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Alexandria Gazette Packet

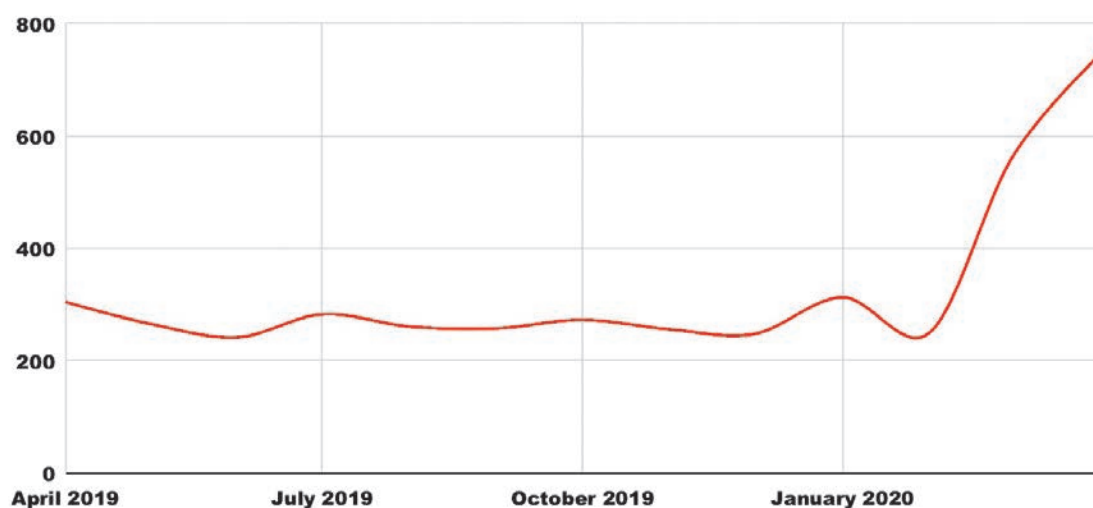
WELLBEING
PAGE 9

25 CENTS

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MAY 7, 2020

Food Stamp Applications



source: Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services

Hunger Rising

Applications for food stamps skyrocket as local economy tanks.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Recent weeks have seen a dramatic spike in the number of people in Alexandria with no resources to put food on the table for their families, leading to a skyrocketing number of applications for food stamps as unemployment numbers climb and people in Alexandria suddenly find themselves in an awkward position — asking for help from the government just to buy groceries. Officials at the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services say applications to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program have more than tripled since February, before the novel coronavirus pandemic prompted Gov. Ralph Northam to issue a stay-at-home order and shut down most of Alexandria's

economy.

"We're receiving the same number of applications in one week now as we would an entire month a year ago," said Kate Garvey, director of the Department of Community and Human Services. "We really have to think about the level of need that is created in this environment, which is significant."

City officials say they are seeing a rise in expedited applications, which means that the individual applying for benefits has no source of income and no resources. In normal times, this accounts for a small fraction of applications. But recent weeks have seen a dramatic spike in that number. Numbers from the Federal Reserve show that the number of people filing for unemployment insurance in Virginia jumped an eye-popping 5,000 percent in the last half of March, an unprecedented increase that has not been replicated with applications for SNAP benefits.

"We're not seeing the same level of people applying for SNAP as we saw applying for unemployment," said Salaam Bhatti, director of Virginia Hunger Solutions. "By

"We're receiving the same number of applications in one week now as we would an entire month a year ago."

— Kate Garvey, director of the Department of Community and Human Services.

SEE HUNGER RISING, PAGE 10

CARES Cash

Alexandria to receive as much as \$27 million from feds.

BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER
GAZETTE PACKET

After losing \$92 million in revenue, Alexandria plans to gain anywhere from \$20 million to \$27 million from the federal government, depending on how the money is distributed to localities by the state from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. Members of the City Council are still waiting to see how much money state officials will send as the governor's office decides between distributing the cash based on population or economic need.

"There's a lot of uncertainties here," said City Manager Mark Jinks. "Clearly the intent is not to

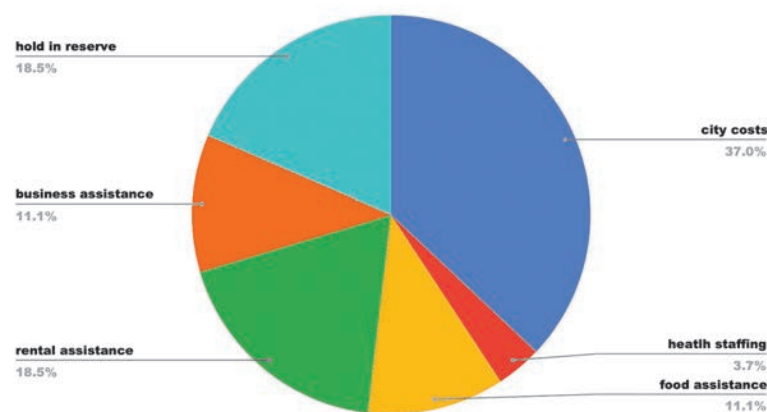
leave a dime on the table by the time we get to the tail end of the calendar year."

The city expects residents to continue struggling with rent payments into the fall. Alexandria's housing department will deploy housing assistance to those with incomes of up to \$75,000, particularly those living with incomes under 50 percent of the Virginia median household income. City officials hope to spend about \$3 million to help residents and property owners.

"We went to multiple property owners in the city and asked them what their operating costs were per month," said Helen McIlvaine, director of the Office of Housing.

SEE ALEXANDRIA, PAGE 10

Where CARES Cash Will Go in Alexandria



Most of the money Alexandria receives from the federal government will go to city response costs, including personal protective equipment, emergency response pay, technology acquisitions, hotel expenses, communication materials and direct mail.

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This Week in Alexandria Coronavirus

By Ken Moore
The Gazette

Tuesday, May 5

Alexandria Cases: 983
Virginia Cases: 20,256
United States Cases: 1,152,372
Alexandria Deaths: 26
Virginia Deaths: 713
United States Deaths: 67,456

WORKER RELIEF AND SECURITY:

Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) with Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) released a draft framework for the Worker Relief and Security Act, legislation that would tie ongoing expanded unemployment benefits to the public health emergency and economic conditions. The bill would use automatic triggers to ensure that assistance continues to flow to workers for the duration of the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis even in the absence of action by Congress, said Beyer. "In the face of an historic crisis, the federal government must take extraordinary steps to give the American people sustained help and prevent this economic downturn from becoming a depression," Beyer said. "This pandemic and the resulting economic crisis may continue to inflict horrifying suffering on the country for many months to come. Passing emergency relief legislation that incorporates automatic triggers would have the enormous benefit of ensuring assistance continues to flow to workers even if Congress itself is unable or unwilling to act."

Beyer serves as Vice Chair of the Joint Economic Committee, which released a report last week arguing that "tying support to economic conditions is essential."

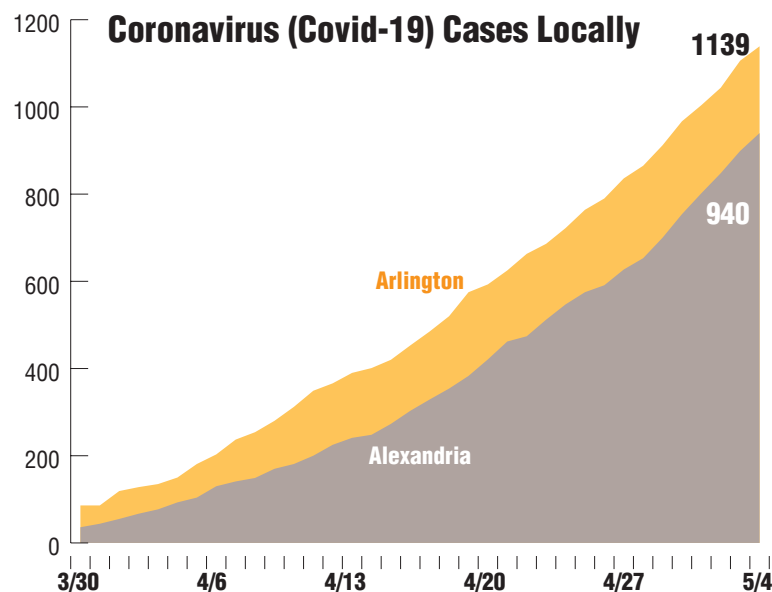
Monday, May 4

Alexandria Cases: 940
Virginia Cases: 19,492

PHASE ONE EASE: Gov. Ralph Northam outlined a three-phase plan to ease restrictions on businesses and gatherings, when health data supports doing so. Northam said he will extend restrictions on businesses and gatherings of more than 10 people, at least through next Thursday, May 14. Officials will continue to monitor health data to ensure cases are trending down, that hospital capacity remains steady, that testing is increased, and that hospitals and medical facilities have necessary supplies of PPE.

Phase I would continue social distancing, teleworking, recommendations that people wear face

www.connectionnewspapers.com



Sources:
Virginia Department of Health <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>
Maryland: Maryland Department of Health <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
Alexandria Source: City of Alexandria

coverings in public, and the ban on social gatherings of more than 10 people. It would ease some limits on businesses and faith communities, and would transition the stay at home directive to a "safer at home" guideline, especially for those in vulnerable populations.

Phase I would likely last two to four weeks, as would the two subsequent phases, depending on health metrics.

NATIONAL GUARD: The Alexandria Health Department teamed up with the Virginia National Guard to conduct point prevalence surveys at long-term care facilities in order to collect more information about how COVID-19 is affecting Alexandria. The collection tool is used to identify the number of people with an infection at a specific point in time, even if they don't have symptoms. In a long term facility like a skilled nursing or assisted living facility it can help determine the spread of COVID-19 and separate those with the infection. Members of the Virginia National Guard who are trained in specimen collection and transport for delivery to laboratories, could greatly reduce the burden on staff and allow them to focus on providing care to their patients.

NO MORE HATE: U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner joined Sens. Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and 13 other Senators in urging the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to address the surge in discrimination and hate crimes against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) individuals in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. The Senators requested that the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ address this spike in discrimination

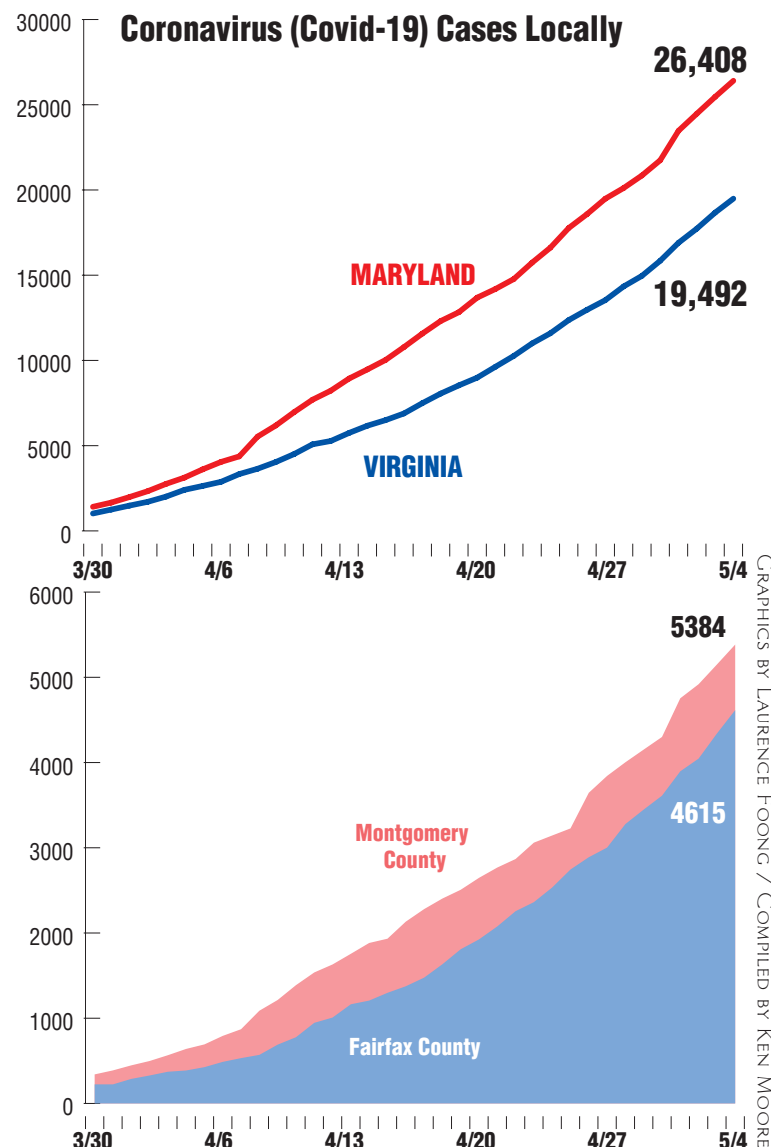
by taking a concrete steps similar to those DOJ has taken in the past to address jumps in discrimination and hate crimes against a particular community.

"There are more than 20 million Americans of Asian descent, and 2 million AAPI individuals are working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, as health care workers, law enforcement agents, first responders, and other essential service providers," they said. "It is critical that the Civil Rights Division ensure that the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans are protected during this pandemic."

In the last month alone, Asian American organizations reported nearly 1,500 incidents of anti-Asian harassment and discrimination against AAPI individuals across the country. This comes after the FBI assessed in March that hate crime incidents against Asian Americans were likely to surge across the country, endangering AAPI communities.

Sen. Warner has been outspoken about the need to prevent discrimination and harassment towards Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has also pressed the coronavirus taskforce only to distribute accurate information about the virus and dispel misinformation or discriminatory rhetoric to help prevent suspicion, panic and race-based assaults.

Resilience Week in Virginia, May 3-9, can help individuals and communities bounce back from difficult experiences, like the COVID-19 crisis. It is a state-wide collaboration between Virginia Trauma-Informed Community Net-



GRAPHICS BY LAURENCE FOONG / COMPILED BY KEN MOORE

worksToday's focus is on mindfulness, a practice that can help build resilience by being fully aware of experiences, thoughts and emotions. Being mindful is easy to learn and becomes more readily available when practiced every day. There is growing research showing that training the brain to be mindful actually remodels its physical structure, and that mindfulness has positive benefits for health, happiness, work and relationships. Visit the City's Resilience Week page <https://www.alexandriava.gov/dchs/childrenfamily/default.aspx?id=115020>

Sunday, May 3

Alexandria Cases: 899
Virginia Cases: 18,671

BUSINESS WEBINARS: The Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance (NOVA EDA) launched a free, three-part, 12-session series, "Beyond COVID-19: Business Resiliency Webinars." The series will focus on how to keep moving forward during and after the global pandemic. The webinars will include topics such as government financing, staffing, technolo-

gy readiness, healthy workplaces, new business and revenue models, customer retention, and more. Visit NOVA EDA for <https://www.novaeda.org/events/>

ASK THE ARCHAEOLOGIST:

Many City meetings, events and activities can now be attended virtually. This week's activities include storytelling, parkour, and an "Ask the Archaeologist" session. Visit the City Calendar for a complete list of virtual opportunities, as well as cancellations. <https://apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/?sm=10>

Saturday, May 2

Alexandria Cases: 848
Virginia Cases: 17,731
Alexandria Deaths: 26

The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 848, including 26 fatalities. Two additional fatalities were reported.

ONE-STOP RESOURCE: The Virginia Department of Social Services has launched a new website

SEE CORONAVIRUS, PAGE 12



U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, who died in 1977, is shown with his son Gary Powers Jr. in a family photo.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Francis Gary Powers beside a U-2 spy plane. Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960 and held captive for two years before his release.

‘An American Hero’ Gary Powers Jr. details U-2 incident.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET



Gary Powers Jr. talks about his father's experience in a Soviet prison at the height of the Cold War during a virtual meeting of the Alexandria Rotary Club on April 28.



British journalist Chris Pocock, considered the leading authority on the U-2 spy plane, participates in a Zoom meeting of the Alexandria Rotary Club discussing the 60th anniversary of the U-2 incident.

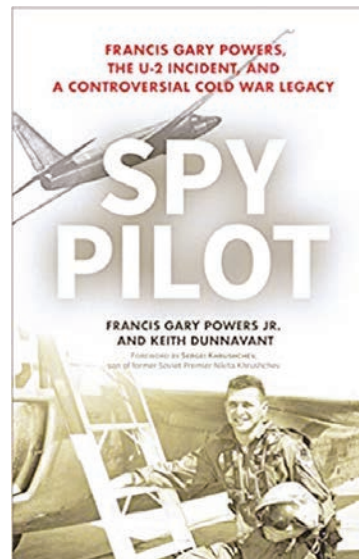
It was the height of the Cold War. A new surface-to-air missile had been developed by the Soviet Union and on May 1, 1960, one locked onto a U-2 spy plane flown by 30-year-old pilot Francis Gary Powers. What happened next has been the subject of rumor and misinformation for 60 years.

"There will continue to be fallacies and conspiracy theories associated with my father and the U-2 Incident," said Gary Powers Jr. in a virtual presentation to the Alexandria Rotary Club on April 28.

"Fortunately, because of Freedom of Information Act requests and the declassification of documents, the misinformation surrounding my father's involvement has been put to rest. The official record of my father is that of a hero to our country, which my family knew all along."

Powers Sr. had been quietly soaring through the atmosphere at the edge of space on a CIA reconnaissance mission when he was shot down over Sverdlovsk, now present-day Yekaterinburg, Russia. His capture, imprisonment and eventual release became the center of an international diplomatic crisis, most recently depicted in the Steven Spielberg movie "Bridge of Spies."

"Many saw my father as a traitor," said Powers Jr., who served as a technical advisor on the film. "But the film helped set the record straight – that my father acted honorably. He was at his assigned altitude of 70,500 feet when he was shot down and upon capture,



Gary Powers Jr. recently released the book "Spy Pilot" to clear up lingering misconceptions regarding the downing of his father's U-2 spy plane by the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960.

followed orders. He did not divulge classified information to the Soviets and refused to denounce the United States of America."

Powers Jr., founder of the Cold War Museum in Vint Hill, Va., is the author of several books on his father, including the recently released "Spy Pilot." The forward of the book is provided by Sergei Khrushchev, son of former Soviet Union President Nikita Khrushchev, who charged Powers Sr. with espionage. Through many years of research, the two sons became, and to this day, remain friends.

Said Sergei Khrushchev: "I have watched Francis Gary Powers Jr. work tirelessly to honor and preserve the memory of his father,

an ordinary American who was caught up in extraordinary circumstances. I, too, have made great efforts to honor and preserve the legacy of my father."

Following the release of Powers Sr. from captivity, he returned to the United States and lived for a time in Alexandria during his CIA debriefing sessions. A Senate inquiry exonerated him of divulging any significant information to the Soviets. Still, it was an uphill battle for Powers Jr. to secure the military recognition he felt his father deserved.

"Because this was a CIA mission, the Air Force initially denied my father any military honors," said Powers Jr., who spent years writing letters and advocating on behalf of the Powers family. "But newly unclassified documentation showed that this was a joint USAF/CIA operation so in 2000, on the 40th anniversary of the U-2 incident, he was posthumously awarded the Prisoner of War Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross and National Defense Service Medal."

In 2012, Powers Sr. was posthumously awarded the United States Air Force Silver Star for "gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States."

"It's been a long journey," said Powers Jr., who was 12 years old when his father died in a helicopter crash in California in 1977. "It really wasn't until after he died that I realized the significance of what he went through. Up until that time I thought all kids had fathers who were shot down and exchanged for a Soviet spy. I didn't appreciate then what I do now – that my father was truly an American hero."

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

PEOPLE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

An online memorial service will be held May 10 at 3 p.m. for Fred Parker, who died April 26 at the age of 78.

Virtual Memorial for Fred Parker

A virtual memorial service will be held for Hard Times Café founder Fred Parker on May 10 at 3 p.m. via the online conferencing app ZOOM.

"To be clear, we're still hoping to have an in-person service once it's safe to all be together," said the family in a statement announcing the memorial. "Until then, we invite you to have a beer, share a story or two about Fred and join his many friends in celebrating his extraordinary life."

Parker was 78 when he died April 26 following a six-month battle with esophageal cancer. His

family will make remarks to begin the event then open the floor for others to share memories and stories. Anyone wishing to speak is asked to contact Parker's son Jonathan at jparkermusic@gmail.com prior to May 9.

"We aren't planning anything too formal – this will just be a place for friends to connect," said Jonathan Parker.

More information and the ZOOM meeting details can be found at www.FredGParker.com. Questions can be directed to jparkermusic@gmail.com.

- JEANNE THEISMANN

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AlexRenew will launch a new Customer Care Billing System in June! Are You Ready for the Switch?

On June 1, 2020, AlexRenew will introduce an improved customer care and billing system that will make it easier to pay your wastewater bill and manage your account. The myAlexRenew Customer Care Portal will create a more user-friendly experience with additional billing and payment features, including paperless billing, improved online access, Auto-Pay, usage graphs, and additional payment options to make bill-paying more convenient.

The new customer care system will offer you the following features and choices:

- Paperless billing to reduce waste and help our environment.
- Additional Auto-Pay options that offer flexibility and convenience.
- Usage graphs, easy online bill access, and self-service options to give you more control over managing your account.
- Archived bills that you can review and access anytime.
- A new online portal that you can access 24/7 from your home computer, smartphone, or tablet.
- Transactions without fees for Auto-Pay, paper check, money order, and bank portal payments. Other options, depending on payment methods, will have varying transaction fees.

Sign up for Auto-Pay by May 27 to be automatically registered to the myAlexRenew Customer Care Portal or log-in to pay your bill at alexrenew.com after June 1 to register.

Questions? Email us at billing@alexrenew.com, call us at 703-549-3383, or visit alexrenew.com/myAlexRenew to learn more.

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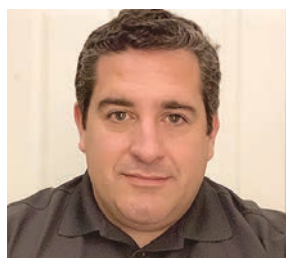
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OPINION



Kimberly Adams



Sean Corcoran



Ron Kuley



Tina Williams



Tammie Wondong

Hazard Pay in Honor of Frontline Workers

We are putting our lives on the line; Hazard pay honors our sacrifices.

BY KIMBERLY ADAMS,
FAIRFAX EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
SEAN CORCORAN,
FCOP LOCAL 5000
RON KULEY,
IAFF LOCAL 2068
TINA WILLIAMS,
FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
TAMMIE WONDONG,
FCGEU - SEIU VIRGINIA 512

As frontline workers and as rank-and-file labor leaders representing Fairfax County firefighters, law enforcement officers, educators, nurses, social workers, trash collectors, and other hard-working county employees, we are proud of the work that our members do every day to keep Fairfax County running.

We keep families safe, care for and educate children, keep our public spaces clean, take care of people who are sick and need support, maintain our community's infrastructure, help

people get where they need to go -- and more.

We are Black, White, Latino, Asian, and many of us are immigrants. We are every religion and every kind of family.

Right now, we are responding to the biggest crisis we have seen in our lifetimes. In the midst of this global pandemic, we continue to keep Fairfax County moving forward.

We are picking up trash, putting out fires, protecting the community, delivering health care and mental health services, educating children, cleaning and maintaining public spaces -- and so many other things that may be invisible to the community because they happen without people thinking about them.

We're also reaching out to our neighbors, raising money for nonprofits, donating food, and supporting those hit hardest by the virus and closures.

We are proud to continue serving our community during this crisis. To do so however, we are risking our health and well-being, and the health and well-being of our loved ones.

In recognition of this reality, neighboring jurisdictions, including Arlington, Alexandria, Washington, DC and the State of Maryland, have all begun offering hazard pay to their workforce.

Hazard pay honors the commitment and sacrifices that frontline workers make every day as we risk exposure to perform essential services.

Before coronavirus, when we left the house each day, many of us feared that we might not return to our families. Now, we fear that we might bring this virus home to our families.

Hazard pay offers frontline workers an extra measure of financial security to stay focused on our critical work.

We have been offering ideas, and will continue to work with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to pass a county budget that invests in good jobs, quality health care, affordable housing, public education, PPE, and services and supports for every family in Fairfax County.

We believe that budgets are moral documents that must reflect the values of our community, putting people before profits.

Fairfax County has long been a wonderful place to live, work and play. We stand united with elected officials and community leaders who are fighting to support working people throughout our county. Together, we can keep our community safe, healthy, and thriving for years to come.

Kimberly Adams is President of the Fairfax Education Association. Sean Corcoran is President of FCOP Local 5000. Ron Kuley is President of IAFF Local 2068. Tina Williams is President of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. Tammie Wondong is President of the FCGEU - SEIU Virginia 512. United together, we advocate for good jobs and quality public services for all people in Fairfax County.

– crucial to an evidence-based reopening of the economy. The good news: Governor Northam just announced that the Commonwealth will be hiring 1,000 new people to work as contact tracers and has taken measures to rapidly increase Virginia's testing capacity to what it needs to be. The bad news: medical supply chains are under-resourced, nationally disorganized and insecure. Frontline clinical providers are few in number, at high risk for infection themselves and impossible to replace quickly. Societal inequities putting communities of color at increased risk remain huge problems dating back to the Civil War.

Overshadowing this is the fact that this coronavirus is a novel infection, which confounds precise planning. Will there be a second wave worse than the first, like the Spanish flu? Will it reoccur seasonally?

SEE NOW IS NOT, PAGE 14

Now Is Not the Time To Put Off Vaccinations

Pediatricians report a 30-76 percent decrease in administering routine childhood immunizations.

BY DEL. PATRICK HOPE
(47TH - ARLINGTON)
AND DEL. PAUL KRIZEK
(44TH - FAIRFAX)

We probably spend too much of our day worrying about and responding to the novel coronavirus. We work from home, or don't work at all, worrying about this infection's economic impact on us and our community, even if we are comfortable. We teach our children at home while gaining new appreciation for their teachers. We plan our trips to the grocery store and pharmacy like the strategic operations they are, ensuring we have facemasks, remembering our social distancing, and having enough hand sanitizer. Through Zoom and Facebook,

we socialize and even worship on-line, wondering if this virtual reality substitutes for our actual communities.

We wonder endlessly about our health. Most of us did not anticipate these challenges, while those few who did couldn't get the attention of national leaders responsible for making a timely, proactive and aggressive response. We've redefined 'essential personnel', and they are our new heroes. Everyone is making tremendous sacrifices.

Yet, things may be changing for the better. In some places, new cases have plateaued or declined – in proportion to the vigor with which disease mitigation measures have been pursued. U.S. deaths predicted have decreased in some models, to 'only' 90,000 – a tragic number still far greater than all the American lives lost in the Vietnam

War. Our hospitals have not been overwhelmed. Our stocks of medical equipment and PPE are increasing. Diagnostic tests are becoming more available and innovative, too; we can, finally, predict a time when we can do all the tests we need. Scientifically sound research into treatment and prevention is progressing rapidly.

Hospitals are resuming elective surgeries, and soon houses of worship, and many businesses will begin to resume their original functions, albeit exercising prudent care and safe social distancing practices.

BUT NONE of this should make us feel completely secure. Public health departments have been working in the dark, due to testing shortfalls; worse, they remain understaffed to do the contact tracing



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APPETITE

4 Eateries to Start Your Day

BY HOPE NELSON

The old adage is common wisdom: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. And these days, starting your day off on the right foot is more important than ever. Why not pick up a bite to eat that accommodates such a morale boost? With online or telephone ordering and curbside pickup, here are four spots to get your day going – and fast.

Stomping Ground, 2309 Mount Vernon Ave. www.stompdelray.com/

The café with a Southern flair offers what is arguably the best biscuits in the city, and thankfully those biscuits are on offer daily for pickup until 3 p.m. Enjoy them plain or as two sides of a sandwich – Stomping Ground has two fried chicken varieties, both “Classic” and not so much. Or go further afield than biscuits and order up some breakfast nachos with all the fixings or a gouda grits bowl (and given that grits are noticeably absent from grocery stores around the city at the moment, this is one good way to enjoy them!). Bring home some coffee or banana bread to go alongside and you’ll be full until lunchtime.

Bagel Uprising, 2307-A Mount Vernon Ave. bageluprising.com/

Any breakfast lover would be remiss not



Stomping Ground has two fried chicken biscuit sandwiches, “Classic” and “Not So Classic.” The latter pictured here.

to stick their heads around the corner from Stomping Ground to take advantage of Bagel Uprising’s location as well. Six days a week – the shop is currently closed on Tuesdays – you’ll find a plethora of bagels on offer for ordering online (no on-site orders are allowed at the moment). From poppyseed to everything to sesame to salt – and, yes, even

to cinnamon, though it’s acknowledged this offering is heresy – Bagel Uprising has you covered by the baker’s dozen. Add a tub of cream cheese to your order and delight your housemates with fresh-baked breakfast.

Fontaine, 119 S. Royal St. fontainebistro.com/

Old Town’s local creperie is proceeding forth in this new world order, dishing up crepes and all manner of accoutrements seven days a week.

From sweet crepes like the Grand Chocolate or the Just Peachy to savory options like the Norwegian (with salmon) or the Farmer’s Market, the menu depth is strong. Feeling like something non-crepe? Quiche, vanilla French toast or overnight oats are at your service.

Taqueria Poblano, 2400 Mount Vernon Ave. www.taqueriapoblano.com/

First they offered up margaritas; now Taqueria Poblano is serving mimosas. Despite social distancing measures, Sunday brunch continues at the Baja California restaurant.

Instead of sitting down to a leisurely meal, bring it home to enjoy instead with chips, salsa and all the rest. Huevos rancheros, huevos motulenos, breakfast tacos, breakfast burritos: All your favorites are in attendance! Be sure to pick up a batch of those aforementioned mimosas or margaritas, too.

Hope Nelson is the author of “Classic Restaurants of Alexandria” and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

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Neighborhood Health's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Neighborhood Health is a non-profit community health center with 13 clinics serving more than 30,000 low-income, mostly uninsured and immigrant patients in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County in Northern Virginia. Our patients are being disproportionately impacted by this crisis, and our team is working tirelessly to assist our patients and the community.

COVID-19 Testing: Neighborhood Health has set up four COVID-19 testing sites for our patient population – two sites in the City of Alexandria, one along the Route 1 Corridor in Southeast Fairfax County, and one in Fairfax. We plan to open a fifth site in collaboration with a community partner in the low-income Bailey's Crossroads area of Fairfax County soon.

Tests are available to Neighborhood Health patients who first receive a telehealth assessment and an order for the test by one of our medical providers. We are accepting new patients, with an emphasis on accommodating people with COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 Test Results: We are seeing an alarming number of patients test positive for COVID-19 in the communities we serve. Of the almost 800 tests that we have conducted so far, more than 50% have come back positive, compared to 25% for Northern Virginia and 17% statewide. 86% of the positive patients are Hispanic and 74% are uninsured.

Contact Tracing: We have a team that is conducting contact tracing with patients that test positive. They are reaching out to those who may have come into

contact with the patient (patient information kept confidential) before the onset of symptoms. They are advised to quarantine for 14 days since time of exposure. Contact tracer calls contact daily to monitor for symptoms and assist with entry into care and testing if necessary.

Support for COVID-19 Patients: As a positive test result comes in from the lab, our medical provider reaches out to the patient to discuss symptoms and determine the level of monitoring needed. For those with more acute symptoms, the provider will recommend the delivery of a pulse oximeter to the patient for regular oxygen level monitoring.

Our family support team delivers the pulse oximeters, and also reaches out to the patient to determine if there are other needs

that we can fulfill, such as masks, food, cleaning supplies, etc. We are working with a community partner agency so that our team can pick up food from a local pantry and deliver it directly to COVID-19 families in need.

Telehealth Visits: Non-COVID patients are being served mainly through tele/videohealth visits, with the goal to keep our patients as healthy as possible, renew needed prescriptions, and prevent ER visits. Dentists are providing teledentistry for patients in pain, with limited in-person dental emergency visits. Since March, we have provided more than 5,000 telehealth visits, with an emphasis on patients with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Open Clinics: Practicing under enhanced infection safeguards, six of our clinics are open for limited

in-person visits.

Mornings are reserved for well-child check-ups so that children younger than two are able to receive developmental assessments and vaccines. Pregnant women are also receiving critically-important intake appointments and most visits in person. Patients coming to pick up their free or low-cost medications must phone before arrival and our on-site pharmacy technicians take medications to them at their vehicles. For HIV+ patients unable to reach the clinic due to transportation challenges, a member of our team is delivering medications (and masks, if needed) to their homes so they are able to remain isolated.

For Information: Nyrma Hernandez, Development Director, development@neighborhoodhealth-va.org – Ph: 703-628-3225



Water bottles on the banks of Cameron Run.



Ben Swanson and Caleb Merendino.

PHOTOS BY ADVOCATES FOR CLEAN & CLEAR WATERWAYS

Trash Advocates Find a Mess At the Alexandria Recycling Center

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

At the Alexandria Recycling Center, the trash all over the ground caught the eye of Ben Swanson and Caleb Merendino, a pair of environmentalists that make up the new organization "Advocates for Clean & Clear Waterways," supporting environmental conservation in the metropolitan area. Trash was all over the ground outside the dumpsters at the center on Eisenhower Avenue, and there were holes in the fence that allowed garbage to spew out, down the hill to Hunting Creek, into the Potomac River and eventually the Chesapeake Bay.

"They need to get the recycling center under control," Swanson said.

It's all part of the job for the two twenty-somethings at their newly formed organi-

zation that just became official in April. They ride their mountain bikes around, track litter back to the source, and bring it to the attention of authorities to get it cleaned up. At the Alexandria center, they went straight to the mayor in Alexandria, and said they initially got some response about the COVID-19 pandemic, but eventually the city did send out people to clean and fix the center. "We're not buying that," about the pandemic, Swanson said. "There's no way this could all be happening since the pandemic. We're just calling it negligence," he added. Upstream from the recycling center, the creek was cleaner, they noted. They made a video about the recycling center, and on the video there are several shots of the trash outside the dumpsters, holes in the fence and trash falling down the stream bank. Lots of water bottles everywhere near the stream. They filled 110 trash bags in 6 days. "Pretty shocked at what we

found," Swanson said on the video. "Alexandria, what the heck is going on?" he asked.

When they reached out to the Department of Environmental Quality, they got the feeling that trash on the ground at a recycling center is to be expected.

Next stop was Lake Cook where there were not enough trash cans around, but their suggestion that an additional trash can be placed by the dock was shot down. "They came back and rejected it," Swanson said.

Swanson is from New York and Merendino is from Arizona. The two came up with the idea for the Advocates after seeing the influx of trash around the area and registered their company in Washington, D.C. and got a 501C3 designation. They serve the whole metropolitan area, and have sights on another project in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. In addition to litter, they are focusing efforts on saving sea turtles too.



Along the fence at the Alexandria Recycling Center, trash is present outside the many dumpsters.

WELLBEING

Virtual fitness classes aid in the effort to stay healthy and fit.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
CHRISTIAN ELLIOT



Virtual Fitness Classes Offer Options

Online choices for those who want to get or stay in shape.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Staying physically and mentally fit is proving to be a challenge for some as local gyms, yoga studios and weight management clinics have closed their doors in an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. As a solution, many local health and fitness studios are offering live-streamed and recorded digital classes that can be joined from almost anywhere. From pre-recorded sessions on Facebook to live sessions with an instructor and personal sessions with a physical trainer, instructors are giving the curious and uninitiated a look inside their cyber classrooms.

"I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19," said Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at the Washington Center for Weight Management and Research in Arlington. "I am also encouraging people to be okay with exercise looking and feeling different right now. Something is better than nothing."

Practicing yoga can offer mental health benefits, says Luann Fulbright, Studio Director of Dream Yoga in McLean. "Yoga means to unite, and human beings, like other mammals, need to connect to stay well," she said. "The virtual classes enable our community to continue to come together to practice."

A disrupted schedule can lead to increased anxiety during this time of uncertainty. "The crux of regular exercise for many people is routine and familiarity, when that gets interrupted, it can be difficult to establish a new normal with exercise," said Trope. "This is a very tricky time. We are using both live exercise classes and pre-recorded exercise content combined with written workouts."

Creating as close to a real experience as possible

for students, including allowing for teacher-student interaction makes the classes more effective. "We transformed one of our classrooms into a virtual studio with good equipment so our classes look as professionally done as possible," said Fulbright. "We have a good camera, microphone, umbrella lighting, and large monitor screen so teachers can better see their students and alignment."

The students who are joining the classes represent a wide demographic. "Many of our regular students have gone virtual with us," said Fulbright. "The ones that surprised us were our older students in our Yoga for Creaky People and other classes. At first, we wondered if they would want to Zoom, but we were wowed. Most of them are Zooming with us now. They are rocking it."

There are even solutions for who those who are only marginally interested in fitness or need help staying motivated.

"I had a former client reach out to me yesterday saying she just couldn't stay motivated doing the free home workouts because no one cared if she did or didn't show up," said Christian Elliot, Health Coach at TRUE Whole Human. "She's finding she prefers an appointment to keep her accountable. The one-to-one personal training with trained eyes watching, although more expensive, often provides the most accountability and bang for the buck, especially if you don't have much equipment to work with."

Classes can be tailored to the abilities and interests of each student. "I've found, probably not surprisingly, that different people prefer different formats," said Elliot. "Not having to think of what to do may be the biggest draw, regardless of the format. Some like the structure of a program and thoughtful movement and a slower pace, others like showing up at a particular time, doing whatever the workout is for the day, and knowing when the workout will be over."

"I'm excited to watch our great, collective, American ingenuity have a new outlet for creativity," added Elliot. "I look forward to seeing how this strange blip in history brings new and better solutions to the market that we otherwise would not have come up with."

"I am encouraging people to focus on the mental health benefits from exercise and movement to help deal with the stress of COVID-19."

—Rachel Trope,
Clinical Exercise Physiologist
at the Washington Center for
Weight Management and Research

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Nurses from Schools Heed The Call

When Megan Costanza, a nurse at the T.C. Williams High School Clinic got the call to say her skills were needed by the Alexandria Health Department's Corona-virus task force, she didn't hesitate.

A former ER nurse who has worked in hospitals around the country, she has seen just about everything there is to see in the medical field, including suspected Ebola cases. For Megan, she viewed this not only as an opportunity that allowed her to answer a call of duty, but also as an opportunity to learn.

She is now amongst ten Alexandria school nurses currently working eight hour shifts from the AHD Investigation Team's offices, meticulously tracing, contacting, assessing and advising people who may have been exposed to the virus.

"When i first heard about the opportunity, I thought it sounded really interesting because what we're living through is history in the making," she said. "But not only that, I also thought I might be able to learn something that I could then take back to T.C. that would help the kids when we return to school."

Although all 22 school nurses were invit-



During this crisis, ten ACPS nurses are helping out at the Alexandria Health Department (AHD).

ed to participate, many were unable to because of the risk working in an office posed to vulnerable family members or indeed themselves.

Those ten who were able to sign up are now playing a critical role in the battle against the virus in Alexandria. The data they uncover helps not only limit the spread but also gives AHD the information they need to monitor the City's situation.

Megan typically works two to three shifts a week socially distanced in a cubicle at the AHD office on King Street. She does this while juggling her ACPS commitments on other days. During each shift, she is given details of individuals who have tested positive for Covid-19 and then the work of contacting anyone that patient could have exposed begins. The first call she makes is to

the patient themselves. She starts by establishing where they have been and who they have had prolonged contact with going back to 48 hours before their first symptom.

Some days Megan, who has worked at T.C. for a year and a half, gets through three or four cases, sometimes just one depending on the complexity.

"We investigate until we get all those names and locations and addresses, she said. "And then we move into contact tracing, and identifying anybody that's had a prolonged exposure. We contact those individuals and ask them to stay home for 14 days in isolation, per the governor's order.

"I often end up creating an insane flow chart, and sometimes it just expands and expands. You can start with one person and it can take you all day to call their contacts. Then you find one of their contacts is sick and you call their contacts and on it goes. It's almost like a spider web, it can grow and grow." The mother of two college students said that when the team of ACPS nurses started the work during Spring Break, those infected had a lot more questions than they do now. "Now it's been on the news so much and everybody is living through it, people are less surprised when they receive a call.

They just want to know their resources and hear reassurance.

"I get asked: 'What's my next step? How do I take care of myself? How do I take care of my family?'" She finds that often, just being there on the end of the line to listen is a great reassurance.

"I think it's comforting for people to have somebody to talk to who knows about the disease and what's going on. People are so isolated in their homes right now that I'm finding just having somebody to talk to on the phone is appreciated."

Of course, Megan misses all the students at T.C. and looks forward to the day that students fill the halls again.

She enjoys the days she is able to reconnect with the entirety of her ACPS nursing team as they together prepare for the return of school with tasks including planning care for students with chronic medical conditions and the review of immunization records.

But until then she plans to help out at AHD as long as she is needed.

"I love the work," she said.

"It makes me feel like I'm giving back to my community and my country and that I'm learning something that I think's going to be valuable for several years to come."

Hunger Rising

FROM PAGE 1

and large if you've lost your income, you're going to be eligible for SNAP for at least a couple of weeks before the unemployment benefits start coming in, so the concerning part of that is not enough people have been signing up for SNAP"

THE FOOD STAMP program dates back to 1939, a time when the masterminds behind the New Deal were trying to figure out a way to balance overproduction on farms with underconsumption in the cities. It was discontinued when the Great Depression ended, although the program was revived by President John Kennedy as a pilot program in targeted areas of unemployment to spur the economy and head off a recession. President Lyndon Johnson signed the Food Stamp Act in 1964 as part of his War on Poverty over the objections from some in Alexandria.

"There are certain things I don't believe in," said U.S. Rep. Howard W. Smith, the powerful Rules Committee Chairman who represented Alexandria in the House of Representatives. "If I'm wrong, you can turn me out any time you want to."

Congressman Smith was turned out of office in the next election, when a more liberal state senator beat him in the 1966 Democratic primary. But opposition to the program lingered for years, even after it was rebranded the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in 2008. Gone are the old fashioned stamps from the New Deal era in favor of electronic benefit transfer cards that load benefits at the beginning of each month. But the food stamp program continues to carry a stigma as an entitlement program that contributes to the national debt.

"Historically there's been shame and a

feeling of not wanting to be a burden to the system," said Lesa Gilbert, director of Social Services. "With the public charge rule, many immigrants are hesitant to apply for any kind of benefits for fear that it'll impact their chances of becoming a citizen."

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION came into office with an agenda of reforming entitlements, and federal officials have already made several key changes and are still considering more. One is the public charge rule, which punishes immigrants seeking to become citizens who take any kind of public assistance. Another rule still under consideration would prevent states from expanding the number of people who could receive food stamps by changing the eligibility, increasing it from 130 percent of the federal poverty rate to 200 percent of the federal poverty rate. More than 40 states currently have less restrictive income and asset tests that the federal government, although Virginia is not among them.

"I think what has changed in recent years is you have extreme anti-government activists in Congress who want to get rid of any sort of safety net program," said Victor Chen, assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University. "So they

are trying to paint food stamps as going to people who don't deserve it."

Participants in the program receive a very limited benefit, a maximum of \$200 a month for an individual. That works out to about \$2.15 a meal, and in order to receive that benefit an individual would have to submit paperwork showing they earn less than \$17,000 a year. Advocates for the program have long argued that the program benefits the local economy just as much as low-income individuals, generating \$1.70 in economic activity for every \$1 received by a beneficiary. Six states currently allow recipients to use the benefits online, but Virginia is not one of them. That means that seniors who receive food stamps or people with underlying health conditions are forced to put themselves in danger by going in person to the grocery store to use the benefit.

"We can use an unmanned drone to kill somebody on the other side of the world, but we can't roll out this program to help our low-income neighbors use an electronic card online," said Bhatti. "It boggles the mind."

CONGRESS IS CURRENTLY considering a number of changes to the program, prompted by the economic crisis created by the pan-

demic. Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine both signed on to a letter last month urging Senate leadership to increase the maximum benefit 15 percent and escalate the monthly minimum from \$16 to \$30. The letter also calls for the Trump administration to ditch the proposed rule that would prevent states from expanding the number of people eligible for benefits.

"Because the benefit is so small, most SNAP households barely make it to the end of the month," Warner and Kaine wrote in the April 29 letter. "We can avert the risk of poverty and food insecurity among American families and children while improving our chances for an economic rebound by investing in SNAP"

Several other proposals are also under consideration in Congress. One would allow benefits to be used for hot food and prepared food, currently forbidden under the existing rules. Another would allow undocumented immigrants to participate in the program, which is currently not available to people who are not citizens.

At the state level, lawmakers are preparing for a special session to scale back Virginia's revenue forecast. One item that may be on the agenda is having Virginia adopt something known as Broad Based Categorical Eligibility, which would expand the number of people who would be eligible for food stamps by allowing them for people who earn as much as 200 percent of the federal poverty rate.

"With the pandemic in place, it's something I think there would be broad support for," said Sen. George Barker (D-39). "A lot of people who don't necessarily participate in programs like this might be able to benefit from it significantly."

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LIVING LEGENDS

Living Legends of 2020 Frank Fannon IV.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

From his volunteer position at Agenda: Alexandria, long-time resident and chairman Frank Fannon stays on top of issues that matter to the residents of the city without directly taking sides. It is that attitude of Fannon's that has kept him involved and contributing to the City of Alexandria through the years.

"I have always been proud of Alexandria and was very fortunate to be born in such a great community," Fannon said. "I was raised to be civic minded and to always contribute and give back to our fellow citizens."

Since the 1990s, Fannon has been involved on several fronts for the City of Alexandria so he has seen what works and what doesn't. The Agenda: Alexandria organization takes pride in being a "non-partisan organization which encourages informed debate and discussion on a wide variety of local issues without taking a position," as stated on the website. Fannon said they don't solicit input from elected officials so meetings remain non-partisan, which works in a diverse city like Alexandria. "It's a great forum for citizens that want to get involved," he said.

One recent Agenda:Alexandria meeting featured the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, which will be located in Potomac Yard near the airport. At the meeting, Tech representatives and homeowners discussed the future of that area in relation to the arrival of Amazon's HQ2 in nearby Arlington. "Channel 7 news was there that night," Fannon said.

Fannon also volunteers on the Friendship Firehouse board and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. On the Firehouse board, the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association assists in the preservation of the historic fire house on Alfred Street; supports the Alexandria Fire Department; and provides scholarships and other benevolent and philanthropic services to the Alexandria Community. Fannon's volunteer experience and city familiarity is valuable in a position like that.

With all that under his belt, Fannon also works full time at SunTrust mortgage, a po-



Frank Fannon IV is a Living Legend of Alexandria for 2020.

sition he has held for the past 25 years. Fannon started the job at SunTrust in the early 1990s following his graduation from Elon College with a degree in corporate communications.

"I was lucky to find a good career," he said. Real estate is in his blood, dating back to his ancestors in Ireland that were not allowed to own property, he said.

A resident of the Rosemont area, Fannon remains involved with the Alexandria Sportsman's Club, the Old Dominion Boat Club, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Volunteer Alexandria, the Alexandria Library board, and The United Way board of the National Capital Region. In 2009, he was elected to the Alexandria City Council and

served until 2012. In addition, he served as chairman of the annual fundraising drive and dinner for the Boys and Girls Club of Alexandria.

Fannon is a fourth-generation Alexandrian and his great-grandfather, T.J. Fannon, started T.J. Fannon and Sons in 1885 with a \$500 loan from a local businessman named Frank Harper (Fannon's namesake). The business began as a coal and lumber depot. After 135 years, it is the oldest 100-percent family owned businesses in Greater Washington, specializing in home heating and air conditioning. The family business is now run by Fannon's cousins. His uncle, also named T.J., was the third-generation owner of the business and was named a Living Legend in

2008. Fannon was also the third member of the Fannon family to be elected to the Alexandria City Council.

In 2009, Fannon created "Alexandrians Have Heart," an annual food and clothing drive which takes place over Valentine's Day weekend. This year's 11th anniversary drive paid off big. "This past month we filled three truckloads of food and clothing for Christ House, Alive Food Bank and Carpenters Shelter along with \$2,400 in cash donations," Fannon said.

Florence King was a Living Legend in 2018 and knows the work that Fannon has done for the city. Most of it is on a volunteer basis, so this makes him stand out, King thinks. "He does it as a community service," she said. The "Alexandrians Have Heart," food and clothing drive "wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Frank Fannon," she said. "He has compassion."

The Commonwealth Republican Women's Club also worked with Fannon on that drive and the club was happy to support the effort for their fellow city residents.

"The Commonwealth Republican Women's Club loves to support Frank Fannon," said CRWC president Linda App. "He was one of the last Republicans to serve on City Council and he is a shining example of Republicans caring about every member of our community."

In the coming months, Fannon will have baseball to look forward to because he is now the new majority owner of the Alexandria Aces Collegiate Summer Baseball Team, an affiliate of Major League Baseball and a member of the Cal Ripken League. Recently, Major League Baseball has strengthened their relations with minor league teams in general and Fannon thought it would be a good time to get involved.

The Fannon family has been a part of Alexandria sports for decades and as a 10-year-old Fannon remembers taking the city bus in the 1970s to see the minor league Alexandria Dukes play their games on the same field where the Aces now play.

"I'm a big sports person," Fannon said. "And on summer nights the baseball games will be a great gathering place."

Alexandria to Receive as Much as \$27 Million from Feds

FROM PAGE 1

"We would be able to serve approximately 1,600 households."

Small businesses brace for costly expenses when they reopen such as personal protective equipment for employees, temperature scans, online communications platforms and ordering portals such as the ALX at Home website. After providing tax relief and surveying businesses on financial needs, city economic development organizations plan to help local businesses access grants from the state and city to pay for new investments. About \$2 million in CARES Act funds will go to small business assistance.

"What we need is for these businesses to

be operating and generating taxes as soon as possible," said Stephanie Landrum, president and CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.

The city is allowed to allocate some CARES money for school expenses, according to Mayor Justin Wilson. Though the school division is proceeding with its budget process as planned, revenues are expected to decline. Superintendent Gregory Hutchings will present a revised budget for the next fiscal year before its adoption in June.

"We haven't changed our budget priorities," said School Board Chairwoman Cindy Anderson. "We're just having a lot of money disappear."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

ALEXANDRIA ADOPTS FY 21 BUDGET

On April 29, the Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted a Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 General Fund Operating Budget of \$753.3 million, which is 5.8% lower than the \$799.9 million operating budget originally proposed by City Manager Mark Jinks in February. The adopted budget reflects the revised operating and capital budgets proposed by Jinks on April 7, due to the nearly \$100 million budget gap created by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The approved budget, which represents a

1.6% decrease from the FY 2020 budget, focuses on continuing the City's record of prudent fiscal management; relieving some of the burden on taxpayers; and delivering core services to the community.

NEW ONLINE CLASSES AT THE ART LEAGUE

The Art League of Alexandria is keeping the Alexandria community creative and connected during the pandemic with new online classes. Painting, drawing, tapestry weaving, hand stitching, and a variety of illustration courses are among the offerings, with more being added regularly. Students can connect to online classes with the Zoom video-conferencing platform, and stay in touch with instructors and classmates through Google classroom. Visit the website: <https://www.theartleague.org/>

This Week in Alexandria Coronavirus

FROM PAGE 3

and app designed as a “one-stop” resource for individuals, families and businesses to access benefits, services and critical information related to essential needs such as food, child care, healthcare, housing, unemployment insurance and more during the pandemic. <https://covid.virginia.gov/>

Volunteer Opportunities: During a crisis, it is important for everyone to work together as a community to help others. Visit Volunteer Alexandria’s COVID-19 Care for Communities page to see opportunities. www.volunteeralexandria.org/careforcommunity

STERILIZING PPE: Virginia will receive three Battelle Critical Care Decontamination System machines that can collectively sterilize up to 240,000 units of personal protective equipment (PPE) per day for reuse. “This innovative new technology will extend the life of critical PPE like N95 masks, giving our medical facilities and first responders greater access to much-needed supplies and helping the Commonwealth manage our resources amid a nationwide shortage,” Northam said.

Friday, May 1

Alexandria Cases: 802
Virginia Cases: 16,901
Alexandria deaths: 24

Three more fatalities reported in Alexandria.

The Virginia Department of Health’s (VDH) daily dashboard has added the ethnicity of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities for Alexandria.

While approximately 17% of Alexandria residents are Hispanic/Latinx, this community accounts for 39% of positive cases of COVID-19 and 38% of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Alexandria to date. Based on the data reported, this indicates that members of the Hispanic/Latinx community are experiencing higher rates of severe illness from COVID-19 than non-Hispanic whites. However, there are still large gaps in the data. Ethnicity was not reported for 27% of cases and 7% of hospitalizations. The number of tests performed is not available by ethnicity. AHD is working with healthcare providers to improve reporting of demographic data.

Keeping Children Healthy When School is Out: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that parents limit their children’s time with other children and with older adults who have serious underlying medical conditions, and directs that children 2 years and older wear a cloth face covering and practice physical distancing measures when in community settings.

HISTORICALLY BLACK UNIVERSITIES: U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine (both D-VA), members of the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) Caucus, applauded more than \$36 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support Virginia’s five HBCUs: Virginia State Uni-

versity, Virginia Union University, Virginia University of Lynchburg, Hampton University and Norfolk State University. The federal funding was made possible through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund established under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to support students, colleges, and universities as they cope with the immediate effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

TAX CREDITS NEED EXPANSION: U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) joined Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ron Wyden (D-OR) and a group of senators in a letter to senate leaders calling for a temporary expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit in the next coronavirus relief package. As the economic effects of COVID-19 are expected to last into next year, this would put money back in the pockets of working Americans as they continue to weather the economic downturn.

Thursday, April 30

Alexandria Cases: 754
Virginia Cases: 15,846

SPREAD CHEER: Everyone has a role—not only in stopping the spread of COVID-19, but also in giving encouragement and cheer to neighbors. Although Alexandrians are separated by physical distancing, the community can connect through shared positive messages.

The City of Alexandria invites the community to share positive messages and post photos on social media with the hashtag #SpreadCheerALX. Messages can be displayed as signs in windows or yards, chalk art on driveways, notes to workers on trash cans, or decorated rocks in yards. Messages should highlight the “Six Steps to Stop the Spread” of COVID-19, thank essential workers for supporting our community, or other messages of gratitude, hope, resilience, solidarity or good cheer.

Messages posted on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter with the hashtag #SpreadCheerALX may be selected by the City to be reproduced as signs for others to display. Selected submissions will be printed, displayed on City property, and made available to residents who would like a sign for their yard or window. Those in need of supplies for this project should email arts@alexandriava.gov or call 703-746-5592.

SUMMER CAMPS CANCELLED: Registration for summer camps and programs offered by the City’s Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA), which had been postponed to May 6, is now suspended until further notice. Previously planned summer camps and programs may need to be adjusted to accommodate the current stay-at-home order and physical distancing guidelines, as well as the potential for new state guidance for the summer months. All Spring programs have been cancelled.

All recreation, nature and art centers remain closed; all activities, events and pri-

vate rentals are canceled; all reservations and registrations are suspended; all public playgrounds are closed; and all public sport courts, fenced fields, fenced dog parks, outdoor fitness stations, restrooms and parking lots at parks are closed. Transient boater access to City Marina piers is prohibited (open to license holders only).

But all unfenced City of Alexandria parks, trails and fields remain open to the public to provide opportunities for safe, physically distant exercise. The City and the Alexandria Health Department believe that access to outdoor exercise is crucial to maintaining both the physical and mental health of our community. Visit alexandriava.gov/Recreation for updates.

Virginia Expands Student Loan Payment Relief

Expanded payment relief is available for Virginians with privately held student loans. While the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided relief for students with federal loans until Sept. 30, this relief did not apply to borrowers with student loans made by private lenders. Under the new initiative, Virginians with commercially-owned Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) loans, Perkins loans, or privately held student loans who are struggling to make payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible for expanded relief. Borrowers must immediately contact their student loan servicers to identify the options that are appropriate to their circumstances.

Wednesday, April 29

Alexandria Cases: 700
Virginia Cases: 14,961
Alexandria Deaths: 21

The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 700, including 21 fatalities. One additional fatality was reported.

BUDGET CHANGES: The Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted a Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 General Fund Operating Budget of \$753.3 million, which is 5.8% lower than the \$799.9 million operating budget originally proposed by City Manager Mark Jinks in February. The adopted budget reflects the revised operating and capital budgets proposed by Jinks on April 7, due to the nearly \$100 million budget gap created by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The budget approved by City Council does not include an originally proposed 2-cent increase in the 2020 real estate tax rate to fund City and Schools capital projects. The real estate tax rate approved by City Council remains at \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value, and there are no other tax rate increases.

This will require rescheduling to FY 2023 the beginning phases of the Waterfront Park and Flood Mitigation plan and the high school facility project at the Minnie Howard Campus. However, the new MacArthur Elementary School project remains budgeted and will proceed on schedule.

The approved budget allocates \$1 million to the Alexandria Health Department from potential federal funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to be used along with potential state funding for substantially increased epidemiological staffing.

Although the Alexandria Health Department is a division of the Virginia Department of Health, more than 50% of its budget is funded by the City.

Protect and Serve APF provides PPE for officers.

With Personal Protection Equipment in short supply, the Alexandria Police Foundation has assisted the police department in procuring more than 1,000 protective face masks for use by officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The police foundation partnered with the department to procure over 1,000 masks through a local supplier that has worked previously with first responders.

“We cannot thank the Alexandria Police Foundation for the continued efforts in supporting our folks,” said Police Chief Michael Brown. “The masks they provided to us came at a critical time for us and we are forever grateful.”

- JEANNE THEISMANN

Alexandria Police Officer Bennie Evans wears one of more than 1,000 face masks provided to the police department from the Alexandria Police Foundation.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO BY LAURA HATCHER PHOTOGRAPHY

Athletes of the Month are recognized at the February meeting of the Alexandria Sportsman's Club. The ASC is seeking applications for its annual student-athlete scholarships.

ASC Seeks Scholarship Applications

May 22 deadline; awards to be presented in June.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Sportsman's Club is seeking applications from college-bound high school seniors for its 2020 scholarship program.

The scholarships, open to any city high school senior, are traditionally presented at the organization's annual Athlete of the Year gala in late May. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state-wide regulations of public gatherings, the gala has been canceled.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting our normal everyday lives, the ASC continues to support the student-athletes in the City of Alexandria," said ASC president Don Hughes. "Although we aren't having our annual banquet in May, we will be awarding

scholarships in June."

Individual scholarships will be \$2,000 per student-athlete.

All applicants must have played at least one season of a varsity sport and be enrolled as a senior at one of the four Alexandria high schools: Bishop Ireton, Episcopal, St. Stephens & St. Agnes or T.C. Williams.

The application can be found online at www.alexandriavasports.org and is due by May 22. Completed applications can be submitted via email to ascvasports@gmail.com by 11:59 p.m. with supporting documentation of scanned photos or documents attached to the email. Alternatively, applications may be mailed to: Alexandria Sportsman's Club, P.O. Box 1011, Alexandria, VA 22313. For more information, visit www.alexandriavasports.org.

COVID-19 Quickly Adding Hunger to Its List of Health Risks

With more than 30 million Americans unemployed, people are being forced to choose between rent and groceries. Meanwhile, food banks are overwhelmed, and missed school meals are threatening the nutritional health of our children. As a volunteer at the ALIVE! food pantry in Alexandria, I've seen personally the growing demand for food.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. And it is built for crises just like this. Back in 2008, SNAP not only kept food on the table for millions, it helped the economy recover (every \$1 in new SNAP spending creates \$1.50-1.80 in economic activity).

It is ready to do so again, but Congress must act. I urge our members of Congress to help hungry Americans by quickly passing legislation that increases the maximum SNAP benefit by 15 percent until this economic crisis ends. Meanwhile, as good neighbors, support your local food banks.

Nancy Morgan
Alexandria



Nancy Morgan

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Obituary

Obituary



John Kent Scales, 82, passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, April 14, after a valiant, two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. Even during his treatments, he maintained a strong joy of life and enjoyed spending time with his many friends and family. He had a love of international travel, adventure and public service, spending most of his career in key positions in the U.S. Congress, Peace Corps and USAID.

He was born in Swarthmore, PA to Constance (Kent) and Richard D. Scales on October 19, 1937. As the oldest of three children living in Park Ridge Illinois, his early life was dramatically shaped as a young boy by the untimely death of his father and grandmother in a car accident.

After graduating from Williams College and Cornell Law School and being admitted to the Washington D.C. and Massachusetts Bars, he began his career as an associate in Sullivan & Worcester Esqs. corporate practice in Boston, Massachusetts.

He then moved to Washington D.C. to work as Counsel to Republican members of the U.S. Senate Labor Subcommittees on Employment, Poverty, Children and Youth. In that role, he worked closely with Senator Jacob Javits. John was instrumental in gaining enactment of laws that provided comprehensive employment, training, early childhood education, volunteer and anti-poverty programs. He was particularly proud to be involved in President Lyndon Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders—known as the Kerner Commission.

After his work for the U.S. Congress, John served for seven years as General Counsel for the Peace Corps, where he managed legal matters for its operations in the U.S. and 86 countries. He managed all litigation and complex issues related to legal, compliance, diplomatic, operational, Congressional and media activities. At times he served as Acting Director of the Peace Corps.

Subsequently, he worked for seven years at USAID, initially as legal advisor to the regional bureaus for Asia, Latin America, Africa, Europe and Eurasia and later in Central Asia. A great joy of his life was working as Regional Legal Advisor and Director of Democratic Transition for Central Asia, based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In that role, he supervised democratic and level development in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. His final role with the agency was as attorney in its Office of General Counsel in Washington D.C.

John will always be remembered as a storyteller and lover of a good joke. He never outgrew his enjoyment of magic tricks and practical jokes. He was fond of his many summer trips to his home on Martha's Vineyard where he enjoyed sailing and swimming; and skiing in Aspen in the winter. He was always a warm and lively attendee at social events whether around his home in Alexandria or with family and friends in New England. He was an active member of the Quaker meeting in Washington, D.C. where a service will take place at a later date.

John was pre-deceased by the love of his life, his wife Mada McGill, who also served in senior positions at the Peace Corps. He is survived by his two sisters: Constance Jean (Scales) Lind and her husband Eric, and Carol Ann (Scales) Teel and her husband Chip. He was fond of his nephews and nieces who always looked forward to reconnecting at holiday events. Donations in his name can be made to the charity of your choice.

Obituary

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Hair Today, Not Gone Tomorrow

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Sheltering in place while isolating at home, like so many others are, in a state, Maryland, where non-essential businesses remain closed, life has mostly come to a screeching halt. And unlike Georgia and nearly 30 other common-sense offenders, salons - among many other trying-to-get-going concerns, are not open. Moreover, given the social-distancing guidelines and the stay-at-home mandate, it's unlikely I'll be receiving any service providers in my home either. And considering that I'm not running a bowling alley in my basement, the chance that my hair stylist is going to unexpectedly knock on my front door is fairly slim. As a non result, what's continuing to happen then is my hair is continuing to grow. Despite my year of immunotherapy, I have a full head of hair; now more than ever, in fact. So what did I dream about last night? Getting a haircut.

As it was dreamt, I was in Virginia (I live in Maryland) doing non-barbershop/salon things when quite unintentionally I walked by a salon that was open and operating. Since I wasn't on a schedule and I needed a haircut, to quote Bob Seeger: "I tucked my hair up under my hat," (sort of) and went inside to make inquiries. I remember asking, as I have previously in real life, if anyone there knew how to cut curly hair. One stylist/operator, who was not familiar to me, offered his services for the task at hand. That's all I remember except feeling pleased with myself when I woke up this morning as if I had accomplished something overnight. Which of course, I hadn't. Oh, how the mighty have fallen.

Of all the things I've dreamt about: interacting with my deceased parents, flying through the air with the greatest of ease, sex, the past, the future, adventures, etc., I dreamt about getting a haircut. How pathetic is that?

One week into my low iodine diet (as preparation for my thyroid cancer treatment), when I haven't had any salt, any dairy, any bread, any most especially, no chocolate or sweets of any kind (jelly beans are on back order), I would have thought that if there was a dream to be dreamt, it would involve food at the very general and chocolate at the very specific, like being in an endless dessert buffet line (social distancing and limiting crown size notwithstanding). But no. What my subconscious focused on was yours truly getting a stupid haircut. There was no special occasion or event for which I was needing my hair cut, it was simply, maintenance. All the more disappointing given the endless possibilities to dream that exist in our heads. What a waste of a deep sleep.

What makes the dream even worse is that for the past month or so I've had very poor sleep, lying in bed for hours with very little to show for it. Specifically, rest, relaxation and dreams; not dreaming at all in fact. Then, in the midst of this poor sleep pattern I awake this morning with the recollection of having dreamt (meaning a deep sleep) about getting my curly locks cut. Mundane minutiae if there ever was such a combination.

Granted, getting my hair cut was a very important part of my life, particularly so for my mother. For my mother, her sons getting a proper haircut was paramount and once she found a barber, Rocky Spirazzo, who cut hair with a scissors instead of a clipper, she was smitten, so to speak. As such, we followed Rocky to whatever barbershop/salon he worked at, including some of the finest hotel barber shops in Boston. We even occasionally went to his home in Roslindale, where he had a barber chair set up in his unfinished basement. I can still that lone bulb above my head attached to a chord hanging from the ceiling.

And so it was, throughout my life when my mother had control of my hair-cutting, that hair cuts were not nearly so arbitrary as they might have otherwise been. Without really admitting it, I guess I would say that getting my hair cut is of some importance, dating back to my "yout," to quote Joe Pesci from "My Cousin Vinny." Like it or not, my mother's influence persists. Now in the midst of a pandemic, with so many other potential problems impacting our life, apparently my subconscious still has its priorities.

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

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OPINION

Now Is Not the Time

FROM PAGE 6

Are survivors immune and, if so, for how long? More than 70 vaccines are in development, but a widely deployable vaccine won't be available for many more months. Given the severity of this infection and the large numbers at risk, we cannot rely on natural 'herd immunity'.

We know some important ways to respond to this pandemic. Wash our hands thoroughly, stay at home inasmuch as possible, socially distance properly and maintain personal healthcare.

However, there is more that we need to think about today. One of the negative repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic is an alarming drop in routine vaccination rates.

REMEMBER THE LESSONS from the measles outbreaks. We in Northern Virginia remain at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases.

Pediatricians report a 30-76 percent decrease in administering routine childhood immunizations, including measles and influenza, because well-child visits are being conducted virtually. This season, 390,000 cases of influenza have been diagnosed, with 24,000 deaths. To avoid compounding the coronavirus pandemic, we must 'double down' on routine immunizations - a cornerstone of public health.

This General Assembly session we passed our House Bill 1090, mandating that immunizations required for school attendance comply with authoritative national standards. We are still working on legislation to tighten standards for granting medical and non-medical exemptions, decreasing financial barriers providers face administering immunizations, and facilitate access for patients.

In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to get your children vaccinated. The Governor, himself a pediatric neurologist, urged parents to make appointments for their children to be vaccinated. Pediatricians throughout the region have made accommodations to safeguard parents and children at such visits.

Last week was National Infant Immunization Week; the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics reminds us that childhood immunizations are essential - even life-saving - with additional value during the pandemic.

We understand that many parents hesitate to bring their child to a doctor's office right now, but we assure you that it is both safe and necessary.

We want to prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases like Pertussis (also known as whooping cough), Meningitis, Rotavirus, the measles, and others. Please reach out to your pediatrician to find out what accommodations they are making, whether your children are up to date on their vaccinations, and to schedule their inoculations. Remember, vaccines are critical to protecting the health and welfare of our children and our community.

We don't want to precipitate a second public health crisis.

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