Old Town office although much of the work can be done from home. Must be Microsoft knowledgeable. Attention to details / deadlines is important. Hours are flexible. If interested, please email aiglesias@srcpmedia.com

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THE CONNECTION
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Obituary



Elizabeth P. Sibold, known to her friends as Libby, and a longtime resident of Alexandria, died on January 28, 2022 at Goodwin House Alexandria. She was born in Henderson NC in 1924 to Lewis G. Porter and Anna B. Porter. She grew up in Alexandria and attended Hollins College until her marriage in 1942 to Ensign Arthur P. Sibold Jr of Chattanooga, TN. During their marriage of 63 years, they lived in Massachusetts, South Carolina, New Mexico, Connecticut, Hawaii and Virginia. She is survived by her six children Arthur III (Sherry),

Brian (Goody), Ann (Robert), Stuart (Donna), Katherine, and Lucy (John), 14 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Jamestown Society, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria Library Company, Army Navy Country Club, Hunting Creek Garden Club, and the Alexandria Community Y/Campagna Center, where she served as President of the Y from 1971 to 1973.

Libby was a devoted Navy wife, cheerfully relocating throughout her married life until Art retired in 1968 in Alexandria as a Captain, USN. As is common to all in the Navy, Libby and Art made lifelong friends along the way. Art and Libby loved being parents and introduced all their children to the joys and lifetime memories of outdoor adventures through camping throughout the western states, New England and Canada. They also explored cultural and historical sites where they lived. They lived for 30 years in their Mount Place home in Alexandria before settling into retirement living in Woodbridge, VA. After Art died, Libby relocated to Goodwin House. Once launching their kids they enthusiastically embraced being grandparents, visiting often and sharing more adventures with them.

Libby lived to almost 98 years and was the last of her generation of family and friends. She lived a disciplined healthy life and walked multiple miles daily up to her 90s. Libby and Art are remembered for the devotion to and championing of their children and grandchildren, their fun, love of outdoor adventure, dedication to country, and excellent role modeling of parenting and hosting of hilarious theme parties with their friends—well lubricated with G&Ts, martinis and chili con queso. Libby had a gift for extraordinary friendliness, gratitude, contentment and good humor to the very end. All her children are tremendously grateful to call her mom. Services will take place later. Contributions in lieu of flowers to The Campagna Center www.campagnacenter.org/donate/ or The Carpenters Shelter <https://carpentersshelter.org/give/> or www.EveryWheatly.com

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Date With Destiny – Or Not

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Despite having cancer and having been given a “terminal” diagnosis/“13 month to two years” prognosis in late February 2009, I rarely, believe or not, consider my own mortality. Well, occasionally in these columns, but day-to-day, hardly ever. Oddly enough, something occurred the other day which meant very little to me when I first heard about it until I read more about it today on the ESPN website. ‘It’ being that former Major League baseball player Jeremy Giambi had died. Mr. Giambi was 47, but initially no cause of death or any other particulars were provided. Today’s story, an Associated Press release filled in some of the gaps. His cause of death was suicide and listed his date of birth (finally the point of this column) as September 30, 1974.

Why should you care? Probably not for the same reason as I do. Jeremy Giambi and I share the same birthday: Sept. 30, though not the same birth year. Nevertheless, seeing a person you have heard of – which I have, or whom billions of others haven’t, die, and whose birthday is identical to yours is – sobering, and I don’t even drink. In an odd and complicated way, seeing/hearing/reading about someone dying with whom you share a birthday is unsettling somehow. To invoke a “Star Wars” reference, I feel something akin to a weakening of the force. And in this context, that feeling being whatever intangible/physical/spiritual ‘force’ keeps us alive. I don’t want to see anyone dying, especially anyone who has the same as birthday as I do. It’s as if any other person dying who has a September 30 birthday affects my mortality somehow, and that I’m at greater risk because of it, like we have some sort of connection. It’s like when another cancer patient succumbs to our shared disease. I don’t exactly feel their pain, but I feel the loss, as if I’ve lost a key member of Team Lourie. And as a cancer patient still undergoing treatment, I don’t need any negativity seeping in.

In fact, I can’t see how thinking about death in any context is helpful. Early on in my cancer life, I was told by multiple medical professionals how important – and helpful, maintaining a positive attitude would be – and has proved to be. Though there’s no real empirical evidence, anecdotal evidence suggests however, that there is a link between attitude and survival. As a longtime cancer patient who has remained positive about this incredible negative, I believe this to be way more than an abstract theory.

For me, and all of you, life goes on until it doesn’t, duh. Still, I don’t want or need to be reminded of my own mortality, in any context. Moreover, I realize I had already jumped to the head of the mortality class when I was diagnosed 13 years ago. Perhaps I’m overstating the significance of Mr. Giambi’s death to me? Perhaps, his having been a Major Leaguer who played his last season for the Boston Red Sox, my hometown team, and I’m a sports’ guy from Boston, intensifies the effect on me? Whatever it is, I don’t ever want to see my birthday associated with death.

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

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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.volunteeralexandria.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 possible. www.volunteeralexandria.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.volunteeralexandria.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.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE>

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.

Join Friends’ Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City’s most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria’s top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com.

Surovell

FROM PAGE 6

thorities to recover methane generated at sewage plants and landfills so that it can be captured and used instead of generating more methane from hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” for natural gas to heat homes and power buses, stoves and water heaters.

We also considered legislation addressing in-person learning and masking in schools. In the last month, major medical journal articles have reported that this pandemic is moving into an endemic phase and will persevere in ways similar to the common cold or the flu. Last week, Dr. Anthony Fauci, an infectious disease expert, confirmed that we are moving into an endemic and Fairfax County Public Schools announced a new policy that will effectively end the mask mandate once Fairfax County achieves certain metrics. In addition, the Prince William County School Board Chairman Babur Lateef said the mandate needs to end. The governors of Oregon, California, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware are moving away from universal masking mandates while the Biden administration is exploring adjustments to masking guidance.

Last week, we debated an amendment to one bill, SB 739, to standardize state masking optional policies. I voted for the amendment to include a mask policy in the bill that would be effective July 1, 2022. Several constituents have asked about my vote.

Unfortunately, our schools, school boards and communities are being torn apart because some are politicizing public health issues instead of respecting health experts. It is virtually impossible to have a rational discussion about the

effectiveness of masks, quarantines and even vaccines across party lines. Virginia school boards cannot even agree on what the Center for Disease Control guidance says. In many cases, Democratic-led school boards are concluding that mandatory masks are required and Republican-led school boards are saying that they are not.

Our school systems need clarity on this issue and we need to get school boards, teachers and children out of the political crossfire. As a state senator, I have to vote on policy for the entire state, not just Northern Virginia. I also want state legislators to be at the table in this discussion after our current masking law expires on Aug. 1, 2022, instead of creating more uncertainty by ceding the issue solely to Governor Youngkin, school boards and courts and perpetuating a climate in which school board members face death threats and citizens carrying firearms to local school board meetings.

I voted against the bill’s final passage because it restricted school boards’ ability to mitigate pandemic emergencies in perpetuity. Attacks on medical science have caused more Virginians than ever to doubt vaccines and challenge vaccine policy. No one knows when the next pandemic will arrive or whether we will start seeing localized breaks of measles or other viruses.

Unfortunately, Governor Youngkin added an emergency clause to the bill making it effective March 1 instead of July 1, refused to add a sunset provision to the bill, and three of my Democratic colleagues crossed over to support it. I remain opposed and expect litigation to ensue once again.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. I hope you will share your views with me at scott@scottsurovell.org

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