



ALX Closet Opens for Families in Need

West End facility supported by community donations.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Center for Alexandria's Children and The Fund for Alexandria's Child have joined forces to open ALX Closet, a new clothing and resource center located at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center to serve Alexandria families in need.

The Closet officially opened Aug. 1 with a ribbon cutting and members of the social services community in attendance.

"I cannot even explain how exciting it is to be here today celebrating this incredible collaboration between the Center for Alex-

"The mission of this shared initiative is to provide essential items to people in need during challenging times."

— Giselle Pelaez, The Center for Alexandria's Children

andria's Children and the Fund for Alexandria's Child," said Giselle Pelaez, executive director of the Center for Alexandria's Children. "ALX Closet is dedicated to supporting



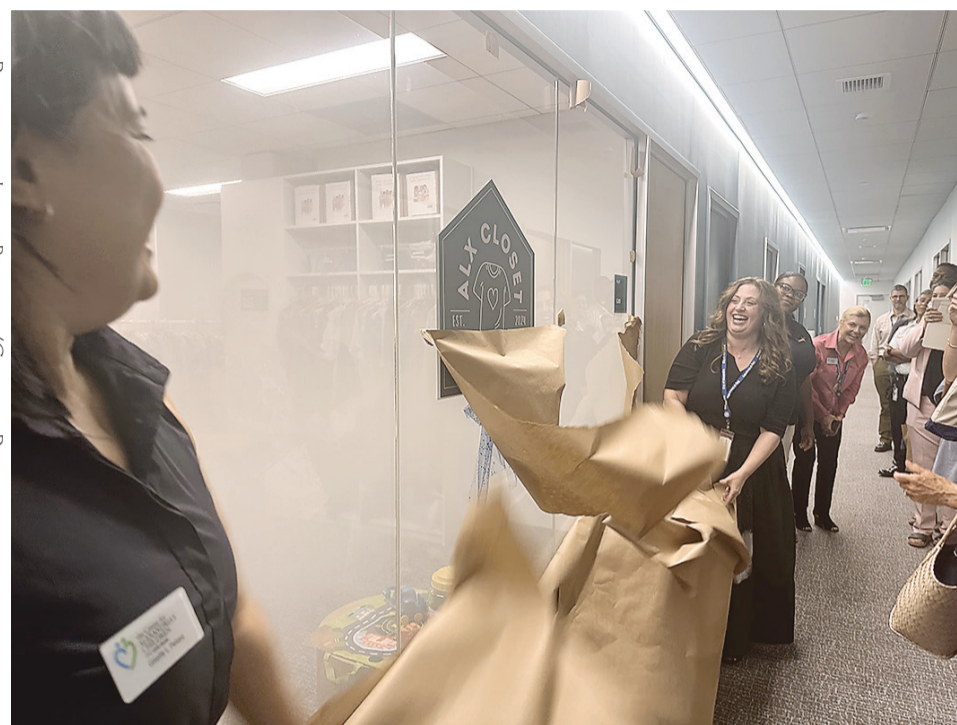
PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

The ALX Closet donation center is open for families in need Monday through Friday.

Alexandria's children and families in times of emergency or crisis. The mission of this shared initiative is to provide essential items to people in need ensuring that every child and family has access to clothing and other necessities during challenging times."

Through donations, ALX Closet is stocked with children's clothing up to size 14/16, toiletries and hygiene products, diapers, wipes and formula, and gift cards as available.

Local resident Sally Simmons was on



Giselle Pelaez and Christine Levine officially open ALX Closet Aug. 1 at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

hand for the grand opening.

"My family has a small foundation and we like to make donations within Alexandria, particularly with regard to the safety and health of women and children," Simmons said. "This is a vital organization as they work with children and families coming from out of the country. The children need help and the parents need help, which is why we work with the Child and Family

Network Center."

Access to ALX Closet will be through the social services providers located in the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

Alexandria Fire Department Battalion Chief Anthony Kelly attended the opening after participating in a donation drive for the center.

"We are a service to the community and

SEE ALX CLOSET, PAGE 9



Attendees browse through clothing available at ALX Closet Aug. 1 at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.



Kathy Horan and Sally Simmons with a donated dress for a young girl at the Aug. 1 opening of ALX Closet.



Christine Levine displays some of the clothing available at the newly opened ALX Closet Aug. 1.

Father-son Duo Save Raccoon

No rabies found in animal in distress.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Father and son Jeff and Samuel Bournes were on Mount Vernon Avenue during National Night Out Aug. 6 when they spotted a raccoon in distress trying to cross the road. Despite the risk, together they grabbed a blanket from their car and rescued the raccoon before it could be hit in traffic.

"I know it wasn't the safest thing to do, but it was stumbling across the road and moving very slowly, Jeff Bournes said. "It was crossing the street and we needed to keep it from getting run over."

The duo called animal control and awaited a response as they wrapped the raccoon in a blanket.

"We waited about 20 minutes for animal control to arrive," said Samuel Bournes, who

"It was crossing the street and we needed to keep it from getting run over."

— Jeff Bournes on saving a raccoon in Del Ray

just started his first year at Gunston Middle School after attending QSI Astana in Kazakhstan. "We don't know the gender of the raccoon and we didn't see any injuries. But we have since found out that it was euthanized."

Tony Rankin, chief of Animal Services for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, confirmed the situation with the raccoon.

"We did pick up a raccoon on Aug. 6 that Jeff Bournes and his son had found while attending National Night Out," Rankin said. "This raccoon was displaying significant signs of illness and was determined to be suffering. Given the raccoon's condition and potential for exposure to a human it was felt the best course of action was to humanely euthanize the raccoon and submit a specimen to the health department for rabies testing."

Rankin added that the rabies test was negative but that the raccoon may have been suffering from distemper.

Said Samule Bournes, "the raccoon seemed young and scared. We had to stop."



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Jeff and Samuel Bournes with a raccoon they saved crossing traffic on Mount Vernon Avenue during National Night Out Aug. 6.

New Corporate Leadership at Alexandria Restaurant Partners

Alexandria Restaurant Partners (ARP) has appointed Nazia Millwala as the new Chief Financial Officer. Millwala joined ARP in January 2022 as Vice President of Finance and has played a pivotal role in restructuring ARP's financial framework and strategies.

Nazia Millwala had an extensive career at YUM! Brands, where she led significant business transformations across multiple regions including the Middle East and Canada, according to ARP

statement. As part of a six-person leadership team, she was instrumental in reversing a decade-long trend of store closures at KFC Canada and achieved a growth of over 50 new restaurants within two years.

Educated in Australia and holding an MBA from IE Business School in Spain, Millwala is also a Chartered Accountant with four years of audit experience at KPMG. Her global perspective and financial expertise make her uniquely qualified to oversee ARP's financial operations and strategic planning.

In her new role, Millwala will not only lead the company's finances and people management, but also play a critical role in operations, closely working with ARP's leadership team to enhance business outcomes and employee satisfaction. "Nazia's impact on ARP has been profound, and her expanded role within the company is a natural evolution of her commitment and expertise," said Scott Shaw, Partner at ARP. "Her strategic vision will be vital as we continue to grow and strengthen our brand over the coming years."

Nazia herself is excited about the opportunity: "Together, we will focus on sustainable growth, operational excellence, and creating lasting value for both our team members and our guests."

ARP includes Mia's Italian Kitchen, The Majestic, Vola's Dockside Grill, Palette 22, Theismann's, Ada's on the River, Barca Pier and Wine Bar and the Royal Restaurant.

<https://www.alexandriarestaurant-partners.com>

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Zoning Lawsuit Can Move Forward

Individual property owners have standing but Coalition dismissed as plaintiff in case.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

A group of residents challenging the city's controversial Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiative won the latest court battle as Judge David S. Schell ruled Aug. 26 that the case against the city had standing and can move forward to trial.

Schell affirmed plaintiff standing and the Amended Complaint for Declaratory Relief against the City of Alexandria, rejecting the city's motion to dismiss the lawsuit in the Alexandria Circuit Court. The judge concurred with the city's assertion that the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria lacks standing because it does not own property as a corporate entity.

The plaintiffs in the case are fighting to reverse the zoning changes that were unanimously approved by City Council on Nov. 28, 2023.

In May, the initial case was dismissed with Schell giving the group 30 days to amend their complaint to clearly identify specific harms to their individual properties. At the time he otherwise found that the pleadings satisfy the requirements to go to trial.

The amended filing specified

how individual properties would be harmed as a result.

According to the city's website, Zoning for Housing is a comprehensive proposal of zoning reforms with the goal of expanding housing production and affordability and addressing past and current barriers to equitable housing access.

The reforms include a single-family zoning provision allowing developers to build homes with up to four units on any property, reducing parking requirements for single-family homes and analyzing

office-to-residential conversions.

The plaintiffs in the case — residents Phylis Burks, William Corin, David and Meghan Rainey, Joshua and Maria Carias Porto, Jimm Roberts

and John E. Craig — argued that increased traffic as well as increased taxes, parking problems, and population density are examples of the injuries they would suffer.

"Proof is not required," Schell said. "All that is required is that they allege a case of action."

The lawsuit, filed in the Circuit Court of Alexandria, alleges violations of state laws governing zoning procedures, as stipulated in the city's charter.

Schell, a retired Fairfax judge, was appointed to the case by the

"Proof is not required. All that is required is that they allege a case of action."

— Judge David S. Schell



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Protesters hold signs in opposition to the proposed changes in zoning Nov. 25, 2023 at Market Square. City Council unanimously passed the changes Nov. 28, 2023. On Aug. 26, a judge ruled that a lawsuit filed by citizens against the city can proceed to trial.

Virginia Supreme Court after the city's circuit court judges recused themselves. This is the second sim-

ilar case for Schell, who heard Arlington's case against Missing Middle zoning changes in July after

the county's judges recused themselves. The decision on the Arlington case is expected next month.

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.

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or

go to cancer.org/drive. 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.

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FILM FESTIVAL



PHOTO BY DENNIS McDONALD

Alexandria Film Festival screening pop-up at Patagonia in Old Town.



PHOTO BY DENNIS McDONALD

Interviews with filmmakers Vijaykumar (left) and Jorge Alvarez at the 2023 Alexandria Film Fest.

Alexandria Film Festival Highlights Creativity, Genre Diversity

Schedule of selected films coming soon.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Film Festival celebrates its 18th year Nov. 7-10. This is the second in an occasional series focusing on the history of the film festival, behind the scenes with the filmmakers and the movers and shakers that make it happen.

Questions for Jill Ray, documentary filmmaker and Vice Chair of the Alexandria Film Festival Board.

Q. What is your film background?

Jill Ray: I am a documentary filmmaker and had several films in the Alexandria Film Festival in 2010-11. In 2016 they asked me to join the Alexandria Film Festival Board. I was in film school at the time at American University and made my most significant film at that time, “The Courage of Her Convictions,” which was for my thesis project. It was a 17-minute documentary about a female private investigator, a real life person, who was working to exonerate men from life sentences who had proclaimed their innocence. It was a portrait of a person whose work complimented her passion on social justice issues. I did several other films including “In the Image of God,” about Dawnielle Miller who worked to empower low-income children in an Alexandria neighborhood and another about the underground illegal movement to keep chickens in Alexandria. In 2012, I was part of a team

that created a 30-minute documentary for Maryland Public Television titled “Menhaden: The Most Important Fish in the Bay.” It ended up winning three regional Emmys (student division) and a Cine Golden Eagle. I was lead producer, writer and narrator.

Q. What was the most difficult thing about making “The Courage of Her Convictions?”

Ray: This film took the most time and money. The most difficult thing was getting the convicts and convincing a number of the witnesses to the murder in New Orleans to come forward and be on camera to testify to what they saw. A private investigator found these people after a murder committed in the 80s, and it was a struggle to get all of these people to New Orleans for a reunion. We got access to the Louisiana State penitentiary but no cameras were allowed. The logistics were difficult. I wanted an all female crew and got it. Making films is a labor of love.

Q. Describe the film festival.

Ray: Our Festival attracts many social justice films — immigration, sex discrimination and also international films. We don’t get a lot of horror films even though Alexandria is a ghost town. On the Friday date the films at Beatley will be free programming for students and family friendly. Film festivals still struggle to attract younger audiences — they watch films on their phones. We try to come up with ideas like partnering with Patagonia who retained their theatre in the building when they opened their store. We do pop-up films there focusing on things like



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jill Ray, documentary filmmaker and Vice Chair of the Alexandria Film Festival Board.

“Making films is a labor of love.”

— Jill Ray,
documentary filmmaker

the environment, climate themes to attract a younger crowd and have partnerships with the city high school to mentor students. It has worked pretty well.

Q. What is your budget and how do you fund it?

Ray: This year’s budget is between \$43-45,000. We apply for grants and this year got \$11,000 from the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. We also get individual con-

tributions and corporate sponsors. Each year it’s pounding the pavement to get what we need to support it. The staff are all volunteer positions.

Q. Where are you now in the process of putting together the Festival?

Ray: Submissions were accepted from March 4-July 31 so now we have begun the selection process. We have 12 volunteer judges this year who will rate the films using a number of criteria including originality/creativity, direction, writing, cinematography and structure. Over the years the judges have ranged in age from 19 to 78 years.

We received over 100 submissions and will choose around 60. As in the past years, we are documentary heavy but plan to offer a diversity/variety of genres come November to also include horror, comedy, thriller, and family—shorts and features.

Before Covid, we would receive up to 400 submissions but when Covid hit everything went dark. We’ve had to build back up again. We will probably have the three same locations again—Beatley Library, the Lyceum and AMC Hoffman. We are looking at another location for a special event this year focusing on James Baldwin. We select types of genres and sort by length and themes and complete the programs with some curated films that have been in other film festivals but haven’t hit the theaters yet. Sometimes we’re able to negotiate the contracts with the producers and it doesn’t cost us to show the film.

We have so far sent out 18 early acceptance notices and will notify all filmmakers of their acceptance or rejection by early September. Then we will release the schedule to the public.

SENIOR LIVING

The History of Social Security

August marks the program's 89th anniversary.

Source: AARP
<https://www.aarp.org/socialsecurity>

In the fabric of society, few programs have woven themselves as deeply into the American culture as Social Security. The economic devastation of the Great Depression further exposed society's vulnerabilities, with millions of older Americans in poverty and many more at risk of financial ruin. In response, in 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law to better ensure a measure of income security for older Americans in retirement.

Over the subsequent decades, it has matured into a vital source of guaranteed, inflation-adjusted income for millions of retirees who pay in and earn their Social Security through payroll taxes they and their employers contribute throughout their working lives. Social Security also enjoys widespread support across all ages and demographic groups.

Today, nearly 1.6 million Virginians receive Social Security. Most of those age 65 or older count on Social Security as their largest source of income, and about 25% of households rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.

With 90% of people saying Social Security is important to their retirement security, it

is helpful to understand how it was created and how it has evolved over time.

Here's a timeline of significant events in the history of Social Security:

- ❖ Aug. 14, 1935: President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law.
- ❖ Aug. 10, 1939: The program was broadened to include benefits for workers' dependents and survivors.
- ❖ October 1950: Congress authorized the first cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), an increase of 77 percent.
- ❖ September 1960: President Eisenhower signed a law amending the disability rules to permit payment of benefits to disabled workers of any age and to their dependents.
- ❖ June 30, 1961: All workers are now allowed to retire early at age 62, albeit at a reduced Social Security benefit. Previously, benefits could not be claimed until the normal retirement age of 65.
- ❖ Oct. 30, 1972: President Nixon signed the Social Security Amendments making the cost-of-living adjustment automatic each year.
- ❖ April 20, 1983: President Ronald Reagan signed into law sweeping changes to Social Security aimed at addressing the imminent Social Security funding gap. These

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Labor Day and the Need For Stronger Rights in Virginia

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

Labor Day is coming up next Monday, allowing us a time to pause and honor the immense contributions of the laborers who have and continue to drive the prosperity of Virginia and our nation. I plan to celebrate the holiday this weekend by serving meals to the many union members attending NoVA Labor's Annual Labor Day Picnic at Fort Hunt Park here in the 16th District.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on supporting workers' rights, which has been a cornerstone of the current Biden-Harris administration's policies. President Biden, recognized as one of the most pro-union leaders in history, has championed the cause of working families by emphasizing economic growth that benefits all, not just the wealthiest few.

The achievements for workers under the Biden-Harris administration are significant. Over 15 million jobs have been created, including 800,000 high-paying manufacturing roles. Notably, manufacturing employment numbers have soared past pre-pandemic levels, making this post-recession gain the strongest in 72 years, and the second-strongest since World War II. This job creation has been accompanied by wage growth that surpasses

inflation, improving the standard of living for many, with lower-wage workers experiencing the most notable gains. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate currently sits at 2.7 percent, a near-historic low, and job growth has surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

A key focus of the administration has been on modernizing apprenticeship programs, opening pathways to well-paying union jobs. Another significant accomplishment has been the preservation of pensions for hundreds of thousands of union workers and retirees, securing their financial futures. Additionally, raising the minimum wage for federal workers and contractors has ensured fair compensation. Here in Virginia, the minimum wage goes up to \$12.41 on Jan. 1, 2025. In our community along Richmond Highway, residents benefit from workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities available at the WISH Center in the Hybla Valley Community Center.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act have also been instrumental in



Krizek

supporting workers. These laws include prevailing wage requirements, ensuring fair pay for those working on federally funded projects. However, while federal initiatives are crucial, numerous challenges for workers remain at the state level.

In Virginia, despite legislative victories like the minimum wage increase, allowing localities to engage in collective bargaining, and expansions in worker compensation, there is a pressing need to address Virginia's so-called "Right to Work" law. This law, dating back to 1947 and steeped in a history of racism, was designed to weaken unions and maintain segregation. Despite its misleading name, "Right to Work" laws do not secure employment but rather undermine workers' ability to bargain collectively for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. By allowing workers to benefit from union negotiations without contributing financially, these laws dilute the power of unions.

The link between "Right to Work" laws and income inequality is clear. Unionized workers typically earn 15-20 percent more than their non-union peers, and these wage disparities disproportionately

affect women and people of color who often work in unionized industries. Repealing Virginia's "Right to Work" law is thus not just an issue of economic justice but one of racial justice as well.

As Virginia continues to confront its history and dismantle discriminatory laws, replacing "Right to Work" with a Virginia PRO Act, similar to the bill that Congressman Bobby Scott first introduced in 2019 which protects the basic right to join a union, presents a crucial opportunity to advance equity and justice for all workers. Aligning our labor laws with 21st-century values will empower every worker to advocate for fair wages, workplace protections, and a brighter future.

In conclusion, Labor Day is a powerful reminder of the contributions workers make and the ongoing fight to secure their rights. While federal progress under President Biden and Vice President Harris has been significant, the struggle continues, especially in states like Virginia, where outdated laws hinder employees' rights to organize and collectively bargain. As we move forward, it is imperative to renew our commitment to ensuring that every worker is treated fairly, their contributions are recognized, and their rights are protected.

The History of Social Security

FROM PAGE 5

included moving up scheduled increases in the payroll taxes that fund Social Security, gradually raising the normal retirement age to 67, and making 50 percent of Social Security benefits taxable for recipients with incomes above \$25,000 for an individual and \$32,000 for married couples filing jointly.

❖ Aug. 10, 1993: President Bill Clinton signed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, a large deficit reduction package of tax increases and spending cuts that included a provision raising the share of Social Security benefits subject to income tax from 50 percent to 85 percent for beneficiaries with incomes above \$34,000 (single) or \$44,000 (couple).

May 6, 2024: According to the Social Security Trustees report, Social Security can pay full benefits

until 2035. That doesn't mean Social Security payments would end, but they would be funded only by each year's payroll tax revenue. The Trustees estimate that would cover about 83 percent of scheduled benefit payments.

The history of Social Security is a testament to the promise between the government and its citizens. From its humble beginnings during the Great Depression, Social Security has stood the test of time, having never missed a payment, providing a foundation of retirement security to generations of Americans.

The following information illustrates how important Social Security is to Virginians:

Who Receives Benefits

❖ Retirement benefits: The largest group of beneficiaries in Virginia are its 1,147,511 retired work-

ers, who account for 72.4 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries in the state.

❖ Disability benefits: Virginia has 199,120 residents who receive Social Security disability income, representing 12.6 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries.

❖ Spousal and survivor benefits: In Virginia, 144,084 spouses, former spouses, widows, widowers, and parents of deceased beneficiaries account for 9.1 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries. An additional 94,479 children, representing 6 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries, receive benefits.

Impact

❖ Economic engine. Annual Social Security benefits to Virginians pump at least \$27.6 billion into the state economy, with \$21 billion paid annually to those receiving

retirement benefits and their eligible family members, \$3.1 billion via survivor benefits, and an additional \$3.5 billion paid through the disability program. Recipients buy goods and services with their Social Security benefits, increasing business sales—which help the companies making those sales and the firms that supply them. The result is more jobs and income to businesses and workers in Virginia.

❖ Reduced poverty. Social Security lifted 333,000 Virginians 65 or older out of poverty from 2018 through 2020. In fact, 31.8 percent of the state's residents in this age group would be in poverty but for Social Security benefits; that number falls to 7.3 percent when Social Security income is included. Nationally, the program lifted 16.1 million people 65 and older out of

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Celebration of Women's Equality Day 2024

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Workhouse Arts Center marks suffrage anniversary.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

Women's Equality Day, celebrated every year, officially on Aug. 26, marks the granting of women's right to vote, enshrined in the U.S. Constitution by the 19th Amendment in 1920. The Amendment prohibits states from depriving citizens of the United States of the right to vote based on gender. The 2024 theme for the Day, "Equality Starts with Empowered Women," highlights the importance of fostering wellbeing and resilience of women in the workplace and society.

The importance of women's equality in the vote and politics is particularly poignant this year as the first Black and Asian American female, Kamala Harris, is the Democratic nominee for United States President. Her nomination came just days before the historic 19th Amendment commemoration day.

The Workhouse played a significant role in the women's suffrage story, where over 70 of the suffragists who picketed the White House were incarcerated. The Workhouse Arts Center marked the 1920 date in history, when most women won the vote, with two related events: a Learning at Lunch lecture, titled Suffragists UNcarcerated; and a Women's Equality Day Celebration on the Center's tented quad, Rizer Pavilion.

While several suffragists famously were jailed for picketing in front of the White House, many other high profile socialite suffragists escaped incarceration. Author and lecturer Kenena Spalding, shared historic photos and stories of principal women in the suffrage movement, in the first in a series of new lunchtime lectures hosted by the Workhouse. For upcoming events, see <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar>.

The Women's Equality Day festival held on Aug. 24, featured performances, readings, information tables and crafts. Capital Harmonia, a women's singing group formed in 2013, performs in support of women's causes. The group sang selections by female composers with themes of sisterhood.

Sonia Monson's belly dance group per-



Volunteers Nicole Mastin and Isabelle Shontz, juniors at Forest Park High School, lead participants in making paper roses, symbolic of the yellow roses worn by women to show support for the suffrage movement



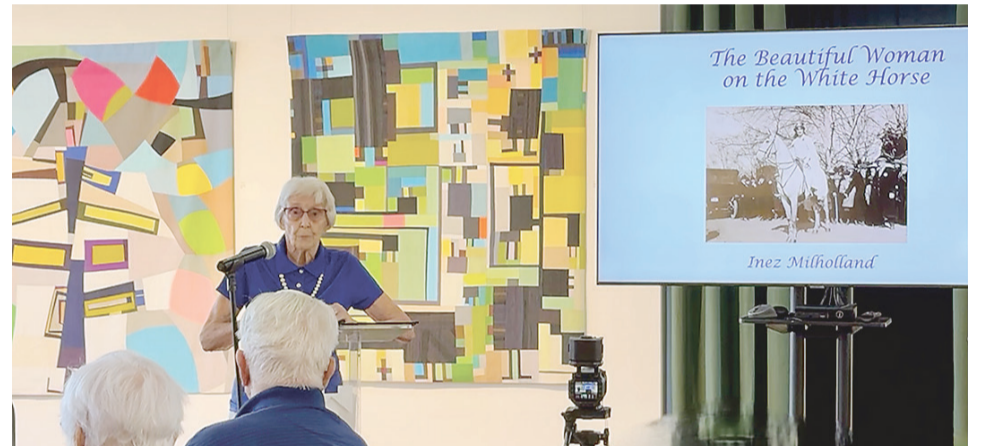
Abby Mundt of Springfield shows off her yellow rose construction and Women's Vote temporary tattoo

formed several styles of belly dance. The dance study seeks to help women find mental and physical health through movement, part of the physical exercise class offerings at the Art of Movement at the Workhouse. (<https://www.workhousearts.org/art-of-movement>)

Sherri Waas Shunfenthal, a poet, read her poetry and shared stories of inspirational women of her acquaintance. Volunteers led rose construction and suffrage tattoo crafts. Nancy Rodreiguez, of Cup & Crown



Katie Crooks, Director of Museum and Visitor Experience, reads a portion of President Biden's proclamation honoring Women's Equality Day



Local historian and author Kenena Spalding presents a Learning at Lunch lecture detailing women's actions in the suffragist movement using historic photographs and stories

(<https://www.cupandcrown.com>) offered an opportunity to create a custom tea mix, a nod to the part afternoon teas played in the suffrage movement.

Eleanor Gomolinski-Allu, formerly a long-time docent at the Lucy Burns Museum,

with friends Patty Marceron, Peggy Woods and Cynthia Cope agreed they came in recognition of the 'fellowship of women' and are eager to exercise their right to vote this year, "for the right person, who happens to be female."



Eleanor Gomolinski-Allu, formerly a long-time docent at the Lucy Burns Museum, with her friends Patty Marceron, Peggy Woods, and Cynthia Cope.



Sonia Monson's dance class performs belly dances with styles from several countries.

ENTERTAINMENT

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 SEPT. 22

Fleeting Moments: Street Photography II. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist Reception: Sunday, August 18, 4 - 6 p.m. Artist Talk, Sunday: September 22, 2:30 p.m. Fleeting Moments features photographs that capture candid moments, revelatory interpretations, and brilliant reflections of the mundane - work commonly referred to as "street photography."

34TH SEASON OF THE LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) announces the 34th season of its Lyceum Chamber Series, under the guidance of Music Director Laureate Ulysses James. Hosted at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, located at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria, this series promises to offer an array of exceptional weekly performances throughout the summer. All concerts are at 3 p.m.; no tickets required. Suggested donation \$25.

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Featuring Anna Binneweg, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic
Ulysses James, Music Director Laureate, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic
Alberto Rodriguez, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra
Martin Garfield-Levine, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra
Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director
MUSIC SCHEDULE
Sept. 1: Michael De Sapio, Violin
Sept. 8: Hai Jin, Piano
Sept. 15: John Sutherland Earle: Piano & Friends

JUNE 1 TO AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, stone carving, jewelry, resin, mosaics, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria) unless noted. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

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



FLEETING MOMENTS 2024 STREET PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE ATHENAEUM

Fleeting Moments: Street Photography II can be seen now thru Sept. 22, 2024 at the Athenaeum in Alexandria.

Aug. 30 – Melissa Qinn Fox (Country/Americana)

AUG. 2-31

"The Science of Our Surroundings" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans gallery features art that draws inspiration from science and math, with a focus on diagrams, cutaways or cycles that the artist or creator may find particularly fascinating. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Opening Reception: Friday, August 2, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed September 1). Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THURSDAY/AUG. 29

Author Q&A. 6 p.m. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Join in a compelling Q&A with best-selling author, kidnapping survivor and founder of Soul Speak Press, Jessica Buchanan; together with best-selling author, yoga instructor, and wellness warrior, Delia Sullivan, as they discuss their stories of healing recently published in the second anthology of the Deserts to Mountaintops Series, "Choosing Our Healing Through Radical Self-Acceptance."

SEPT. 6-28

"Fascinating Fiber, Alluring Fabric" Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Features art that is either created with fiber or fabric or depicts fiber or fabric as its subject. Opening reception on Friday, Sept. 6, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on Sunday, September 29). Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

FRIDAY/SEPT. 6

Something Country. 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. At Electric Palm Restaurant, 12745 Sea Ray Lane, Woodbridge. Rockin' country that gets you dancing.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Sidewalk Sale. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Experience a delightful day of shopping and dining at Belle View Shopping Center, 1632 Belle View Boulevard, Alexandria. Get ready for the Fall season. More than 30 merchants will be offering exclusive deals and special offers throughout the day. Discover fantastic bargains at popular spots like Top It Off Outlet, Pampered Pet, LIGHT, and Virginia Florist, with sales tables set up both inside and outside. To add to

the festivities, Revel and UnWined will be hosting a wine tasting from 2 to 5 p.m., either indoors or outdoors depending on the weather.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Find Your Ancestors! 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Attend this conference featuring one of America's most popular genealogical lecturers. John Colletta will discuss how historical research can help to understand the day-to-day lives of our ancestors. Lively discussions will follow. Cost: \$40. Email: contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. Website: <https://mvgenealogy.org/store.php?sid=7>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. 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>.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 13

Summer Concert Series. 7:30 p.m. The U.S. Air Force Band returns to the Air Force Memorial in Arlington. Free and open to the public.

SEPT. 17-23

Fall Book Sale. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, Sept. 17, 3 p.m.-7:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, Sept. 18, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 19, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 21, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, Sept. 22, Half Price Day, 1-4:30 p.m.; Monday, Sept. 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; info: 703-746-1702; www.beatleyfriends.org.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 19

Coffee & Connections. 8:30-9:30 a.m. At The Landing Alexandria, 2620 Main Line Blvd., Alexandria. Join The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network for September Coffee & Connections. Hear from Dr. Sarah Johnson Conway, a practicing internal medicine physi-



The Chalk-A-Block will be held on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024 in Old Town Alexandria.

cian at Johns Hopkins Hospital and the interim Senior Vice President of the Office of Johns Hopkins Physicians, who will share her story and highlight ways to stay healthy heading into the Fall.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

2024 American Horticultural Society Gala. 6-10:30 p.m. At River Farm, Alexandria. The annual soirée not only highlights the vibrant culture of gardening and horticultural practices but also raises vital funds to support AHS's outreach and educational programs and the stewardship of River Farm, headquarters of the AHS. The gala will feature cocktails, dinner, dancing and mingling set amongst River Farm's stunning gardens on the Potomac River. Complimentary valet is also included. Attire is black-tie. Individual tickets are \$375 each, and sponsorships start at \$1,250. Visit www.ahsgardening.org/2024gala to purchase tickets and sponsorships.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

Tons of Trucks. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Chinquapin Park, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Attendees of all ages are invited to explore and get behind the wheel of their favorite City vehicles, meet the staff who help build, maintain, serve, and protect the community, and learn about the vehicles they use. Other activities include an art project with the City's Mobile Art Lab, giveaways, photo opportunities, and food truck vendors. Parking is available at Alexandria City High School, 3330 King St.; the First Baptist Church, 2932 King St.; and Oakland Baptist Church, 3408 King St. The City will also provide a sensory-friendly hour for the first 60 minutes of the event, 10 a.m.-11 a.m. For additional information, visit alexandriava.gov/rpca/tons-of-trucks-2024.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 22

Community Baby Shower. 12-2 p.m.

At Charles Houston Rec Center, 901 Wythe Street, Alexandria. Join ALIVE! member congregation @sixteenth_tabernacle_beth_el for the annual Community Baby Shower. Discover a wide range of resources for ensuring healthy pregnancies, self care and parenting. Topics and information range from nutrition in pregnancy to what to expect in the first year, both mother and child. There will also be free raffles for large prizes, baby walkers, cribs, strollers and more. For more information text 347-495-9233.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 25

"Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons Lecture. 7 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. The Alexandria Historical Society is pleased to announce its upcoming lecture, "Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons." Local historian Madeline Feisterstein will present her research on the five military prisons of Alexandria during the Civil War. Her lecture will provide an in-depth look at life within these institutions for both Confederate and Union prisoners, examining how their presence disrupted the daily lives of Alexandria residents. Additionally, Madeline will explore the medical treatment of jailed soldiers and prisoners of war at hospitals such as Grosvenor Branch, which was the confiscated Lee-Fendall House. Attendees will gain insight into first-hand accounts from individuals who experienced imprisonment within Alexandria's city limits, from the earliest days of battle to the beginnings of Reconstruction. For more information, contact David Heiby, Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society, at davidheiby@gmail.com or 703-869-0872.

SEPT. 26 AND 27

Jane Franklin Dance's Moving Stories. 7 p.m. At The Lloyd House

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ALX Closet Opens for Families in Need

FROM PAGE 1

anytime we have an opportunity to pour back into the community we take advantage of that," Kelly said. "What better opportunity than to help some of the most vulnerable parts of our population. The men and women of the fire department donated mainly toiletries and gift cards. We know that every little bit helps."

ALX Closet will be operated by volunteers, which will be needed Monday-Friday mornings. Inventory will be stocked on a seasonal basis.

"We already have a huge stock of fall things so our intention is each season to rotate our inventory," said Christine Levine of the Fund for Alexandria's Child. We are really excited about our holiday dresses and we will need a lot of Halloween costumes in October."

Through a donation from the Bruhn-Morris Family Foundation, ALX Closet has a supply of pack-and-play cribs.

"We have the pack-and-play cribs that we give out to our families in need because we want every child to have a safe bed to sleep in at night," Levine said. "We are very grateful to Lori Morris and the

Bruhn-Morris Family Foundation for their generosity."

The city will provide ongoing lists of donation requests to keep the closet stocked and able to provide support to families in need.

"We have collaborated to create ALX Closet specifically with a focus on providing a dignified opportunity for families to access emergency resources and to provide an opportunity for service providers to engage with families in a very relaxed setting while that family is in crisis," Pelaez added.

The Center for Alexandria's Children provides prevention, intervention, and treatment programs to Alexandria's children and families. The Fund for Alexandria's Child processes requests to provide immediate assistance in the form of basic needs and life-enhancing opportunities to children in foster care and children who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

"This is more than just clothing," Simmons said. "It's about helping people find the right place to go in this building for the resources to meet their daily needs."

www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Kathy Horan organizes clothing at the Aug. 1 opening of ALX Closet.



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**City of Alexandria
Public Notice**

City Invites Public Comment on the Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) Action Plan

The City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit regulates discharges of stormwater from the City's system and is issued by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ). The permit requires the development and implementation of a Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan to reach pollution reduction targets to help clean up the Bay.

While the Phase 2 Action Plan focused on strategies to meet 40% of the nitrogen and phosphorus pollution reduction targets by June 30, 2024, the Phase 3 Action Plan includes additional strategies to meet 100% of the target dates no later than June 30, 2028.

The Draft Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan is available to view at alexandriava.gov/go/2873.

The public is invited to comment in writing on the Draft Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan via email to MS4ProgramPlan@alexandriava.gov or online at alexandriava.gov/go/2873. Comments may also be dropped off or mailed to:

Transportation and Environmental Services
Stormwater Management Division
Attn: Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan
2900-B Business Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22314

The deadline for public comment is September 16, 2024. Comments submitted by mail must be postmarked on or before this deadline.

Following receipt and incorporation of public comment, the Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan will be finalized and posted to the City website by November 1, 2024.

For more information about this and other TMDLs, visit the City's Total Maximum Daily Loads webpage at alexandriava.gov/Stormwater

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NEWS

Tons of Trucks

The popular City of Alexandria event "Tons of Trucks" returns on Saturday, Sept. 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Chinquapin Park, 3210 King St. This event will occur rain or shine.

Attendees of all ages are invited to explore and get behind the wheel of their favorite City vehicles, meet the staff who help build, maintain, serve, and protect the community, and learn about the vehicles they use. Other activities include an art project with the City's Mobile Art Lab, giveaways, photo opportunities, and food truck vendors.

Visitors are invited to take free DASH Bus transportation or use Capital Bikeshare to get to the event. Onsite valet services will be provided to attendees looking to park their bikes, scooters, and strollers.

Visit alexandriava.gov/GOAlex for more information on alternative transit options.

Driving to the event? Parking is available at Alexandria City High School, 3330 King St.; the First Baptist Church, 2932 King St.; and Oakland Baptist Church, 3408 King St.

New this year and in celebration of the City's 275th anniversary, admission is now FREE. The City will also provide a sensory-friendly hour for the first 60 minutes of the event, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.

For additional information, visit alexandriava.gov/rpca/tons-of-trucks-20

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, brianmorreale@gmail.com

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

Gardens, 220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria. Moving Stories is a movement-based work that is about historical Lloyd House and its Gardens, not as a static landmark, but rather as a place where people of different generations interact. The performance resonates with the landscape and references the site's history. Lloyd House, built in 1796, has housed many prominent people and is important to the streetscape of Washington Street, part of George Washington Memorial Parkway. The architecture of the building, the people who have lived there, and the changing community surrounding it, makes the location important to ALX275, the City of Alexandria's 275th Anniversary.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 29

Chalk-A-Block. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Throughout Old Town Alexandria. Follow the Old Town North Tern's footprints from site to site throughout Old Town North and

complete the scavenger hunt to be entered to win prizes. Chalk artists will transform the sidewalks and parking lots of Old Town North into their canvases. Live music will fill the air from a variety of artists including local favorites Mars Rodeo at Montgomery Park and Yellow Door Jazz at Canal Center. Local artists and makers will be on hand to showcase their works. From ceramics to jewelry to bath products to books and more, there's something for everyone. For more information about Old Town North Alliance, visit: <https://www.oldtownnorthalliance.com>.

SATURDAY/OCT. 19

9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon. TDMV Ride 8:30 a.m.; Youth and Family Ride at 9 a.m. Starting and ending at Warehouse Arts Center, Lorton. Early bird special! Register for the 9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon by August 31 for a discounted rate and be guaranteed a pair of Tour de Mount Vernon socks!

#TdmV2024 Register now: <https://buff.ly/46VNVtx>

SAVE THE DATE

Yacht Haven Garden Club's 40th annual Fashion Show, Silent Auction and Luncheon, "American Beauty" October 16, 2024 at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria. Fashions will be provided by Sara Campbell.

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.

AUGUST

Thu. 29: Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with The Guilty Ones w/ Jon Langford & The Bright Shiners \$45.00
 Fri. 30: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00
 Sat. 31: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00
SEPTEMBER
 Sun. 1: 5th Annual Danny Gatton Birthday Celebration \$39.50

Thu. 5: Dweezil Zappa – The Rox- (Postroph)y Tour \$79.50 SOLD OUT!
 Fri. 6: John Cafferty & The Beaver Brown Band \$39.50
 Sat. 7: James McMurtry with Betty-Soo \$39.50
 Sun. 8: Jake Shimabukuro \$49.50
 Wed. 11: Hoodoo Gurus \$35.00 SOLD OUT!
 Fri. 13: Who's Bad – The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50
 Sat. 14: Bob Schneider with Martin & Kelly \$45.00
 Sun. 15: Ruben Studdard: The Masterpiece Tour \$45.00
 Thu. 19: Amy Grant \$95.00
 Fri. 20: Michelle Collins: The Big Natural Tour \$45.00
 Sat. 21: Atlantic Starr \$65.00
 Sun. 22: Atlantic Starr \$65.00
 Tue. 24: Stella Cole \$35.00
 Wed. 25: Suzanne Vega 'Old Songs, New Songs and other Songs' \$55.00
 Thu. 26: Phillip Phillips \$49.50
 Fri. 27: Eric Roberson \$69.50
 Sat. 28: Eric Roberson \$69.50
 Sun. 29: Jonathan Coulton and Paul & Storm \$39.50

The History of Social Security

FROM PAGE 6

poverty, reducing the proportion below the poverty line from 37.8 percent to 9 percent.

Average Benefits

- ❖ Retirement benefits: The average Social Security retired worker benefit in Virginia is \$1,598 monthly (about \$19,200 annually). The national average monthly retirement benefit is \$1,544.
- ❖ Disability benefits: In Virginia, the average Social Security disabled worker benefit

is \$1,291 per month (about \$15,500 annually). The national average monthly disabled worker benefit is \$1,277.

Reliance

- ❖ At least half of income. 483,567 Virginia residents, or 36 percent of individuals 65 and older, live in families that rely on the program for at least half of their income.
- ❖ More than 90% of income. 259,474 Virginia residents, or 19 percent of individuals

65 and older, live in families that rely on the program for at least 90 percent of their income.

❖ Black individuals rely more on Social Security income. Overall, 29 percent of Black Virginia residents 65 and older live in families that rely on Social for at least 90 percent of their income as compared with 18 percent of white residents.

For more information about the program, visit <https://www.aarp.org/socialsecurity>

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at suzjdoyle@gmail.com or 571-403-0673.

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email DAAS@alexandriava.gov.

FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.

- ❖ Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.
- ❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road. Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us for more.

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasecondsaturday.com for more.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/tes.

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+

robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact jkkingconsulting@yahoo.com.

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit www.computercore.org/contribute.

Be Heard at the City's Monthly Public Hearings. A schedule of the meetings can be found at www.alexandriava.gov. Voice opinions, speak about something on the docket or just speak about something you are concerned about. Sign up in advance to speak through the city's website. Anyone is welcome at any of the public hearings.

Public Space Recycling. Alexandria has placed more than 80 bright blue recycling containers next to public trash cans in the commercial districts along Mount Vernon Avenue and King Street, as well as other public spaces, including parks, recreation fields, and other high-traffic pedestrian areas. Visit alexandriava.gov/Recycling.

Composting and Food Waste. Alexandria now has Resource Recovery Stations, located at the City's Farmers' Markets (Old Town, Del Ray) to collect food waste. More than 270 people have participated in the food waste program over the last several months. Participants drop off items weekly, over eight tons of waste has been collected, to be composted to make a natural fertilizer. To learn more about composting visit alexandriava.gov/YardWaste.

Woe Is Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Definitely not a cancer column.) Rather, this is, to invoke Robin Leach of the mid-80s/early 90s syndicated series "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," and tease this column as the lifestyle of the middle-class cancer patient still surviving and not famous. Doesn't quite have the same ring, does it? Specifically, I am a current homeowner, going on 33 years and a former renter/co-"habiter" with my wife, Dina beginning in 1977. (To quote Maurice Chevalier: "I remember it well.") And in all that time, nearly 47 years-ish, I/we have had an electric dishwasher (I say 'electric' so there's no confusion with my being the dishwasher) for approximately eight of those years. With yours truly being the by-hand dishwasher, I'll be generous and say 95% of the time. Moreover, never once in all that time have I/we gone out/shopped online for dishwashers, installed or portable. As a result, my shopping lists have never, ever, included Cascade or Finish. Moreover, neither have I/we ever considered the features and benefits of dishwashers- and/or brands available for today's kitchen, in all of these years. We/mostly me have managed under the duress. Well, I've mostly managed.

And it's only been recently, a year or two ago, that Dina observed/suggested that maybe I should use rubber gloves when doing the dishes, that I've gloved up. Believe it or not - and this might interest "Ripley's," for most of these 40-ish years of handwashing, I've been washing au naturel, and I don't mean in the buff. I mean bare-handed.

In fact, Dina is responsible for another life-changing suggestion directed my way: She suggested I buy the sturdiest, heavy duty litter scoop I could find for our minimum three-cat, maximum five-cat household of indoor cats instead of the cheap plastic ones that always break. They are a lot less expensive - or so it seems at the time. With upwards of five litter boxes in our house, using a plastic litter scoop that unlike Paul Mason's wine, it did indeed break before its time. And after breaking a dozen or so of these cheap plastic scoops over these multiple decades (yikes!), this commercial grade scoop has solved the problem. Not only does it not break, it also doesn't even bend. Why this upgrade never occurred to me I can only guess. Perhaps I wasn't clear as to the long-term commitment I was a part of. Dina knew. That's why she suggested it. Despite its frequency of use, the metal scoop has been able to meet the demand with nary a complaint - or need to replace.

Back to Dina's suggestion to me about wearing gloves, it was another lightbulb moment for me. It simply never occurred to me was my answer as to why - in spite of the fact that the water is quite often hot when doing the dishes, I never used gloves. I know, duh! Well, as anybody knows who's used rubber gloves when hot anything, especially when water is involved; what a difference a little rubber can make - or whatever the glove is made of (nitrile, et cetera). The only problem is, similar to the plastic litter scoops, are that the rubber gloves are generally not up to the task. Let's just say, they don't do the job. They are, in addition to being barely protective of the heat of the hot water, forever tearing and being poked through by silverware leading to water in the glove which is a problem. As a negative result, this in-glove water means I need to buy another pair, pronto. Then I have to start this entire process all over again. Nevertheless, until the gloves reached their usual breaking point, I managed well enough, sort of, with bare skin. I guess what you don't know can hurt you until another voice is there to tell you otherwise.

I imagine Dina, from her perspective, likely has had other similar lifestyle-changing ideas, but I'm out of column space so ... no more. Sometimes, from the mouths of babes. Who would have thunk it? Obviously, not me.

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

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