



Home of the Brave “Flags For Heroes” on display at Cedar Knoll.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The strains of a lone trumpeter filled the air as hundreds of American flags stood overlooking the Potomac River as part of the 5th annual Flags for Heroes opening ceremony June 26 on the grounds of Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

“Today is about honoring those who serve our country, those who have given without thought to themselves,” said Alexandria Rotary Club president Pam DeCandio.

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Alexandria, the Flags for Heroes project provides community members an opportunity to dedicate a flag to honor a hero in their life. A card attached to each flag bears the name of the hero – a friend, family member, veteran, health-care worker, first responder or other hero -- along with the name of the individual sponsor.

“I have five flags here today,” DeCandio said. “One for each of the fathers of five of my childhood friends. They were all military and were like my other fathers. Only one is still living and I wanted to honor them all.”

Speakers at the event included the Hon. Allison Silberberg, who gave the keynote address, and Akale Kinte, president of the Thomas Jefferson High School In-

teract Club.

Boy Scouts from the region joined Rotary Club members and volunteers in unfurling more than 300 flags at 6 a.m. the previous day to set up the display, which will remain in place through July 10. Rotarians from Mount Vernon and Alexandria West partnered with Alexandria in the program.

This year’s Flags for Heroes program raised in excess of \$24,000, which will benefit Alexandria Rotary Club community projects and provide direct financial support to more than 40 local charities and nonprofits.

“This is our most successful year yet,” said organizer Sharon Meisel. “We had great weather and loyal support from our corporate sponsors.”

Rotarian Jim Lindsay closed the ceremony with a reading of the names of club members who have died.

The ringing of a bell accompanied each name as it was read followed by the playing of Taps by trumpeter Paul Johnson.

“Our club is amazing,” DeCandio added. “Every year I get to honor people who have meant very much to me throughout my life. This is also an opportunity for everyone to honor the unsung heroes of our community.”

www.alexandriarotary.org



Attendees recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the opening ceremony of the Flags For Heroes display June 26 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant along the Potomac River. The annual event is a project of the Rotary Club of Alexandria.



Paul Johnson performs at the opening ceremony of the Flags for Heroes program June 26 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Organizers gather at the June 26 opening of the Flags for Heroes display on the grounds of Cedar Knoll Restaurant. Pictured are Rotary Club president-elect Denny Kuhns, past president John Moorman, and members Nancy Van Gulick, Jim Carmalt and Bob McClure.



Alexandria Rotary Club president Pam DeCandio, left, is joined by president-elect Denny Kuhns, Akale Kinte, president of the Thomas Jefferson High School Interact Club, and the Hon. Allison Silberberg at the opening ceremony of Flags For Heroes June 26 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

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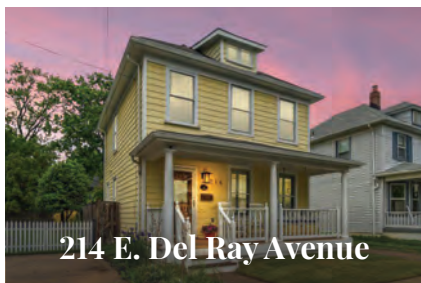
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New Board Members for Senior Services

Senior Services of Alexandria welcomed five new board members at its annual luncheon on June 22, 2022. The new members have a broad range of experience from the legal and business sectors as well as long-time community supporters.

"We are pleased to welcome such an impressive, diverse group of women and men to the Board of Senior Services of Alexandria, said Board Chair Kerry Donley. They bring a strong skill set and a commitment to improving the lives of older adults. We look forward to working with them as we continue to expand our services to the various diverse communities within our city. We also want to thank Laurie Blackburn and Willie Bailey for their dedicated service as they finish their board terms."

The new board members are:

Robert Steele

Robert Steele retired from The Washington Gas Company as a Promotional Representative and former Chair of the Trustee Board for the 3rd Baptist Church of Alexandria. He is a member of The Grandfathers Group, a senior volunteer program since 1998. Robert served on the planning committee for Mayor William D. Euille's campaign. He is a member of the Alexandria NAACP, Northern Virginia Urban League, Del Ray Citizens Association, former member of the Campagna Center Board of directors and many more civic organizations. Robert is also involved in numerous Masonic and Shrine Affiliations. SSA welcomes this distinguished group of individuals to its Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 term. For more information about SSA's work in the community go to www.seniorservicesalex.org or its Facebook page.



Robert Steele



Meg Bonitt

Meg Bonitt

Meg grew up in Alexandria with her three brothers. She and her husband have two children. Currently, she helps her husband run the award-winning Alexandria business, Bonitt Builders. Meg loved her career at The American Bankers Association where she was Associate Director of the State Association Division. She has worked on all of Senator Warner's campaigns and runs his Forward Together Pac's annual retreat. She has been involved with many Alexandria organizations and schools. In her spare time, she is in several book clubs and needlepoints. You can find her outside walking her golden retriever.



Gerry Cooper

Gerry Cooper

Gerry Cooper is returning to Senior Services of Alexandria's Board and is a long-time member of the Alexandria community. Gerry retired from a 35-year career with The Stanley Works, now Stanley Black and Decker, and worked in various financial and manufacturing positions. He then started his own business, Asia Tech Source Company, to provide engineered parts, manufacturing, and product development to mid-sized hardware and tool distributors in North America. His many volunteer activities include delivering Meals on Wheels, serving hot breakfasts to needy Alexandrians every Thursday, the Vestry at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Oxford, MD, and as an Elder at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House.



David Dolton

David Dolton

David Dolton is a Regional Vice President with Clearwave, a leading patient access and engagement software solution provider. He's had a long career in the healthcare industry serving in various positions in the Snyder Healthcare Marketing Services. David served as a Vice President with the Washington Football team. He has extensive Board experience including the Society for Participatory Medicine, Medical Care for Children Partnership. He also volunteers in the community including with Senior Services of Alexandria's Groceries-to-Go Program.



Gretchyn Meinken

Gretchyn Meinken

Gretchyn Meinken is partner with the Alexandria firm of Wade, Grimes, Friedman, Meinken, Leischner, PLLC. She provides legal counsel in a variety of practice areas with a focus on estate planning, estate and trust administration, adult guardianship and general business law. For the past several years, she has participated in the planning of Senior Law Day and presented on Estate Planning. This annual event is sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association.

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Performs for Alexandria Birthday Celebration

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO) will present a free concert as part of the 273rd Alexandria Birthday Celebration on Saturday, July 9, 2022. The celebration, sponsored by the city and coordinated by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, culminates

with fireworks underscored by additional music from the orchestra.

The concert will include music by Copland, the Armed Forces Medley, film scores, patriotic favorites and highlights from ASO's upcoming season. The grand finale will feature a spectacular fireworks display, accompanied by other pa-

triotic tunes. The event will include all the elements of the celebration from years past with vendors, food trucks, and cupcakes.

"The ASO is thrilled to bring this tradition back in full force to the City of Alexandria," says Music Director James Ross. "With musical works celebrating both our history

and diversity, it will be a program that touches hearts — fanfares, patriotic fare, Sousa marches. What a delight to present the orchestra again with the celebration in its grandest form."

As ASO partners in the celebration, the symphony thanks its concert sponsors: McEneaney Associates Realtors; Renner & Com-

pany, CPA; Caudron Megary Blackburn Wealth Management; Chadwicks; Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota; MT Dental Partners; and Burke & Herbert Bank.

"Music has the power to bring us together," says ASO Executive Director George. SEE ALEXANDRIA, PAGE 5

'A Visionary Pioneer'

Tree planted in memory of Julia Johns.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Mayor Justin Wilson joined representatives of the Board of Lady Managers and Inova Alexandria Hospital in planting a tree in memory of Julia Johns June 8 at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Johns is the founder of the Board of Lady Managers, the motivating force behind the establishment of Alexandria's first medical facility in 1872.

The daughter of the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, Johns rallied local citizens to establish "a hospital for the sick" in Alexandria. The Commonwealth of Virginia granted a charter in December of 1872 to the Alexandria Infirmary, which opened its doors to patients in January of 1873 in a townhouse at the southwest corner of Duke and South Fairfax streets.

Under the leadership of Johns,



Mayor Justin Wilson, second from left, is joined by Board of Lady Managers president Mary Ryan, Inova Alexandria Chief Medical Officer Dr. Rina Bansal, the Very Reverend Ian Markham, Dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary, and Dr. Lydia Hile, Chair of the Inova Alexandria Emergency Department at the June 8 tree planting ceremony in memory of Julia Johns. Johns is credited with founding Alexandria's first hospital in 1872.



The gravestone of Julia Johns, founder of the Board of Lady Managers and Alexandria's first hospital, on the grounds of Virginia Theological Seminary.



Dr. Rina Bansal, Chief Medical Officer of Inova Alexandria, helps plant a tree in memory of Julia Johns, founder of the Board of Lady Managers and Alexandria's first hospital, at Virginia Theological Seminary June 8.

the Board of Lady Managers was formed to help establish the Infirmary and was given full responsibility for its management. That management continued until 1941 when the administration of the hospital was turned over to a professional staff.

Now in its 150th year, the Board of Lady Managers continues to raise funds for the hospital and

provides significant improvements for medical technology and patient care facilities.

Johns died in Alexandria in 1883 and is buried near her father at the Virginia Theological Seminary. A plaque by her grave reads in part, "A Visionary Community Pioneer, Extraordinary Leader of Women and Compassionate Humanitarian."



Silverado Senior Regional Administrator Katie Hilburn, fifth from right, stands with support staff at the 25th anniversary celebration of the organization's founding June 16 at the Alexandria facility, which opened in 2018.



Silverado Senior Regional Administrator Katie Hilburn, left, and Loren B. Shook, Silverado president and CEO, at the 25th anniversary celebration of Silverado memory care facilities June 16 in Alexandria.



Family champion Dori Smith speaks about her father's experience at Silverado during the organization's 25th anniversary celebration June 16.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

'True Sense of Family'

Silverado celebrates 25th anniversary.

Silverado of Alexandria hosted a 25th anniversary celebration for the memory care and assisted living company June 16 at its Alexandria location.

Mayor Justin Wilson joined Silverado founder and CEO Loren B. Shook and Senior Regional Administrator Katie Hilburn in celebrating with support staff and health care workers.

"We are excited to celebrate 25 years of changing lives and improving the quality of

life for people living with dementia," Hilburn said. "There is a true sense of family here."

Founded in October of 1996, Silverado now has 28 locations throughout the country. The Alexandria facility on King Street opened in May of 2018.

"The commitment and resilience here are incredible," Hilburn added. "The leadership team and the connectedness of families to each other is part of the culture and groundwork that was laid by our founder, Loren Shook, 25 years ago."

www.silverado.com

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Mayor Justin Wilson, left, celebrates the 25th anniversary of Silverado memory care facilities with Cele Garrett, John Noelle, Maria Delpizzo and Jennifer Brown June 16 in Alexandria.

Prosecutorial Discretion

Northern Virginia prosecutors say they won't enforce abortion restrictions.



Steve Descano



Steve Descano



Parisa Dehghani-Tafti

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Nine prosecutors across Virginia say they will not enforce any new restrictions on abortion, complicating Republican efforts to crack down on reproductive freedom in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs versus Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The nine prosecutors include most of Northern Virginia, including Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano, Arlington Commonwealth's Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti and Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter.

"Not all of us agree on a personal or moral level on the issue of abortion," the prosecutors wrote in the joint statement. "But we stand together in our firm belief that prosecutors have a responsibility to refrain from using limited criminal legal system resources to criminalize reproductive health decisions."

The letter was released by a criminal-justice reform nonprofit organization known as Fair and Just Prosecution, which is financially supported by the California-based Tides Center. It included 88 elected prosecutors from across the country, including district attorneys and attorneys general. Here in Virginia, the nine commonwealth's attorneys are elected and have nobody to answer to but

voters.

"I hope that people of the commonwealth pay attention to prosecutors who claim that they have the discretion to enforce the law of the commonwealth and take note of that the next time there's an election," said Steve Aden, chief legal officer and general counsel at Americans United for Life.

Commonwealth's attorneys in Virginia have wide latitude to decide which cases they want to pursue. That prosecutorial discretion was recently strengthened by a bill introduced by Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36), which was prompted by Circuit Court judges in Arlington and Norfolk who refused to dismiss marijuana possession cases after prosecutors requested

dismissal. So Surovell introduced a bill in the 2020 session to force judges to dismiss cases under those circumstances, and former Gov. Ralph Northam signed it into law.

"If a prosecutor moves to dismiss an abortion prosecution, and the defense says they're fine with that a court would have to grant a

dismissal," said Surovell. "If we had not passed that law, it would have been a bit more complicated."

Judges still have some authority to determine what happens with prosecutions. Loudoun Circuit Court Judge James Plowman recently threw Commonwealth's Attorney Buta Biberaj off a case when he determined that a plea deal she struck was too lenient. So the protections for prosecutorial discretion are not absolute. And

if Republicans were able to get the votes to outlaw abortion, they could also have the votes to pass a bill that undermines prosecutorial discretion and allows the attorney general to step in and try cases.

"As long as I'm commonwealth's

attorney, in Fairfax County we will not prosecute a woman or a provider for making her own health-care decisions," said Steve Descano, commonwealth's attorney in Fairfax County. "My obligation is to public safety, and I know that

abortion bans don't keep our community safe. All they do is actually lead to more

loss of life because abortion bans just force women into back-alley abortions, which lead to more death."

"My obligation is to public safety, and I know that abortion bans don't keep our community safe."

— Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

FROM PAGE 3

Hanson. "We mark significant moments in our lives and in our history with music that has special meaning and importance."

The Alexandria Birthday Celebration is free and open to the

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public in Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison Street, Alexandria. The park opens at 6:00 p.m. with food vendors and announcements beginning at 7:30 p.m.; the ASO's concert begins at 8:30 p.m. with fireworks at 9:30 p.m.



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U.S. Supreme Court Puts Virginians Safety at Risk

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

The U.S. Supreme Court on June 23 issued a disturbing decision on guns, the New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn. v. Bruen case, which clarified the scope of firearms rules declared by the Supreme Court in a previous case, D.C. v. Heller, decided in 2008. This is yet another disappointing decision from that court, like the one I wrote about last week, the Dobbs case, which would severely limit women's reproductive rights.

Before 2008, American courts interpreted the Second Amendment as authorizing states the freedom to regulate their militias – today's National Guard. In Heller, the Court invalidated the District of Columbia's handgun ban and requirement that rifles in the home be stored with trigger locks and unassembled. This was the first time the Court found such a right existed.

Today, New York requires every gun owner to obtain a license to own or possess a gun and to meet certain character standards. If a person wants to carry a concealed firearm outside the home, he or she has to demonstrate "good cause," which courts have found is "a special need for self-protection

distinguishable from that of the general community," such as specific threats.

New York's concealed handgun ban dates to 1905 and it was one of only six states where concealed carry permits are discretionary. In Virginia, concealed carry permits must be issued unless you fall within one of 18 exclusions such as a felony conviction, mental illness or have specific misdemeanor or convictions.

The NY Rifle case abandoned tests that had been settled on by the federal appellate courts and set aside the New York rule by creating a new test stipulating that all firearms rules must be "consistent with this Nation's historical tradition ... when the people adopted them" and consistent with the "public understanding" of the amendment.

This "historical tradition" test is preposterous. At the time our country was founded, it took eight to 10 seconds to put one bullet in a musket. The effective range of an 18th century musket was 50 to 100 meters. George Washington would not recognize today's firearms, you could not carry a pistol with 33 bullets in your pocket, and it is un-



Surovell

likely James Madison ever stuffed his musket rifle in his jacket while he perused grocery store aisles. Concealable guns did not exist.

The Court also discussed what kinds of "sensitive places" firearm regulation might be allowed including some "government buildings," such as courthouses, but it did not clarify the scope. Given this discussion, Virginia's rules prohibiting firearms on school property, in Richmond's Capitol Square or in state government buildings could be at issue.

In 2020, I helped pass several historic laws that could be at issue because *

- Universal background checks;

- ❖ "Red Flag" laws allowing police to seize guns from mentally unstable people in an emergency;

- ❖ Allowing only one handgun purchase per month; and

- ❖ Allowing localities to regulate firearms on government property and at government-permitted events.

I was especially proud to carry the local authority bill after several men from Hopewell, Virginia, carried AR-15 rifles around the

Alexandria Farmers Market while my father and son tried to buy a baguette and ham biscuits. Since then, many Virginia localities have adopted ordinances prohibiting firearms in government centers, libraries, local parks and during parades, protests or other government-permitted events.

All of these ordinances are now at risk. Background checks, red flag laws and gun purchase limits did not exist in 1776 and I have no idea what the Supreme Court thinks the "historical record" says about these rules.

The Court has also created this new legal regime out of thin air. It effectively requires legislators and judges to become historians. History is often written by the victors, filled with the period's prejudices and interpretation is subject of debate. Law schools do not teach historical analysis and our system is wholly unprepared for this new "legal test" which is going to result in a legal feeding frenzy which is one reasons courts often avoid overruling precedents.

Confidence in the Supreme Court is at an all-time low today because today's Court operates more as a legislature instead of nine impartial jurists who follow the U.S. Constitution or law enacted by democratic legislatures.

New Changes to Marijuana Laws

Possession of up to an ounce still legal in Virginia.

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN AND DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

One year ago legal possession of marijuana became law in Virginia, making us the first state in the South to allow for the legal simple possession of up to an ounce of cannabis in public. Much of the 210 page legalization bill from the 2021 session dealing with the legal sale and licensing of cannabis required additional legislation during the 2022 session. After passing the Virginia Senate, this legislation disappointingly died in a House Subcommittee on a party-line vote. While much work remains in order to stand up a safe, equitable, and regulated retail cannabis market in the coming year, several important changes to marijuana policy went into effect last week, on July 1.

Three important changes were added into the biennial budget bill which was signed into law by Gov. Glenn Youngkin on Tuesday, June 21.

The first is a new misdemeanor or penalty for possession of over four times the current legal limit (four ounces of marijuana in public). The budget language states that public possession of over four ounces, but less than one pound of cannabis is a Class 3 misdemeanor or punishable by a \$500 fine; second or subsequent offenses will be treated as class 2 misdemeanor punishable by up to 6 months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

The second amendment removed several legal gray areas relating to personal cultivation of marijuana. As of last summer, Virginians are allowed to cultivate four marijuana plants in their home so long as they tag those plants with their name and driver's license number, shield them from public view, or prevent access by those under 21. However, violations of this law could lead to harsh penalties — up to a class six felony. We were glad to include a provision in the budget to clarify that possession of cannabis in

one's residence for personal use is not subject to penalty and reduce the class six felonies related to personal cultivation to simple \$25 fines for minor infractions.

The third change included in the budget is focused on the proliferation of synthetic cannabinoids which have recently popped up

for sale in gas stations and convenience stores (products like delta-8 and delta-10 THC). The budget language prohibits the retail sale of any product containing THC that is ingestible "orally or by inhalation" to those under 21 and prohibits packaging products

SEE NEW CHANGES, PAGE 13

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ON A MISSION -- Florence Debra, Woodbine Director of Nursing, far right, thanked volunteers from The international missionary group of the International Bible Way of Jesus Christ, who chose Woodbine for their volunteer mission during their visit to Alexandria in honor of their 65th International Holy Convocation on Tuesday, July 5th. They provided 300 gift bags loaded with art supplies, notebooks, game books, socks, blankets, toiletries and silk flowers for every resident. Among the volunteers were members of the Antioch Baptist Church on Queen Street.

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News

Uncommon Valor

Versace memorial marks 20 years.



A U.S. Army soldier from the 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) places the Medal of Honor flag behind the statue of Captain Rocky Versace prior to the start of the 2016 Memorial Day Ceremony.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Their names are etched in marble, a gold star memorializing the ultimate sacrifice for America. It was 20 years ago this week that the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated honoring the 68 Alexandrians who were killed or remain missing in action in the Vietnam War.

Located in front of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Del Ray, the memorial features a bronze statue of Captain Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace, Alexandria's only Vietnam-era Medal of Honor recipient.

Spearheaded by the Friends of Rocky Versace organization, the ceremony on July 6, 2002, was the culmination of a three-and-a-half-year effort to appropriately honor Versace, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor two days later by President George W. Bush for his "heroic, 23-month sustained resistance above and beyond the call of duty" against the Viet Cong while the senior officer in a POW camp in the jungle of South Vietnam. Versace's remains have yet to be recovered. He remains a MIA to this day.

The Alexandria Gazette Packet spoke to Kevin Rue, a member of the Friends of Rocky Versace, regarding the effort to honor Versace and the organization's plans for the future.

AGP: What was the origin of the Friends of Rocky Versace?

FoRV: The founding members of the Friends of Rocky Versace were Mike Faber, Joe Flynn, Tony Heisley and Mike Kentes. They grew up in Alexandria. Mike and Joe were George Washington High School graduates with the class of 1965. The Flynn family lived across from the Versace family on Forrest Street. Tony's older brother, Michael Heisley, was Rocky's best friend. In late 1998, Mike Kentes learned that Alexandria planned to build a new school in the West End at the former Cameron Station Defense property. A school naming committee was seeking solicitations for the new school's name. Mike suggested to his friends that they submit the name of Capt. Versace – a Vietnam War POW and MIA. Mike Faber's brother, Phil, and Rocky's West Point (USMA) 1959 classmate, John Gurr, joined the effort. The six men organized themselves in January 1999 and called their group the "Friends of Rocky Versace."

AGP: What was the FoRV's plan?

FoRV: The FoRV sought grassroots support from Alexandrians. The group set up in front of supermarkets in the city and asked citizens to sign a petition in support of Rocky's name for the new school. The FoRV wrote to senior, retired military officers regarding the effort. Their endeavors resulted in endorsements from, among others, Gen. Colin Powell, Gen. William Westmoreland, Gen. Gordon Sul-



USMA 1959 classmates salute Rocky's statue during the sounding of Taps at a Memorial Day ceremony in Del Ray.

livan and Lt. Gen. Julius Becton. U.S. Sen. John Warner wrote to the Alexandria School Board Chairman to give his backing to the FoRV.

AGP: What was the result?

FoRV: The School Naming Committee met on Oct. 27, 1999. David Speck, a city councilman at the time, was on the Committee. Rocky's classmate, John Gurr, gave an impassioned plea to the Committee to name the West End school for Rocky Versace. His words fell on mostly deaf ears. However, immediately after the vote, City Councilman David Speck turned to John Gurr and informed him in front of the audience that "Something good will come of your determination in support of this effort."

AGP: What was next?

FoRV: The FoRV were admittedly dejected after exerting so much time and energy in the failed effort. Councilman Speck worked in the background for a memorial for Capt. Versace that would properly honor his valor. Soon thereafter, the city formed an Arts Committee to solicit designs for a memorial to be built in front of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center on Commonwealth Ave. in Del Ray – just two blocks from where Versace lived. Two members of the FoRV were on the Committee. The Committee selected the architectural design submitted by Toby Mendez.

The Alexandria City Council voted unanimously to erect the memorial in December of 2000. The Versace memorial was privately funded with \$175,000 donated by Rocky's



The granddaughters of former MIA CPT Henry M. Spengler III pose for a photo on Memorial Day 2010.

boyhood friend, entrepreneur Michael Heisley, and \$75,000 raised by the FoRV.

AGP: There are 68 names of Vietnam War Fallen Heroes on the Memorial. How did the FoRV determine whose name to include?

FoRV: We began with the Department of Defense Home of Record list. This resulted in 61 names of

Alexandria graduates who died in Southeast Asia with additional research adding six more names. There were 67 names from 2002 – 2018. In early 2018, the Gold Star Mother of MIA 1st Lt Lawrence Lilly petitioned the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities Dept. to include her son's name. Because Larry Lilly enlisted in the Army at

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Dignitaries including Miss Northern Virginia Abigail Farley, Deacon Steve Dixon and West Point Class of 1959 and Rocky Versace classmate LTC Tom Boyle prepare for the 2019 Memorial Day Ceremony at the Rocky Versace Plaza in Del Ray.



The Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Memorial statue was unveiled July 6, 2002, in front of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Del Ray. Versace family members, Rocky's West Point 1959 classmates and the Friends of Rocky Versace took part in the ceremony.

the Alexandria Recruiting Station, even though his military HoR was Los Angeles, the FoRV, after a complete review of Lt. Lilly's military records, recommended that James Spengler, RP&CA Chief, approve the addition. Mr. Spengler gave his nod and Mrs. Lilly unveiled her MIA son's name on the Versace Memorial on Nov. 15, 2018.

AGP: Were there other events associated with the dedication of the Versace Memorial in July 2002?

FoRV: Yes. Beginning in 1997, there was a parallel effort from the U.S. Army's Special Forces Command to re-submit the Medal of Honor award recommendation for Capt. Versace. The president approved the request in Dec. 2001. On July 6, 2002, the Capt. Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated with the unveiling of his statue. City Councilman David Speck spoke at the dedication, in addition to the president of Rocky's USMA 1959 class, Brig. Gen. Pete Dawkins and Rocky's boyhood friend Michael Heisley. Rocky Versace's family attended in addition to 90 of Rocky's classmates and hundreds from the

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Jeannette Lilly, mother of MIA 1LT Lawrence Lilly, unveils his Gold Star and name on the Versace Memorial in November of 2018.



Arlisa Walton, her daughter and granddaughter, look at the name beneath a Gold Star of her brother, SP4 Johnny J. Smith, on the Versace Memorial during Memorial Day ceremonies in 2016.



The statue depicting Rocky Versace was designed by artist Toby Mendez and unveiled July 6, 2002.



The Old Guard's Historical Trumpets and Flutes perform patriotic music during the 2017 Memorial Day Ceremony at the Versace Plaza.

and endeavor to present Vietnam Era Veterans with the Commemorative Lapel Pins. The DoD also seeks to identify Gold Star Family members through the Partner Program and present them with "in

memory of" Certificates of Honor. Of the 68 Gold Star Families, the FoRV must still identify 55 families and recognize their sacrifice.

AGP: Thank you for this insight into the Capt. Rocky Versace Plaza

and Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the origins of the Friends of Rocky Versace organization.

FoRV: You're welcome and thank you for the Alexandria Gazette's support of the FoRV.

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ♦ JULY 7-13, 2022 ♦ 9

ENTERTAINMENT

3 Dates to Circle in July

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

The summertime swelter is upon us – but blessedly, we’ve got plenty of food and drink adventures to cool us off (or, at least, help us endure the heat and humidity)! Here are some of the month’s top picks.

Old Town Pub Crawl, July 9

Back from its covid-era format, the Port City Old Town Pub Crawl is ready to hit the streets in its original form once again. Eight different stops in one afternoon: It’s a challenge, but a worthy one. Pop into the likes of Virtue Feed and Grain, Buggy’s Pizzeria, Union Street Public House and Black-wall Hitch for food and drink (but pace yourself!). All done stamping your event passport? Return it to a Port City tent for a

commemorative pint glass. 1:30-6 p.m. Visit portcitybrewing.com for location information.

“Wines of Spain and Portugal” Four-Course Dinner at Trademark Drink & Eat, July 29

Celebrate some of the best wines Spain and Portugal have to offer with this four-course meal pairing. Beginning with gazpacho soup, stopping off at cod paella and braised duck leg and finishing with an almond tart, you won’t go home hungry. Nor, given the course pairings, will you leave thirsty. (But do partake responsibly.) 6 p.m. \$79 per person. 2080 Jamieson Ave.

“The History of Ice Cream” at Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, July 30

What could put the month on ice – in the



Lee-Fendall House
MUSEUM AND GARDEN

The History of Ice Cream

July 30th 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

best way possible – better than a deep dive into the history of ice cream (and maybe a sample or two)? Have a taste of 18th- and 19th-century ice cream flavors and try your hand at making some from scratch during this family-friendly event. Registration recommended. 11 a.m. 614 Oronoco St. \$7 for adults; \$3 for students and children.

Award-winning columnist Hope Nelson is author of “Classic Restaurants of Alexandria” and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

ART CAMP 2022

Del Ray Artisans invites youth ages 8-12 to Art Camp 2022 for a week of professional art instruction! Campers will have an immersive creative journey: painting, sculpting, journaling and other artful planned activities. During nice weather, campers will even have outdoor time to get fresh air, unwind, and replenish their creative energy. All art supplies are provided. Choose July 18–22 or July 25–29; \$350/child; scholarship support available. Registration at DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp.

NOW THRU JULY 9

Retrospective Art Deco Exhibition. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive in Alexandria. The first retrospective on the work of Art Deco designer Edgard Sforzina will open April 30th at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial during the Art Deco Society of Washington’s 39th annual Washington Modernism Show. Discount tickets are available at www.washingtonmodernism-show.com.

NOW THRU AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Learn techniques in drawing, mixed media, mosaic, jewelry, watercolor, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Sign up for the programs that inspire you and make your own “stay-cation” art experience. Visit the website: <https://DelRayArtisans.org/programs/creative-summer/>

JUNE 28 TO OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition. At the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. For those who can’t get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds,



The U.S. Air Force String Quartet will appear on Sunday, July 10 at Sherwood Regional Library in Mount Vernon.

a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer. The title of the show is “A Bouquet of Hummingbirds,” and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach.

JUNE 25-SEPT. 10

Yoga Sessions. 12-2:15 p.m. Yoga at the National Museum of the United States Army hosted by Honest Soul Yoga, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. Honest Soul Yoga and The Army Historical Foundation invites you to take a moment to de-stress by enjoying an afternoon of yoga at

the Museum. Join trained instructors for an afternoon of flow and sound meditation. After class, grab a coffee and some healthy snacks in the Museum Café or take some time to explore the exhibits.

FRIDAYS/JULY 8 AND 22

Trivia Nights at Historic Sites. 7 to 9 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Staff members at Carlyle House Historic Park and the Lee-Fendall House Museum combine their knowledge to create bi-weekly trivia nights throughout the summer in the beautiful gardens of the Lee-Fendall House. Test your knowledge on everything from pop culture to history.

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Alexandria Birthday Celebration. 6 to 9:45 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park,

100 Madison St, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria celebrates its 273rd birthday and the USA’s 246th birthday on Saturday, July 9, with a performance by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and a grand finale fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. Enjoy the return of the big birthday experience of years past with cupcakes, local vendors, live music and an extended runtime.

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Old Town Pub Crawl. 2-6 p.m. hosted by Port City Brewing Company. At various locations throughout Old Town, Alexandria. This popular event is returning to the original live and in-person format for 2022. Visit eight of Port City’s top bars and restaurants in Old Town, enjoy their daily specials and stamp your pass at each stop. Then turn in

your completed pass for this year’s Pub Crawl Pint Glass.

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Backyard Composting Basics. 10-11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Mother Nature can help you compost plant material into luscious amendment for your lawn and garden. Visit Green Spring’s composting station to learn different composting methods, materials to use and not use, proportions, aeration, screening, critter control and compost use. \$19 per person. Code 0B1.NK0K.

JULY 9-10

Del Ray Artisans’ Summer Art Market 2022. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. An indoor event featuring original creations by local artists in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, glass, jewelry, mixed media, photography, and more. Shop original work from local artists at Del Ray Artisans gallery at 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria—perfect for gifts or treat yourself. Different artists each market day, so visit both days. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/summer-art-market

JULY 9-31

“Tick, Tick...Boom!” Presented by Monumental Theatre Company in Alexandria. The story follows an aspiring composer, Jon, in New York City in 1990 who worries he made the wrong career choice as he approaches his 30th birthday. Tickets will be available online at <http://www.monumentaltheatre.org/>

SATURDAY/JULY 9

“The Quanders” with Rohulamin Quander. 6 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Join an evening with Rohulamin Quander, founder of the Quander Historical and Educational

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Society, as he discusses his book *The Quanders* – Since 1684: An Enduring African America Family Legacy, which introduces stories that constitute the Quander Family legacy as one of the oldest consistently documented African American families in the United States.

SUNDAY/JULY 10

U.S. Air Force String Quartet. 3-4 p.m. At Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. The U.S. Air Force Band has many different musical ensembles and Sherwood is proud to present their string quartet (part of the USAF Strolling Strings group). Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/9180518>

TUESDAYS, JULY 12, 19, 26

Simpson Park Demonstration Garden. Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 11 a.m., Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. From The Ground Up - Garden Challenges? Simple steps to help your container garden or whole yard, whether it's adding soil amendments, the value of a soil

sample, or other easy solutions. Contact mgnv.org.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 13

King Teddy. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Lee District Park Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Franconia. This five-piece combo features a song list that dares the foot not to tap. King Teddy has a single-minded musical mission—to swing, baby, swing! Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

JULY 18-22 OR JULY 25-29

Summer Art Camp. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans invites young campers ages 8-12 years old to spend a week creating art with professional local artist instruction. All artist supplies are provided. Details and registration: <https://delrayartisans.org/programs/creative-summer/#event=art-camp-2022>

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-

7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

JULY

Fri. Jul. 8: GINGER BILLY'S Backwoods Comedy Tour \$45/\$75
Sat. Jul. 9: Newmyer Flyer Presents LAUREL CANYON \$35.00
Sun/Mon. Jul. 10 & 11: GRAYSON CAPPS to open for John Hiatt & The Goners.
Mon/Tue. Jul. 11 & 12: JOHN HIATT & THE GONERS Featuring SONNY LANDRETH \$75.00
Thu. Jul. 14: HERMAN'S HERMITS starring PETER NOONE \$49.50
Fri. Jul. 15: Tarsha Fitzgerald Production Presents VOICES OF MOUNTAIN \$35.00
Sun. Jul. 17: THE HIGH KINGS \$65.00
Tue. Jul. 19: COLIN JAMES & TORONZO CANNON \$29.50
Wed. Jul. 20: STEVE EARLE & THE DUKES with Special Guest The Whitmore Sisters \$65.00
Sun. Jul. 24: CROCE PLAYS CROCE Performed by A.J. CROCE \$39.50
Tue. Jul. 26: Herb Albert & Lani Hall \$65.00
Thu. Jul. 28: STEPHEN KELLOGG \$35.00
Fri. Jul. 29: ANTHONY BROWN & Group Therapy \$39.50
Sat. Jul. 30: WHO'S BAD – The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50

BULLETIN BOARD

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

GIANT FOOD ANNOUNCES LOCAL PRODUCE BOXES

Giant Food announces the relaunch of its Local Produce Boxes featuring locally sourced, in-season produce sold exclusively through Giant Delivers. Available throughout the summer without a subscription or commitment, the boxes retail for \$20.00 and contain six or more items from local farms in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. For more information and to purchase a local produce box, visit <https://giantfood.com/pages/giants-local-best>.

METRO TRANSIT POLICE TO USE BODY WORN CAMERAS

The Metro Transit Police Department will equip officers with body worn cameras (BWC), adding a new tool to MTPD's crime fighting initiatives. The program is designed to create an additional layer of transparency for sworn officers who protect Metro customers and employees. MTPD is in the initial stages of developing the program, supported by a grant award from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) of approximately \$905,000.

VIRGINIA ABC EXTENDS CLOSING HOURS IN 31 STORES

To provide greater customer convenience, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) has extended Monday

through Saturday closing hours from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in 31 stores. Customers are encouraged to visit Virginia ABC's website at www.abc.virginia.gov to search for stores and view operating hours, as well as order spirits online for in-store or curbside pickup, or home delivery in select areas.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

ACPS- Help Provide Meals to Children. Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) will provide two days worth of breakfast and lunch meals with a snack pack free for any enrolled ACPS student on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Friday distribution will include a meal(s) for Saturday. Volunteers will meet at various schools to assist with packing boxes and loading buses with boxed meals. Then, volunteers will ride the bus along to distribute the meals while on site at a few ACPS mobile pop-up locations. Click on each location to sign up: Francis C. Hammond Middle School, TC Williams High School, or Jefferson Houston School. www.volunteerallexandria.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.volunteerallexandria.org

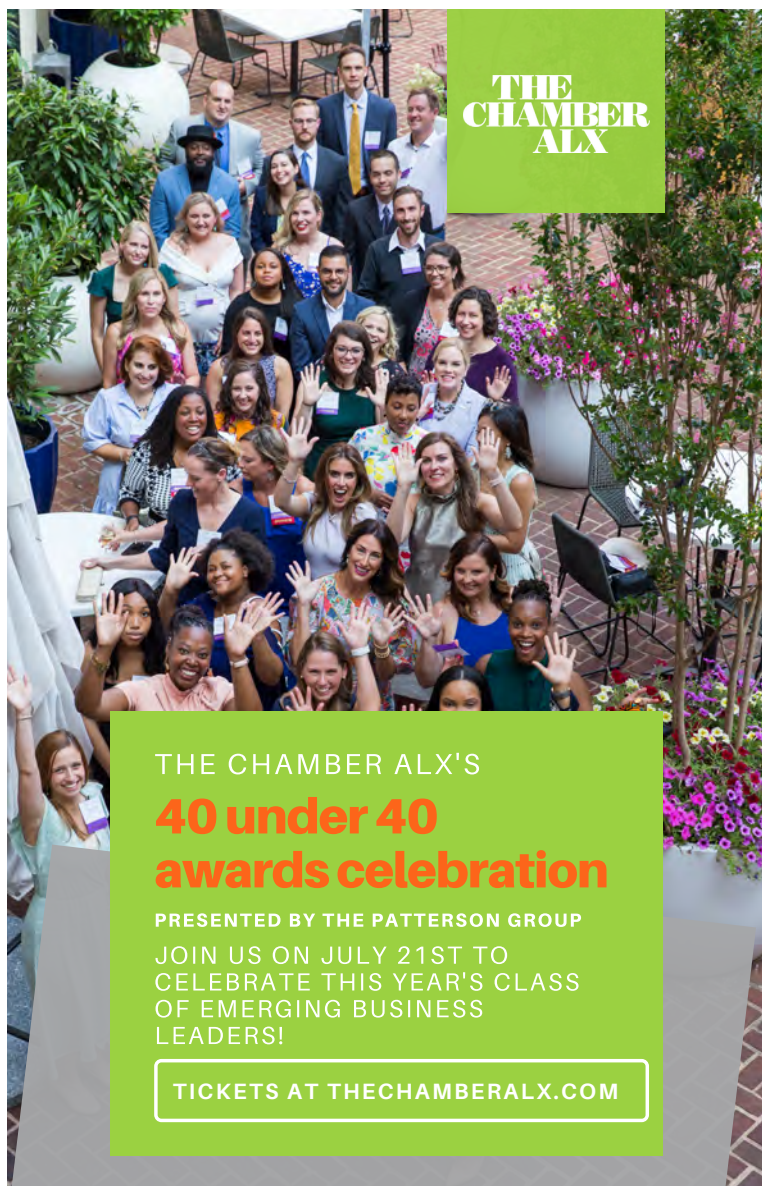
Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks

necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. www.volunteerallexandria.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.volunteerallexandria.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.

STEM Professionals Needed. Help SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13



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**NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST
RELEASE OF FUNDS**

July 7, 2022

Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria
3209 5th Street SE, Washington DC 20032
202-800-0632/703-836-1021

On June 9, 2022, Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria published a notice of intent to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of funding as follows: On or about June 9, 2022 Rebuilding Together Alexandria will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of the Healthy Homes Production Grant Program (HHP) is authorized under 501 and Section 502 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 (12 U.S.C. §§ 1701z-1 and 1701z-2), and funding is provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021(Public Law 116-260, approved December 27, 2020) for the following multi-year program/project: Healthy Homes Production Grant, for the purpose of providing healthy home repairs to low-income homeowners in DC and the City of Alexandria, VA. Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria is requesting the release of \$1,601,000.00 in HUD assistance.

This notice provides the public with a corrected requested release of funds date. On June 30, 2022, Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria submitted a request to HUD for the release of funds referenced in the notice cited above.

Release of Funds Correction:

Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria certifies to HUD that James Parajon in his official capacity as City Manager for the City of Alexandria consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities, and allows Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria to utilize federal funds and implement the Program.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will consider objections to its release of funds and the Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria certification for a period of fifteen days following either the anticipated submission date (cited above) or HUD's actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if the objections are on one of the following bases: (a) that the Certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer on behalf of Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria; (b) Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria has committed funds or incurred costs not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58), and may be addressed to HUD and sent to the email address as follows: Karen M. Griego, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, Program Environmental Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development LeadRegulations@HUD.GOV Potential objectors may contact HUD directly to verify the actual last day of the objection/comment period.

James Parajon, City Manager
City of Alexandria

THEATER



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS

Elizabeth Replogle and Anne Paine West as Joanna and Margie in the Aldersgate Church Community Theater production of *The Best Worst That Could Happen* playing July 8-24.

'The Best Worst That Could Happen'

**ACCT debuts poignant
Koppen comedy.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Joanna is worried about her mother's failing memory. Margie is concerned about her daughter's career and love life. Deep down, both are terrified about how they will handle the worst that can happen - Margie contracting Alzheimer's Disease - in the poignant Jean Koppen comedy now in production at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

"The Best Worst That Could Happen grabbed my attention and my heart from the first staged reading I saw," said producer Charles Drag-onette. "Jean [Koppen] sent me the script and I knew it was perfect for ACCT. We're so grateful to her for letting us bring it to the stage for its first full production." Margie Wells is an energetic, fun-loving widow and retired college drama professor. She is mother to Joanna, a middle-aged romance writer who feels like the opportunity for love and partnership has passed her by.

An unlikely new housemate enters their lives followed by an unexpected visit from his movie producer brother, setting Margie and Joanna on the path to discover the best that can happen even in the worst situation.

"Joanna has accepted that being alone might just be her fate," said Elizabeth Replogle of her character. "Outwardly she bristles at her mother's constant digs about finding someone but I think inside she does long to find that partner in life, especially as she faces

the loss of her mother, who has been her only constant in life."

Anne Paine West plays Margie, who slowly journeys from a capable, independent life to a life that requires assistance for daily living.

"A message from this play is that we all need love and support from those around us as we are all only temporarily 'abled.'" West said.

Rounding out the cast are Brad Sperber as Paul and Nate Tatro as Paul's younger brother Lewis.

"Paul is a sincere, kind, and awkward middle-aged fellow trying to make sense and meaning of what his life has become," said Sperber, while Tatro added that "Lewis is a deeply insecure Hollywood executive who presents himself as more successful than he actually is."

Acclaimed director Joanna Henry guides the stellar cast in what she calls "a beautiful story about a mother and daughter who are forced to deal with a difficult situation."

"These women have a close relationship, and each has a different way of coping," said Henry, whose own mother suffers from dementia. "By the end of the play, they have accepted Margie's plight and are dealing with this worst condition in the best way they know."

Henry has known Koppen for many years, saying, "Jean Koppen has a way of infusing humor into challenging circumstances. We've all experienced events in our lives that have knocked the wind out of us. How we deal with that is what defines us. In the end there is always hope. There is always a light, even in the darkest of times."

The Best Worst That Could Happen is playing weekends July 8-24 at Wesley Hall of Aldersgate United Methodist Church at 1301 Collingwood Road in Alexandria. For tickets or more information visit www.acctonline.org.

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News

New Changes to Marijuana Laws

FROM PAGE 6

to look like common brand name products.

The General Assembly also took an important step to improve medical cannabis patient access. Current law requires the Virginia Board of Pharmacy to approve all medical patients before they can begin to receive treatment. This has led to an unnecessary backlog of patients waiting for several months for their certification before they can receive treatment. Especially for those using cannabis for pain and nausea management while in late-stage illness or palliative care, this backlog was unacceptable. Legislation signed earlier this year eliminates the requirement that patients register with the Board of Pharmacy after receiving their written certification from a registered practitioner. Patients will only need their written certification to shop at one of the state's medical cannabis dispensaries. Patients can now purchase medical cannabis at the newly opened "Beyond Hello" dispensary located at the former location of the Great American Steak Buffet at 5902 Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon.

As members of the Virginia Cannabis Oversight Commission, we will continue to work in the interim to craft legislation which stands up a well-regulated retail marijuana industry which prioritizes consumer safety, public health, and social equity, as well as build a strong tax base for investments in historically underinvested communities, education, and public health.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 11

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

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

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Progressively More Irritating



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, after years of radio and television advertising/sponsorships, I blinked. I switched from one frequently advertised auto insurer to another. And sure enough, there was savings to be had. More than enough in fact to compensate me for the time spent on the phone comparing policies, provisions, premiums, et cetera. Every month when I make my new payment, I feel the joy. The joy being that I saved so much money that I was nearly able to pay for my new homeowner's policy without increasing the cash flowing out.

Part of the inducement to make the change was the prospect of additional savings in a few months. That inducement by way of a device to be installed in my car/under the driver's dash, which measures – presumably, my driving tendencies (speed, acceleration, aggressive stops and so forth) in some algorithmic way to evaluate the driver's actual risk to the insurer. On paper, as a careful between-the-lines driver, I saw no downside (actually, I'm not sure if my rates can increase if my driving fails to match expectations) so I agreed and have installed the devices in both our cars. I suppose I'll know in six months if there is damage yet to be done. I kind of remember a timeline but can't recall if there were any potential rate-type consequences. No matter, overall, it sounded reasonable, and the savings were enticing so the change was made.

Off paper, there have been consequences, and they have nothing to do with price. They have to do with people. One of those consequences involves my wife, Dina and the other involves me (actually, they both involve me). The part which specifically involves my wife is the part of the device that beeps three times if it doesn't like the stopping speed/braking pressure. The beeping serves as a friendly reminder to the driver to moderate some aggressive tendencies and to drive more defensively. The beeping also serves to bring attention to the passenger – usually my wife, Dina, of my driving skills or lack thereof – according to her, and therein lies the problem. What was once unseen/unnoticed/lost in the shuffle of every day traffic has now become front and center/in my wife's face, and in turn in my ear and as a result, has now become the bane of our driving togetherness. That damn beeping is interfering with our driving compatibility – which was never great to begin with, is now worse than ever. Previously, it had more to do with getting lost and my having a poor sense of direction than it did with yours truly stopping short or accelerating through a yellow light. Now my driving indiscretions – which I didn't really think I had, have been laid bare not simply to me, but to my wife. And for those of you who share regular time in your vehicles with a significant other with whom you've already shared a significant amount of time/life together, there might be a slight risk of too much of good thing is not a good thing anymore.

The emotional issue aside, I wonder if there will be rate consequences when my new rate is renewed after this initial six-month trial-type interval has ended. Will that new rate be based on actual real-time data, or will it continue be on than favorable presumptions/lower rate which enticed me to change carriers in the first place? I suppose I can always switch to yet another carrier if there are rate consequences. There's certainly enough of them around and one insurer's experiences are different than another's so my past indiscretion might not be so obvious. But for me, the real problem isn't the insurer, it's the passenger.

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

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WELLBEING

Preventing Teen Summer Suicide

What to look for and where to go for help.

Get Help

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Sleepaway camp, trips to the beach or marathon video gaming sessions are some of the hallmarks of summer for many teens. For those who struggle with anxiety, depression and suicidal ideations, this time of year can mean a loss of mental health resources and monitoring by school psychologists, guidance counselors and teachers.

“[Summer] can sever important linkages for children and families that are reliant on schools for social work support,” added Kurt Larrick, Assistant Director, Arlington County Department of Human Services.

“Though suicide happens in all age groups, it is the ... 2nd leading cause of death for youth [between] 10-14,” added Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., who is Professor and Director, School of Counseling at Marymount University, and co-author of the book, “Crisis Assessment, Intervention, and Prevention.”

While families with health insurance have access to a variety of resources, local health departments want parents and caregivers to know that there is free or low-cost mental health assistance as well as the warning signs that such intervention might be needed.

“At my agency, the DHS Children’s Behavioral Healthcare Bureau provides a wide range of services to children and their families experiencing mental health and substance use issues,” said Larrick. “We focus mostly on youth from low-income and uninsured households whose needs cannot be met elsewhere and who do not have alternative resources.”

Local health departments offer mental health assistance to teens, parents are caregivers. “Our agency has counselors, workshops, trainings and other resources to help reduce youth suicide and substance use,” said Lisa Flowers, Director of Communications and Public Information Officer, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

In addition to knowing that there are resources for mental health services, parents should be aware of the signs that a child needs help, advises Stephanie Will, LCPC, Mental Health Services Program Manager, Montgomery College.

“Adults should be looking out for signs of withdrawing from loved ones and usual interests, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, engaging in risky behaviors like substance abuse, unsafe sex, driving too fast, acting out, giving away prized possessions, and saying goodbye through notes, texts, or

The toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to anyone. All calls are confidential. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA:

❖ Teen Wellness Center: Teen Wellness Center | City of Alexandria, VA (alexandriava.gov)

❖ Community Regional Crisis Response 844-627-4747 to access 24-hour rapid response to youth and adults facing a mental health and/or substance use crisis who may be at risk for hospitalization.

social media posts,” said Will. “Other signs to look for include self-harming behaviors like cutting or burning their skin and significant changes in mood. Most importantly if someone tells you they are thinking about suicide, believe them and get them help.”

“There is not one specific profile or checklist of a suicidal individual,” added Jackson-Cherry. “Some mental health concerns that may increase suicidal risk are a history of mood disorder, including bipolar and major depressive disorder; anxiety, schizophrenia, eating disordered behaviors, and substance use.”

Create an environment that can mitigate some of the mental health issues that lead to suicide include several tools, advises Jackson-Cherry. “It is also important to know

that there are protective factors that include a strong family and social support system, access to resources, sense of belonging and acceptance, sense of purpose, hopefulness,

ability to problem solve and work through prior conflicts.”

Be sure any suicidal person does not have access to firearms.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in 2020 suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10-14 and 25-34, the third leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 15-24, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 44.

In 2020, there were nearly two times as many suicides (45,979) in the United States as there were homicides (24,576). In 2020, firearms were the most common method used in suicide deaths in the United States, accounting for over half of all suicide deaths (24,292).

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Jodie Burns 571.228.5790
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