

Kerry Donley Former mayor, political titan, dies at 66.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Kerry Donley, a former mayor and political titan who spearheaded transformative development across the city, died suddenly of a heart attack at his Alexandria home July 13. He was 66.

Recently retired from his career in banking, Donley was actively engaged in several nonprofits. He had spent that morning delivering Meals on Wheels for Senior Services of Alexandria followed by a board meeting for the Center for Alexandria's Children.

"It was a normal day for him," said former City Councilman and close friend David Speck. "That is why it is so shocking. It's going to take me a long time to absorb the fact that my friend is gone."

Donley spent nearly his entire life in Alexandria, having moved to the area when he was 7 years old.

He graduated from Bishop Ireton High School and obtained a B.A. in political science from Marquette University.

Donley was first elected to City Council in 1988, serving until 1996 when he became mayor. He served two terms in that capacity, retiring in 2003. He served an additional term as vice mayor in 2010 followed by two years as chair of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

"Kerry has been a true mentor to a lot of

SEE FORMER MAYOR, PAGE 6



Former mayor Kerry Donley died suddenly July 13 at the age of 66.

PHOTO BY STEVEN HALPERSON/TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY



Kerry Donley, center back, with wife Eva, children and grandchildren.



Kerry Donley on his wedding day.



Eva and Kerry Donley on their wedding day.



Kerry Donley as a schoolboy in Alexandria.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

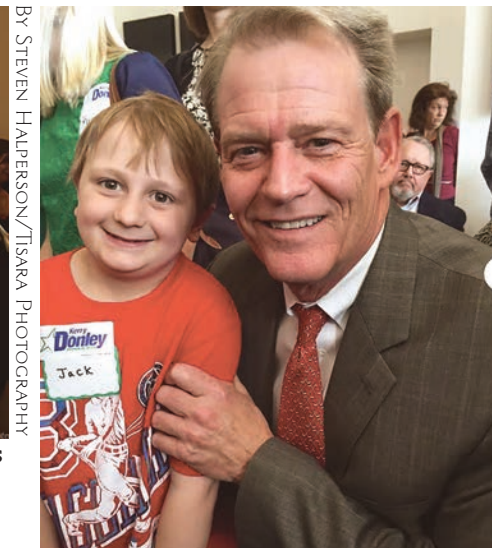


Kerry Donley takes a selfie with wife Eva and Marcia and David Speck during a trip to Martha's Vineyard.



Kerry Donley, second from right, was recognized as a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2017.

Kerry Donley, right, and David Speck show off their catch after a day of fishing in Martha's Vineyard.



Kerry Donley with grandson Jackson.

BY STEVEN HALPERSON/TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY

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Great Resignation Hits the Classroom

Pay penalty for teachers in Virginia is the worst in the country.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The Great Resignation is hitting classrooms across Virginia, worrying school administrators about what happens when fall arrives and schools are forced to deal with a teacher shortage.

Public school teachers in Virginia are paid 33 percent less than other college-educated workers, a metric that ranked the pay penalty for Virginia teachers as the highest in the country according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute. Add to that a lack of support staff that dates back to the last recession. More recently, teachers are dealing with pandemic-era burnout that's causing many of them to leave the profession in search of higher pay and better work environments.

"A lot of students suffered significant trauma during the pandemic when they were not in school buildings," said Chad Stewart, a policy analyst at the Virginia Education Association. "Teachers in many ways are dealing with the fallout of that trauma with additional behavioral issues and the need for additional mental health supports that just haven't been adequate."

Here in Alexandria, teacher vacancies and staff vacancies are causing school officials to figure out ways to do more with less. According to the most recent data available from the Virginia Department of Education, Alexandria City Public Schools have more than two dozen teacher vacancies. Add to that more than 100 staff vacancies, and that leaves school administrators scrambling to figure out how they'll be able to get through the fall with a diminished team of workers and a student body suffering from learning loss during the pandemic.

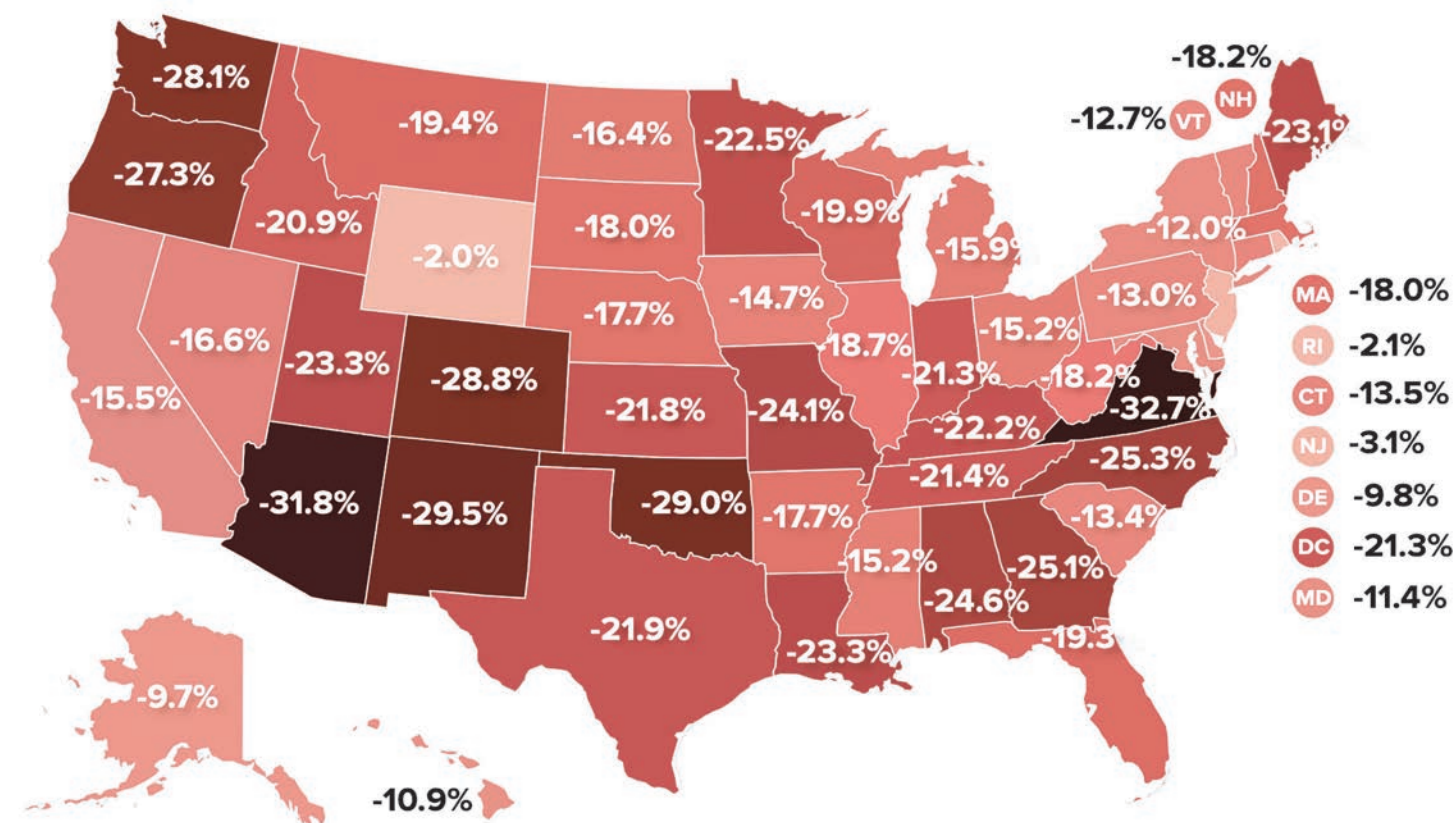
"We've got to make a work environment where our teachers are respected, treated with dignity and honored," said Herb Berg, former superintendent of schools in Alexandria. "You cannot disparage hard-working classroom teachers in any way. They have to be respected for what they do. They do important work, and you've got to tell them it's important."

TEACHERS IN ALEXANDRIA earn an average salary of \$78,000. Many teachers are taking a hard look at that number and wondering if they could make more money driving a truck or developing software. That's why alarm bells are ringing for teachers who are having second thoughts about their chosen profession. It's part of a broader trend known as the Great Resignation, a trend that started last year when workers abruptly left their jobs in the midst of pandemic-era economic uncertainty.

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How underpaid are teachers in your state?

Depending on the state, teachers make between 2.0% and 32.7% less than other comparable college-educated workers



OBITUARY



Resa O'Flaherty, shown at Trinity United Methodist Church on July 3, died July 5 at the age of 98.



Resa O'Flaherty with her husband, the Hon. Daniel O'Flaherty.



Resa and Daniel O'Flaherty on their wedding day July 15, 1950.



Resa O'Flaherty died July 5 at the age of 98.

Resa O'Flaherty

Prominent Rosemont resident dies at 98.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

She loved to dance. If you knew nothing else about Resa O'Flaherty, you knew that she loved music and would dance as she moved from room to room in the Rosemont home where she raised her family for nearly 60 years. On July 5, the gracious widow of the late Honorable Daniel Fairfax O'Flaherty died peacefully at the age of 98.

"Mom would always say 'I'd rather dance than eat,'" said O'Flaherty's youngest daughter Lucelle, who lived with her mother following her father's death in 2015. "She lived a good life full of love with my father, even though she loved to dance and he did not."

Tributes poured in on social media as news spread of the death of the beloved matriarch.

"Even when she might not have felt good herself, when she recognized someone she knew, her face would light up and she would flash her beautiful smile and say something that made you truly happy to have her friendship," said Verna Hahn Lomax. "She did so much good in her lifetime and will be missed and remembered with love by those lucky enough to know her."

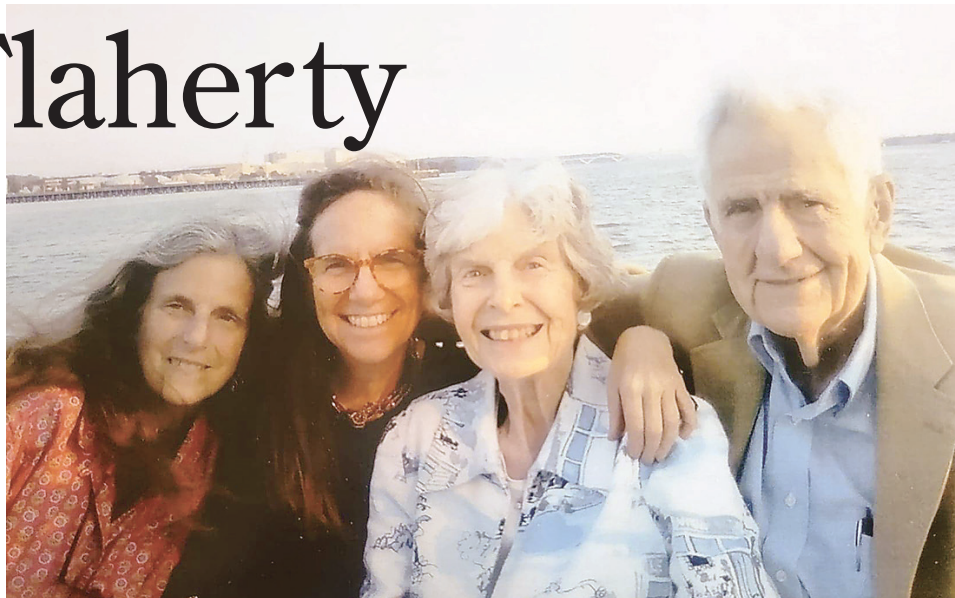
Added Kathy Jernigan, "Resa was gracious beyond all measure with that ever-willing smile. She will be remembered with joy by the community she loved."

Resa Hutt O'Flaherty was born Sept. 1, 1923, in Montross, Va. She graduated from Farmville State Teachers College, now Longwood University, in 1945. She spent a summer taking classes at The College of William & Mary returning to Montross to teach at Washington & Lee High School, where she had graduated in 1941.

In 1948, O'Flaherty and three fellow teacher friends moved to Alexandria, where they lived at 813 Jefferson Street in Old Town.

"They knew not much was happening in Montross so they decided to move to the big city of Alexandria," Lucelle O'Flaherty added.

Soon after, O'Flaherty met Daniel Fairfax O'Flaherty, a George Washington Law School



Resa O'Flaherty with daughters Susan and Lucelle and husband Daniel.



Resa O'Flaherty with daughters Lucelle O'Flaherty and Susan Griffith.

senior. They married on July 15, 1950, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Warsaw, Va., settling into the Rosemont neighborhood at 11 E. Linden St. then later settling at Summers Drive in 1965.

"Mom was teaching at Mount Vernon High school when another couple set her and daddy up for a double date," Lucelle O'Flaherty said. "Only the other couple ended up canceling. Mom and dad took a taxi to the Wardman Park Hotel, where dad spent the evening shaking hands following a law school election while mom was dancing with everyone else. She was certain she would never hear from him again."

Daniel O'Flaherty did call and the courtship continued as he graduated from law school in 1949.

"He was just starting his law practice,"

Lucelle O'Flaherty said. "But being a lawyer isn't as sexy as it sounds. It wasn't glamorous and they were trying to raise a family. Mom was quite remarkable -- she really was the power behind the power."

O'Flaherty devoted her life to her family and supporting her husband's career, political life, and community involvement. She was dedicated to the Maury School PTA, Rosemont Citizens Association, Rosemont Beautification Committee, and was a lifetime member of Stratford Hall Historical Society. She attended Trinity United Methodist Church where she oversaw getting greeters every Sunday for 23 years.

O'Flaherty and her husband had three children: Daniel Jr., Susan and Lucelle. Daniel Jr. was born with profound disabilities.

"Despite outward appearances, my mother

"Mom was quite remarkable — she really was the power behind the power."

— Lucelle O'Flaherty on her mother Resa

did not have an easy life," Lucelle O'Flaherty said. "Her mother died when she was 23 days old so she was raised by an aunt. Danny was born as my father was running for office and mom was trying to raise her family."

Daniel Jr. died at the age of 64 two months before his father's death in 2015.

"Danny taught us how to love," Lucelle O'Flaherty said. "We had a quiet service that prepared us for daddy's funeral. But it is because of Danny that we were such a close family."

O'Flaherty is survived by two daughters, Susan O'Flaherty Griffith and Lucelle O'Flaherty. She was preceded in death by her husband, Judge Daniel Fairfax O'Flaherty, and her son, Daniel Fairfax O'Flaherty Jr.

Services were held at Trinity United Methodist Church with interment at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Warsaw, Va. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Trinity United Methodist Church and St. Paul's c/o Daniel Hutt 17757 History Land Hwy Warsaw, VA 22572.

"Time is the commodity we cannot quantify," Lucelle O'Flaherty said. "You can't get that back and I never wanted to look in the rearview mirror and say I should have done something differently."

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'Divas and Devos'

Washington House celebrates Pride with drag queen show.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Residents of the Fountains at Washington House were treated to a musical extravaganza as legends Tina Turner, Diana Ross, Whitney Houston, Chaka Khan and others were impersonated as part of the Divas & Devos drag queen show June 22 in celebration of Pride Month.

"We are so excited to be celebrating our Pride event today," said Community Life Director Dennis Del Rosario. "We are very happy that our retirement communities embrace diversity and inclusivity to all."

The show was staged by Van-Hook Productions and led by creator, director and cast member Shi-Queeta-Lee, the first drag queen to perform at the White House and the Smithsonian Renwick Gallery.

"We welcomed these performers before the pandemic and our residents filled the room and danced and sang together," Del Rosario said. "We are excited to have them back. We know how important it is to build a welcoming, accepting community for our residents and their families and the best way to do that is to create opportunities for all our residents to connect with and learn from members of the LGBTQ community."

Shi-Queeta-Lee opened the show with some background on Pride Month before introducing the performers to the audience assembled in the facility's Sky Room.

"Divas and Devos are leading impersonators from Washington, D.C.," Del Rosario added. "They are the first drag show to ever perform at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage."

www.washingtonhouse.watermarkcommunities.com



Residents of the Fountains at Washington House pose for a photo with drag queen impersonators as part of the June 22 Pride celebration.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



A Marvin Gaye impersonator entertains as part of the Pride celebration June 22 at the Fountains at Washington House.



Drag queen performers impersonating Nancy Sinatra, Tina Turner, Diana Ross and Chaka Khan take a selfie during the Divas & Devos show June 22 at the Fountains at Washington House.



Shi-Queeta-Lee impersonates Tina Turner as part of the Divas & Devos drag queen show June 22 at the Fountains at Washington House.

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Former Mayor, Political Titan, Dies at 66

FROM PAGE 1

us, not just politicians but to those serving with him on nonprofits," said vice Mayor Amy Jackson. "He was a natural leader and so robust, which is why this is such a shock. No one ever thinks it's going to be the last 'I love you,' the last 'good-bye.' But he has left a legacy for people to follow."

Donley's background in banking, beginning with Crestar in 1979 through his most recent position with John Marshall Bank, served him well both in office and in his work with nonprofits.

"I'm not sure people knew how good a banker Kerry really was," Speck said. "It's not real sexy to be skillful in municipal finance but that was a strength of Kerry that very few people had. His leadership in that area was underestimated because he made it look easier than it really was."

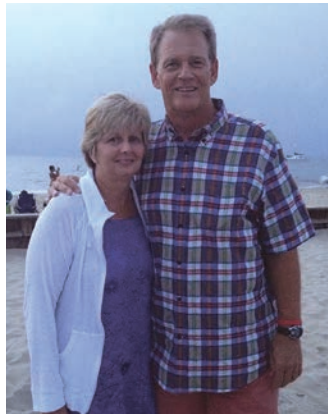
Among his many accomplishments, Donley is credited with bringing the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to Alexandria, transforming the Carlyle area.

"There will be no plaques or statues for having a strong economic foundation but that was very much a part of Kerry's leadership," Speck added. "Subsequent councils and mayors have really benefited from a lot of the things he put in place."

Donley was named a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2017 for his many commitments to local nonprofits. He served on the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership board, Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors, Scholarship Fund of Alexandria board, Alexandria Senior Services board, Alexandria Renew Enterprises board, Center for Alexandria's Children board, Carpenter's Shelter's board, Alexandria United Way and Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy board.

He was named the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's Business Leader of the Year in 2004, served as the Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade grand marshal in 2006, selected to the Carpenter's Shelter Wall of Honor in 2015 and received the Volunteer Alexandria Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.

"Kerry was a mentor to those of us who got into public service or wanted to know more about the community," said Councilman John Chapman. "But he would not get bogged down in the negative. He could always be counted on to remind folks of the good things we have done while still challenging us to push farther and harder. He was part of the generation that re-defined the city and made it what it is today."



Eva and Kerry Donley on the beach in Martha's Vineyard.



Kerry Donley and family at an election night gathering.



Kerry Donley with Brian and Jim Moran.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Kerry Donley participates in a city parade.



Kerry Donley at the 2020 Chamber of Commerce Chairman's Gala.



The Center for Alexandria's Children board chair Kerry Donley, left, honors Tom and Magaly Hirst with the Champion of Children Award April 4, 2019, at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

Donley himself said when named a Living Legend, "Any citizen, whether an elected official or not, you're endowed with a responsibility to leave the community a better place because you lived there."

Speck said that Donley was truly dedicated to public service.

"Kerry and I both loved local government," said Speck, who served on City Council with Donley. "Alexandria is big enough to have the problems of a big city but small enough that you could get your hands around an issue and get it resolved."

At the time of his death, Donley had just begun his second term as board chair for Senior Services of Alexandria.

"Whether it was Senior Services or the Center for Alexandria's Children, Kerry was all in," said Speck. "If Kerry said he would help you with something you knew you had all of him."

Donley is survived by his wife, Eva; five daughters and five grandchildren; a twin sister Kelly of Arlington; and younger brother Scott of Alexandria.

A Memorial Gathering will be held on Sunday, July 24, at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 W. Braddock Road. The family will receive guests from 1 to 3 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m. with a prayer service beginning at 6:30 p.m.

A Funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, July 25, at Blessed



David Speck, left, with Kerry Donley and grandsons at a baseball game in Martha's Vineyard.

Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the following organizations: Senior Services of Alexandria -- seniorservice-salex.org; Center for Alexandria's Children -- centerforalexandriaschildren.org; and Marquette University -- Bridge to the Future Fund -- timetorise.marquette.edu/give

"For guys, you are lucky if you have someone you can trust explicitly," Speck said. "I know if I were ever in need I could call Kerry and he would step up. That is what is so devastating about this. This isn't the way it was supposed to be. I'm not supposed to be speaking at Kerry's funeral. I'm 11 years older -- he was supposed to be speaking at mine."



Kerry Donley, right, was a longtime board member and supporter of Carpenter's Shelter.



The Donley family at one of many Turkey Trot races.

AWLA's Crisis Care Program

Temporary stays for pets at shelter provide lifeline for people in crisis.

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE
OF ALEXANDRIA

When Courtney R. of Alexandria reached a low point in her life — unhoused, ill and without a dime — her one source of comfort was her dog, Yanni. A black, white and gray Chihuahua-shepherd mix, Yanni had stood by Courtney through numerous crises. “He has the biggest heart, and I know he would lay down his life for me,” she said.

But when Courtney had no choice but to go to a homeless shelter for a while, Yanni wasn't allowed to accompany her. She called the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), which had a solution. The shelter's Crisis Care program, which provides temporary care for animals whose owners are experiencing a temporary crisis or emergency, could house Yanni while Courtney searched for a new home.

Courtney was greatly relieved that Yanni had found a safe place to stay. “What sets [the AWLA] apart is that you understand people,” she said. “The community is so lucky to have you.”

The Crisis Care program takes in dozens of pets each year for temporary stays. People may seek help when fleeing domestic violence, after a sudden hospitalization or other emergencies, including experiencing homelessness. Many are referred to the AWLA by the City of Alexandria agencies who are assisting people in crisis. “Families often just need a week or two to figure

out options for their pet,” said AWLA's Director of Community Programs Joanna Fortin. “That really is the motivation for the program — the hope that by providing interim care, we enable them to stay with their pets in the long run.”

These temporary shelter residents may be sent out to foster homes or might spend their days in staffers' offices rather than in kennels, said AWLA Community Programs Coordinator Demetrius Jackson, who manages the program with Fortin. Jackson stays in close contact with the animals' owners, working with them to contact their friends, family and neighbors to line up temporary housing for the animals. Most of the animals ultimately return to their owners, he said.

Like Courtney, another Alexandria resident faced a stark choice: Stay in her home to endure continuing domestic violence or leave — and abandon her beloved Yorkshire terrier. She brought her dog to the AWLA.

“Sometimes a pet is the only other living being who has endured the trauma that the person has been through; it creates such a strong bond,” said Fortin. “Being able to preserve that relationship is so important to their mental health.”

After a few weeks at the city shelter, the woman was able to arrange permanent housing for herself — and a reunion with her dog.

“When animals are reunited with their person, they often run toward them, so happy to see them,” Jackson said. “I feel a little release, knowing that they're going back to their family, the people

they love.”

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization that operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter. The AWLA impacts the lives of thousands of animals each year through adoptions and other programs, including a Pet Pan-

try that last year provided more than 50,000 pounds of pet food and supplies to community members in need. The AWLA also helps Alexandrians with questions about wildlife and other animals in the community. More than half of the AWLA's budget is composed of donations. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org



PHOTO BY DIRTY PAW PHOTOGRAPHY

Cats in Alexandria sometimes stay for a while at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria when their owners are navigating crises such as hospitalization or escaping domestic violence.



PHOTO COURTESY AWLA

Pet “parents” who experience unexpected challenges can take advantage of the AWLA's Crisis Care program, which can temporarily house dogs like Lucy.



PHOTO COURTESY AWLA

Chihuahua-shepherd mix Yanni is the faithful companion of Courtney R. of Alexandria, who relied on the AWLA's Crisis Care program when she was temporarily out of a home.

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Alexandria Youth Imagine a New Alexandria

Seeking safety, success and respect for all young people in Alexandria.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Youth dream of a future where they feel important, where they are valued and respected by members of the community, where everyone feels safe. They dream of an Alexandria that would eliminate gaps and racial disparities and where factors like race, sexual orientation and zip codes don't determine outcomes.

The Children and Youth Master Plan 2025 presents a roadmap for how the community will work together to create conditions for all

Children and Youth Community Plan report card looks back at March and April to focus on progress made in alcohol awareness and nutrition for children, youth and families. Each month will include the result the Children and Youth Community Plan is trying to achieve, the data that illustrate how they are doing in a particular area and specific actions the community is taking to improve the trend, the players involved and what they are measuring. You can access the report cards at alexandriava.gov.

A key input was the feedback from 89 Build Your Legacy workshops held all over the city. They involved 2,100 community members of which 88 percent were public school youth. The one-hour workshops were held in the school civics classes. Chelsea Eickert, Children and Youth Plan Coordinator, said when they were thinking about how to engage the community in the plan, she attended a workshop which grew into the concept of the Legacy Workshops.

"We workshopped the idea with youth first to be sure they understood and would react positively. We found youth just want to be heard but no one was asking. It was very easy for them to open

"We found youth just want to be heard but no one was asking. It was very easy for them to open up."

— Chelsea Eickert,
Children and Youth Plan Coordinator

young people to thrive in Alexandria. This process began in 2014 when the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC) submitted a blueprint to improve outcomes for children in Alexandria. This comprehensive Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP) set out a vision statement with goals that read "all of Alexandria's children and youth can thrive today and tomorrow."

In 2019 the Commission released a report on the first five years of the CYMP by highlighting community contributions to improving children's outcomes but identifying social, racial and economic disparities that continue. The newly released CYMP built on this report with extensive community engagement in the new plan's development.

This plan is updated every five years by building on the original plan and its progress. The City released the first report card for the 2025 plan on June 1, 2022 and plans to highlight areas of progress monthly. This first



Legacy workshops across Alexandria encouraged youth to dream about their hopes for a better Alexandria.



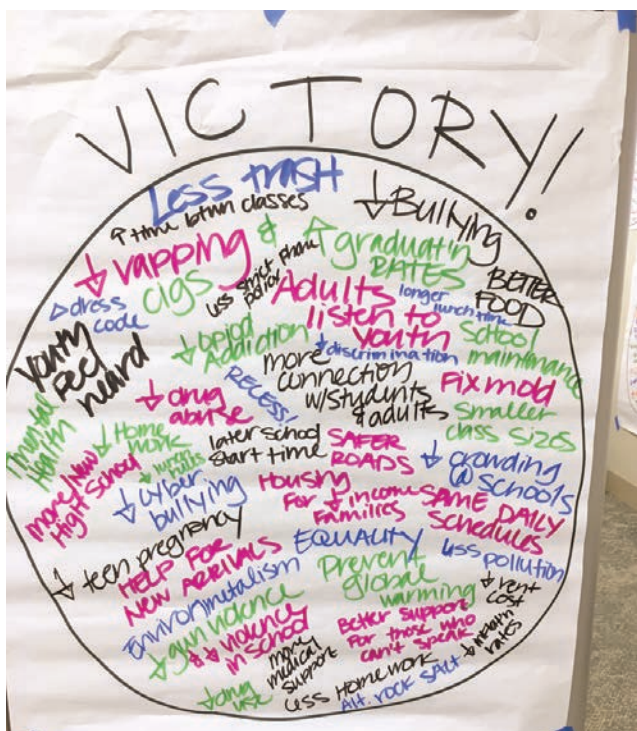
PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Three goals: All children, youth and families are physically safe and healthy; all children and youth are academically successful and career ready; all children, youth and families have positive experiences.

up." She said they began each session by distributing a flyer heavy with youth statistics in the community. We didn't lead them; we just asked 'what stands out to you.'"

"We drew a huge victory circle on the wall and asked them 'imagine what Alexandria would look like if we listened to you. What do you hope will be better?' We gave them permission to dream." She says a lot of themes came up—better mental health, better school lunches. "We had a 20-foot sticky

SEE SEEKING SAFETY, PAGE 9



Chelsea Eickert, Children and Youth Plan Coordinator, says they decorated their offices with the victory circles produced by Alexandria youth containing sticky pad dreams for the future of the City. From left to right: Noraine Buttar, Lisette Torres, Emma Beall, Chelsea Eickert, and Rachel Philpott.

Seeking Safety, Success and Respect For all Young People in Alexandria

FROM PAGE 8

tarp on the wall where we pasted their ideas on sticky notes. Themes started to cluster — how stressful school is, the pressure to succeed.” Eickert said they asked the youth to prioritize. “We told them we don’t have the resources to do it all.”

Once they developed the priorities, she says they landscaped the analysis to figure out who is currently doing what in the City and to connect the dots with all of the other existing plans, to see what was left. Then they brought back the youth and met virtually for months to develop an action plan. “There were a lot of good ideas but when we asked who is going to do it, a lot of stuff we didn’t have the bandwidth, the people power.”

The ideas were turned into three goals with accompanying actions including: All children, youth and families are physically safe and healthy; all children and youth are academically successful and career ready; all children, youth and families have positive experiences.

Norraine Buttar, Department of Community and Human Services Chief of Youth Development says this plan builds on the 2019 report by adding a lot of strategy to the action steps on how to move forward. In addition, they have added results-based accountability. “We have a framework with organizational updates to show progress.” Each strategy is connected to an action plan including tactics, a timeline for implementation and performance measures.

Eickert said, “When I arrived three years ago it made my job extremely difficult because there was no accountability plan in place for the first plan. I didn’t know who was doing what.”

Buttar said, “We like for them to do their reporting monthly. And having a coordinator really helped. Instead of acting by themselves we now have a unified implementation. They can follow progress and if things get behind the timeline, they can have discussions about moving forward.”

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Eickert says, “It was a major cultural shift with rigorous tracking city-wide.

Allen Lomax, “volunteer extraordinaire” who is Chairman of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria and Chairman of the Substance Abuse Coalition, explains that in 2019 the timing for the Alexandria City Public Schools Strategic Plan, the Department of

“We have to let the youth know that what they dreamed does matter and show them some results.”

— Chelsea Eickert, Children and Youth Plan Coordinator

Community and Human Services Children and Youth Master Plan and the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for

“Where the City is lacking is the ability to provide the educational experience for all students that will level the playing field. The talk about equity is disconnected to reality. We need to tackle the root causes. Something is not happening.”

— Carter Fleming

a Healthier Alexandria’s Community Health Improvement Plan revisions all coincided. This allowed them to establish a unified working team to share input and focus on outcomes.

Buttar says, “The first time we all did our own plans.”

Other events resulted in modifications to the original 2019 report. One of the additions was an environmental justice piece. Lomax explains the 2019 report had nothing. “We actually had a group at G.W. Middle School who wanted to include it.”

Another element in the new plan resulted from the Council of Mayor’s focus on bullying. The Mayor wanted us to focus on it.

Lomax says, “The youth had

been thinking about these things for years, but they aren’t asked very much. They don’t feel their voice is valued. They live through these things day in and day out. They were dying to be asked.”

Eickert said they asked only public school students because it was harder to get into the private schools and work with administrators. “They are a different beast. They don’t receive public funding, and we have much less influence over what they do.”

She says another factor was the Legacy Workshops were very equity focused, making sure those furthest from opportunity get heard.

Carter Fleming, a native Alexandrian comments, “I think the plan encompasses what we all believe, that we want positive outcomes for youth in our city. It is a plan of plans. It explains a lot of things. But it doesn’t break a lot of new ground. It is a compilation of other plans.” She continues, “Who wouldn’t believe in equity but the recent laser focus on this has given the impression this is the Alexandria I grew up in long ago.”

This is a progressive community, Fleming says, and the ultimate determinate is education, but those kids are not getting the education they should. “These kids that were interviewed want to be valued but don’t see progress that will allow that to happen. Where the City is lacking is the ability to provide the educational experience for all students that will level the playing field. The talk about equity is disconnected to reality. We need to tackle the root causes. Something is not happening.”

Eickert says, “This is my entire world, and I am passionate about it. Sometimes I’m discouraged. There has been all of this youth violence, and with COVID, too. It seems sometimes all of that engagement done before doesn’t matter anymore.

But we have to let the youth know that what they dreamed does matter and show them some results.”

City of Alexandria Lands \$10 million from NVT

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

With the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVT) unanimous vote on June 14 to adopt the \$624,882,714 FY2022-2027 Six Year Program (SYP), the City of Alexandria will receive \$10 million total, \$5 million each for two approved projects. One, the West End Transitway Phase 1b: South Van Dorn Street and Bridge Design; two, Alexandria Bike and Pedestrian Trails Construction and Reconstruction: Holmes Run Trail - Dora Kelly Fair-weather Crossing Bridge.

According to the City’s Application, ALX-018 to NVT FY2022-2027 SYP for the South Van Dorn Street and Bridge Design, the project is located on between Metro Road and McConnell Avenue. The design will “accommodate dedicated transit lanes for the future West End Transitway as well as improve non-motorized facilities along the bridges for better connections between new developments, transit stops/stations and the Van Dorn Metrorail station. The design reportedly will include engineering and community engagement, environmental work, staff time and substantial contingency funds.

In addition, beginning the design of this portion of the transitway, where the City has already acquired right of way, makes the City very competitive for construction funds for this project. The City reports total cost to complete the project is \$40,999,440.

As for the City’s Application ALX:020 to NVT FY2022-2027 SYP for the Alexandria Bike and Pedestrian Trails Construction and Reconstruction, the project is located on Holmes Run Trail, at the existing fair-weather crossing located approximately 400 feet north of the intersection of North Beauregard Street and North Morgan Street in Dora Kelley Park. The project would replace an existing fair-weather crossing for the Holmes Run Trail with a prefabricated steel pedestrian and bicycle bridge to allow trail users continuous, safe, and reliable access to the City’s off-street trail facilities. According to the Application’s Project Funding, following design, engineering, and environmental in FY24-25 at a total

cost \$500,000, the NVT funds of \$5 million would be applied to construction scheduled for FY26-27.

Arlington County’s Ballston-MU Metro Rail Station West Entrance is one of NVT’s three largest funding projects at \$80 million, tied for second place with Fairfax County’s Richmond Highway Route 1 BRT (bus rapid transit). Fairfax County’s \$108 million for the “Fairfax County Parkway Widening” topped all projects.

During the press conference, Monica Brockman, chief executive officer of NVT, said that NVT is in its sixth funding program. The passage of HB 2313 is the transportation funding bill. “We are looking at slightly over \$3 billion (\$3.12) in regional multimodal congestion relief solutions right here in Northern Virginia.”

The projects will impact the region in three ways; first, as a multimodal/corridor focus with an emphasis on roadway/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the Rt. 1 corridor. Second, the projects include transportation technology, decarbonizing transit fleets, and an ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) along the Rt. 7 corridor. Third, the projects represent a geographical and modal balance of transit, bike and pedestrian, and transportation technology projects.

NVT is a regional governmental entity of 17 members established to plan, prioritize, and fund regional transportation programs. The program funds what the Authority has deemed the most important transportation projects to relieve congestion to cost and improve the quality of life for Northern Virginians. The program focuses on geographic and modal balance.

What makes one project more likely to receive funding than another? Determining which projects land funding and which do not is tied to four key components of NVT’s project selection process. It begins with an eligibility review. The candidate project must be in a NOVA jurisdiction. Second, a quantitative analysis of congestion reduction relative to costs and long-term benefits. Third, qualitative analysis, past performances, external funding, projective readiness, and modal and geographic balance. Finally, NVT considers public

SEE CITY OF, PAGE 13

Area Native Americans Gather for a Powwow

An “urban powwow” in Alexandria’s Ben Brenman Park.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

Native Americans from the Washington metropolitan area and beyond gathered on July 16 in Alexandria’s Ben Brenman Park for a powwow. A powwow is a celebration of being native that is focused on singing and dancing, explained emcee Dennis Zotigh, a Kiowa-Dakota-Pueblo Indian who works for Washington, D.C.’s National Museum of the American Indian.

Calling it “an urban powwow,” Zotigh said that unlike most powwows, this one was not on currently-owned tribal lands, but he pointed out that the area was once home to the Piscataway people.

Gregorio Kishketon, a Kickapoo tribe member and U. S. Marine Corps veteran, led the Grand Entry, followed by dancers of all ages. Kishketon carried a traditional eagle staff, which Zotigh said preceded the American flag. “Veterans are our living heroes. They’ve protected us,” Zotigh noted.



Dancers followed the leader, Kishketon, in the Grand Entry.



Greg Kishketon led the Grand Entry and carried the eagle flag.

The Zotigh Singers sang and drummed for the entry procession and dances. Many participants dressed in traditional regalia decorated with eagle feathers. See AN “URBAN POWWOW”, PAGE 11



Couples competed in the Potato Dance Contest.



The sponsors cooked and served fry bread.



Rico Newman wore deer toes.



The drummers sat and played in a circle.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

Dennis Zotigh was the emcee and a drummer with the Zotigh Singers



News

An “Urban Powwow” in Alexandria’s Ben Brenman Park

FROM PAGE 10

orated with jingles, beadwork, stitchery and other handmade crafts. Rico Newman from Upper Marlboro, Maryland, welcomed all in his native Piscataway Conoy language and gave thanks to the Earth, water and winds.

“English is a foreign language brought here by immigrants,” Zotigh told the gathering.

Around 25 couples entered the Potato Dance Contest, a competition in which each pair faced each other and danced gently with their hands behind their backs while holding a potato between their two foreheads. If either person touched the potato or if it fell, the couple was disqualified. The last couple standing won \$50. “Gotta get the rhythm. Talk to your potato,” urged Zotigh.

The Washington area has around 5,000 or so Native Americans, according to Zotigh. The U.S. has around 600 tribes. Native people prefer to be called by their tribal affiliation, he said.

Sponsors of the powwow were Running Strong for American Indian Youth (<https://indianyouth.org/>) and the Udall Foundation’s Native American internship program (<https://www.udall.gov/Our-Programs/Internship/Internship.aspx>).



Jennifer Night Bird with the Red River Metis Michif tribe came from Delaware.



Many people had jingles on their clothing that make tinkling sounds when the person moves.

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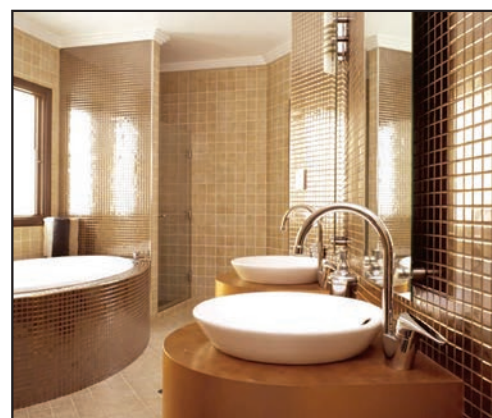
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Obituary



Sarah (Sally) Bond Welch Geary was born October 6, 1921, daughter of Robert Sellman Gray Welch, MD of Annapolis and Sarah (Sally) Maria Bond Welch of Calvert County. After graduation from Hood College Sally taught kindergarten in Annapolis then married LT John T. Geary from Phoenix, Arizona. Their duty stations included San Diego and Long Beach, CA; Pearl Harbor, HI; and Norfolk and Alexandria, VA. Sally pursued her interests in music and historic preservation as a member of the first Board of Historic Annapolis, Junior League docent at Gunston Hall, and member of the DAR and the Colonial Dames. Her most rewarding activity was participating in the New Life Series, a Bible study conducted by the Rev. Everett Fullam in Washington, D.C., and serving on the steering committee. As long as she could remember, Sally tried to live in obedience to the Golden Rule. She died on July 16 and was predeceased by her husband, CAPT John T. Geary, USN (Ret) and her brother, Robert B. Welch, MD. She is survived by her son, CAPT John Welch Geary, USN (Ret) and his wife, Kathleen; her grandson, Robert Geary; and her granddaughter, Meredith Hawley, her husband, Kevin Hawley, and their daughter, Natalie.

Obituary



Surrounded by family and friends, **Patricia May Dillon Lopez, 75**, passed away peacefully at home in Alexandria on Monday, July 11th, 2022. Patricia was born in Washington, D.C. on July 26th, 1946, to Albert Dillon and Gaynell Virginia (Crabtree) Dillon. Raised in Arlington, Virginia, Patricia graduated from Bishop Denis J. O’Connell High School. She received her Bachelor of Arts from George Mason University and a Masters Degree in Clinical Social Work from Argosy University. Born with a servants heart, Patricia dedicated her life to helping others with a steady and guiding wisdom. She served her community both professionally and personally through her 30 year tenure with the City of Alexandria and cultivated deep community bonds within various organizations such as Alexandria City Public Schools, SCAN of Northern Virginia and Alexandria Soccer Association. Patricia is survived by her three children August Lopez, his wife Evangeline, Zachary Lopez, and Mariana (Lopez) Taormina, her husband Louis Taormina, as well as Patricia’s daughter-in-law Carmen Lopez and Kenneth E. Lopez, the father of Patricia’s children. Patricia’s six grandchildren, Violeta, Kenneth, Henry, Alessandra, Vincent and August remain her greatest blessings. Patricia also leaves behind her beloved companion of many years, Douglas Wagoner. Should you wish to make a contribution, please make donations to your local Animal Welfare League in Patricia Dillon Lopez’s name.

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CALENDAR



California artist Shima Shanti’s artwork will be featured at Nepenthe Gallery in Alexandria on Thursday, July 21, 2022.

Special Exhibit by California Artist Shima Shanti

6 p.m. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Nepenthe Gallery is pleased to announce that Shima Shanti, one of the west coast artists, will be the featured artist and speaker. The evening’s exhibit will showcase paintings by Shima, a San Diego based fine artist who uses beeswax and fire in the ancient medium of 3-D encaustic art. The exhibit will feature nine of Shima’s works.

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/>

NOW THRU 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, 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.

NOW THRU 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.

NOW THRU JULY 31
SOAR Exhibition. At Van Landingham Gallery, Studio 311, Torpedo Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists’ Association’s Van Landingham Gallery presents SOAR, a new show featuring artworks by Joyce Zipperer, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Tom Kelly, Eileen O’Brien, Jennifer Brewer Stone and Rebecca McNeely. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, photography, paintings and sculpture. Additionally, the gallery offers small gifts, art cards, block-printed totes and jewelry.

NOW THRU JULY 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/>

THURSDAY/JULY 21
Music at the Market at Old Town North. 6-7 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 N Royal St., Alexandria. The Old Town North Community Partnership, with support from NOTICE, The Old Town North Alliance and local businesses and residents, present Music at the Market on the third Thursday of the month throughout the summer. Head to the Old Town North Farmer’s and Artisans Market to browse, pick up a bite and picnic in the park while soaking in great live music. Rain dates are July 28 and September 8.

THURSDAY/JULY 21
Old Town Art Walk. At various locations in Old Town Alexandria. Enjoy a self-guided tour of Old Town Alexandria and explore the fine art and studio crafts found in art galleries and boutique shops on the SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

News

City of Alexandria

FROM PAGE 9

comment.

NVTA received 1,609 comments from 448 members of the public on the 26 candidate projects, according to the NVTA approved summary minutes as viewed online. The public comment period began on Friday, April 15, 2022, and concluded at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 22, 2022. On June 2, NVTA's CEO Monica Backmon posted a summary report of public comments along with the comments themselves on NVTA's website. According to the Summary Minutes of the Thursday, June 9 NVTA meeting, Chairman Jeffery C. McKay, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, noted that many of these projects had undergone previous public comment at the jurisdictional level.

Randall said that one thing in this six-year program that had not occurred previously was an emphasis on transportation technology. According to Randall, our children will probably not use the same power source to drive and travel throughout the region as we do today. "If we are going to be ready for that time, we have got to invest in transportation technology right now, all the infrastructure for what we believe will be coming in the future."

Congestion relief and "getting people out of traffic as fast as possible," are the key goals of NVTA funding. NVTA funds pedestrian and bicycle modes only if they lead to a more extensive transport system. "If there is a bike path that leads you to the Metro, then that is something we will look at. But for NVTA overall, our first goal is to do congestion relief," Randall said.

NVTA's next Call for Regional Transportation Projects is anticipated for May 2023. Subscribe to NVTA's newsletters at TheNoVaAuthority.org to stay in the know.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

third Thursday of each month, May to October. The stroll is a great activity after an early dinner, or before enjoying a meal at one of Old Town Alexandria's restaurants. The Old Town Art Walk is presented by the Old Town Business Association.

SATURDAY/JULY 23

Auxiliary Improv Show. 7:30-9:30 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. They're putting on a show! Everything will be completely made up on the spot, so everything performed is totally unique and limited to this night only!

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Obituary



William H. Thompson, 83, passed away peacefully at his home in Woodbridge, VA, on Monday, July 11, 2022. Services will be held July 22 at Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church, 606 S. Washington St., Alexandria, VA. The viewing is at 10:00 a.m. and the service is at 11:00 a.m.

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More Than I Bargained For



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a longtime homeowner of a historic home, one dating back to the early 1800s, to say there's ongoing upkeep/maintenance required is to state the obvious. What wouldn't be so obvious is the total inability of yours truly, cancer notwithstanding, to do any kind of constructive, presumed-to-be-within-the-man's purview-type repairs. Moreover, home improvement projects and/or any number of garden variety/common sense modifications like adding shelves, changing light switches/adding a dimmer, fixing a toilet, hanging pictures, et. cetera, are also outside of my comfort zone. A zone which barely exists. Nothing too complicated in the scheme of things mind you, but way too complicated for me. In addition, as you might imagine, tools are not my friends. In fact, they are my sworn enemies. If I pick up a hammer or a chain saw (which I do own), I'm more likely to hurt myself than I am to hit my target. I can live with my shortcomings. However, it's becoming increasingly difficult for my wife, Dina, to endure my incompetence.

Aside from my shortcomings, not being able to do anything costs money. And to hire anybody to do these kinds of homeowner tasks costs big money, usually a retail-type of cost to what it might cost compared to what it might cost a more capable homeowner – unlike myself, to do the job himself (wholesale). And other than Ghostbusters, who you gonna call? If you're lucky, you have a referral to somebody reliable and knowledgeable. If you're me, you don't so you have to find some other trusted resource. And that resource amazingly exists online. You simply list your project, your zip code and other pertinent information (cell phone and email specifically) and wait for the feedback. It's almost immediate. Within seconds almost, the phone rings and/or your email receives – with offers. Within these offers are typically star-type evaluations and comments from previous users of this specific service. It's all, in my limited experience, reassuring and so I've hired these "pros" on multiple occasions and so far, so good. I still feel helpless, but I don't feel directionless – if that's even a word.

But there's a downside. The amount of communication either over the phone or electronically before the job and/or after the job has been completed is relentless. It's nonstop. Initially, there is the solicitation of the job which spawns any number of calls/emails offering. Once you're able to commit and hire the pro, the solicitations don't stop. On occasion, I've received calls/emails for another day or two until my non-reply eventually stops the outreach. It's intrusive enough before the job, but after, it's worse. In the pursuit of feedback, presumably (I've only responded electronically, never on the phone though), the calls continue for days. The caller ID tells me who's calling so I don't have to answer but I still make note – mentally, of who called. I don't tally the calls, but I can tell you, it's been upwards of a dozen over a couple of days – along with emails. I can appreciate that the service wants feedback from the person who hired the pro to post it on their site to educate the public, so to speak, but enough is enough. A good faith effort to contact me is all that's required. If I don't respond after a few calls, leave me be.

Nevertheless, because of this service, I have been able, recently to get out of my own way and let a professional handle the work. And so far, I have had good luck – with a plumber, an electrician, and a gutter/air-duct-cleaning service, to name a few. I feel as if we've made some progress, which as the owner of a historic home (yes designated as such), is a constant battle, one which I have consistently lost – for years. But I don't feel as irresponsible since I have a resource. I still can't do any homeowner-type stuff myself, but I can certainly hire someone. I just wish the cost – literally and figuratively, for the experience was less. Because, unfortunately for me, the demand far outweighs the supply, and the end is nowhere in sight.

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

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NEWS

At Last

Pepe's Pizza opens on Duke Street.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

New Haven-style pizza, already widely revered in culinary circles, arrived in Alexandria July 18 as Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana opened its doors in the Alexandria Commons Shopping Center on Duke Street.

Known as Pepe's Pizza, the iconic Connecticut-based eatery first opened in New Haven in 1925 and is one of the oldest and best recognized pizzerias in the country. Founder Frank Pepe popularized the thin-crust, coal-fired Neapolitan pizza of his native Italy and his granddaughter was on hand as local officials formally cut the ribbon to open the Alexandria location.

"I am beyond excited today," said Jennifer Kelly, who grew up working in the original Pepe's in New Haven. "I saw the hard work that my grandparents put into this – then my mom and her sister. My family worked so hard for so long then to see something like this happen, it is just so emotional for me."

Vice-Mayor Amy Jackson and Councilman John Chapman were on hand for the ceremonial ribbon cutting along with Chamber of Commerce CEO Joe Haggerty.

"I am beyond excited today. I saw the hard work that my grandparents put into this."

—Jennifer Kelly, granddaughter of Pepe's Pizza founder Frank Pepe

The Alexandria location is the 14th to expand beyond New Haven with another planned for Plantation, Fla., for later this year. All remain owned by the Pepe family.

"We began expanding outside of New Haven in 2006," Kelly said. "People were coming to us from all over so we made the decision to come to them."

Signature pizzas include the Fresh Tomato Pie, the first sold by Frank Pepe, which is topped with fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, garlic, grated Pecorino Romano and olive oil. Also on the menu is Pepe's famous White Clam Pizza, featuring fresh clams, Pecorino Romano, proprietary oil blend, fresh garlic, and oregano.

All pizzas are baked in a coal-fired brick oven at 600 degrees resulting in a distinct thin, oblong crust with characteristic charring and chewy texture. The 97-year-old legacy brand has been consistently ranked as America's best pizza by The Daily Meal and other national media.

Located at 3231 Duke Street, Pepe's Pizza is open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Both indoor dining and takeout are available. For more information call 703-719-2035 or visit www.pepespizza.com.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Jennifer Kelly, center, granddaughter of Pepe's Pizza founder Frank Pepe, is joined by local dignitaries and staff for the grand opening of Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana in Alexandria Commons Shopping Center on Duke Street.



Workers prepare pizzas during the July 18 grand opening of Frank Pepe's Pizzeria.



Employees prepare to serve New Haven-style pizza at the July 18 grand opening of Pepe's Pizza in Alexandria.



Jennifer Kelly, left, granddaughter of Pepe's Pizza founder Frank Pepe, talks with Maria Ciarrocchi and Joe Haggerty of the Chamber of Commerce.

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