

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 21, 2023

Cecil Gregg, Grade 9,
St. Stephens and St.
Agnes Upper School,
Tom Bunnell, art teacher.



Children's & Teens'
Gazette 2023



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Making Spirits Bright

Firefighters mark 25 years of toy donations.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue marked its 25th year of serving families in need with a toy distribution day Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

"This is one of my favorite events of the year," said Bruce Witucki of Union Street Public House. "It's hard to believe this was our 25th year of providing for the community."

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue was founded by Willie Bailey, recently retired as Deputy Chief of the Office of the Fire Marshall with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. Bailey credits Witucki with generating significant early support for the organization.

"Bruce has been a sponsor since the organization was founded," Bailey said. "He was instrumental in building support for us, through his own donations and with introductions to his wide circle of friends and businesses in the community."

The annual event has grown from serving the Route 1 corridor to helping families, schools and nonprofits throughout Northern Virginia.

"This year we gave away over 3,000 toys, 50 bikes, and \$3,000 in gift cards to over 50 schools and nonprofits," Bailey said. "For 25 years individuals like Bruce and our many business sponsors have helped us provide for those less fortunate in the community."

Children from the Gum Springs Head



Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, left, and State Senator George Barker (D-39) help children from Gum Springs Head select toys as part of the 25th annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue toy distribution Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

Start program selected a toy of their choice while having the opportunity to visit with Santa and interact with Caring Angels Therapy dogs. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck and State Senator George Barker (D-39) were among the volunteers helping distribute toys.

"It's important to be involved in helping people, particularly children," Barker said.

Sponsors for the event include: Ken and Kelly Savittiere Foundation; Apple Federal Credit Union; Progressive Firefighters of

Fairfax; Local 2068; Fire and Rescue Retirement Association; Nationwide Credit Corporation; John and Jack Taylor; Chadwick's Restaurant; Union Street Public House Restaurant (Bruce Witucki); Alexandria Toyota; Andrew Mitchell; Daniel Rowe; Bernie Cabral; Energesco Solutions LLC (William Bennett); Modern Technology Solution, Inc.; Medocracy, Inc.; DWCVN; PROMAX Realtors; The Movement Studios; Accenture Federal Services; Five Guys (Sam Chamberlain); FRANS MART; FCAC

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Mount Vernon Gazette; Rotary Club of Tysons Corner; Caring Angels Therapy Dogs; Kelly's Irish Times Restaurant; Fairfax County Police Department; Walmart (Store #2258 - Richmond Hwy.); and Primo Family Restaurant.

"It's hard to believe but we have been providing gifts during the holidays for a quarter-century now," Bailey said. "I am so thankful to our sponsors and supporters for making this a special time of year for so many families."



Firefighter Lt. David Saunders as Santa greets a child at the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 11 in Penn Daw.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

Wreaths Across America

Thousands turn out to honor local veterans.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

More than 2,000 volunteers took part in Wreaths Across America day, placing 4,230 wreaths in honor of local veterans Dec. 16 at Alexandria National Cemetery.

"The annual Wreaths Across America event at Alexandria National Cemetery was a huge success," said VFW Post 609 Commander Gerald Krueger. "Over 2,000 Alexandria area patriotic citizens joined military veterans from several VSOs, along with Scouts, cadets, church groups, and more, in placing wreaths on all 4,229 veterans' gravestones."

Daija Stewart-Simmons was volunteering as part of Girl Scout Troop 5223 from Alfred Street Baptist Church.

"Girl Scouts is about dedication to service," Stewart-Simmons said. "So I am here to honor those who sacrificed their lives for us. This is very special."

Military attaché officers stationed in U.S. embassies in DC took part in the Alexandria ceremony.

"These officers come to pay their respects to our veterans," Krueger said. "They come to pay tribute to those who have served."



Representatives of various military organizations prepare to place honorary service wreaths as part of Wreaths Across America Dec. 16 at Alexandria National Cemetery.

National Wreaths Across America Day took place at over 4,225 cemeteries across the country with over three million veterans

honored this year. "The mission of Wreaths Across America is to Remember the fallen, Honor those who

"We are inspired by the support of the community."

— VFW Post 609 Commander Gerald Krueger

serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom," Krueger said.

Fundraising for next year's Wreaths Across America has begun with the Wreaths Across America organization in Columbia Falls, Maine, again announcing they will match one-for-one additional wreath for pledges made through registered Sponsorship Groups. The offer runs through Jan. 16, 2024. The link to donate through VFW Post 609-Alexandria is www.wreathscrossamerica.org/VA0930P

"We are inspired by the support of the community, including Saint Rita's American Heritage Girls, who have been the top organization for getting pledges for us for the last 5-6 years," Krueger said. "The Wreaths Across America veterans remembrance wreaths is a way for a community to honor those who have served."

PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

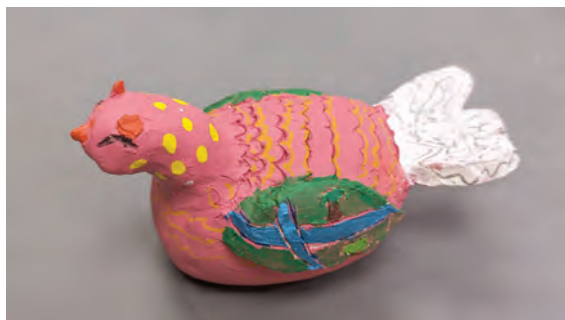
CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

St. Stephens and St. Agnes School



Sophia Voudouris, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.

Yabsra Tewodros, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.



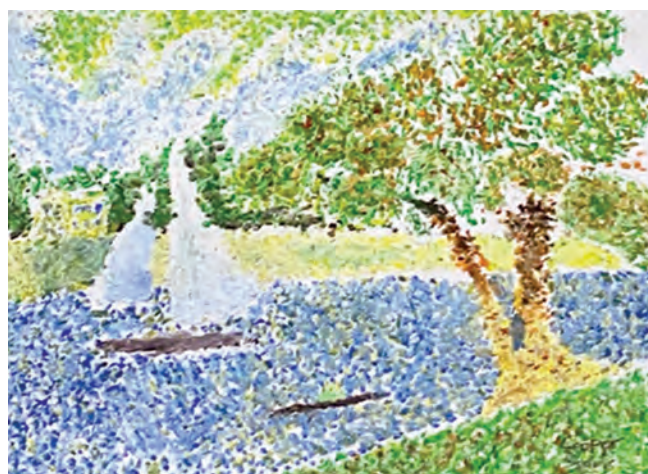
Anabel DeLucia, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



Brody Hark, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



Alex Blaker, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Kati Towle, art teacher.



Cooper Spies, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Brandon Royal, art teacher.



Addy Petron, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Augusta Jay, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Sean Riley, art teacher.



Michael Hu, Grade 9

Welcome the the Children's And Teens' Gazette 2023

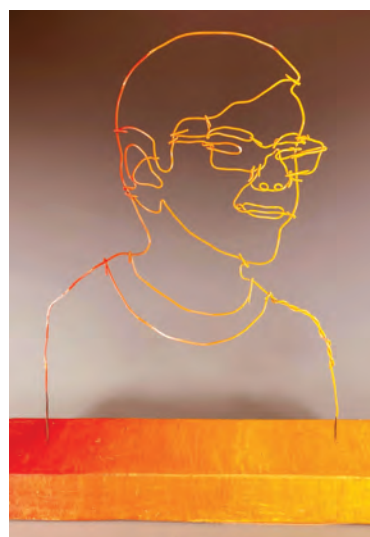
The art and writing of local students is always a bright spot. We offer many thanks to the art teachers who guided these artists and compiled the art to appear here. You can find the other Children's and Teens' editions by going to <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and then scrolling down to Children's. Thanks for reading.

Now the Gazette will be on a break until after the New Year, with our next publication appearing the week of Jan. 10.

In the meantime contact us, for advertising contact debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com or sales@connectionnewspapers.com. For the newsroom, contact editors@connectionnewspapers.com



Everly Kunz, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Cecil Gregg, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Tom Bunnell, art teacher.



Caeli Boris, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Kate Elkins, art teacher.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

Grace Episcopal School



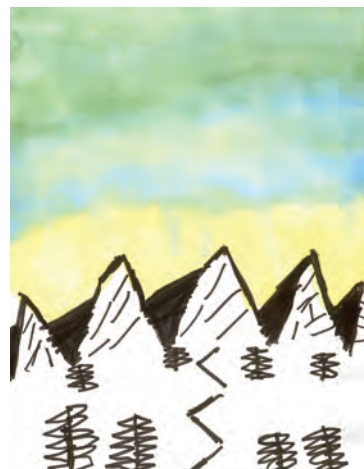
Catherine Voces, 4th Grade, Grace Episcopal School.



Libby Wise, Kindergarten, Grace Episcopal School.



Ronan Wallace, Kindergarten, Grace Episcopal School.



Oliver Murray, 3rd Grade, Grace Episcopal School.



Winnie Knight, 3rd Grade, Grace Episcopal School.



5th Grade Nativity Animals, Grace Episcopal School.



4th Grade Nativity Angels, Grace Episcopal School.



Andrew Smith, Grace Episcopal School.



Meraf Getahun, 1st Grade, Grace Episcopal School.



Katherine Hungerford, Grade 1, Grace Episcopal School.



Anne Harrison 3rd Grade, Grace Episcopal School.



Hernandez and Connolly 2nd Grade, Grace Episcopal School.

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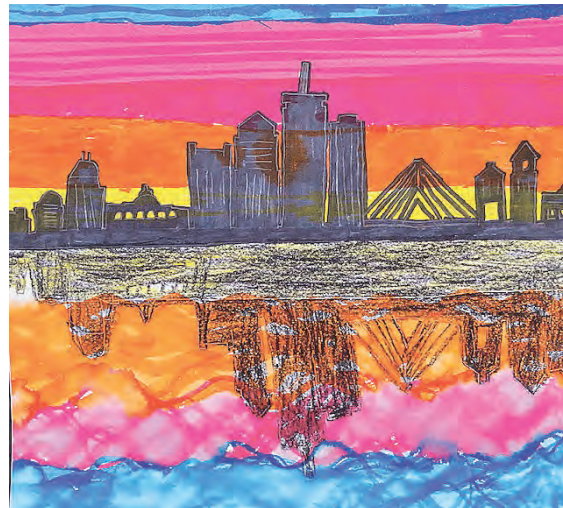


CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School



Wesley Smith, 11, 5th Grade, Alexandria, Paint, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



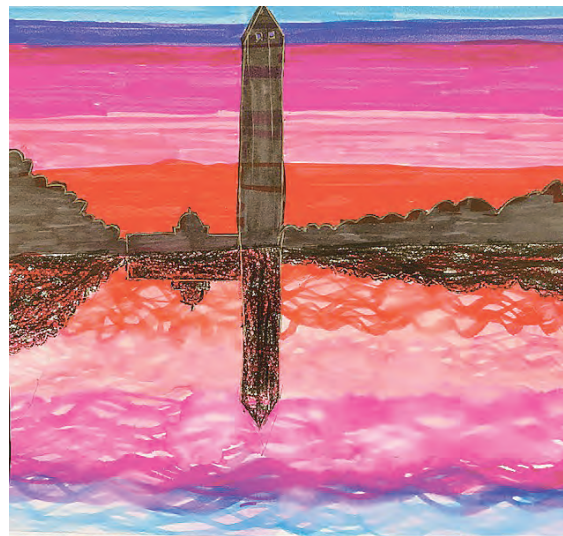
Hanan Hussein, 11, 5th Grade, Alexandria, Paint, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Ruby Griffis, 10, 4th Grade, Alexandria, Oil Pastel, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Thomas Miller, 11, 5th Grade, Alexandria, Paint, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Ra'Kiya Carothers, 11, 5th Grade, Alexandria, Paint, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Diana Yates, 10, 4th Grade, Alexandria, Oil Pastel, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Liam McGinnis, 8, 2nd Grade, Alexandria, Crayon and Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Victoria Randall, 8, 2nd Grade, Alexandria, Crayon and Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Nell Larson, 5, Kindergarten, Alexandria, Watercolor and Oil Pastel, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Isaiah Some, 10, 4th Grade, Alexandria, Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Imonie-Sade Ford, 5, Kindergarten, Alexandria, Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Wren Barnes, 5, Kindergarten, Alexandria, Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Khaliah Barclay, 7, 1st Grade, Alexandria, Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Cole Salerno, 7, 1st Grade, Alexandria, Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School



Sahiran Green, 11, 5th Grade, Alexandria, Pencil, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Mya Eason, 8, 2nd Grade, Alexandria, Marker and Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Cristel Espinoza, 8, 2nd Grade, Alexandria, Marker and Watercolor, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Tarteel Salih, 9, 3rd Grade, Alexandria, Oil Pastel, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Haddon Heath, 7, 1st Grade, Alexandria, Crayon, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Oliver Doyle, 9, 3rd Grade, Alexandria, Crayon and Marker, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Absalat Abebe, 7, 1st Grade, Alexandria, Marker, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.



Alexander Batt, 9, 3rd Grade, Alexandria, Crayon and Marker, Naomi L. Brooks, Alexandria, Luisa Tio, Art Teacher.

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THE CONNECTION
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back to 2008 are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

ELECTION NOTICE - CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
Special Election for School Board Member District A- Tuesday, January 9, 2024

VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Voter Registration Deadline for the Special Election is
December 27, 2023

Eligible citizens who will be 18 or over by January 9, 2024 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 **Dec. 27, 2023**

By Mail, download an application at alexandriava.gov/elections or call 703.746.4050. Applications must be postmarked by **Dec. 27, 2023**

In Person at the following sites, prior to 5pm on **Dec. 27, 2023**

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

To vote in-person, early:

Office of Voter Registration:

- Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
- Closed: Monday, December 25, 2023; Tuesday, December 26, 2023; Monday, January 1, 2024
- Evening and weekend hours available; see website below.

For complete absentee hours at all locations, check alexandriava.gov/elections

Deadline for in-person, early voting: Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024 at 5pm

To vote by mail:

- 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.

Return the application by mail, fax, or email.

Deadlines for voting by mail:

- Absentee ballot applications must be **received** by 5pm on Dec. 29, 2023.
- Mailed Ballots must be **received** by 7pm on Jan 9, 2024 or postmarked by election day and received by noon on Friday, Jan. 12, 2024.
- 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 Jan. 9, 2024.

Special Services:

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.

City of Alexandria Office Voter Registration and Elections
132 North Royal St, Suite 100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Office: 703.746.4050 ; Fax: 703.838.6440
Website: alexandriava.gov/elections ; Email: voters@alexandriava.gov

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ❖ DECEMBER 21-27, 2023 ❖ 7



Julia K., Grade 8, "Christmas Time," Oil Pastels on paper.



Laila G., Grade 8, "Tis The Season," Oil Pastels on paper.



Lily R., Grade 8, "Christmas Day," Oil Pastels on paper.



Mahasyn B., Grade 8, "Still Life," Oil Pastels on paper.



Yerlinda P., Grade 7, "Lunch Time," Oil Pastels on paper.



Samantha J., Grade 7, "A day in the life of a Musician," Oil Pastels on paper.



Samuel T., Grade 8, "Tart and Sweet," Acrylic on canvas.



Rose K., Grade 6, "Totally Random Likes," Oil Pastels on paper.



Zoe C., Grade 7, "Music in the Art Room," Oil Pastels on paper.



Mars G., Grade 7, "Art Class," Oil Pastels on paper.



Owen H., Grade 6, "Game Night," Oil Pastels on paper.



Max., Grade 6, "Fruit Basket," Oil Pastels on paper.



Jennifer M., Grade 7, "Grandma's House," Oil Pastels on paper.



Jackson, Grade 6, "Art in a Case," Oil Pastels on paper.



Gemma P., Grade 8, "Fall Vanity," Oil Pastels on paper.



Nyla W., Grade 7, "Big Sounds," Oil Pastels on paper.



Ella E., Grade 8, "The Harvest from the Cold Winter," Oil Pastels on paper.



Eleanor W., Grade 7, "The Fruit Basket," Oil Pastels on paper.



Estella H., Grade 8, "Relax," Acrylic on paper.



Miles M., Grade 6, "Japanese Tea Table," Oil Pastels on paper.



Ryan Z., Grade 6, "Plushies and Cups," Oil Pastels on paper.



Retag M., Grade 6, "Time to go out," Oil Pastels on paper.



Elaina G., Grade 6, "Picnic," Oil Pastels on paper.



Anna K., Grade 6, "Gold with Pink Blankets," Oil Pastels on paper.



Cooper V., Grade 8, "Art-to-ber," Acrylic on canvas.



Nichelle D-B., Grade 6, "Cozy Coffee Table," Oil Pastels on paper.



Noemi H., Grade 6, "Coziness and Contentment," Oil Pastels on paper.



Annette B., Grade 8, "Kiwis," Acrylic on canvas.



Desa S., Grade 6, "Fancy Fall," Oil Pastels on paper.



Anaya R., Grade 7, "Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas," Oil Pastels on paper.



Aman R., Grade 8, "The Season of Giving," Acrylic on canvas.



Adam M., Grade 7, "Advanced Aviation," Colored Pencils on paper.

Washington Street UMC Preschool



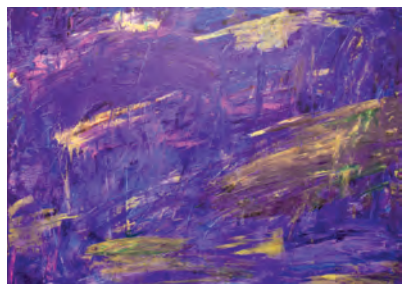
Camilla, 4, Pre-K, Alexandria, Letter Artwork.



Thomas, 4, Pre-K, Alexandria, Gingerbread Artwork.



Stevie, 5, Pre-K, Alexandria, Letter Artwork.



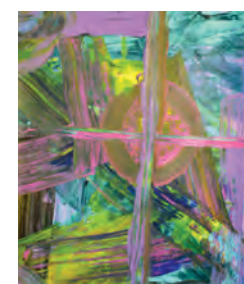
Evelyn R-G, Grade 8, "Purple Rainbow," Acrylic on canvas.



Evelyn R-G, Grade 8, "The Sun," Acrylic on paper.



Rachel C., Grade 8, "Through the looking glass," Acrylic on paper.



Rachel C., Grade 8, "Highway to Nowhere," Acrylic on canvas.



Cooper V., Grade 8, "Green," Acrylic on canvas.



Estella H., Grade 8, "1970s," Acrylic on canvas.



Dajuan J., Grade 7, "Visible Fruits," Oil Pastels on paper.



Naomi W., Grade 7, "Pixel Food," Oil Pastels on paper.



Adam M., Grade 7, "November Decor," Oil Pastels on paper.



Alex A., Grade 7, "Lighthouse in the Evening," Oil Pastels on paper.



Aubrey M., Grade 7, "Someday A Lawyer," Graphic Markers on paper.

This is Christmas

Winter's embrace, starry gleam,
A world in a festive dream.
Twinkling lights twinkling stars
Families gather from afar,
love and happiness round n round.
Seasons embrace takes over towns

- ANNABELLA MCDOWELL

Annabella McDowell, 17, junior, Alexandria,
This is Christmas, poem, Bishop Ireton, Alexandria, Mrs thoms



Nora Gilary, 8, Grade 3, Alexandria, The Day a Penguin Got Ice Skates for Christmas, drawing | Mount Vernon Community School, Sara Lovelace, art teacher,

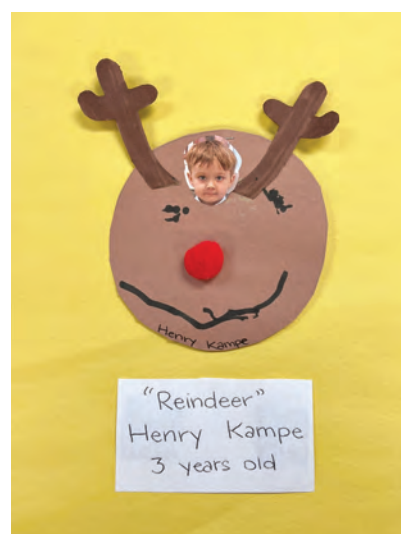
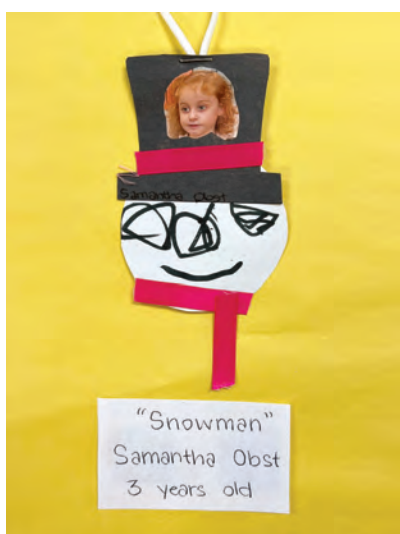
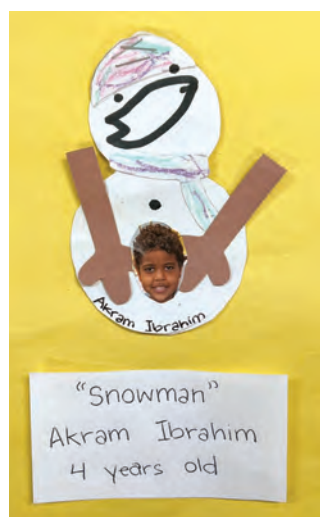


Sylvie Wetzel, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Mountain Pass, Drawing, Stephen's & St. Agnes School.



Sylvie Wetzel, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Cake, Drawing, Stephen's & St. Agnes School.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE



Correcting 1965 Little League Travesty

Big Brother Tommy Lingan Hit Zimmerman Electric into Playoffs



Tom, left, ripped three hits, propelling his team into the 1965 playoffs.

In Alexandria in the summer of 1965, Zimmerman Electric's little league team was in pursuit of a place in the playoffs. Tommy Lingan (12) played first base for the team and his brother, Bobby (9), was a utility player. In that fateful game, Tommy had three heroic hits, leading to the victory that clinched their spot in the playoffs. Regrettably, the Alexandria Gazette reported that it was Bobby who made the hits.

After nearly 60 years of good-natured teasing, it is time to publicly set the record straight.

Congratulations Tom Lingan on your amazing hits and baseball prowess.



Hopkins House Junior K-Prep class

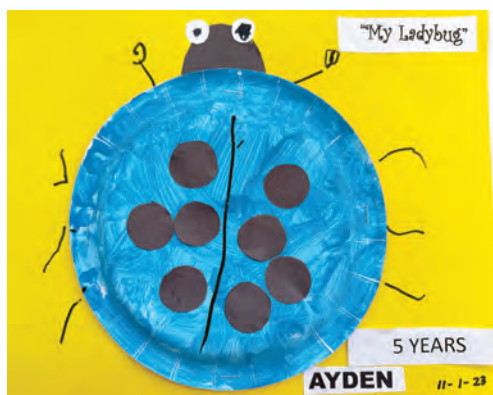
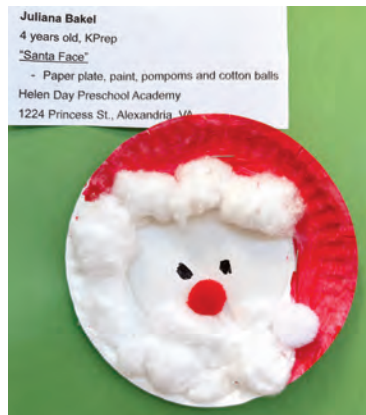
TEACHER'S:
AGNES AGYEMANG



CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

Hopkins House McNeil
Preschool Academy

TEACHER: DORIS OTU



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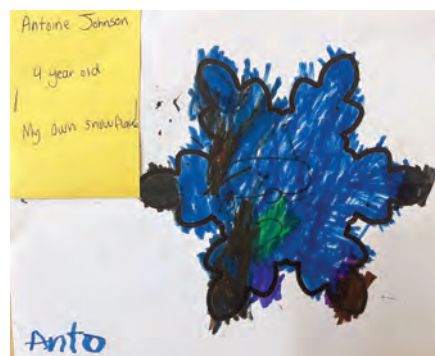
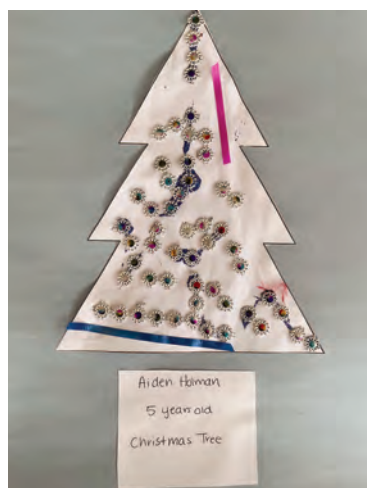
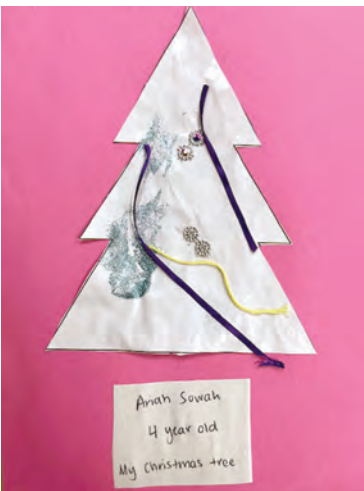
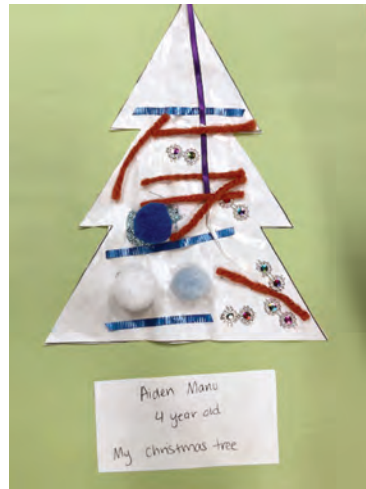
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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

K-Prep class at Hopkins House McNeil Preschool Academy Teacher: Emely Benitez





First Night Alexandria takes place on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023 in Old Town Alexandria.

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 JAN. 7

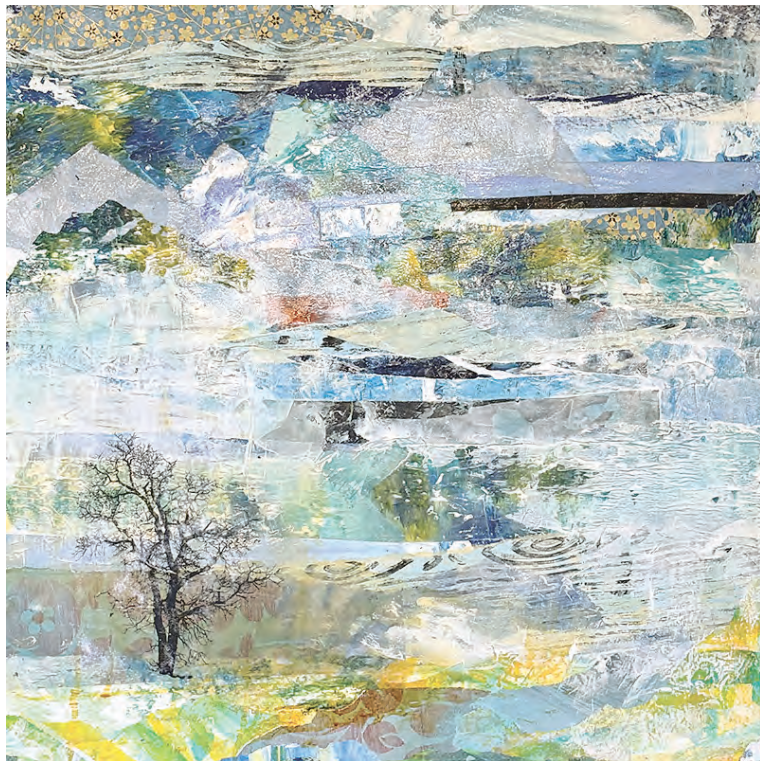
National Treasures | Leanne Fink. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. National Treasures is a collection of oil and cold wax paintings by Leanne Fink that pays homage to the grandeur of America's National Parks. Inspired by the beauty of the natural world, Leanne is known for her visually dynamic landscapes. The Athenaeum Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA
"Breakfast with Santa" will take place every weekend in December, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in three locations in Alexandria:

Joe Theismann's Restaurant
Mia's Italian Kitchen
Ada's on the River
Tickets range from \$0-\$65 and include a hearty and festive breakfast feast that will delight your taste buds. Children will receive take-home treats to continue the holiday spirit at home, while adults can indulge in some celebratory Prosecco.
Tickets can be purchased here:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/breakfast-with-santa-in-old-town-alexandria-by-arp-1039279>

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. In locations around Old Town Alexandria. First Night Alexandria, known as the largest family-friendly and



Visions of Resilience: Art for Climate Justice can be seen at Del Ray Artisans Jan. 5-27, 2024.

affordable New Year's Eve festival of music and more event in the region, returns with its day into night of celebration showcasing performing arts throughout Old Town. The annual event (in its 29th year) will feature a variety of activities, activations, dance parties, live music and more. The festivities kick off at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at midnight as thousands welcome in the New Year.

A tradition that started in 1994, First Night Alexandria has become a staple in the region to bring in the New Year as an affordable event filled with a lineup of entertainment and activities. Proceeds from the event supports Alexandria's middle and high school students' activities with a musical background in choir, orchestra, and band.

New this Year:
Twilight Fireworks - This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m. on Alexandria's waterfront geared

to families who want to enjoy the show with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront.

Fun Hunt - Add adventure, exploration, and education to the last day of the year! After 5 years, the Fun Hunt returns with new ways to enjoy an afternoon in Old Town Alexandria. Ticketed guests have the opportunity to turn a day of Fun and entertainment into potential prize winnings. The adventure concludes at the Block Party at Market Square just prior to the Twilight Fireworks.

Daytime Block Party - Join us at Market Square from 4 - 6 p.m. for a time of music, a "Cool Happy New Year" demonstration and special fun just prior to the new Twilight fireworks display.
For more information visit www.firstnightalexandria.org.



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria resident Douglas Goist, right, poses for a photo with members of the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19 at the White House.

Frozen Fun

White House ice rink hosts local athletes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

With the White House as the backdrop, Alexandria resident Douglas Goist demonstrated his goaltending skills at an ice rink installed by President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden as part of an exhibition by the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19.

"This is a great opportunity for athletes of all abilities to come together and enjoy being on the ice," said Goist, who has been the goalie on the US team since it was formed in 2018.

The rink is the first to be installed on the South Lawn in

43 years. First Lady Jill Biden officially opened the temporary 50-by-70-foot rink Nov. 29. It will operate by invitation only throughout December.

Area schoolchildren and children from families with service members, frontline workers, first responders and teachers are among those who have been invited to skate.

The National Hockey League and the NHL Players Association has provided lessons through their "Learn to Play/Learn to Skate" program, which provides first-time participants with free equipment, weekly sessions and coaching.

"This is a great opportunity for athletes of all abilities."

— Douglas Goist of the US National Blind Hockey Team

Goist and his teammates skated alongside special needs athletes, including deaf players and those in wheelchairs, who used sleds on the ice.

"It was a great experience to be here tonight," Goist said.



Alexandria's Douglas Goist tends goal as part of an exhibition by the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19 at the White House.

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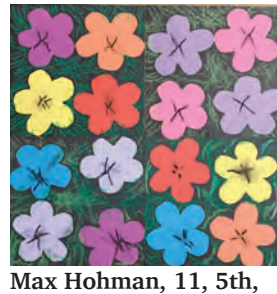
Tommy Walsh, 9, 4th, Alexandria, Landscape, Acrylic and liquid watercolor.



Steven Hernandez Berrios, 10, 4th, Alexandria, Landscape, Acrylic and liquid watercolor.



Jake LaFratta, 7, 1st, Alexandria, Circle and Lines, Black Crayons and Tempera paint.



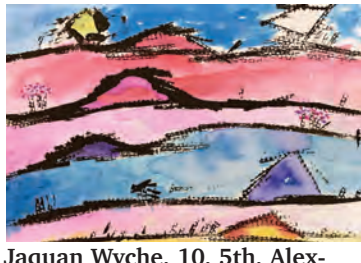
Max Hohman, 11, 5th, Alexandria, Warhol Inspired Flowers, Collage, Oil Pastel and Crayons.



Alex Keplinger, 10, 5th, Landscape, Acrylic and Watercolor.



Matthew Guevara Gomez, 7, 2nd, Alexandria, Circles and Lines.



Jaquan Wyche, 10, 5th, Alexandria, Landscape, Acrylic and Liquid Watercolor.



Saad Seman, 10, 5th, Alexandria, Firewolf, Collage.



Colin Redican, 10, 5th, Alexandria, Armadillo, Collage | Charles Barrett Elementary, Alexandria City, Ellen Pattisall, Visual Art Teacher.



Evie Anderson, 10, 5th, Alexandria, Desert Landscape, Acrylic and liquid watercolor.



Annelynn Dahlstrom, 10, 5th, Alexandria, Fox, Collage.

CHARLES BARRETT ELEMENTARY

Lyle Vogel, 8, 3rd, Alexandria, Fall Tree, Collage and Crayon | Charles Barrett Elementary, Alexandria City, Ellen Pattisall, Visual Art Teacher



Allan Cordova Santos, 6, K, Alexandria, Fall Tree, Tempera Paint



Payton Hambrick, 9, 4th, Alexandria, Fall Tree, Collage and Crayon | Charles Barrett Elementary, Alexandria City, Ellen Pattisall, Visual Art Teacher.



Ellie Landres, 9, 4th, Alexandria, Fall Tree, Collage and Crayons.

Charles Barrett Celebrates 80 Years Tree planting ceremony highlights school history.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Students and staff at Charles Barrett Elementary School celebrated the school's 80th anniversary with the planting of a willow oak tree donated by the North Ridge Citizens' Association's Tree Canopy Program.

"We are celebrating the 80th anniversary of our school's history by planting a willow tree donated by North Ridge Citizens Association," said Charles Barrett principal Loren Brody. "We are planting seeds for a bright future together and also recognizing all the people in our school community who have contributed so much to our school to make

it the loving, caring place that it is."

In addition to Brody, the Oct. 25 ceremony featured Charles Barrett Assistant principal Marcella Ahern, Alexandria City Public Schools Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt, School Board Member Ashley Simpson Baird and members of the Charles Barrett PTA, including President Carrie Lewis.

The school's Fifth Grade Student Ambassadors and Premier Panda and Growing Stronger Award Recipients from all grade levels were also featured in the celebration.

The elementary school, home to 550 students and 90 staff members, is named after Major General Charles Dodson Barrett of the



ACPS superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt, left, stands with Charles Barrett Elementary School students and staff in front of the newly planted willow oak tree Oct. 25 to celebrate the school's 80th anniversary.

U.S. Marine Corps, an Alexandrian who was killed in the South Pacific on Oct. 8, 1943. The original school was built in 1943 as a temporary prefab followed by a red brick building in 1949.

A Complete Whiff



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a longtime married man, I can speak to the various responsibilities that one another has to help nurture/maintain the framework that "Keeps Hope Alive," to invoke Jesse Jackson – out of context, that any relationship needs to thrive. For my wife Dina and I, as it pertains to the subject matter at hand/inner workings of our marriage, one very clear delineation exists: Dina handles the social, I handle the business/money. Sometimes however, the twain can be on different twacks (as my later father would always joke), even with the best of intentions. Getting the tracks to coalesce into one takes patience, courage, conviction, and most importantly, accommodation.

And it was in this context that I prepare you readers for something specifically to do with yours truly. What I am about to divulge is/was 100% my fault. Being responsible for the business/money side of the marriage means that I am expected to be organized concerning how much money is coming in, and most importantly, how much is going out, and moreover, when pay or play options are feasible/prudent. Meaning, I know how much money is due when certain relatively important bills arrive. In addition to the monthly recurring obligations, this also means I'm to be aware of the ones due less frequently (quarterly, semiannually, and of course, annually). And then there's other category of bills which require not so much payment as they do require a renewal. The renewal that I refer to now is for our health insurance, a special health insurance that because of means and/or seriousness of condition (cancer qualifies) enables me to not incur any costs for drugs, co-pays, co-insurance et cetera. As you might imagine for a cancer patient nearing his 15th year under the proverbial gun so to speak, there are regular/recurring costs associated with my care and now is no time to decide care options based on money/ability to pay, instead of what the doctor recommends. Simply stated: my life might very well be at stake, certainly it might be at risk. And yet, this is exactly what I did. I completely forgot to submit our annual renewal due Sept 1-ish for an Oct. 1-ish restart date. It didn't hit me until I went to check in with the receptionist for the PET scan, I had scheduled for Nov. 27 that I was told I had a co-pay due. (The other part of this story being the anxiety about the results and all I wrote about in the column entitled: "Uncertainty.") "Co-pay due? I just signed up for this in September," I said. That's when I was told that my plan had expired in Sept. because I hadn't renewed it for the '23-'24 year. I was off by three months or so. I totally missed the deadline. I don't begrudge the health insurance for not reminding me. Nor do I think Dina should have said something. This was on me, totally. There's no more important business in a family than its health insurance, particularly when one of its payors/covered individuals has been diagnosed originally with "terminal" cancer. I mean cancer is not exactly the kind of thing that goes away on its own. Often, when it goes away, it takes the patient with it.

Moreover, as a former insurance broker, I am aware of the costs and consequences of neglecting one's insurance responsibilities. And if one is not an experienced agent as I was, there's plenty of news stories and articles available online about devastating decisions that some families have had to make between rent, food, and buying drugs needed to keep them alive. And when the receptionist advised me of my plan's expiration (or my participation in it, I should say), it was the furthest thing from my mind. I was not thinking at all about having to renew/re-apply at all. Not that I thought for second that it was an automatic self-renewing kind of coverage (I knew it wasn't). It was just as we used to say in the back yard, whiffle bat in hand after missing the whiffle ball: "a complete whiff."

It's not exactly a total disaster, I/we still have health insurance, And I can re-apply for this special plan at any time; I will just have incurred unnecessary expenses in the interim. Hopefully, there won't be too many cancer-related decisions that cost us money until I'm able to re-qualify (it's hardly guaranteed). I just hope that Dina stays in her lane and doesn't veer from the social lane into my business lane. I never really planned it this way. I tried in the early days of our marriage to never make the decisions without consulting the manual (my wife). However, over time and over wrought, it became clear to me that since she was minding her business, I should be minding mine, except her business was social; mine was business – with some potential real world consequences, unfortunately.

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

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