



‘Fort Hunt Lives’ Alumni Hoda Kotb returns for FHHS 60th reunion.



NBC Today Show anchor Hoda Kotb walks onto the stage at the Fort Hunt High School 60th Reunion Sept. 30 at Carl Sandburg Middle School. Kotb was a 1982 graduate of Fort Hunt.



Hoda Kotb poses for a photo with Fort Hunt class of '79 alumni James Kirkman, right, and Gayle Petro.



Hoda Kotb shows off her Fort Hunt High School novelty glasses.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The school may have ceased to exist in 1985 but the spirit of the Fort Hunt High School Federals is alive and well as hundreds of alumni turned out for the 60th reunion with a special guest appearance by NBC Today Show anchor Hoda Kotb, a 1982 graduate of the school.

“Walking back into this building is wild,” said Kotb of the reunion held at what is now Carl Sandburg Middle School. “It brings back the same feeling you had back in the

“I have a million fond memories of Fort Hunt.”

— Hoda Kotb,
NBC Today Show
anchor and FHHS alumna

day. It all comes washing back.”

Kotb was the featured speaker at the event, which served as a reunion for all FHHS classes. She enthusiastically led the audience in cheers of “Fort Hunt Lives.”

“I have a million fond memories of Fort Hunt,” Kotb said. “I feel like I was the school cheerleader even though I didn’t have a uniform --



Hoda Kotb family members attend the Fort Hunt High School 60th reunion Sept. 30 at Carl Sandburg Middle School. Pictured are: Hala Kotb (sister), Hope Kotb (daughter), Hannah Kotb (niece) and Adel Kotb (brother).

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Hoda Kotb, center, poses for a photo with Nena Lee Kobayashi, Patricia Kosciuscko Collette, sister Hala Kotb and daughter Hope Kotb.



Hoda Kotb, second from right, poses with fellow Fort Hunt High School alumni Patricia Kosciuscko Collette (cheerleader), Broc Pertuchie (football player), Frank Creneti (football coach) and Jim Dietz (former director of student activities).

SEE ALUMNI HODA KOTB, PAGE 15

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NEWS

City Among the Best in U.S.

Visit Alexandria annual meeting highlights increased tourism data.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Visit Alexandria announced another “best” for the city, adding Travel + Leisure Magazine to the publications citing Alexandria as one of the best in the U.S. at the organization’s annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria Hotel.

President and CEO Patricia Washington also cited the rise of Alexandria to #3 on the Conde Nast Traveler’s Best Small Cities in the U.S. list as part of a presentation that showcased the results of tourism efforts over the past fiscal year.

“This is an exciting time for all of us,” said Washington, who noted that the inclusion on the Travel + Leisure list was a first for Alexandria and joins cities like New York, Honolulu and Charleston. “We are past the pandemic and have moved on to the next chapter. We worked hard to gain national recognition and a national reputation and this is the moment to capitalize on it.”

The tourism organization showcased results over the past fiscal year including record consumption tax revenue and all-time high advertising impressions.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the city’s consumption tax revenues, consisting of sales, meals and lodging taxes, reached \$81 million, surpassing the previous record of \$76 million set in Fiscal Year 2022 and up 22 percent over pre-pandemic levels.

“Visit Alexandria’s role in the community is evolving,” Washington said. “Of course it begins with our primary mission of growing revenues for business and generating tax



Visit Alexandria President and CEO Patricia Washington addresses attendees at the Visit Alexandria Annual Meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria Hotel.

receipts that support core city services. We also help curate the visitor experience and provide image and brand building that supports economic development.”

According to Visit Alexandria, an 18 percent rise in hotel occupancy coupled with significant increases in average daily rate resulted in record revenue per available room of \$111, surpassing Alexandria’s pre-pandemic high.

Data released by the Commonwealth of Virginia indicated that the growth of Alexandria’s visitor spending in calendar year 2022 from travelers residing more than 50 miles away grew by 30.6 percent, the third highest

rate in the state and 51 percent faster than the Commonwealth average.

“If last year was about rebound or revenge travel we believe this year will be about a return to value,” Washington said. “For the past two years travel inflation has actually exceeded the consumer price index. That coupled with uncertainty about recession is likely to mean more price sensitivity this year. That does not mean being the cheapest but it does mean delivering value.”

Visit Alexandria’s Key Performance Indicators include record group business, digital marketing impressions, national and international press hits, social media followers



Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington, left, speaks with City Manager Jim Parajon at the Oct. 3 Visit Alexandria annual meeting at the Westin Alexandria.

and membership.

Some of those indicators include: \$10 million in confirmed group business (+22 percent YoY); 186 million digital marketing impressions (+18 percent YoY); 296 national/international press hits (+34 percent YoY); 193,000 social media followers (+7 percent YoY); and 456 members (+7 percent YoY).

Washington previewed key upcoming initiatives for Fiscal Year 2024, including enhancing the city’s tourism experience and growing revenues. Included will be an expanded video program that encompasses

SEE VISIT ALEXANDRIA, PAGE 11



Kathy Seifert, Laure Fisher, Morgan Babcock and Katie Kissal at the Visit Alexandria annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria hotel.



Walter Clarke, Kenneth Abrom, Debra Roepke, Tobias Arff and Brett Johnson at the Visit Alexandria annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria hotel.

OPERATION WARM



An Amazon volunteer helps fit a student with a new winter coat during the Sept. 27 winter coat donation at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology in partnership with Operation Warm.



Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology principal Jasibi Crews helps get a student fitted for a new winter coat during the Sept. 27 Amazon-Operation Warm winter coat distribution.



A volunteer helps a student try on shoes as part of the Sept. 27 Amazon-Operation Warm coat and winter clothing donation day at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Amazon Delivers

Partnership with Operation Warm provides elementary students with winter clothing.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Amazons, in partnership with the nonprofit Operation Warm, delivered coats, shoes and other winter clothing to Alexandria City Public Schools elementary students during events at Cora Kelly School for Math Science and Technology and William Ramsay Elementary School.

Amazon volunteers descended on Cora Kelly on Sept. 27, supplying all 283 students with new winter clothing in preparation for winter weather. A visit to William Ramsay took place Sept. 28.

“We are so excited to have Amazon and Operation Warm here today,” said Cora Kelly principal Jasibi Crews. They have donated coats, shoes, gloves, hats and socks to all 283 of our amazing Cora Kelly Cougars.”

The gifting events provided all students in grades K-5 the opportunity to select a new coat while students in grades K-2 also received new shoes. Amazon also donated comfort kits to all students, which included backpacks with toiletry items, as well as hats, socks and gloves to prepare them for



ACPS Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt poses for a photo after helping students select backpacks filled with toiletry supplies Sept. 27 at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology.

the upcoming winter season.

“Today is the first of three stops for us in Alexandria, Arlington and DC,” said Melissa Robinson, Principal Program Manager of Volunteering at Amazon. “The event is part of our annual global month of volunteering,

our second annual celebration of volunteering at Amazon.”

Prior to the start of the events, each school held a pep rally to welcome representatives from Operation Warm and Amazon. They were joined by ACPS Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt and the school

principals – Crews at Cora Kelly and William Ramsay principal Michael Routhouska – in greeting students and thanking Amazon volunteers, who helped the students make their selections.



A volunteer helps a student check the fit of a new winter coat Sept. 27 at the Amazon-Operation Warm winter coat distribution at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology.

OPERATION WARM



A student selects new winter socks with the help of a volunteer at the Sept. 27 Amazon-Operation Warm coat distribution at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology.

FROM PAGE 12

An estimated 904 coats and 440 pairs of shoes were donated to ACPS students during these two days as part of the school division's community partnership initiative to support students' social, emotional and academic well-being.

The gifting events were coordinated as part of Amazon's Global Month of Volunteering, where employees in the DMV and across the world come together in Sep-

tember to volunteer for various nonprofit causes, adding to the company's efforts to support its local communities throughout the year. In their mission statements, Amazon and Operation Warm have a shared commitment to meet the basic needs of schoolchildren and help eliminate barriers to learning by providing access to school supplies, clothing, and other resources they need in order to focus on their studies.

www.operationwarm.org

ELECTION NOTICE - CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

General Election- Tuesday, November 7, 2023

VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Voter Registration Deadline for this Election is
Monday, October 16, 2023

Eligible citizens who will be 18 or over by November 7, 2023 may apply to register to vote (or update an address) online, by mail, or in person.

Online at <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov>, prior to 11:59 pm on **Oct. 16, 2023**.

By Mail, download an application at alexandriava.gov/elections or call 703.746.4050. Applications must be postmarked by **Oct. 16, 2023**.

In Person at the following sites, prior to 5pm on **Oct. 16, 2023**:

Voter Registration Office 132 North Royal St, Suite 100 Alexandria, Virginia 22314 Monday thru Friday, 8am to 5pm 703.746.4050	Division of Motor Vehicles 2681 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314 Please contact the DMV for hours.
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For voting information, including sample ballots and list of acceptable ID go to: alexandriava.gov/elections

Same-Day Registration

is available to individuals who missed the standard registration period. Go to AlexandriaVa.gov/Elections for more information.

EARLY VOTING INFORMATION

All registered voters are eligible to request a by-mail ballot or vote early.

<p>To vote in-person, early:</p> <p>Office of Voter Registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm Closed Monday, Oct. 9, 2023 Evenings and weekend hours available, see website below. See Beatley Library early voting location and hours on our website: alexandriava.gov/elections <p>For complete absentee hours at all locations, check alexandriava.gov/elections</p> <p>Deadline for in-person, early voting: Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023 at 5pm</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #002060; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Special Services:</p> <p>Requests for reasonable accommodation due to a disability should be made with at least a 48-hr notice. TTY number for hearing impaired persons: 703.838.5056.</p> </div>	<p>To vote by mail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply online: https://vote.elections.virginia.gov; or Download an absentee application from alexandriava.gov/elections; or Call 703.746.4050 to request an application. <p>Return the application by mail, fax, or email.</p> <p>Deadlines for voting by mail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absentee ballot applications must be received by 5pm on Oct. 27, 2023. Mailed Ballots must be received by 7pm on Nov. 7, 2023 or postmarked by election day and received by Noon on Monday, Nov. 13, 2023. A secure outdoor drop box is available outside the Office of Voter Registration. This box will be under video surveillance and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Ballots must be deposited by 7pm on Nov. 7, 2023.
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City of Alexandria Office Voter Registration and Elections

132 North Royal St, Suite 100
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Office: 703.746.4050 ; Fax: 703.838.6449
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Making Music Together for Alexandria Symphony

Goal: Raise \$2 million in new funding; \$600,000 to go.

BY MELINDA KERN

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO), serving greater Northern Virginia, celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. ASO has embarked on a major fundraising campaign, Making Music Together, the first in the 80-year history of the organization. The campaign seeks to raise \$2 million in new funding, and as of September 2023, \$1.4 million has been secured through pledges and gifts.

The campaign brings new vitality to ASO, which now reaches more than 20,000 patrons each year. It expands the orchestra's

impact in Alexandria and Northern Virginia and ensures ASO will thrive for generations.

During the quiet phase, which launched in September 2022, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Director approached individuals close to the organization and others in the community to determine the feasibility of success for a major campaign. With the leadership of Co-chairs Gant Redmon and George White, the organization has already secured 70% of its total goal in pledges and gifts during the quiet phase.

"ASO reaches out to all parts of our community and punches way above its weight artistically," says White. "I am investing in ASO now to help strengthen and enhance this unique cultural resource for the next generation."

Donors may designate their gifts toward several funding priorities or acknowledge their contributions in memory or in honor of a loved one. The priorities include sup-

porting the newly created Endowment Fund, enhanced community engagement and programming, and new education initiatives.

"Vital arts organizations are flexible, modular, and able to create according to need and impetus," says Music Director James Ross. "A strong financial foundation is essential to those efforts." Distinguished by his seasoned conducting in the United States and abroad, Maestro Ross assumed the baton in 2018.

As it enters the public phase of the campaign, ASO will appeal to the community at large. Online giving will launch this week with a dedicated page on the ASO's website. The campaign is scheduled to continue through the 80th anniversary season with a strategy to reach the \$2 million goal by June 30, 2024.

"The Board of Trustees recognized the importance of building an endowment for the ASO as a legacy for the community," says

Executive Director George Hanson. "As we celebrate the last 80 years, Making Music Together ensures we'll be creating music for another 80 and beyond."

Comprised of the region's finest freelance musicians, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra presents a classical season October to April at iconic Alexandria venues: the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center and the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Launching its 11th school year this fall, its award-winning education program, Sympatico, serves students daily at John Adams Elementary, a Title I school in the Alexandria City Public Schools. Each July, ASO performs as the headliner at the City's largest community event, the Alexandria Birthday Celebration. An intimate chamber concert highlights ASO's exceptional musicians every spring.

For more information, visit alex-sym.org/makingmusictogether

BULLETIN BOARD

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

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.volunteerallexandria.org

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/ALIVE>

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration

of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsOfAMHC@gmail.com.

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

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 or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

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 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 or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

National Coffee Day

Staff at Elance Senior Living Community celebrates National Coffee Day Sept. 29 with ASO Sergeant Brian Mauck. Pictured are: Mariama Turay, Olivia Horseman and Erica Moyler, who served complimentary coffee and sweet treats as thanks to local professionals. The coffee and pastries were provided by Taste of RUI. www.elanceluxuryliving.net/alexandria

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FOOD DRIVE

Alexandria Scouts to Hold Food Drive on Nov. 4

Residents can leave food items at front door or contribute online.

Alexandria-area Boy Scouts of America's Colonial District will hold their 35th annual Scouting for Food drive on Saturday, Nov. 4. Local residents are invited to leave bagged donations on their doorstep by 8:30 am that morning for pickup by the Scouts. Held annually prior to Thanksgiving, Scouting for Food is an important program for many local food banks which rely on it to stock shelves for the upcoming holiday months when demands are the greatest.

On the weekend of Oct. 28, Scouts will go door to door neighborhoods across Alexandria and surrounding areas placing notes on doors reminding residents about the Scouting for Food pickup to take place on Nov. 4.

In Alexandria, donations collected through Scouting for Food will be directed to ALIVE! and other local food banks.

Items in highest demand include the following items (avoid glass containers please):

- ❖ Canned protein (tuna, salmon, chicken, peanut butter)
- ❖ Soups and stews (beef stew, chili, meat-based soups)

NEWS BRIEFS

Covanta Shredding & Electronics

Recycling Oct. 7

You can get rid of your old mobile phones, computers and other electronics (e-waste) on Saturday, Oct. 7 from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Covanta, operator of Alexandria's waste-to-energy facility, is making disposal a bit easier by hosting a shredding and recycling takeback at its location on 5301 Eisenhower Avenue open to the public.

Area residents can trust that e-waste collected by Covanta will be safely processed for recycling and potential reuse at its Southwest Philadelphia electronic waste facility.

Documents will also be accepted at the collection for secure destruction (shredding).

Free Income Tax Program Helped Hundreds

The Free Income Tax Preparation Program served 375 low-income taxpayers and completed returns for 339 taxpayers who received \$2,880,851 in net federal refunds. These refunds included \$126,819 in federal Earned Income Credit and \$80,765 in federal Child Tax

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

- ❖ 100% fruit juices (all sizes)
- ❖ Grains (pasta, whole grain pasta, rice, brown rice, boxed macaroni and cheese); cereals (multi-grain, low sugar cereals, oatmeal)
- ❖ Canned vegetables
- ❖ Canned fruits
- ❖ Condiments

- ❖ Hygiene products (diapers, toilet paper, tissues, soap, toothpaste)

In the instance of food placed on a porch that is not picked up, residents may reach out to colonial@ncacbsa.org until Saturday, Nov.

11, to coordinate a missed pickup. Donations can also be delivered directly to the ALIVE! Food Warehouse, 801 South Payne St.

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 9 am - 4 pm; Thursdays: 9 am - 7 pm; Saturdays: 9 am - 12 pm

Donate to Scouting for Food Online during October

In an effort to maximize participation in this food drive there is a new online shop that allows supporters to purchase the most needed items. All items will be shipped directly to ALIVE! and local food pantries. See more at: <https://yougivegoods.com/colonialdistrict-scoutingforfood2023>

LOVE OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA?
EXPAND YOUR ALX
AND EXPLORE EVEN MORE OF THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS.

Old Town Alexandria never really gets old. But there's so much you're missing until you explore more of Alexandria's neighborhoods. Uncover everything from globe-spanning eats and award-winning brews to eclectic live music and inspiring green spaces.

DISCOVER MORE, INCLUDING A NEW TOUR OF DINING SPOTS IN ALEXANDRIA'S WEST END, AT EXPANDYOURALX.COM

alexandria



The Masons planted vegetables in the middle of the garden and boxwoods and flowers on the sides.

Officials cut a gold ribbon at a September 28, opening event.

Gunston Hall to Open Restored Garden Oct. 7

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

American statesman George Mason not only authored several documents that rejected Great Britain's rule and created a new democratic nation, he even asserted American independence in designing his garden. Mason's garden is an "Americanized version of a traditional English walled garden," with some elements of Italian villa and theater set designs, say Gunston Hall officials. The restored, 1780s garden will open to the public on Oct. 7.

Mason was the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Fairfax Resolves and Virginia's constitution. He refused to sign the U.S. Constitution because it had no Bill of Rights. The Masons' son, John, described the garden as a place of "meditation," so it was likely here that George Mason pondered the colonies' predicament and framed some of the fundamental principles of American democracy, still enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

At a September 28 reception, hosting the Board of Regents and other guests, Executive Director Scott Stroh called the garden

"a retreat, a place of reflection where Mason cemented enlightenment principles."

For the plantation's enslaved people, it was not a respite of peaceful contemplation. They only entered the space to work.

Bringing History Alive

The garden project took two decades of archaeological research, planning and fund raising. No written plan from Mason's time exists, but some of his and John's letters and seed orders offer hints. The lead archaeologist, Dave Shonyo, found ungerminated, 18th century seeds in the plot.

Owners following the Masons made many changes. In 1880, it was a pear orchard; in the 1920s, a plowed field. In the 1950s, it was intended as a "colonial revival" garden, but "was not fact based," said Shonyo.

The one-acre plot of four rectangles today has vegetables, ornamental plants and small apple trees. Eventually, it will have over 80 different perennial flowers and bulbs, over 30 types of annual flowers, 34 different vegetables, 16 apple varieties and roses common in the 18th century. The Masons collected seeds, cuttings and plants "from around the Atlantic world," notes a press release. Vegetables grow in the center and ornamentals along the sides, typical of the



Guests entered the garden from the mansion's back door.

1700s according to landscape historians.

In Mason's day, plants bloomed from March and to the first killing frost. The Masons also used hotboxes with glass tops and decomposing manure to raise the soil tem-

perature and extend the growing season. With hotboxes, wealthy colonials could eat foods like kale, collards and chard in the winter while the less affluent likely ate salt

SEE GUNSTON HALL, PAGE 9



Nicole Ryan had the scissors ready for the ribbon cutting.



Nicole Ryan, Virginia Nicholson and Scott Stroh welcomed visitors.



Executive Director Scott Stroh described the garden as a "retreat."

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Hotboxes could extend the growing season.



Chard is thriving in today's garden.



Gourds growing today resemble melons.



Pattypan squash were commonly grown in the garden.

Gunston Hall to Open Restored Garden Oct. 7

FROM PAGE 8

pork and cornmeal, one panel explains.

Visitors this fall can see vegetables like okra, chard, tomatoes and squash and herbs, including borage and fennel. Among fall-blooming plants are amaranths, celosias, coneflowers and asters.

The Masons grew Hewe's crab apples and Newton pippins. Today's caretakers are using free-standing espalier to shape the trees.

Gravel walks separate the four sections and one-foot-or-so boxwoods line the central corridor and the mansion walkway. The Masons fenced the garden to keep out wildlife and free-roaming cows, sheep and pigs. The fence also separated beauty from the labor in the nearby kitchen yards.

“George Mason was a central figure because what he wrote ensures our liberties. The garden will draw more people to his home to learn about him and his contribution to the Bill of Rights.”

— Holly Dougherty,

President of the Mount Vernon-Springfield Chamber of Commerce

The Glave and Holmes architectural firm prepared the garden's master plan and Rob McGinnis was the landscape architect.

At the Sept. 28 event, Stroh called the opening a “monumental occasion.” Virginia regent and Arlingtonian Ann Taylor Schaefer

visited Gunston Hall frequently growing up and sees Gunston Hall as “one of the most fabulous historic houses in the United States.”

Del. Kathy Tran commented, “Gunston Hall is a hidden treasure, waiting to be discovered. The restoration of the garden is a perfect opportunity to learn about George Mason and our history.”

Holly Dougherty, President of the Mount Vernon-Springfield Chamber of Commerce, concurred: “George Mason was a central figure because what he wrote ensures our liberties. The garden will draw more people to his home to learn about him and his contribution to the Bill of Rights.”

Visit www.gunstonhall.org.



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Gunston Hall Opens Historic Riverside Garden

After years of archaeological investigation, research and construction, we have moved from concept plan to 1-acre restored garden!

Join us on
Saturday, October 7, 2023
10 am - 4 pm



You will have a chance to explore and learn from our education team about the plants currently growing in the NABA butterfly certified garden. Join in seed saving activities, crafts, flower arranging, and more!
For info and tickets scan QR code.



All Creatures Great and Small



Blessing of the Animals held Sept. 30.

Animal owners and lovers from around the region gathered Sept. 30 in the courtyard of Trinity United Methodist Church for a non-denominational Blessing of the Animals.

Each year Christians around the world honor the Patron Saint of Animals, St. Francis of Assisi, near his feast day of Oct 4. Trinity United Methodist Church in Alexandria holds its traditional blessing the last Saturday of September.

Pastor Grace Han presided over a general blessing before giving individual blessings to animals in attendance.

“This is Indy, a Tibetan Spaniel,” said Martha Anne Lee, a retired math teacher at Woodson High School. “Tibetan Spaniels are rare in this country. Indy was a champion in his day and has even been on Jeopardy. He is very loyal, very faithful.”

After each animal was individually blessed, a Certificate of Blessing was presented personalized with the pet’s name.

Said Christine Miller after receiving a blessing for her dog Wren, “He is the best dog in the whole world.”

— JEANNE THEISMANN

Pastor Grace Han, left, gives a blessing at the Blessing of the Animals Sept. 30 at Trinity United Methodist Church.



Pastor Grace Han blesses Tibetan Spaniel Indy as owner Marth Anne Lee looks on.



Susan Vilella holds Chico as Pastor Grace Han administers a blessing.



Christine Miller holds 12-year-old Wren’s certificate following the Blessing of the Animals Sept. 30 at Trinity United Methodist Church.

PHOTOS BY
JANET BARNETT
GAZETTE PACKET

VISIT ALEXANDRIA

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Ann Ile, Charlotte Hall, Anne Polk and Amy Rutherford at the Visit Alexandria annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria.

FROM PAGE 3

increased short-form vertical video content, a holiday shoot, an immersive Old Town video itinerary and Phase II of the “Expand Your ALX” neighborhood campaign.

Washington also committed the organization to broadening its accessibility initiatives, use of Spanish language media, and sustainability messaging through a new media buying agency, RFP and Datafy, a tourism research tool to track visi-

tor behavior and spending.

“We are also community stewards and are 100 percent committed to building the equity, inclusion and sustainability of our city and to ensure that we attract and compensate our workforce with growing wages and career advancement,” Washington added. “Alexandria is not just a great place to visit, it is a great place to live and work.”

www.VisitAlexandria.com



Misha Enriquez, Rebecca Doser, Kate Ellis, Melanie Fallon, Nicole McGrew and Claire Mouledoux at the Visit Alexandria annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria hotel.



Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington, second from right, is joined by staff members Suzanne Thibeault, Trisha Meisner and Caroline Secrest at the organization’s annual meeting Oct. 3 at the Westin Alexandria.

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ENTERTAINMENT

GWHS CLASS OF 1963 REUNION

The George Washington High School Class of 1963 will celebrate their 60-year reunion on October 5 and 6 in Alexandria. For additional information and registration please contact Viloa Miller at vem1006@verizon.net, Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net or Jackie Bridges at jhuetbridges@gmail.com

NOW THRU OCT. 8

Progression Exhibit. At Multiple Exposures Gallery (MEG), at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union Street, Alexandria. The exhibition features a sequence of photographs, with each one chosen for its relation to the previous image. The relationships among the 56 included images may be based on composition, color, geography or other characteristics — the choice was left to each of the 14 contributing artists. Exhibition visitors are invited to observe each image as it appears in the sequence and consider what the connection to the previous image might have been. Exhibition Artists: Soomin Ham, Tim Hyde, Eric Johnson, Clara Young Kim, Irina Lawton, Sandy LeBrun-Evans, Matt Leedham, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sislen, Tom Sliter and Fred Zafran. Exhibition hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

ALEXANDRIA COLONIAL TOURS' GHOST & GRAVEYARD TOUR

Wednesdays through Sundays in September at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Nightly in October at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria. Walk your way through the charming streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost and Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Visit alexcolonialtours.com.

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/>

NOW THRU OCT. 15

Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Stine. At The Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Award-winning painter Anne Stine

debut her latest collection of encaustic works titled, Every Rock Has a Story, in September, at the Athenaeum Gallery. Her collection of 20 geological paintings explores the interconnection between Earth and humanity through representational and abstract imagery. "Every rock has a story", a popular geological phrase, meaning history is captured within the Earth's formations from the majestic mountains to the tiniest pebbles that reside beneath our feet.

OCT. 2-29

Cascades Art Exhibition. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center (Gallery 311), 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Van Landingham Gallery presents a solo exhibition from Gregory Logan Dunn entitled Cascades, a collection of oil and acrylic paintings created during his studio residency at the Torpedo Factory this past year. Original paintings and print reproductions of the artist's work will be available for purchase.

OCT. 3 TO NOV. 13

"The Spirit Within" Exhibit. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Drive, Alexandria. Mosaic artist Nina Tisara and artist-photographer Steven Halperson will exhibit their art work in the Fireplace Art Alcove. MVUC members and friends are invited to an artists' reception on Sunday, November 12, 2:30 - 5 p.m. RSVP: ninat@ninatisara.com.

OCT. 6-8

Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour. 6-9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Taste samples from Virginia wineries after hours at George Washington's estate. Bring a blanket and relax on the east lawn overlooking the Potomac River and meet General Washington. Admission: Friday: \$49 for members, \$59 for general public; Saturday: \$53 for members, \$63 for general public; Sunday: \$43 for members; \$53 for general public. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

OCT. 6-28

The "Curses! Foiled Again! The Art of Swords and Sorcery" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that evokes the fantastic and swashbuckling. Opening Reception: Friday, October 6, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 29, 2023). Details on the art exhibit and related creative programs at DelRayArtisans.org/event/curses-foiled-again

OCT. 6 AND 12

Staged Readings of "The Laramie Project." 8 p.m. At the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. The LTA will present staged readings of "The Laramie Project" on Oct. 6 and 12, observing that it has been 25 years since the horrific abduction and death of Matthew Shepard. This is a play by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, written in response to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, in Laramie, Wyoming. Kaufman and the other company



THE GREAT PUMPKIN PATCH – The Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch will run now through Halloween. Hours are noon-6 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. on weekends and Columbus Day. All proceeds support charitable ministries of the church. The unloading of the 18-wheelers attracts a crowd and will take place with trucks on Oct. 14 and Oct. 21. At 3606 Seminary Road, Alexandria. www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org



The Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour takes place Oct. 6-8, 2023 at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

members visited Laramie on six occasions and interviewed residents, members of the police force, and Matthew's friends, to understand what happened, and why. Tickets are \$20.00. For further information regarding tickets, call 703-683-5778 (Ext.1).

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

28th Annual Art on the Avenue. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Mount Vernon Ave. between Hume Ave. and Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. The 28th annual arts festival held in the Del Ray features more than 350 juried artists, from quilters to card-makers to cartographers, displaying their one-of-a-kind wares. Arrive with an appetite and grab a bite from 20+ food vendors and set to the soundtrack of live music along the avenue. Trolley transportation will be available from the

Braddock Road Metro. Visit www.artontheavenue.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

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/OCT. 7

Fall Plant and Garden Sale. 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Shop for seasonal color and

heirloom plants along with native perennials, trees and shrubs grown at Mount Vernon. Members receive a 10% discount on plants. The cooler fall weather makes it a great time to plant perennials, trees, and shrubs. In addition to heirloom plants, we sell many plants native to our region that are beautiful and support the local insect, bird, and wildlife population.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

Oktoberfest Festivities. At Alexandria Bier Garden, Alexandria.

Live bands and DJs Saturday and Sunday starting at 10 AM, with festive German music playing all day long Stein Holding Contests will give guests a chance to win a \$50 gift card on 9/30 and 10/7

Oktoberfest Trivia on Thursday 9/28 and 10/5 at 7 p.m. (will be Oktoberfest themed), featuring fantastic prizes

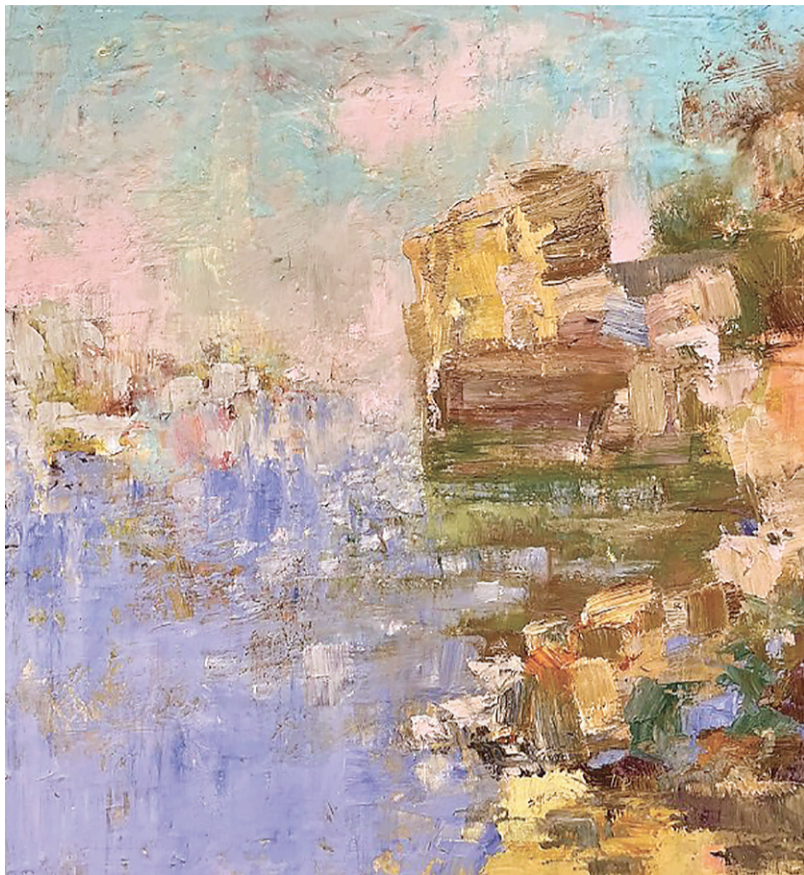
Alexandria Bier Garden will end the Oktoberfest festivities with the unveiling of its much-anticipated Paulaner event room and Rooftop Bar.

Oktoberfest brunch, featuring an array of German dishes to savor, will take place on 10/1

Sausagefest the next two Saturdays and throughout Oktoberfest, guests can enjoy traditional German dishes, including a hearty 2 lb. pretzel that's perfect for sharing with friends

OCT. 10 TO NOV. 19

"Reflection Unknown" Photography Exhibit by Fred Zafran. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Alexandria. Opening Reception: Sunday, October 22, 2023, 2 - 4 p.m. Fred Zafran has long been interested in photography as a distinctive



Every Rock Has a Story by Anne Stine will be on view at The Athenaeum Gallery in Alexandria from now through Oct. 15, 2023.

means of storytelling. His work examines the artistic possibilities of photographs that combine the poetic with a representational view of the world. The resulting photo essays which Zafran calls "poetic narrative," are post-documentary in that the stories are open ended, subjective, rich in symbolism and metaphor, and encourage consideration and interpretation by the viewer.

TUESDAYS, OCTOBER 10, 17, 24, 31

Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, Tuesdays @ 10. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Simpson Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Meet and talk with Extension Master Gardeners in the Simpson Demonstration Gardens to learn the best uses for fallen leaves and other organic garden waste. Free.

SUNDAY/OCT. 15

Paws in the Park 2023. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, Alexandria. Paws in the Park

brings together shopping, music, food and drink, and of course lots of adoptable animals. The event is free to attend. Additional activities include a silent auction and Family Fun Tent, sponsored by TTR Sotheby's International Realty. Event proceeds benefit the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. Find more details on parking, vendors, and more here: <https://pawsintheparkva.com/>

OCT. 17-23

Fall Book Sale – At Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, October 17 through Monday, October 23. Members' Preview on Tuesday, October 17, 3 p.m.-7:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, October 18, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Thursday, October 19, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, October 20, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, October 21, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, October 22, Half Price Day, 1-4:30 p.m.; Monday, October 23, \$10

Bag Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.. \$4 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books, and media. All genres. Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA; info: 703-746-1702; www.beatleyfriends.org.

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

- OCTOBER
- Wed. 4: Eric Hutchinson "Sounds Like This" 15th Anniversary Tour w/ Scribe \$39.50
- Thu. 5: Edwin McCain w/ Danielle Howle \$39.50
- Fri. 6: Marcus Johnson \$35.00
- Sat. 7: The Bacon Brothers w/ Cindy Alexander \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
- Sun. 8: The Bacon Brothers w/ Cindy Alexander \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
- Mon. 9: The Bacon Brothers w/ Cindy Alexander \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
- Tue. 10: Iris DeMent \$45.00 Rescheduled from 8/30/23. All 8/30/23 tickets honored.
- Wed. 11: Eric Benet \$79.50

- Fri. 13: Jeffrey Osborne \$95.00 SOLD OUT!
- Sat. 14: Jeffrey Osborne \$95.00 SOLD OUT!
- Sun. 15: Ottmar Liebert & Luna Negra \$39.50
- Tue. 17: Chris Knight (Band) \$29.50
- Wed. 18: Rodney Crowell w/ Rob Ickes & Trey Hensley \$59.50 (Rescheduled from 7/16/23)
- Fri. 20: Phil Vassar w/ Martin & Kelly \$49.50
- Sat. 21: Raven's Night presents "Masquerade" \$35.00
- Sun. 22: The Secret Sisters w/ Amy Stroup \$29.50
- Mon. 23: Gene Noble w/ Diamond Pynk \$35.00 (Rescheduled from 8/24/23)
- Tue. 24: The Zombies: Different Game Tour 23 w/ Wendy Colonna \$59.50
- Wed. 25: Euge Groove \$45.00 (Rescheduled from 6/7/23)
- Thu. 26: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
- Fri. 27: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
- Sat. 28: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
- Sun. 29: Tom Paxton & The DonJuans and John McCutcheon \$45.00

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Obituary

Obituary

**THOMAS B. NELSON
NOVEMBER 6, 1935 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2023**

Thomas Baird Nelson, loving father, grandfather, uncle, husband and friend, passed Friday, September 15th at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, MI.



Tom was born on November 6, 1935 in New York City, son of the late James Morange Nelson and Dorothy Baird Jorgensen, and brother of James Nelson. As a boy, he developed a love of fishing and shooting while enjoying many camping trips in Northern Michigan and Canada with his father and younger brother, Jim. At an early age, Tom had a fascination with history, which developed into a passionate interest in small arms, their mechanics, and historical significance. During his studies at the University of Miami in Oxford, OH, and the University of Cincinnati (Sigma Chi), he started gathering the information for his first book.

After college, he traveled throughout Europe collecting data and photos of firearms from multiple armament companies. When he returned from Europe, he enlisted in the Army. After he finished his Basic Training at Fort Knox, KY, he met his mentor and longtime friend, Col. George Burling Jarrett. It did not take Colonel Jarrett long to discover young Tom Nelson was a highly intelligent individual with a wealth of knowledge about small arms and World History. Col. Jarrett arranged for Tom to attend Technical Ordinance Intelligence School. Col. Jarrett became Tom's mentor, and worked with him at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Museum.

While stationed in Arlington, VA, Tom married his long-time girlfriend, Joy Arlene Gilbert of Cincinnati. Tom worked diligently on writing his first book, with Joy typing page after page. The World's Submachine Guns was published in 1963. It was the first book of its kind. Tom was 27 years old when the book was published. It is 739 pages of information on more than 300 submachine guns, has been reprinted four times, and translated in more than 20 languages. In the Foreword, Tom wrote, "It had been my desire to see a book published which would deal exclusively and extensively with the topic of submachine guns". "When no such book appeared, I decided to gather what information and photographs I had collected through the years and to make the attempt myself."

In 1980, Volume 1 was followed by The World's Machine Pistols and Submachine Guns (co-authored with Daniel Musgrave), and his publication of The World's Fighting Shotguns (authored by Thomas Swearingen). At the time of his passing, Tom and his long-time friend and co-author, Gary Johnston had just completed work on their capstone book, an updated edition of The World's Assault Rifles, with over 1100 pages of technical data covering assault rifles from around the world. It is considered the most comprehensive collection of assault rifle research of its kind and is expected to be published shortly.

When he left the Army, Tom entered the private sector, and worked at Interarms in Alexandria, VA. He traveled extensively for the company, and made valuable contacts internationally in the arms industry. In the late 1960's Tom left Interarms to start his first import-export company, Replica Models, in Alexandria. His agent in Asia showed him a replica 1911 Colt .45 Automatic and asked if he thought there would be any interest in the United States. Replica Models was born and later became The Collector's Armoury, selling more than two million replica arms and accoutrements to a wide variety of markets, including Military and Police Training Centers, and various venues in the entertainment industry.

In the course of his life, Tom became a well-known importer/exporter in the industry. His passports are laden with colorful stamps from multiple countries in Asia, Central and South America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Tom frequently acted as a consultant and liaison for the U.S. Government in international matters throughout Latin America, Europe, and Asia. He formed friendships and lasting bonds with industry icons; Henk Visser, Gordon B, Ingram, Uzi Gal, Eugene Stoner and Lt. General Mikhail Kalashnikov. In 2019, Tom was presented the Lt. Colonel George M. Chinn Award for his lifelong contribution to firearms research, an achievement of which he was very proud. He was nominated by a number of accomplished men in the industry, including Captain William Shepherd, U.S. Navy Seal, astronaut, and Commander of the First International Space Station who wrote, "I know of no one who has contributed more to our knowledge of the military small arms field."

Tom and Joy loved to entertain at their homes in Alexandria, Va and in Northern Michigan! Many were treated to Tom's smoked turkey or fresh caught fish. An avid fisherman, many friends, family and grandchildren remember trips to Petobago, Elk, Torch or Skegemog Lakes. His greatest catch was a 42" Muskie caught in Skegemog Lake. Tom also loved visiting Spain (where he enjoyed watching Flamenco dancing), and South America (where he watched the Tango). Tom was a Classical Jazz aficionado, and attended performances by such greats as Sarah Vaughn, Tony Bennett, and Buddy Rich. Additionally, he was a "die hard" Redskins fan, and frequently watched them play at R.F.K. Stadium.

Those who know Tom know he had his "business side", However, his family and friends know Tom as a generous soul who rarely turned away anyone who asked for help, he positively affected so many lives. He is fondly remembered by his children: Tracy Nelson Geschickter and husband Brian, Lori Nelson Cochran and husband Rick, Scott Gilbert Nelson and wife Michele, Ross Taylor, and his grandchildren; Alexa and Isabel Botha, Mac and Hank Nelson, and Katie and Garrett Geschickter.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that friends consider donating to the Tunnels To Towers Foundation. The family has celebrated his life privately. Arrangements have been entrusted to Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home.

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NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 7

Credits. At an average cost of \$268 for preparing tax returns, these taxpayers also saved \$86,564 in tax preparation fees. This program was supported by 23 tax program volunteers for a total of 785 hours worked on the program.

Alexandria To Welcome Pride of Baltimore II in October

Pride of Baltimore II will visit Alexandria Oct. 20- 22, as part of a partnership with the National Park Service tour of the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The ship will dock at the City of Alexandria Marina (0 Cameron St.) and will be available for free deck tours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during its three-day visit. Tickets are not required for the free deck tours and will include a chance to talk with deck crew and a National Park Service (NPS) ranger to learn more about the War of 1812, Thomas Boyle, privateers, and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

Learn more about *Pride II's* visit and the history of the ship. <https://pride2.org/come-aboard/>

Public Information Meeting for Del Ray East Sanitary Sewer Project

As part of its Sanitary Sewer Asset Renewal Program, the City of Alexandria has hired a contractor to rehabilitate mainline sanitary sewers and manholes starting this fall. Rehabilitation work will take place in the Del Ray, Lynhaven and Rosemont neighborhoods, in areas east of Commonwealth Avenue.

Manhole inspections and closed-circuit television (CCTV) inspections of sewers were completed last year. A total of 165 pipe segments and 122 manholes, representing approximately 20 percent of those inspected, were found to have structural defects and other issues that allow infiltration and inflow (I&I) to enter the sanitary sewer system. Along with reducing the potential for I&I in the sewer system, rehabilitating sanitary sewers renews the existing sewer pipes, extends their useful life, and protects against pipe collapses and other costly emergency repairs. The City's contractor will use ultraviolet (UV) cured-in-place pipe technology to rehabilitate the existing sanitary sewers.

The City will hold a public meeting on the rehabilitation project on Thursday, Oct. 12, at 7 p.m., at City Hall, 301 King St. Members of the public can also attend virtually, via Zoom. Please register in advance for the virtual meeting.

The meeting will include a 30-minute presentation by City staff, followed by a question-and-answer session.

For more information about the Del Ray East Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project, visit the City's Sanitary Sewer Asset Renewal Program page. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sewers/sanitary-sewer-asset-renewal-program>

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PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Former Fort Hunt High School band members play at the school's 60th anniversary reunion Sept. 30 at Carl Sandburg Middle School.



Jim Carmalt, vice president of the Fort Hunt Class of '71, with Hoda Kotb.



Hoda Kotb gives remarks at the Fort Hunt High School 60th reunion Sept. 30 at Carl Sandburg Middle School.

Alumni Hoda Kotb Returns For FHHS 60th Reunion

FROM PAGE 1

that was my jam and it still kind of is. I am so excited to see what people have become, what they're up to, what they're doing."

Fort Hunt High School was a public high school from 1963 until 1985, when it was converted to what is now Carl Sandburg Middle School.

In 1985, Fort Hunt was combined with Groveton High School to form West Potomac High School, located on Groveton's campus. The Fort Hunt campus was converted into Carl Sandburg Middle School, which replaced the older Stephen Foster and Bryant Intermediate Schools.

The event was organized by the Fort Hunt High School Alumni Association, which organizes several alumni events and grants annual scholarships to graduating seniors of West Potomac High School.

"Can you believe our little school?" Kotb said. "Everywhere we go we are looking for each other. We went to a fantastic school. We went to a school that won district championships, regional championships, state

championships.

We have people who graduated from here that are NFL players. We have Pulitzer Prize winners who graduated from here."

Rocky Belk, Class of '79, played in the NFL and Rick Atkinson, Class of '70, and Carolyn Cole, Class of '79, are Pulitzer Prize recipients.

Kotb humorously described driving throughout the southeastern U.S., naming all the TV stations where she was rejected before finally beginning her broadcast career in Greenville, Miss.

"You don't have to be the best, you have to be the one who doesn't quit," Kotb said. "And that kind of defined my whole career. I wasn't the best. I wasn't the smartest. I wasn't any of those things. My secret was I refused to quit."

The audience included both student and teacher alumni. Also attending the event were Kotb's family members, including her sister Hala Kotb, daughter Hope Kotb, niece Hannah Kotb, and brother Adel Kotb.

"Fort Hunt was a very special place," Kotb said. "It's been great being back."

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Certain About Burton



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The little dog, affectionately referred to as, recently celebrated his first birthday. And as I anticipated when I wrote my initial column about him/me having gotten a puppy for the first time in 28 years or so: "Burton For Certain," he has been everything a dog owner could want. He's a sweet and loving golden retriever (it's rare that the breed is anything else) who still believes - at almost 75 pounds, that he's a lapdog. Have you ever tried eating off a snack table with a big dog sitting on your lap and sniffing your plate/fork? It's not easy. Part of what brings me joy about Burton is the story of how and why he was christened, so to speak, with his name. I'm always interested in pet names and their stories, if any, which people are only too happy to share about their pet's given name. And Burton, as with Brandy and Bailey before him (both liquor-related), has a good backstory which I will now share.

My wife, Dina surprised me with puppy-Burton on a Saturday morning in early October one year ago. Dina was helping a neighbor, or so I was told, that morning, when she got up at 6 am to drive four hours to Lexington, Va. What little did I know?: As Seargent Schultz said so often on "Hogan's Heroes" so too did "I know nothing." Of course, I didn't have a dog name at the ready since I was clueless what Dina had started planning three months earlier in June when she first met the breeder in Harper's Ferry on a Saturday when we took a day trip with some friends. Fast forward, when she arrived home later that afternoon, puppy in tow, with the associated puppy paraphernalia, some of which had been spread around the neighborhood - to maintain the surprise, I was nearly speechless at the sight of him. He was adorable and lovable. Dina placed him in my arms, and I very nearly started to cry. I really hadn't thought much about a puppy. Ever since I was diagnosed with cancer, I had always thought that with the indeterminate issues with my health and life expectancy, especially factoring in the side effects - and demands of chemotherapy, that adding to the family when we might be subtracting from it was a risky proposition. Nevertheless, here I was back in the dog business for the first time in 14 years. Having not considered a canine addition, given the cancer diagnosis and the five cats we already had in house, I was not thinking expansion. As such, I was totally unprepared for Burton emotionally (physically I could mostly manage, although occasionally a little challenging on some days when I felt the effects of 14 years of chemotherapy), and since I had no inkling as to what Dina was planning, I certainly didn't know what to call him.

For the next day, we struggled to give him a proper name. We did agree that his name should begin with the letter "B," given the names of our two previous goldens, but other than that, we were stuck. The only name we could produce was "Buddy," but other than the "B" part, we weren't all that enamored, particularly Dina. I can still see her sitting on our living room couch that morning, cellphone in hand, scrolling pet name lists on the internet, as we tried to resolve this pet-naming dilemma. Frustrated by the choices we were considering; we were temporarily at a loss. Then, out of the blue, as I'm sitting in a wingchair perpendicular to the couch, I get a text from Dina's father in New York - who rarely texts. He knew about the puppy surprise but had no idea that we were focused on finding a name at that moment or were as stuck as we were, struggling to find a suitable name and beginning quite frankly to get a bit frustrated. Granted, it was barely a day, and we hadn't had much time to get our arms - and head around the changes to our life (me more so than Dina obviously since she was the "surpriser"), but we wanted to call him something other than "puppy." And until we had a name, it's almost as if the surprise wasn't quite finished and therefore, we couldn't move on and/or plan for our new future as dog owners once again.

Then I hear my phone-text ring, look down on my lap, and see a text out of the blue/unsolicited, from Dina's father. I click on his name and read the message. I immediately smile and look over to the Dina on the couch, still scrolling/researching names. I snicker and say, "Dina, your father has just come up with the dog's name: Burton." And since we live in Burtonsville and live in the Isaac Burton House and the name begins with "B," we had found/been given Burton's name. And when I said so, Dina smiled back at me and chuckled: "Perfect," and so he was officially named. Soon thereafter, his AKC registration confirmed it: "Sir Isaac Burton of Burtonsville."

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

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