

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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JULY 27, 2023

## 40 Under 40 Chamber celebrates next generation of leaders.



The Chamber ALX 2023 40 Under 40 honorees pose for a class photo July 20 at the American Physical Therapy Association Headquarters.

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA REED/JASON DIXON PHOTOGRAPHY



Amanda Wallingford, Micki MacNaughton, Sue Kovalsky and Gwen Lutz at The Chamber ALX 40 Under 40 reception.



Ariel Johnson-Peredo (right) poses with a friend in front of the photobooth backdrop.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Chamber ALX held its 40 Under 40 awards July 20, celebrating the achievements and community impact of the next generation of Alexandrians, all under the age of 40, for significant accomplishments in their chosen field.

Held at the American Physical Therapy Association Headquarters, the 8th annual event, presented by The Jen Walker Team, recognized the most recent selection of honorees based on professional accomplishments, scholastic achievements, community impact, and personal story.

Mayor Justin Wilson was joined by members of City Council, City Manager Jim Parajon and Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker in celebrating the newest honorees. Chamber Chair Nicole McGrew and Micki MacNaughton of The Jen Walker Team served as emcees.

In addition to the traditional 40 Under 40 honorees, two Alexandria City High School students were recognized with the Youth Honoree Award.

The 2023 Honorees include: Bismah Ahmed, Apartment and Office Building Association; Be-



40 Under 40 honoree Ebony Fleming of the City of Alexandria.

tel Aklilu, Kelayi Chiropractic & Wellness Boutique; Lisette Alvarez, Stormfire Productions; Joshua Bagley, Goodwin Living; Matt Bell, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority; Chris Berset, Prime Time Baseball & Alexandria Aces; Deron Campbell, Inova Health System; Alison Coleman Tokarz, City of Alexandria; Xue Connelly, Wade, Grimes, Friedman, Meinken & Leischner PLLC; Kristin Cowan, Mount Purnon Cat Cafe and Wine Bar; Marilyn G. Delgado, Alexandria Clerk of Court; Regis V.B. DeVeaux, NerdsToGo; Rebecca Doser, Visit Alexandria; Reverend Professor Quardricos B. Driskell,

Beulah Baptist Church; Raytevia Evans, Alexandria City Fire Department; Philomena Fitzgerald, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership; Cecilia Kern Fix, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; Ebony Fleming, City of Alexandria; Crystal Fraley, Port City Brewing Company; Rakin Hamad, Curcio Law; Kasey Henderson, Global Situation Room; Colleen Hughes, Inova Health Foundation; Dr. Krina Jasani, Alexandria Dental Care Center; Ariel Johnson-Peredo, Ernst & Young; Dr. Joshpaul Jolly, Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group; Mor-

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Joe Haggerty with the 40 Under 40 Youth Honorees, Chloe Yokitis and Emily Milton.

# Miriam Miller

Helping YOU Move Forward at Every Phase of Life!



## First Time Home Buyers

"We met Miriam at one of the first open houses we attended. **We weren't pre-approved, didn't know what an appraiser was, and were way over our heads. That all changed once we officially had Miriam as our agent, or as we like to call her — our 'real estate mom'.** As first-time homeowners, we had a lot of questions. It didn't matter the time of day — Miriam was always there to answer us." — *Samantha and John*

## Buying from Overseas

"Public Service Announcement for all prospective home buyers or sellers: **It is 100% in your best interest to hire Miriam Miller as your agent. We did our utmost to make the home buying experience challenging for Miriam — especially as we were buying a home from overseas (and sight unseen).** Fortunately for us, Miriam made it seem like no challenge at all! Miriam's knowledge, experience, promptness, and flexibility provided a foundation for success given our circumstances... Miriam truly cared about us as clients and we felt that throughout our experience." — *K Mueller*

## Buying and Selling at the Same Time

"Miriam Miller represented us for both the purchase of our new home and sale of our former home. Miriam's amiable follow-up, follow-through, and unflappable positivity made the difference. **Our complex transaction, from the sale of home contingency, below-price purchase and above list price sale, through a challenging timeline, would not have succeeded without Miriam's perseverance and unfailing optimism...** If you're seeking a knowledgeable professional with both grace and tenacity, look no further than Miriam Miller." — *David and Elisa*

## Estate Sales

"Miriam Miller is a consummate professional with a deep understanding of local real estate markets. **Having to sell my late father's house was difficult, but Miriam's optimism, patience and can-do attitude made the process that much easier. Her expertise and keen eye for detail served me well and her willingness to go above and beyond helped turn a neglected house into a beautiful home.** Not living in the immediate area, Miriam played the roles of real estate agent, stager, and logistics manager for all the moving parts required to update the house from afar. I am truly appreciative of all that Miriam was able to accomplish and cannot think of a more capable real estate agent." — *Mark*

## Rentals

"Miriam has been a friend for years, so I knew just who I could depend upon when we were struggling to rent our home in Virginia in a very slow renters' market. **Miriam stepped in and seamlessly took care of everything for us.** Within no time, Miriam helped us to economically upgrade our home, took new photos and increased the traffic to our listing by using every resource at her disposal. She spent time showing the house, meeting workmen and following up on leads. **I'm happy to say that it is now rented with a solid 3-year lease. I highly recommend Miriam!**" — *Beth*



Wherever you are in life, buying or selling your home is an exciting and emotional experience. I love working with all my clients from first-time buyers with growing families to empty-nesters who want to right size for their next chapter in life. Call me today if you or anyone you know is interested in buying or selling a home. **My goal is to help you reach yours!**

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# NEWS

## Senate District 39

Democrat

**Adam Ebbin**

raised \$608,000

- ❖ \$45,000 from Charlottesville-based Clean Virginia Fund
- ❖ \$16,000 from John Ashford, chairman and CEO of the Hawthorne Group
- ❖ \$12,000 from Leslie Wilkes of Alexandria
- ❖ \$8,000 from Seattle-based Amazon
- ❖ \$8,000 from Henrico-based Common Good VA



## House District 4

Democrat

**Charniele Herring**

raised \$410,000

- ❖ \$105,000 from Richmond-based Dominion Energy
- ❖ \$15,000 from Ronald Abramson, an attorney at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney in Washington, D.C.
- ❖ \$15,000 from Richmond-based Virginia Auto Dealers Association
- ❖ \$10,000 from Washington-based American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
- ❖ \$10,000 from Richmond-based Virginia Beer Wholesalers Association



## House District 5

Democrat

**Elizabeth Bennett Parker**

raised \$116,000

- ❖ \$10,000 from Charlottesville-based Clean Virginia Fund
- ❖ \$5,000 from Washington-based American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
- ❖ \$5,000 from Thomas Becherer, founder and CEO of Delta Bridge telecommunications and engineering consulting
- ❖ \$5,000 from G. Gilmer Minor III, chairman, president and CEO of Owens & Minor medical supplies
- ❖ \$4,300 from David Bruce Bouk, XO Communication



## House District 3

Democrat

**Alfonso Lopez**

raised \$90,000

- ❖ \$10,000 from Charlottesville-based Clean Virginia Fund
- ❖ \$10,000 from Washington-based American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
- ❖ \$7,000 from Henrico-based Common Good VA
- ❖ \$5,000 from Richmond-based Virginia Trial Lawyers Association
- ❖ \$2,600 from Washington-based International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers



# Following the Money Alexandria delegation pulls in almost \$3 million despite lack of competition.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he election in Alexandria this year is kind of a dud in terms of competition. But don't let that fool you because the race for campaign cash is hotter than ever.

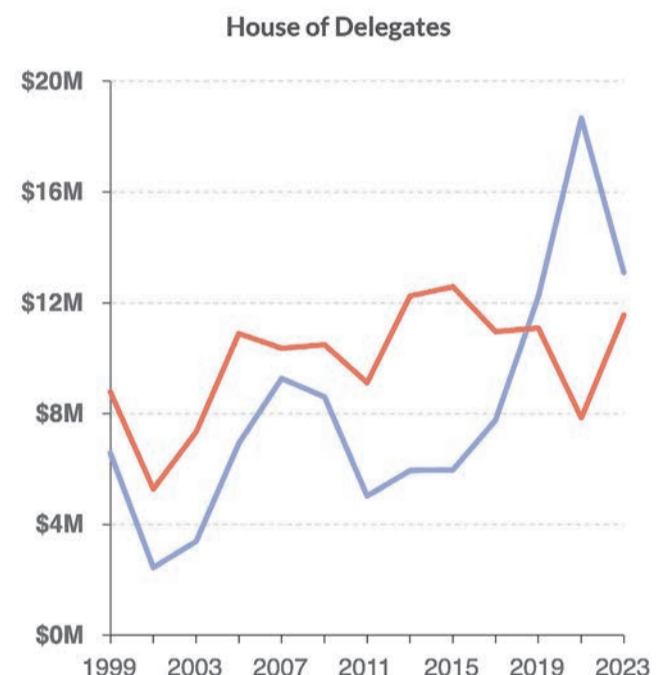
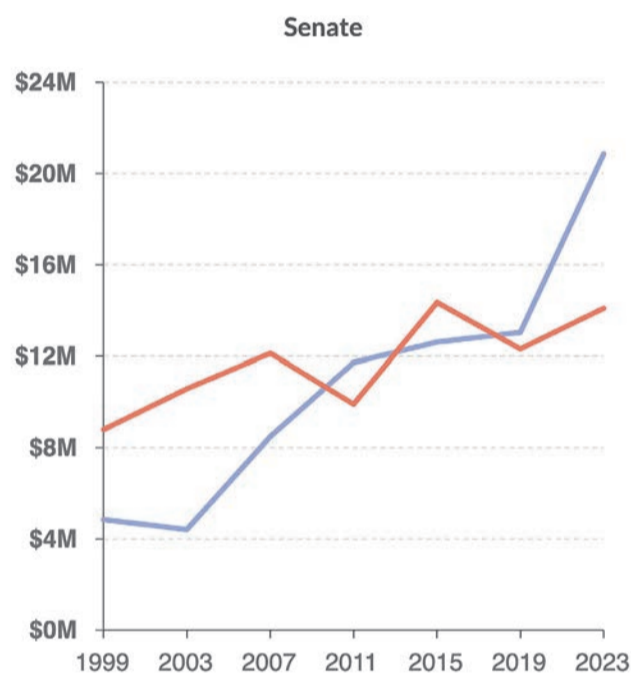
According to campaign finance documents, candidates running for the four General Assembly seats in Alexandria have raised a total of \$1.2 million — a staggering amount considering the candidates are either unopposed or in races that are not competitive. Add to that the \$1.6 million retiring Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw raised this election cycle, and that's almost \$3 million the Alexandria delegation is contributing this election cycle.

"The amount of money is fascinating, although I'm not sure what it says about our current state of democracy," said Brian Moran, former Alexandria delegate who served as chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "There's a real financial war going on right now, and of course the governor is raising record amounts of money."

At the top of the money pyramid in Alexandria is state Sen. Adam Ebbin, who is currently running for the newly created Senate District 39. Because he's chairman of the General Laws Committee and one of the more senior members, he is responsible for helping Democrats keep control of the chamber. During his time in the Senate, he's given \$250,000 to the caucus. In the last election cycle, he gave \$140,000 to the caucus to help candidates in competitive races.

"If a candidate is likely to help move the needle on getting a majority on either side, then the caucuses will come in and put in money either directly or indirectly," said former Republican Delegate David Ramadan, now at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government. "We'll see quite a bit of that throughout the summer with a huge push toward the end of the summer or the fall."

Aside from money to the caucus, Ebbin also helps individual candidates in tight races. In the 2019 election cycle, Ebbin gave \$30,000 to Democrat Amy Laufer who was hoping to unseat Sen. Bryce Reeves, a Re-



VIRGINIA PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

**Democrats are outpacing Republicans in fundraising for the House and Senate, although Republican candidates have more cash on hand in key House races.**

**"The amount of money is fascinating, although I'm not sure what it says about our current state of democracy."**

— Brian Moran,  
former Alexandria delegate who served as  
chairman of the House Democratic Caucus

publican from Spotsylvania. He also gave \$9,000 to Democrat Debra Rodman in her campaign against Sen. Siobhan Dunning, a Republican from Henrico. Earlier this year, he gave \$8,000 to Sen. Creigh Deeds of Charlottesville to help him defeat a challenger in the Democratic primary.

"That creates expectations for future legislative sessions," said Karen Hult, a political science professor at Virginia Tech. "People might be more open and willing to listen to other members and also to some of the advocates who have given money."

Ebbin does have a Republican challenger, although the race is not considered compet-

itive. Republican Sophia Moshasha is the only Senate candidate on the ballot anywhere in Virginia who is 100 percent self-financed. Campaign finance records show she loaned her campaign \$300 for setting up a website through GoDaddy and buying food from Asian Bistro for a campaign meeting.

"I think it's too easily overstated that money is somehow buying votes. We don't have very much direct evidence of that," said Hult. "But it opens doors and eases relationships. And in a part time legislature it's how a lot of legislators get information and knowledge and know who to call when they've got questions."

**ALEXANDRIA'S HOUSE DELEGATION** is also flush with cash even though only one candidate faces an independent candidate who hasn't raised any money so far. Del. Charniele Herring served as majority leader for the brief period that Democrats controlled the House, and she is now the chairwoman of the House Democratic Caucus. In this election cycle, she's raised almost a half a million

dollars even though she has no opponent.

"As the chair, Charniele would have a high number she's expected to raise and contribute to the caucus," said Trevor Southerland, former executive director of the House Democratic Caucus. "Maybe she's going to run statewide in a few years. But if she wants to be majority leader again, she's going to have to stand up in front of the caucus and show what she did to help get that majority back."

This election cycle, Herring has given \$50,000 to the House Democratic Caucus, making her one of the top donors and giving her a key voice in how the money is distributed later this year. Campaign finance records show she has contributed more than \$1 million to the caucus during her time in office, putting her in league with some of the most influential members like former Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn and former Minority Leader David Toscano.

"When you become leader or chair or whip or campaign chair, you're expected to increase your giving," said Southerland. "The ones who have full time jobs are not always able to fundraise as much as people who make the legislature their full-time job."

# Chamber Celebrates Next Generation of Leaders

FROM PAGE 1  
 gan Jones, Convene Architecture; Grace E. Kim, Oblon, McClelland, Maier & Neustadt; Timothy R. Laderach, US Navy Reserves and Crowell & Moring; Leah Lattus, Holistic Hair Studio; James C. Lewis Jr., American Society of Consultant Pharmacists; Alexandra M. Lydon, Legal Services of Northern Virginia; Dr. Rachel Marquez, Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group; Emily Milton, Alexandria City High School Youth Honoree; Daquise Montgomery, M&T Bank; Jenna Rae Perkins, DiscovHER Health; Suzan Imad Rababe, Redmon, Peyton & Braswell; Marta Schantz, Urban Land Institute; Casey Sharperson, EON; Amaia Pilar Stecker, Millennial Action Project; Mollie Thorsen Andrews, The Little Burros; Heather M. Wojton, Institute for Defense Analyses; and Chloe Yokitis, Alexandria City High School Youth Honoree.

Video Link: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cu8YvXG0tHV/>

Over 300 attendees celebrate at The Chamber ALX's 40 Under 40 reception July 20 at the American Physical Therapy Association Headquarters.



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA REED/JASON DIXSON PHOTOGRAPHY



Honoree Dr. Rachel Marke, honoree Dr. Joshpaul Jolly, and Peggy Leadbetter at the 40 Under 40 reception.



Tricia Richie, Brian Stecker, Frank Fannon, honoree Chris Berset, and honoree Amaia Pilar Stecker at the 40 Under 40 reception.



40 Under 40 honoree Deron Campbell of Inova Health Foundation poses with his award.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

### FAMILIES SOUGHT TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Families and individuals from the Washington, D.C.-metro region are being sought to become hosts for international students for 12 weeks, a semester, or an academic year. Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures,

including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and more.

AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world. Those interested in hosting an AFS Exchange Student are encouraged to contact 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit [www.afsusa.org](http://www.afsusa.org) for more information. You can also get involved as an AFS-USA Volunteer. Visit [www.afsusa.org/volunteer](http://www.afsusa.org/volunteer) to get started or learn more about opportunities to make a difference.

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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.volunteeral-alexandria.org](http://www.volunteeral-alexandria.org)

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck

to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeralalexandria.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](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org). Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexan-

dria 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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

## SENIOR LIVING

# Register for Fall 2023 Senior Academy

BY MARGARET SHETLER,  
DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH AND  
DEVELOPMENT SENIOR SERVICES

**A**re you interested in becoming a more engaged and informed Alexandrian? Whether you are new to the city or have lived here for decades, there is something for everyone at this Fall's Senior Academy. The free four-week course for Alexandria's older adults 60+ highlights various government functions, local organizations, and services and resources for older adults.

Participants will hear from the Mayor, City Manager, Police Chief, Sheriff, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Workforce Development, Senior Services of Alexandria and more. Senior Academy explores topics such as Getting to know your city and how you can make a difference, city services for older adults, community resources, and cultural and educational op-

portunities in Alexandria. Any older adult (60+) who lives or works in the city of Alexandria is welcome!

The Fall 2023 Senior Academy runs through the month of September, every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27). The weekly venues will change starting at City Hall, followed by the Police Headquarters, Charles Houston Recreation Center, and Beatley Central Library. Light refreshments are provided each week, and a special graduation luncheon will follow the last class. To learn more, or to register, visit seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414 ext. 110. Registration closes on Friday, Aug. 25 at 5 p.m. and the class size is limited to 25. Registrants will receive a schedule with further details.

Senior Academy is organized by the City of Alexandria and Senior Services of Alexandria. To learn more about the various City Academies and educational opportunities to engage Alexandria residents, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/Academies](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Academies).

### BULLETIN BOARD

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goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com). STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://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](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

ALIVE! offers numerous programs

that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer

Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to [cancer.org/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while

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The Little Theatre of Alexandria

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## Examining and Correcting School Funding Formulas

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



The underfunding of Virginia's public schools recently made headlines, when a new study concluded that Virginia's K-12 education system receives 14 percent less funding than the average system in America even though Virginia has the 10th highest median family income. This independent analysis collides with Governor Youngkin's persistent call for more tax cuts. This year, the state legislature should be adopting budget amendments to reflect adjusted revenues, but we have been unable to agree because of the Governor's insistence on more tax cuts. Cutting taxes means less revenue for state responsibilities like education and mental health.

As someone whose 20 years of education were subsidized by Virginia taxpayers from kindergarten through law school, I fully appreciate the importance of robust investments in public education.

### Schools Are Underfunded

Two weeks ago, Virginia's nonpartisan independent auditor, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission or JLARC, published a long-awaited analysis of the adequacy of funding for Virginia K-12 education. The study found that Virginia's system receives 14 percent less funding than the average U.S. public education system after adjusting for labor costs or about \$1,900 per student. Among neighboring states, we also invest less than West Virginia, Kentucky and Maryland and slightly more than Tennessee and North Carolina.

The report highlighted several disparities baked into our existing education funding

approach that hurt our area. First, existing funding underweighs Northern Virginia's higher increased labor costs and caps state funding for school support employees like guidance counselors, nurses, social workers and teachers' assistants — an approach that pushes these costs onto local government.

State funding also does not adequately account for English as a Second Language (ESOL) students, special education or children in poverty, students we broadly label as "At-Risk Students." This is significant because public schools must teach whoever walks in the door and Fairfax County Public Schools report that elementary students speak 182 different languages or dialects at home.

Schools cannot control the number of at-risk students in their classrooms and Northern Virginia has a disproportionate share of ESOL students compared with the rest of the state and FCPS At Risk Student population would be the 5th largest school division in Virginia if it were its own school division. In addition, state funding for at-risk students has declined on a net basis while actual expenditures have risen, costs funded by local governments.

Fourth, while we do have a program to supplement localities with high labor costs called "cost to compete," this funding is insufficient. Arlington receives nine percent more funding while its labor costs are 40 percent more than average.

JLARC did find that the formula currently used to allocate funds called the "local composite index" (LCI) does work. The LCI measures a locality's ability to pay by comparing each locality's relative income, real estate taxes and student population. Wealthier jurisdictions receive

less state funding and less-wealthy divisions receive more.

The study also highlights concerns unique to rural areas. It is important to realize that we must construct policies for jurisdictions as large as Fairfax County's 1.1 million residents and 180,000 students and a system like Highland County, Virginia, with 2,295 residents and 195 students.

The JLARC analysis basically leaves two questions. First, how do we craft a funding system that more equitably distributes more funds to elementary-secondary education in Virginia. The solution must ensure that ESOL, special education and low-income students are accurately assessed and accounted for in the funding formulas. We also must correctly account for localities' true labor costs and needs.

### The Senate Moved Forward

This year, the Senate Democratic Caucus took a first step by proposing to eliminate the cap on state reimbursement for support employees, investing significantly more funds in at-risk students and proposing higher teacher raises. Sadly, the House of Delegates Republicans and the Governor are prioritizing tax cuts. Hence, the budget stalemate.

The second issue is finding more resources to invest in education. Annual tax cuts like those proposed by the Governor will not help us make longer-term investments in schools. Virginia's tax system also needs serious modernization so that revenues keep up with demands for the high-quality services the public expects.

I am fortunate that public education gave me a foundation for success that I have enjoyed in life and I will continue to fight for policy choices that make those opportunities available to everyone. Please email your views to me at [scott@scottsurovell.org](mailto:scott@scottsurovell.org)

### BULLETIN BOARD

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serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).  
Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit [www.spaceofherown.org](http://www.spaceofherown.org) and [www.spaceofhisown.org](http://www.spaceofhisown.org). For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at [sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov](mailto:sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov) or phone at 703-746-4687.  
Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed.

To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, [brianmorreale@gmail.com](mailto:brianmorreale@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at [suzjdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:suzjdoyle@gmail.com) or 571-403-0673.  
The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.  
The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month

at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for

each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email [DAAS@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DAAS@alexandriava.gov).

### Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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By mail to: Letters to the Editor The Connection  
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Published by  
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Laurence Foong  
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A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to [circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com), and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.



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# Going the Extra Mile

Walk to Richmond to mark Women's Equality Day Aug. 26.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

It was a 72-year battle to pass and ratify the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. That historic day took place August 26, 1920, when U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby officially certified the 19th Amendment resulting in the largest single one-day increase of potential voters in the history of the United States.

Now known as Women's Equality Day, August 26 this year celebrates 50 years since the day was designated by Congress in 1973. Alexandria resident Gayle Converse is marking the milestone leading a walk from Alexandria to the Virginia Women's Monument in Richmond.

"The walk is designed to recognize and honor all women of the Commonwealth of Virginia – past, present and future," said Converse, vice president of Alexandria Celebrates Women. "My goal is to highlight women's history, women's health and women's equality."

Alexandria Celebrates Women is sponsoring the walk – "Women Going the Extra Mile" – with Converse stepping off on the 133-mile journey Aug. 5 from the steps of Kate Waller Barrett Library in Old Town. The location recognizes the efforts of Waller Barrett, an Alexandrian and leading social and voting rights activist of her time.

"Weather permitting, we will leave Alexandria at 8 a.m. the



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Resident Gayle Converse trains for the 133-mile "Women Going the Extra Mile" walk from Alexandria to Richmond to mark Women's Equality Day Aug. 26.

morning of Aug. 5," Converse said. "First stop will be Mount Vernon, then we will head to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Occoquan Regional Park. Factors like weather and air quality will determine the pace but we should be in Richmond by the 26th."

Converse will lead walkers along the East Coast Greenway, a developing 3,000-mile network of protected pathways from Maine to Florida. The culmination of the walk will be the Virginia Women's Monument in Richmond's Capitol

Square. The Monument depicts 12 women from around the Commonwealth as bronze statues.

The 19th Amendment was first introduced in 1878 with the victory in the fight for gender equality coming after many decades of campaigning from women's civil rights movements. It would take another 45 years and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to guarantee the right to vote to women of all races.

"We've gained some rights along the way that we shouldn't have had



The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Occoquan Regional Park provides an overview of the movement, including the efforts of African American suffragists.

to fight for in the first place but we have a long way to go," Converse said. "We still have that glass ceiling particularly in women's health research, such as cardiovascular health. We need to raise awareness of some of these issues that in 2023 we shouldn't even have to be talking about."

Converse normally walks 3-5 miles a day but increased that to 8-10 miles per day in anticipation of the journey.

"I started training in March by increasing my miles and walking with a backpack," Converse said.

"Our pace will vary of course but it should take about 16 days to reach Richmond. But anything can happen. I just hope we don't get a streak of really bad weather or air quality."

Known as a bit of an adventurer to her family, Converse says she isn't out to set any records.

"This walk isn't to break any speed records for heaven's sake," Converse said with a laugh. "The goal is to be in Richmond Aug. 26 and along the way focus on the extraordinarily accomplished women

SEE GOING THE, PAGE 14



The Virginia Women's Monument in Richmond's Capitol Square depicts 12 women from around the Commonwealth as bronze statues.



PHOTO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Suffragists Helena Hill Weed and Vida Mullholand in the Occoquan prison in 1917. The Lucy Burns Museum at the site of the former prison details the historic events of the Night of Terror Nov. 14, 1917.



## SENIOR LIVING

# Caregiving Corner

## Something new for dementia patients.

BY DEBORAH TOMPKINS JOHNSON  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE PACKET

**D**ear Caregiver: If your loved one has dementia, there is an option, a concept still somewhat novel to most, that you could consider.

Health officials across the country including here in the northern Virginia region recommend we consider robotic companion pets.

Like me you may have or have had your own live pets. Or when you are out walking, jogging or shopping, you see how your neighbors absolutely love their dogs and cats. But older adults with dementia usually cannot handle a live pet. Dementia patients and other older adults with different health issues who feel isolated, respond to the purrs, soft barks and movements of the robotic companion pets.

"I have personally seen how the vast majority of the time when you provide a dog or cat to a dementia sufferer, that their whole personality changes from angry, confused, silent and agitated to calm, happy or outgoing," says Steve Cone, Chief of Communications, Marketing and Philanthropy for Capital Caring Health.

Please do not think of robotic pets simply as toys for dementia patients. To the person with dementia, these pets are perceived as companions.

Cone continues, "A number of clinical studies have shown how very often robotic companion pets can transform dementia sufferers' daily life pretty dramatically. They have been found to be effective for dementia sufferers up until the end stage. However, in the last final weeks of dementia when it is very advanced, nothing really works. But up until that point robotic pets really serve as a companion and friend."

Elder care facilities in our region, Goodwin House in Alexandria for example, have residents who own or occasionally interact with a robotic companion pet.

Jessica Fredericksen, Director of Brain Health at Goodwin Living described a patient experience: "We have one resident who is very anxious, paces a lot, always looking for what is going on next, what she needs to be doing. Because the pets respond with sound and movement, they really help her to focus when she is anxious and help to stop her cycle of pacing. Sometimes, we will ask her to watch a pet for us, which helps her feel purposeful, calmer and more relaxed."

"We had another resident who knew the robotic pets were not real. She got a kick out of them. They reminded her of something she bought her kids or grandchildren. She would take those smaller pets and put them in the basket of her walker — like a shopping basket. She would open it up and



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

A resident at Goodwin House Alexandria interacts with a robotic companion pet.

**“Robotic companion pets can transform dementia sufferers’ daily life pretty dramatically.”**

— Steve Cone of Capital Caring Health

show other team members and say, 'Look what I have. I got such a great deal on this. I am going to give it to my grandchild.' She seemed to express joy and purpose to go shopping for her grandchildren. And it was something special to her to be able to interact with the pet."

On a personal note, when I first learned of robotic companion pets a few months ago, I placed an order by giving a donation. I gave one puppy to a friend for her mother. Her mom enjoys her puppy, which she calls "Sweet Pea." And a family member who is a geriatric nurse says the puppy I gave her has helped some of her patients.

Other professionals agree robotic companion pets are worth trying.

"Every family in America deals with dementia at some point and often multiple times where different family members unfortunately get dementia," says Cone. "It is the third leading cause of death today, after heart disease and cancer. With the aging of America, the occurrences are growing. So, we wish more people knew that a robotic companion pet could help the patient and the family and all those who interact with the person who has dementia. Alleviating suffering is a wonderful outcome."

And Fredericksen says, "The best thing that can happen is that the resident establishes a connection. They have something that helps reduce their stress. It reduces their isolation. So, it really can't hurt to try it out."

More information on robotic companion pets is available at [www.joyforall.com](http://www.joyforall.com) and [www.capitalcaring.org/robotic-companion-pets/](http://www.capitalcaring.org/robotic-companion-pets/)

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# Sensational Spoonbills

Did you miss seeing the spoonbills that visited in 2021?

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Two pink roseate spoonbills caused quite the sensation among their human observers the week of July 10. On July 12, Joan Mashburn photographed two that she believes were displaying courtship behavior in Hunting Creek, although they are likely too young to breed, she clarifies.

Larry Meade, president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club, says, "These roseate spoonbills seem to be mostly young birds that have dispersed north."

There are a few spoonbills in Virginia and Maryland this year, but not as many as there were throughout the region in 2021. I am not sure what is pushing them north from their normal range, well south of here along the Gulf Coast and Florida."

The young birds that Mashburn captured with her camera are paler than adult spoonbills, which get a darker pink plumage in their third year, according to Meade. "Roseate spoonbills get their pink coloration from the foods they eat," according to Cornell University's All about Birds. "Crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates contain pigments called carotenoids that help turn their feathers pink." Adults have scarlet patches and a yellowish-green head.

These wading birds have six- to seven-inch, spatula-like bills resembling long-handled spoons that they sweep back and forth to feed. As they slowly step across the water, they scoop up fish, crustaceans and other prey, especially small aquatic creatures, as the water passes through their bills. The birds can be up to 33 inches tall, weigh between 2.5 and 4 pounds and have a 47-to-50-inch wingspan.

Recently, spoonbills have been reported in a few other areas, including Washington, D.C.'s Kenilworth Gardens, but unlike 2021, when throngs of people flocked to Huntley Meadows Park to see them, there have been no reports of them there this year so far.

North America has one of six worldwide roseate spoonbill species. They breed mostly in Florida and Texas and are typically seen in coastal southeastern U.S. states and South America. They are common in coastal Texas year-round and young ones may stray "far north and inland" after breeding, reports the National Audubon Society. In the 1860s, plume hunters almost caused their extermination, reports Audubon.

"These birds were clearly displaying courtship behavior and followed each other closely, which is another indication of courtship," said Mashburn. "It was magical to watch."



PHOTOS BY JOAN MASHBURN



Two young Roseate Spoonbills in Hunting Creek, a long way from their normal range, breeding primarily in Florida and Texas.



Two young Roseate Spoonbills, a rare sight here, far north of their usual range.



PHOTO COURTESY ASO

A member of the Sheriff's Community Academy participates in a motorcycle demonstration with Deputy Sean Williams.

## Sheriff's Community Academy Accepting Applications for September

Alexandrians can explore the role of the Sheriff's Office by joining the next session of the Sheriff's Community Academy, an informative four-session experience on Saturday mornings beginning Sept. 9. Participants will learn about the Sheriff's Office by touring the jail, going

behind the scenes at the courthouse, taking part in hands-on activities, and meeting with deputies responsible for the care and custody of approximately 300 inmates. The deadline to apply is Aug. 25, so visit [www.alexandriava.gov/sheriff](http://www.alexandriava.gov/sheriff) or call 703.746.5013 to apply or learn more.

## Local Student Chosen To Attend American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation

Sara Fenimore of Alexandria is one of 94 high school seniors selected to attend American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls Nation July 22-29 in Washington, D.C. The weeklong program, founded in 1947, has provided exceptional civic education to thousands of students, teaching them about how the federal government works.

Fenimore is one of two participants who will represent Washington D.C. as a "senator" at ALA Girls Nation. Two delegates from each ALA Girls State program are chosen to represent their state after participating in an ALA state-level program held across the country. At ALA Girls Nation, senators will participate in mock Senate sessions complete with caucuses and debating bills that range from personal to political interests.

Other activities on the agenda include a visit to Arlington National Cemetery where they will place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a visit to Capitol Hill to meet with real-life U.S. senators from their state, and a tour of D.C. monuments.

Fenimore, a rising senior at St. John's College High School in Washington D.C., was active in many ways during her week at ALA Washington D.C. Girls State. She also participates in many activities in her school and community. Some of her activities include Cadet Colonel in Cadet Corps Leadership Program, Color Guard Commander, student government, Best Buddies, soccer, and rugby.

Students leave the program with increased confidence and leadership skills for college and in their future career paths. Some participants of the program go on to have careers in public service at the local, state, and national levels. No matter what their future holds, all leave with a better understanding of civic responsibilities.

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Members also support the mission of The American Legion in improving the quality of life for veterans. To learn more and to volunteer, join, and donate, visit [www.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG](http://www.ALAFORVETERANS.ORG).

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# Off the Menu: Restaurant News and Notes

BY HOPE NELSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A** blast from the past and restaurant reinventions: Alexandria's food scene isn't taking a summer vacation, that's for sure. Here are some of the latest happenings in the city's dining landscape.

## Party Like It's 1985 at Miami Vice-Themed Pop-Up

Dust off your white suit and channel your inner Crockett and/or Tubbs: Miami Vibes has opened its doors in Del Ray and is ready for a summertime soiree. Nosh on coconut shrimp, Havana pineapple wings or key lime pie while you sample some specialty cocktails. The Don Johnson? South Beach Sunset? It's all there. Or order up a beer or two to cool off with instead. 2312 Mount Vernon Ave. 5-10 p.m. Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday; 5 p.m.-midnight Thurs-

day-Saturday. Closed Mondays.

## Say Hello to the Alexandria Bier Garden

In keeping with its original Bavarian beer theme, Village Brauhaus has transitioned into the Alexandria Bier Garden, sporting new ownership and a host of brews, snacks and games to spice up an afternoon or evening (or both). Pop into the indoor beer garden to enjoy a beer, nosh on pretzels, sausages and schnitzels, and maybe have a go at a video game. Looking for some sunshine to go with your meal? The restaurant has plans for a rooftop bar to debut by fall. 710 King St.

## Goodbye, Café 44; Hello, Julia's

The transformation at the Restaurant Formerly Known as Café 44 continues: As of July 8, Julia's on the Potomac has opened its doors to diners with a revamped dining room and some new items on the menu. (Psst: Missing some

of Café 44's favorites? Don't fret: Many of them made the cut.) Another facet of the former Café 44 that has persisted with Julia's: The outdoor balcony dining. Post up, order a cocktail and watch the river flow. 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 401.

*Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).*

**Chill vibes with a spicy kick at Miami Vibes, Serrano Mango Margarita, Herradura Silver Tequila, Mango Nectar, Serrano Simple, Lime, Salt Rim. 2312 Mount Vernon Ave.**



# Elaine's—from Alexandria, Egypt to Alexandria, Virginia

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**I**t is a busy day at Elaine's on Queen Street. Although the restaurant isn't open on Mondays for regular business, the kitchen is buzzing with a big event. Cynthia Higgins, owner of Elaine's and Executive Chef says, "We do a lot of catered events and my husband is an author of spy thrillers so we have frequent events for authors in the Library room upstairs."

Elaine's has just been open since May, and Higgins is still getting used to the 40-year-old stove. She leased the space in 2022 where the former Bilbo Baggins had been located and spent the next 9 months renovating it. Higgins says she has taught herself, and this is her first commercial kitchen but she told her grandmother when she was a child in Egypt that she was going to open a restaurant one day. "My grandmother said 'oh, it's so sweet darlin'—what was she going to say? It took me 30 years to do it but she knew I would. Your word is your contract."

Today Higgins is making her weekly special—branzino on warm farro salad, inspired by a recipe of her grandmother's of course. Higgins says her vision is to bring Alexandria of Egypt to Alexandria, Virginia. She says Alexandria of Egypt was named after Alexander the Great—such an exciting city combining French, Italian, Middle eastern flavors.

Higgins has marinated the thin



Elaine's Executive Chef Cynthia Higgins.



Higgins arranges dollops of harissa vinaigrette around branzino.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE GAZETTE  
Branzino which has been marinated overnight in mixture of herbs with olive oil, then sautéed in butter and olive oil.



Warm farro salad with sautéed vegetables added to skillet.



Higgins spoons out farro salad on hand made pottery.

filet of branzino overnight in a combination of finely chopped parsley, cilantro, with a tiny bit of dill, kosher salt, pepper, chopped garlic and a little bit of extra virgin olive oil. She turns the heat on medium high, squirts olive oil into the skillet and adds a large pat of butter from a bowl mounded high with butter cubes. "I use a lot of butter; the secret to all good cooking is butter. Don't let anyone tell you that butter is bad." She explains the olive oil and butter act together. "The olive oil keeps the butter from burning."

Higgins places the filet of branzino in the hot oil with the skin side down. "The fish is thin and delicate so I am careful not to overcook it. I watch it carefully—about two minutes on the first side until it is about halfway opaque. Then I flip it over and cook it about a minute. I keep watching the whole time."

"I have already cooked the ... she hesitates for a moment. "Sometimes I forget the English word when I'm excited. farro—that's it! In Egypt we eat farro both sweet and savory, for breakfast with milk and honey or savory such as with seafood or this salad with a mixture of vegetables." Higgins has boiled a cup of farro in water with a little salt. "I keep an eye on it, too." When it looks just right, she drains the farro. In a pan adjoining the fish she tosses diced white onions, carrots and celery. "I throw in a little salt and pepper and the zest from half a lemon." She says you can sauté the vegetables just until

SEE ELAINE'S, PAGE 13

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# ENTERTAINMENT

**NOW THRU JULY 30**

**Hues Exhibit.** At Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311 - Van Lindingham Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Lindingham Gallery presents Hues, a juried membership show featuring artworks that showcase artworks that emphasize bold and vibrant colors. The following artists are participating: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Abol Bahadori, Jon Kandel, Lynn Chadwick, Rebecca McNeely, Gregory Logan Dunn, Eileen O'Brien, and Andrea Cybyk. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, multimedia works, photography, mosaics, and embossed digital works. Additionally, the gallery offers small gifts, art cards, block-printed totes and tee shirts, and jewelry and unframed works by Tara Barr, Ileen Shefferman, Lisa Schumaier.

**NOW THRU AUGUST 31**

**Creative Summer Programs.** At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, mixed media, mosaic, jewelry, watercolor, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. For children and/or adults, free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Visit the website: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer

**NOW THRU JULY 31**

**Monochrome Exhibit.** At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union Street, Studio 312, Alexandria. Monochrome, a fine art photography exhibition juried by Sandy Sugawara, features monochrome images from 13 artists: Soomin Ham, Tim Hyde, Clara Young Kim, Irina Lawton, Sandy LeBrun-Evans, Matt Leedham, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sisen, Tom Sliter and Fred Zafran.

**JULY 24-28**

**Art Camp.** Del Ray Artisans invites youth ages 8-12 to Art Camp 2023 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



Take a tour aboard the Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center in Alexandria's Waterfront Park.

## Wednesdays Through Saturdays

**Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

17-21 or July 24-28; \$350/child; scholarship support available. Registration at DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp

**JULY 25-SEPT. 17**

**Captured: Plants and Places.** 1-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Step into the world of plants across the region and in still life at a season-spanning photography exhibit July 25 to Sept. 17 at Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center. The lyrical collection "Captured: Plants and Places" features botanical imagery drawn from the Washington area to Maine, including studio photos, intimate outdoor vignettes and landscape scenes. The photographers' varying visions and styles in color and black-and-white invite viewers to explore the

wonder of wild and horticultural lands. An opening reception with the artists is July 30 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Atrium at Green Springs Gardens Horticultural Center.

**SUNDAY/JULY 30**

**Lesson Zero.** 7 to 8 p.m. At Fort Hunt Park, 8999 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. The United States Park Service presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO for a free show. For additional information see: [www.youtube.com/lessonzero](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero](http://www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero)

**AUG. 4-26**

**The "Treasures of the DMV" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that celebrates

the wonders of DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Come see famous and overlooked regional gems from the perspective of local artists. Opening Reception: Friday, August 4, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed on August 27). [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](https://www.delrayartisans.org/exhibits)

**AUG. 5, 2023**

**Used Book Sale:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

**SATURDAY/AUG. 5**

**Open House at Woodlawn.** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring free self-guided tours of the Woodlawn mansion, arts and crafts tables, lawn games, and more! Bring your family to learn about this unique local historic site and enjoy our outdoor space. Visitors are encouraged to bring a blanket and enjoy a picnic on the lawn. Drinks and snacks will be available for sale.

**SUNDAY/AUG. 6**

**Running Strong Powwow.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street, Alexandria. Come join the 2nd Annual Running Strong Powwow to celebrate Native American cultures with others and create long-lasting memories with one another. Be a part of the growing awareness of Native American Communities, History, and Culture of the region. Be a part of remembering how Native American People, Communities, Contributions, History, and Land will always be the heritage of the United States of America.

**TUESDAY/AUG. 8**

**August Networking Breakfast.** 8:30-9:30 a.m. Share your brand across Northern Virginia from your home or office. Join the Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce for this virtual installment of its Networking Breakfast Series. Develop new prospects and share a 60-second commercial with all the attendees. Each attendee will get to address the group and share their business. Virtual - Zoom Link Available After Registration. Go to <https://web.alexchamber.com/>

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

# Elaine's—from Alexandria, Egypt to Alexandria, Virginia

FROM PAGE 12

crunchy or a little softer. "Add the minced garlic at the end. You don't want it to burn. Then mix in the farro to warm the salad."

The branzino and farro salad both come off their burners at the same time. She scrapes the farro onto a handmade pottery plate and tosses it around the plate a bit. "I love the randomness of it." Higgins has made harissa vinaigrette by blending a large can of roasted red peppers, a tablespoon of tomato paste, a little paprika, extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, cumin, coriander, salt and pepper. "It makes a pretty plate."

Higgins places the branzino across the farro salad. She stands back, moves her head slightly and squirts two dollops of mild harissa vinaigrette around the plate. "Now I add dots of garlic lebna." Finally charmoula sauce artfully but



Special of the week marinated branzino with warm farro salad.

randomly added to the remaining spaces on the plate. "It makes a pretty plate." She usually garnishes the final dish with spring onions curled in ice water but today the green onions have disappeared in the refrigerator so she improvises with chopped parsley.

Higgins says she had a pretty tough childhood, and her first happy memory was of food. "I was four-years-old and it was a pasta dish with fresh tomatoes and garlic when I was in Egypt in school. I thought this is what food should be like. It was just fresh spaghetti

but so flavorful." Higgins says her father was abusive, and in Egypt it was legal at the time. "It was worse than that."

He enjoyed torturing us. It was the thing of nightmares." She and her mother and grandmother were in hiding for 14 years moving from apartment to apartment in Cairo with their clothes in suitcases to escape her father.

She remembers cooking with her grandmother, Elaine, "who was an extraordinary woman — morally, culturally. Her real personality came out in the kitchen. I would usually be her sous chef — chopping onions, puréeing tomatoes, sometimes grinding spices." She says, "We would play old French music; she loved Edith Piaf. We would be talking a lot about food, telling secrets, laughing."

Higgins says she realizes that running a restaurant is about a

lot more than cooking food. You have to have control of the inventory, produce a consistent product, manage the personality components. She explains the kitchen is brutally hot, not an easy atmosphere and it's boom, boom activity level. You have to maintain composure under extreme pressure. "You can be the most renowned cook on the planet but if you don't have the rest of it, you won't be a success."

Higgins comments, "I live in the kitchen." She routinely spends 14 hours a day there. Higgins adds it's a good thing that her husband is a workaholic because there are weeks that go by without time for a five-minute conversation. "Really." But she strives to make it a good place to work. "That's what I'm most proud of the culture of business; it's like being in charge of an orchestra."

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## Obituary



On Thursday July 20, 2023

### Robert William Allmang

Passed away at the age of 84. Mr. Allmang was born in Bloomfield, NJ and lived and retired in Alexandria, VA after a long career with the FDIC. Robert had a life long commitment to health and wellness, including being an avid cyclist and working out well into his 80's. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Christianne Allmang who passed away January 27, 2007. Robert is survived by his loving daughter, Allyson Fitzsimons and her husband Darren; grandchildren Andrew and Ashley Fitzsimons. Funeral services will be held at Ivy Hill Cemetery on August 1. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his name to St. Jude's Children's Hospital."

## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 13

### MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria

### JULY

28 The HalfSmokes (WHFS Playlists/ Alternative Rock)

### AUGUST

4 Kadencia Orchestra (Bomba, Plena, Salsa)  
 11 Collaboration featuring Lori Williams (Jazz)  
 18 Crack The Sky (Rock)  
 25 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)

### FRANCONIA

### NIGHTS CONCERTS

Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

At Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.

### JULY

26 Silver Tones Swing Band (Swing Dance)

### AUGUST

2 Pablo Perez El Alcalde de la Salsa (Salsa)

9 Alexandria Harmonizers (Chorus)

16 The Nighthawks (Blues)

23 Dave Kline Band (World Jazz Fusion)

### OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

### WATERFRONT MUSIC SERIES

Free Concerts. Wednesdays from 4-7 p.m. At Old Town Alexandria waterfront. Join in the Waterfront Wednesday Music Series featuring a range of music genres by local musicians. Bring a chair or simply stop by to enjoy some beautiful waterside beats. Free. Weather permitting.

July 26 - Amafujo's Moodswings

August 2 - Chris Barrick Vibes and Organ Trio

August 9 - Sol Roots

August 16 - Delta Spur

## Going the Extra Mile

FROM PAGE 8

that Virginia has produced. Alexandria Celebrates Women is always advocating for women, not just in voting but for women in the arts, women innovators and entrepreneurs – they are all important."

The public is encouraged to join Converse and others along the route, for a day or for the entire walk. Alexandria Celebrates Women is seeking donations to help support participants in the journey.

"We are walking for women's equality – in health care, at the ballot box and everywhere else," said Converse, who will gather and highlight women's histories along the route. "We honor women and girls of today and throughout history who have broken tradition, social norms, glass ceilings and gone the extra mile."

Alexandria Celebrates Women is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. For more information or to join or donate to the Women Going the Extra Mile Walk, contact ACW president Pat Miller at [Pmiller1806@comcast.net](mailto:Pmiller1806@comcast.net).

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# CELEBRATION



American Horticultural Society celebrates 50 golden years at its beloved River Farm headquarters with the River Farm Anniversary Picnic Thursday, Aug. 24, 6 to 8 p.m. Free and open to the public. Registration is available through Eventbrite.

## 50th Anniversary for River Farm and AHS

The American Horticultural Society celebrates 50 golden years at its beloved River Farm headquarters with the River Farm Anniversary Picnic featuring live music from the band, Soulfire. Guests are encouraged to pack a blanket and picnic basket with food and beverage favorites, find a comfortable spot on River Farm's welcoming lawn, and relax and enjoy the music, stunning gardens, and spectacular views overlooking the Potomac River. The BYOB outdoor community picnic – to be held on Thursday, Aug. 24, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. – is FREE and open to the public. Registration is available through Eventbrite.

Soulfire's repertoire includes well over a thousand songs ranging from the foundational rock of Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley and the funk musings of Kool and the Gang to the British beats of The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, and The Who.

While River Farm is known as part of George Washington's farmland, its exciting, memorable history with the AHS is truly one for the books. 50 years ago, a generous philanthropist Enid Haupt donated the purchase price of River Farm to the AHS. This gift saved River Farm from being sold to Russian diplomats during the Cold War of the 70s and ensured River Farm as the home to the AHS in perpetuity. In 2020, River Farm once again was saved from being sold thanks to the rallying cries of the community and the terms of Haupt's agreement. The River Farm Anniversary Picnic celebrates these joyous occasions, all the memories in between, and the future of River Farm as a local and national treasure.

The celebration picnic and concert is made possible by River Farm neighbor, fan and advocate Katherine Ward who sponsored Soulfire, and the band's lead singer Randy Benn who serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network. The AHS and River Farm applauds the Potomac Riverkeeper Network's mission to protect the public's right to clean water in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers and their tributaries. Their work to stop pollution is critical to enhance the safety of drinking water, protect healthy river habitats and increase public use and enjoyment.

Save the Date! In addition to the Anniversary Picnic, the AHS is celebrating its 50th golden anniversary at River Farm at its annual gala, this year themed Simple Pleasures of the Garden featuring renowned interior and garden designer Charlotte Moss. The gala will be held on Sept. 23, 2023. Details and tickets can be found at [www.ahsgala2023.org](http://www.ahsgala2023.org)

River Farm is the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society where the organization strives to live its mission of horticultural excellence. The nonprofit relies on private contributions to help maintain, beautify, and preserve the 25-acre site that is part of George Washington's original farmlands. River Farm is located at 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria, Virginia 22308. It is open to the public and free to visit Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (excluding special events). For more information, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114 or visit [www.ahsgardening.org](http://www.ahsgardening.org)



River Farm Anniversary Picnic will feature live music from the band, Soulfire. The band's lead singer, Randy Benn, serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

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

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

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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## An Inadvertent Friend-Type Request



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

This column has nothing to do with Facebook, though the title is a bit of a tease, to encourage you to read further. And what you're reading about is not exactly a surprise that it happened, it's more a flashing, neon-type sign that shopping online has matured from a transactional one between a buyer and a seller to something so much more. Not so much more as to make it sinister, but enough to make it more personal. Personal in that your online/website searches/inquiries are in essence, the beginning of a friendship. A friendship whereby the company (the seller) is becoming more like a friend in its willingness (algorithm) to offer opinions, dare I say encouragement to you (the buyer) to spend money on merchandise you've recently clicked on as sort of a starting point. But it's interpreted by the computer/website host (AI, I suppose) to be one which – with some electronic prodding, views this interaction as a potential final sale with only a credit card required to consummate this new/budding relationship.

The problem/reality is, I wasn't necessarily looking to buy and/or consummate this retail partnership/purchase just yet. This initial process when I'm searching, clicking, perusing, calculating, perhaps even actually contemplating, is my time, honestly. It's not the company/seller's time. Just because I'm looking, doesn't mean I'm ready to be leaping. To my way of thinking, this initial search is simply a consideration, not a calculation per se. Granted, I'm likely doing some math while I'm reading and then writing. But I don't need the website host hounding/gently nudging (depending on your perspective) me any more than I want to be accosted/offered assistance (again, depending on your perspective) when entering a retail establishment where merchandise can actually be touched and examined while up close so the purchase becomes personal, not merely professional.

What precipitated this most recent rant are the almost daily reminders I receive in my inbox from sites I visited previously. Their intent being to try and consummate our computer relationship by getting me to enter my credit card information/cozying up to me in an increasingly familiar manner, as if we were friends, and that by researching and clicking on their website I have somehow brought us closer together than merely a buyer and a seller, but rather more like friends in the pursuit of wholesale/retail justice.

I guess if I were to be naive and gullible, I would interpret these electronic reminders as I would indeed respect and appreciate a friend's suggestion/recommendation about whether I should be making a particular purchase. But that's not how I'm reacting to these many missives. I'm reacting to them as attempts at hostile take-overs – of my money. Moreover, I feel their reach is intrusive and presumptive. Certainly, when I read their heading in the subject box I can press delete and completely ignore their communication. At that point however, the psychological damage has already been done. By simply reading their headline and understanding its lineage, I have already been hooked, so to speak. I know why the email is there. It's not to ask how I'm adjusting to my late brother's semi unexpected death or asking if I think the Red Sox will be buyers or sellers at the trade deadline. Oh no. They're asking for money/commitment. They want to know how and when, not why and where I'll be otherwise spending my money – or not at all. They're not understanding. They're manipulating. And once they're through with me, they'll move on to the next site-clicker. I'll merely be a blip in their artificial computer code. Code that reacts to my computer research in their products/services as an inevitable buy and sell opportunity. It views my soliciting their help/information as a buying signal and the more help they offer/email, the more inevitable the sale becomes as it believes more is more rather than less is more.

But I object to this presumption of facts not yet agreed to. And I further object to presuming a familiarity which absolutely does not exist. I don't know this caller from Adam. Like my disdain for cold-callers – for whatever solicitation – whether for business, charity or community when the caller addresses me by my first name. That's a no-no, never a yes-yes. It's an automatic click. As for these computer emails that remind me of a previous interest/inquiry on their site/for their product or service, we are not in any kind of relationship. If anything, we might be in the middle/the beginning of a transaction. If this 'relationship' is about anything, it's about business, not pleasure.

Transact this!

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

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