

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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JUNE 22, 2023



PHOTO BY MCARTHUR MYERS

## Celebrating Juneteenth

The George Washington Masonic National Memorial lights up the sky over Alexandria in recognition of Juneteenth, marking the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops' arrival came two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and officially became a federal holiday in 2021.

## Hometown Hero

**Paris Davis honored by local community.**

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**R**etired Army Colonel Paris Davis, the nation's most recent recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, was celebrated at a reception in his honor June 17 at the Capt. Rocky Versace Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza in Del Ray.

The event took place 58 years to

the day that a wounded and bloodied Davis, then a Special Forces captain, twice refused orders to quit the battlefield of Bong Son until he had saved multiple wounded teammates in a brutal 19-hour hand to hand battle with a Viet Cong battalion. Due to his heroics, Davis's entire team survived the battle.

President Joe Biden presented Davis, a longtime Alexandria resident, with the Medal of Honor in a White House ceremony March 3. Davis was also inducted into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes.

Retired Navy Captain Eugene "Red" McDaniel, who spent six years

SEE HOMETOWN HERO, PAGE 4



Medal of Honor recipient Col. Paris Davis (ret), left, is presented with a proclamation from the City of Alexandria by Daniel Gade, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, June 17 at the Capt. Rocky Versace Vietnam Memorial Plaza in Del Ray.



PHOTOS BY MARCEL BASSETT/APD

Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis, second from right, is congratulated by Police Chief Don Hayes, former Mayor Allison Silberberg and Sheriff Sean Casey at a reception in Davis' honor June 17 at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.

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# Ebbin to Face Challenger

Senate race will be the lone contested election in Alexandria this November.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Republicans haven't had much luck in Alexandria since the days of Wiley Mitchell and Bob Calhoun, two GOP state senators who represented the city before Patsy Ticer was elected in 1995. Since Ticer unseated Calhoun, Democrats have dominated the city's delegation to the General Assembly with lopsided elections and uncontested races. Ticer never faced another Republican after knocking off Calhoun. And when Adam Ebbin was first elected to the seat in 2011, he won with 64 percent of the vote against Republican Tim McGhee. Republicans have not offered another candidate to challenge Ebbin since then.

Until now.

This year, the three-term incumbent Democrat will have a Republican opponent, Sophia Moshasha. She declined repeated requests to be interviewed for this story, although she sent a press release describing herself as a "seasoned technology advocate" and a "dedicated community builder." The press release says she plans on prioritizing education and workforce development, economic growth. According to her LinkedIn page, she is the vice president of the DC Chapter of the VR/AR Association and co-host of the "Everything VR & AR" podcast. VR is virtual reality and AR is augmented reality.

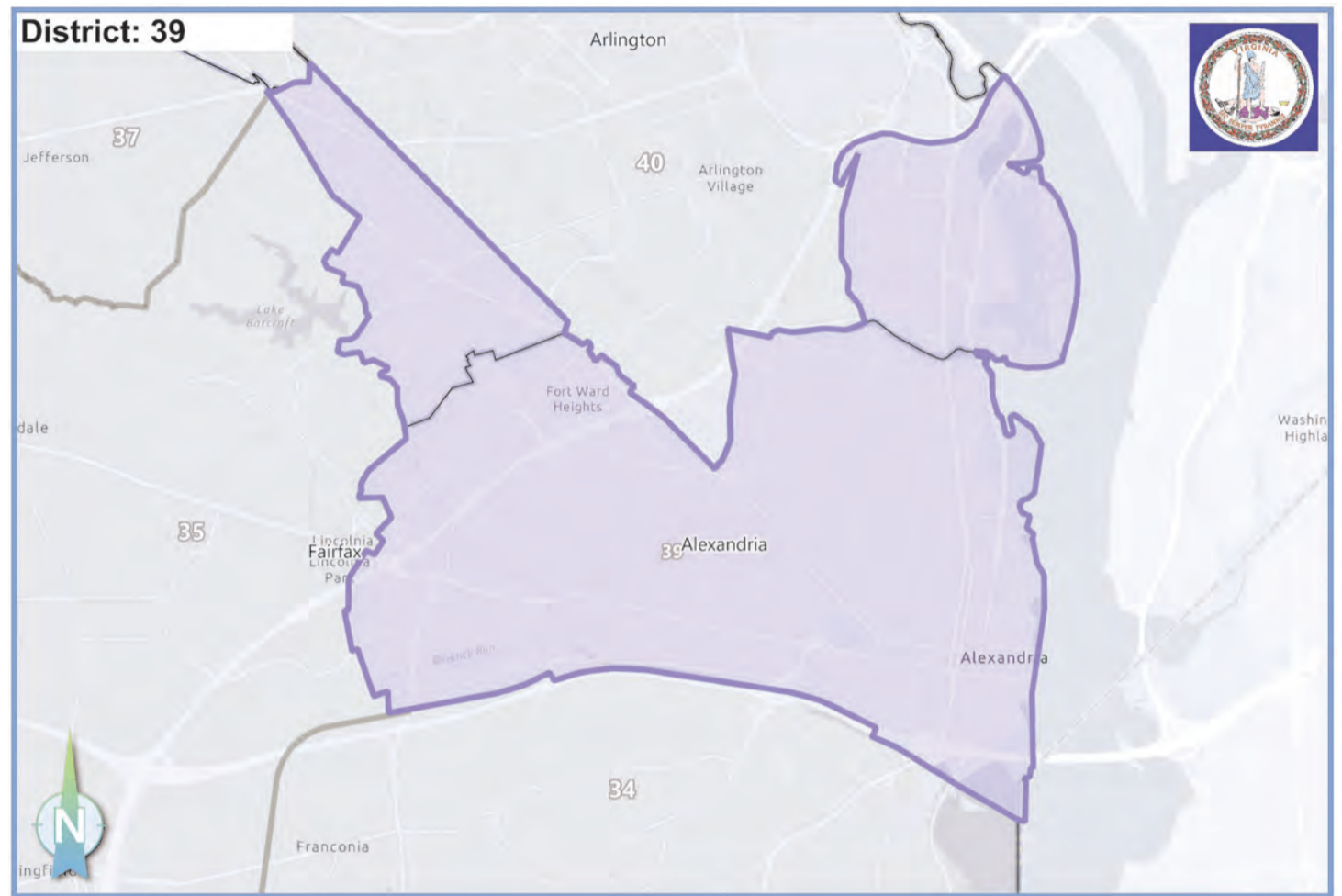
"She understands that divisive partisanship should not hinder progress," the press release says, "and is determined to work collaboratively with colleagues from all backgrounds to achieve results for the community."

Republicans acknowledge that Democrats have an overwhelming advantage in a city where President Joe Biden won in 2020 with 80 percent of the vote. The GOP will not have candidates on the ballot challenging any of the city's three House of Delegates seats, and party leaders concede that getting Republicans to challenge Democrats in Alexandria is a very difficult challenge.

"It's not rocket science," says Mike Lane, who was in charge of recruiting Republican candidates in Alexandria. "When you are interested in public service and you look at a race and you read the numbers and figure out that it's an extraordinarily uphill race, you need to think seriously and hard about the effort that is to be invested for very iffy returns."

**IN AN INTERVIEW**, Ebbin says he hopes voters in the newly created 39th Senate District will return him to office so he can protect abortion rights, secure funding for public education, safeguard voting rights and press for more gun violence prevention legislation. When Democrats held the General Assembly and the governor's office, Ebbin led an unsuccessful effort to ban assault weapons. Now that he has to deal with a Republican governor, he says Democrats should continue pressing for banning ghost guns and requiring safe storage of firearms as well as raising the purchasing age to 21.

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VIRGINIA REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

The newly drawn Senate District 39 includes all of Alexandria as well as National Airport and Bailey's Crossroads.



Adam Ebbin

**"Our lineup of challenger and open seat nominees are committed to working with Governor Youngkin to advance his common-sense conservative agenda."**

— Sen. Mark Obenshain, co-chairman of the Senate Republican Caucus



Sophia Moshasha

"I think people are angry and tired of mass shootings," said Ebbin, while campaigning for a Senate colleague this week. "We know that assault-style weapons are often used in them, and that we can come together and come up with a principled alternative to letting assault weapons be easily available."

Ebbin is perhaps best known as being one of the General Assembly's most outspoken advocates for legalization of marijuana, a process that is still half baked at best. While it's currently legal for adults to possess small amounts of marijuana, House Republicans have blocked efforts to create a system to issue licenses to sell weed. As the first openly gay member of the Senate, Ebbin has been outspoken about the unsuccessful effort to remove Virginia's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. As the chairman of the influential General Laws Committee, Ebbin says he'll use the position to influence everything from laws governing real estate and genetic data to evictions and documents available under the Freedom of Information Act.

"You never know what's going to come through General Laws," says Ebbin, who was previously chairman of the Privileges and Elections Committee. "Whatever we can do to see that renters are getting a more fair shake and whatever we can do to lessen evictions by seeing the process is fair."

**REPUBLICANS HEAD** into the fall election energized by their sweeping election victory in 2021, when they took all three statewide offices and seized control of the House of Delegates. Although voters ousted four incumbent Democratic senators this week, the only Republican to be unseated was Amanda Chase of Chesterfield — and she was not a member of the Senate Republican Caucus. Senate Republicans say they are poised to regain the Senate majority in November with the help of candidates like Sophia Moshasha.

"Our lineup of challenger and open seat nominees are committed to working with Governor Youngkin to advance his common sense conservative agenda," said Sen-

ate Caucus co-chairman Mark Obenshain in a written statement this week. "Republicans are ready to regain the Senate majority in November."

Democrats say the political dynamics have changed since 2021, especially after the United States Supreme Court obliterated the constitutionally protected right to abortion. That was a major issue in a hotly contested Democratic primary in Petersburg, where voters ousted the only Senate Democrat who opposes abortion rights. Democrats say they plan to campaign against the agenda of Republican Governor Glenn Youngkin, especially when it comes to corporate tax cuts, voting rights, gun violence and limiting access to controversial books in public school libraries.

"He doesn't have any accomplishments," said Sen. Scott Surovell, who is currently running in the newly created Senate District 34. "He hasn't accomplished anything as governor for the last two years because he's in the middle of a presidential beauty pageant."

# Hometown Hero

**“I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of appreciation and gratitude that everyone has shown me here today.”**

— Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis

FROM PAGE 1

as a POW in Vietnam, gave remarks, noting that as a Vietnam soldier at the height of the conflict, Davis never received the welcome home and accolades he and his men deserved.

“Those of us released in 1973 came home to a hero’s welcome,” McDaniel said. “Col. Davis never knew that feeling of appreciation for the service and sacrifice he had given for his country. This recognition, this Medal of Honor, is long overdue.”

A proclamation from the City of Alexandria was read on behalf of Mayor Justin Wilson and members of City Council, who were unable to attend due to a council meeting at City Hall. Daniel Gade, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, made the presentation to Davis.

Fellow Vietnam Medal of Honor recipient Brian Thacker traveled

from his home in Maryland to meet Davis and visit the Capt. Rocky Versace Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza. Versace, who grew up just blocks from the Plaza that now bears his name, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2002 for heroism during his time in captivity. It was the first time an Army POW had been awarded the nation’s highest honor for actions in captivity.

Davis and Thacker paid their respects to Versace, whose remains have never been accounted for, with a salute at the Gold Star bearing his name.

A highly decorated veteran who served 26 years in the U.S. Army, Davis was one of the first African Americans to lead a Special Forces team in combat.

“There were not many African Americans in Special Forces,” Davis said. “I had a lot of people say to me ‘Are you sure you want to go into



Medal of Honor recipient Col. Paris Davis (ret), center, is congratulated by members of American Legion Post 24 June 17 after being presented with a lifetime honorary membership to the American Legion.

Special Forces? I don’t see a lot of people who look like you there.’ But

I was inspired by President Kennedy, who created the Special Forces, and wanted to be a part of it. I knew what I was getting into.”

In attendance at the reception were Alexandria Police Chief Don Hayes, Sheriff Sean Casey, former Mayor Allison Silberberg, and Jerry Krueger, Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 609.

Mike Mixon, Commander of American Legion Post 24, was joined by several Legion members in a pre-

sentation to Davis of an honorary lifetime membership to Post 24.

Now 84 years old, Davis retired as a colonel in 1985. For 30 years, he published the Metro Herald, an African American newspaper that was headquartered on North Washington Street.

“This is a very special day,” Davis said. “I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of appreciation and gratitude that everyone has shown me here today.”



Vietnam POW Capt. Eugene “Red” McDaniel gives remarks at the June 17 ceremony honoring Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis.



Special Forces veterans Ray Oden and Jim Hooker attend the June 17 ceremony honoring Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis.



Kevin Rue, left, of the Friends of Rocky Versace, gives a tour of Vietnam War memorabilia to Col. Paris Davis June 17 at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.



Mount Vernon Recreation Center director Elsie Akinbobola, second from left, gathers with recreation center staff for a photo with Medal of Honor recipients Brian Thacker, left, and Paris Davis, fourth from right, at the Capt. Rocky Versace Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza in Del Ray.



Medal of Honor recipients Brian Thacker, left, and Paris Davis, salute the Gold Star of Humbert “Rocky” Versace June 17 in Del Ray. Versace received the Medal of Honor posthumously in 2002 for his heroics in Vietnam.

PHOTOS BY MARCEL BASSETT/APD

OPINION

# Racial Equity Toolkit for School Board

To the Editor:  
Our city government has hailed the recent introduction of the Racial Equity Toolkit to “promote racial equity” and “enhance marginalized communities” in our city.

Based on the results of the School Board’s system to select a new Principal for the former T.C. Williams High School, it appears the School Board as well as the marginalized Hispanic community, might mutually benefit from the use of this meticulous Racial Equity Toolkit.

The School Board has recommended solely two African American educators for consideration to become the new Principal at the former T.C. Williams High School despite the student population of both the high school and the entire school system becoming increasingly majority Hispanic.

This must be sadly disappointing to the marginalized Hispanic communities of Arlandria/Chirilagua and the West End, whose self-esteem would significantly benefit from seeing a member of their heritage in a leadership position.

**For example:**

- 38% = racial makeup by Hispanic students in entire ACPS
- 25% = racial makeup by Black students in entire ACPS
- 35% = racial makeup by Hispanics of last High School graduation class
- 27% = racial makeup by Blacks of last High School graduation class
- 10% = racial makeup by Hispanics of High School Staff
- 33% = racial makeup by Blacks of High School Staff

The results of the School Board in this critically important leadership selection appear to contradict their highly publicized mantra of “Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity.” Disappointingly, the marginalized Hispanic students, which make up 38 percent of the student population, continue to make up only 10 percent of the Administration, Leadership and employees of the High School while the stagnant African American population benefits disproportionately.

Perhaps enrollment in the Racial Equity Toolkit Program will result in enlightened results for the School Board and bring the high school Administration, Leadership and employees into a more equitable racial balance.

**Gerald B. File**  
ACPS Graduate  
& Alexandria Resident

## More Plant-based Food Products

Local family owned establishments in Alexandria are listening to consumer demand for plant-based food products. Restaurants such as Fairlington Pizza, Bread & Water Company, Spicy Kraft Indian Bistro, and Dishes of India and others are incorporating new

meat-alternatives options onto their menus. What’s the reason behind this growth of foot traffic for local businesses?

Whether the ethical, environmental or health-re-

SEE MORE PLANT-BASED FOOD, PAGE 8

Alexandria  
**Gazette Packet**

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**NEWS DEPARTMENT:**  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Editor & Publisher**

Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

**Jeanne Theismann**

[jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@TheismannMedia

**Janet Barnett, John Bordner, Mark Mogle**

Contributing Photographers  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Shirley Ruhe**

Contributing Photographer and Writer  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier, Glenda Booth**  
Contributing Writers  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Hope Nelson**

Food Writer  
[hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com)  
@kitchenrecess

**Michael Pope**

Senior Reporter  
[michaelpope@gmail.com](mailto:michaelpope@gmail.com)  
@michaelelope

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# Eviction Nears Crisis Levels in City of Alexandria

Relief funds have run out, and legal protections are slim.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE GAZETTE

Things are tight but going along ok. Then your daughter has an auto accident and then a problem with her student financial aid at college—a double whammy—and another big expense hits. All of a sudden you are two months behind in your rent and the landlord has sent an eviction notice.

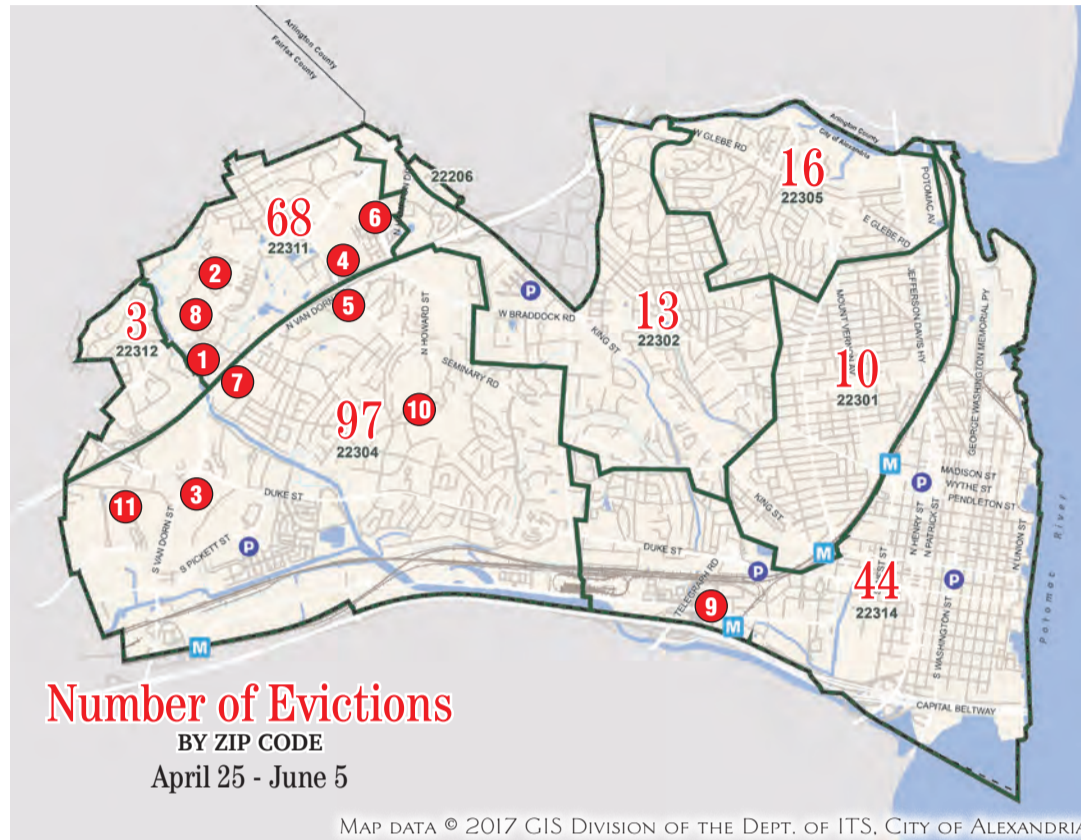
This is what happened to Tracey Barber a month ago. She says the property manager was willing to work with her to find a solution but then the property manager was out for a while “and the assistant property manager didn’t have a heart to nurture or help. They put a notice on my door.” And she explains they can set any date they want for your eviction up to 30 days. “They told me on April 28 I would have to be out by May 10. I really panicked. I didn’t know what to do or where to go with my three kids. One is home from college; my son is on a traveling sports team, and my 14-year-old takes a lot of my attention.”

Barber reached out to several different places, and Christ Church was one of them. “I was hyperventilating. The first thing the staff there told me was to calm down and they were very patient until I could get it together.” She says the staff were on top of it from the beginning and after reviewing her paperwork they told her to give them a day and then she got an email they were waiting for the person to sign the check. “A day or so later they literally walked the check for \$4,940 over to my leasing office.” Now things are back on track.

Liz Denson, assistant to Outreach and Mission at Christ Church, says a number of people are still struggling after Covid and living on very tight margins. These are people who are working. But she says if somebody gets sick and is out of work for a week, or there is a funeral or a baby, it can throw off earnings. Added to the dilemma is the rollback of supplemental SNAP benefits issued during Covid so there is less to spend just as inflation is driving costs up.

Christ Church’s Lazarus ministry program redirected its emergency assistance in September 2022 to focus exclusively on evictions. Denson says the average amount given since September is \$2,800 to pay full back rent, and they have helped 154 households avoid eviction. “The range of their requests is pretty wide from \$5,828 max to \$303 minimum.”

Denson says the Lazarus ministry eviction assistance is targeted on families with children, and Christ Church has focused on sus-



## Evictions by Apartment Complex (5 or more) April 25 - June 5

Plaintiff	Number of Evictions	Address	Zip Code
FPACP3 STRAND/FPACP4 BLVD 2801	19		
1 LYNBROOK AT MARC CENTER	18	5510 Ascot Ct	22311
EQUITY RESIDENT MGMT LLC	14		
2 STONERIDGE AT MARC CENTER	13	5797 Rayburn Ave	22311
BONAVENTURE REALTY GROUP LLC	11		
3 MASON AT VAN DORN	11	140 S Van Dorn St	22304
4 SOUTHERN TOWERS	11	4901 Seminary Rd	22311
5 SEMINARY TOWERS	10	4701 Kenmore Ave Ste 101	22304
6 NEWPORT VILLAGE APARTMENTS	9	4757 W Braddock Rd	22311
FOUNDRY ASSOCIATES OWNER LLC	8		
7 WILLOW RUN AT MARC CENTER	8	935 N Van Dorn St	22304
8 BROOKDALE AT MARK CENTER	6	1400 N Beaugard St	22311
9 CAMERON COURT OF ALEXANDRIA	6	2700 Williamsburg St	22314
CS RIPLEY LLC	6		
10 FOXCHASE	5	766 N Howard St	22304
11 CASCADE AT LANDMARK	5	300 Yoakum Pkwy	22304

Evictions by zip code in Alexandria. Data from the Virginia General District Court Online Case Information System. Compiled By Alexandria Office of Performance Analytics

tainability; the household must have income to support themselves going forward. “But it is very difficult to tell a desperate person that they don’t qualify for the scarce funds available at Christ Church because they don’t have children.”

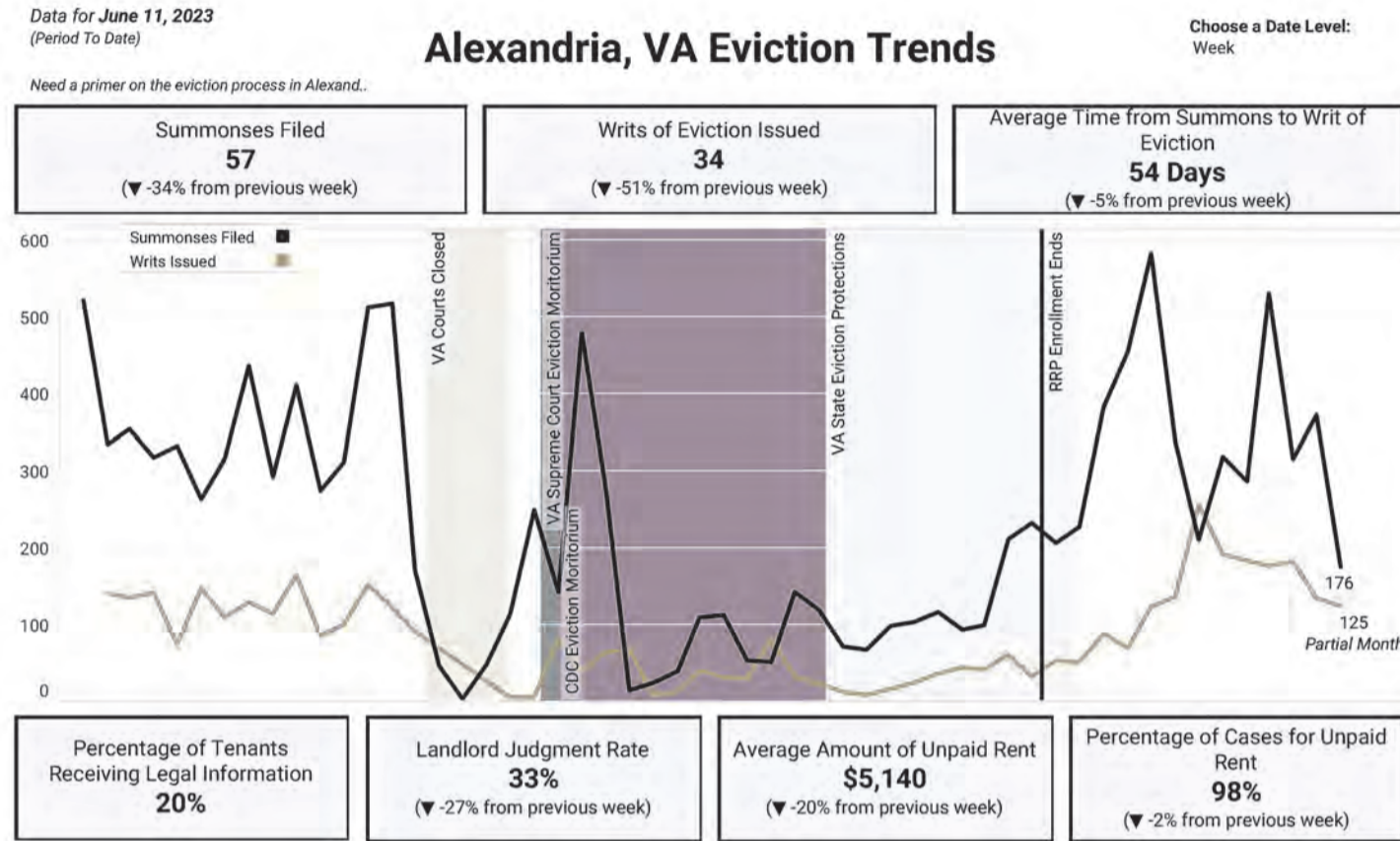
Melanie Gray, Director of Outreach and Mission at Christ Church, says eviction has reached a crisis level. “I feel like people aren’t paying attention. Things are heating up

with 319 people who have court between today and June 29.” Gray adds that shelters are full and they are seeing people who are over 65, those with more mental health issues, and families needing shelter.

Gray says currently everybody has spent their funding to assist with eviction prevention. She says Christ Church got a generous grant of \$100,000 from St. Alfred Street Baptist Church and another \$57,000 grant

provision of tangible aid. “We’re still seeing a high level of need without accompanying funds of support.”

In May ACT distributed the current round of \$400,000 in emergency funding to seven grantees who received \$55,000 each for housing stability. “Three of these grantees are all out of money.” Miller says St. Paul’s Lazarus Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul, ENDEpendence Center and the Old Presbyterian



Eviction trends. Data from the Virginia General District Court Online Case Information System. Compiled by Alexandria Office of Performance Analytics

## How To Help

Give to ACT for Alexandria. ACT for Alexandria is the Community Foundation and issues grants to nonprofit providers, <https://www.actforalexandria.org/>

from ACT for Alexandria in May. But these funds are all gone and the church doesn’t know when to expect more to come. Gray says the city is also out of funds and won’t receive more until the next fiscal year begins July 1.

Gray recommends the best way for people who want to help is to give money to ACT for Alexandria. ACT for Alexandria grants money to nonprofits to meet needs in the City and assists with coordination and forming partnerships.

Shelley Miller, program manager for the ACT housing stability program, says ACT for Alexandria is a Community Foundation which is working with the Department of Community and Human Services to ensure that Alexandria’s ongoing resource needs are met through the provision of tangible aid. “We’re still seeing a high level of need without accompanying funds of support.”

In May ACT distributed the current round of \$400,000 in emergency funding to seven grantees who received \$55,000 each for housing stability. “Three of these grantees are all out of money.” Miller says St. Paul’s Lazarus Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul, ENDEpendence Center and the Old Presbyterian

Meeting House may have some of their \$55,000 grant remaining but it is going fast, and in a month it will all be gone. Miller says some of these places don’t place the same requirement for assistance on families and sustainability as Christ Church.

“The hopeful thing I have seen through all of this is the way providers have come together is incredible,” Miller says. “For instance, somebody who needed \$5,000 recently called a grantee provider but the provider could only help with \$2,000. So it was an incredibly stressful situation. We put our heads together and someone else came up with the rest.”

Denson adds, “It’s really hard. We receive so many calls each week, and we have to tell the people there is no more money left at Christ Church.” She says the volunteers take the brunt speaking to everybody who calls. Now instead of answering calls one Monday a week, they have gone to answering calls every day. “It is very emotional. There is a lot of crying.”

Denson says the homeless shelters are full and there is no money to put the evicted in hotels until a spot becomes available in the shelter. “What will people do? Some are living in cars and some have doubled up with other family members. And the cost of housing continues to rise.”

Mary Horner, Housing Justice Senior Staff Attorney at Legal Services of Northern Virginia said there is a dual crisis.

“First the dollars are gone. The state took over the Rental Relief Program which was the biggest bucket for rental assistance but it ran out. RRP stopped accepting applica-

tions in May 2022. She says Rental Relief Program continued to administer the fund until October 2022. Then abruptly it was gone. Some applications had been approved but the applicants hadn’t responded, and then the dollars ran out. Since the applicants thought they would be receiving the money, they were left holding the bag. She adds the City didn’t plan for that, and there were no dollars to cover the situation.

Second is the lack of legal protections Horner says. “It was changing rapidly during Covid — state, local, so many things changing — but it allowed us to keep people in their home. As of July 2022 almost all laws are no longer friendly.” There was a 14-day notice required before filing an eviction notice. Now it is back to a five-day notice. Horner says Federal law still applies to dwellings receiving Federal funds where the landlord is supposed to give a 30-day notice.

“We don’t have a magic wand when the money goes away but we can make sure they are following the law for the people we are seeing in court right now. Since June 2020, we have operated outreach tables outside the courthouse so people know their rights. This is still a pretty good barometer. We are hearing from people on a daily basis.” She says more and more people are being evicted for lower amounts. They just need to get through that next pay period.

The system is complicated and many of the instructions and informational materials are in English. People may not understand what to do or be afraid to appear in court. They are often desperate and can see no solution in sight. “Rent is increasing all the time and people are being pushed out

## The Eviction Process in Virginia

Landlord issues written notice of lease termination. This is usually 5 days for unpaid rent.

(2) Summons issued with time, date and location for court hearing.

(3) Tenant must appear in court if they wish to challenge the case. If it is for unpaid rent, the tenant may be able to pay by the court date and avoid a judgment.

(4) If the judge rules for the landlord, they can take the next steps to evict you.

(5) The tenant has 10 days to appeal and will need to file the necessary papers and pay all rent owed.

(6) After a judgment the court asks for a writ of eviction and instructs the sheriff to schedule it.

(7) The sheriff will notify the tenant the date and time of eviction; notification must happen at least three days prior to eviction.

(8) Up until two business days before the eviction the tenant might have the right to pay everything they owe and stay in the home.

(9) Unless the court or landlord cancels the eviction, the sheriff will return on the date and time on the notice and physically remove the tenant and have the locks changed.

Information provided by Virginia Poverty Law Center

by factors not related to them like a car accident or wages cut at their second job,” Horner says.

Another issue Horner has been addressing is expunging evictions from the renter’s record. An expungement is an action used to delete all court and police records and could wipe the slate clean for those with previous evictions. Horner says an eviction can be a blight on the tenant’s record and make it more difficult to find new housing since landlords do a background check, and they often view tenants with evictions as a bad rental risk.

She says the lawyers realized they had seen some of these people before and could look up their eviction history before the tenants came to court. “We try to complete the required forms while they are in court.” If you have been found not responsible, you can now expunge your record. She says they have been able successfully complete 700 expungements.

Horner said she invited local policymakers to observe court one day when she had 160 eviction cases. “I told them, ‘this is what an eviction court looks like for your constituents.’ If people who had decision making power knew more about the process, maybe we could get some important policy changes. One of these would be to return to 14 days notification.

“And we need more dollars.” But she confessed, “It’s really hard. I don’t know when burnout is. I keep seeing boulders in front of me.” She explains, “Success is temporary with the need for affordable housing but the losses go so deep, so much heavier.”

## Build Your Own Rain Barrel

The City of Alexandria Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) Stormwater Management Division will host a Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop at Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library (5005 Duke Street) on Saturday, July 8, from 2 – 4 p.m. Each rain barrel costs \$55 and you must register in advance here for this Workshop through the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. [https://nsvswcd-velocitypayment-com.3dcart-stores.com/Build-Your-Own-Rain-Barrel-Workshop\\_p\\_14.html](https://nsvswcd-velocitypayment-com.3dcart-stores.com/Build-Your-Own-Rain-Barrel-Workshop_p_14.html) Space is limited.

Building your own rain barrel reduces the upfront cost of the barrel and also creates a custom-made product unique to your property.

The City recommends using rain barrels to collect and store runoff from roofs that would otherwise flow into the storm sewer network. Making use of residential rain barrels offers the following benefits:

The rainwater stored in these barrels is naturally soft, and better for washing cars or watering indoor/outdoor plants than municipal water treated with dissolved minerals. Save money and water. Using saved water from rain barrels instead of tap water for home landscapes can help reduce your municipal water bill.

The City offers credits towards your stormwater utility fee for installing and properly using a rain barrel on your property. Protect the Chesapeake Bay. Water stored in your rain barrel won’t rush off into our streams. Using the stored rainwater around the home and garden will absorb slowly into the ground, replenishing groundwater supplies.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### FAMILIES SOUGHT TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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

Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures, including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and more. AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world. Those interested in hosting an AFS Exchange Student are encouraged to contact 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit [www.afsusa.org](http://www.afsusa.org) for more information. You can also get involved as an AFS-USA Volunteer. Visit [www.afsusa.org/volunteer](http://www.afsusa.org/volunteer) to get started or learn more about opportunities to make a difference.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

**THE CHAMBER ALX**

THE CHAMBER ALX ANNOUNCES OUR 2023

## 40 UNDER 40 HONOREES

- Eighth Class
- 40 Honorees
- 2 Youth Honorees
- Tickets are now available to celebrate our honorees at the 40 Under 40 Awards Celebration, presented by The Jen Walker Team on July 20!

Get your tickets at [thechamberalx.com](http://thechamberalx.com)

## OPINION

# More Plant-based Food Products

FROM PAGE 5

lated avenues of enjoying plant-based dining to restaurants priorities remains to be seen.

Ultimately, business-owners are focused on the financial bottom line.

Local staples are driving change following market-trends. These products are competitive in price, taste and convenience. In 2023, Northern Virginians are pushing for change in our community for a revamped food system moving forward.

**Thomas Goodman**  
Alexandria



## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

### 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.volunteeralx.org](http://www.volunteeralx.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.volunteeralx.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 volun-

teer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

**Join Friends' Board.** Those who care about mental health, the 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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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**Mount Vernon Gazette**

**Potomac ALMANAC**

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Independence Day Fireworks will be held on June 30 and July 1 at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

## JUNE 30 AND JULY 1

**Independence Day Fireworks.** At George Washington's Mount Vernon. Enjoy an evening of family fun and Independence Day fireworks along with patriotic music to celebrate the nation's founding. Guests also can attend a special wreath-laying at Washington's Tomb, watch colonial ice cream-making demonstrations, and enjoy 18th-century dancing. The Mansion will be lit in red, white, and blue during this event scheduled for June 30 and July 1.

## NOW THRU JULY 15

**Alexander D'Agostino: "A Shrine for the Forgotten" Exhibition.** At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Baltimore-based solo artist exhibition recipient, Alexander D'Agostino, presents "A Shrine for the Forgotten." The work explores queer histories and images, through performance, installation, and reclaiming material from queer archives and other cultural resources related to the historic marginalization of LGBTQ people.

## NOW THRU JUNE 25

**Kandinski.** At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show "Kandinsky," which will run from May 23, 2023-June 25, 2023, featuring fiber art interpretations of Kandinsky's paintings.

## JUNE 1-AUGUST 31

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

## NOW THRU JUNE 25

**The "American Patchwork" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that highlights the diversity of cultures, landscapes, and artistic styles that make up the American experience. The exhibit broadly explores and captures the patchwork spirit of the United States and her people. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Reception: Friday, June 2, 7-9pm. Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

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

## JUNE

23 The Revelers (Swamp Pop)  
30 Collective Delusion (Rock)

## JULY

7 Kickoman (Latin/Reggae)  
14 Burn the Ballroom (Alternative Rock)  
21 King Teddy (Swing)  
28 The HalfSmokes (WHFS Playlists/Alternative Rock)

## AUGUST

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

## FRANCONIA NIGHTS CONCERTS

Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30 p.m.  
At Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.

## JULY

5 Natyabhoomi School of Dance (Indian Dance and Music)  
12 The Pietasters (Ska)  
19 Chuck Brown Band (Go Go/Funk/Soul)  
26 Silver Tones Swing Band (Swing Dance)

## AUGUST

2 Pablo Perez El Alcalde de la Salsa (Salsa)  
9 Alexandria Harmonizers (Chorus)  
16 The Nighthawks (Blues)

23 Dave Kline Band (World Jazz Fusion)

## OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT MUSIC SERIES

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

June 21 - Tobago Bay Calypso  
June 28 - Adrian Duke Project  
July 12 - Melissa Quinn Fox  
July 19 - Vaughn Ambrose and the SJE  
July 26 - Amafujo's Moodswings  
August 2 - Chris Barrick Vibes and Organ Trio  
August 9 - Sol Roots  
August 16 - Delta Spur

## SUNDAY SOUNDS ON THE PROMENADE

**Free Concerts.** 11:30-1:30 p.m. At 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Yellow Door Music Concert Series presents a musical lineup of artists on select Sundays.

June 25 - Damon Foreman  
July 30 - Vaughn Ambrose Jazz Trio  
August 27 - Trifilio Tango Music  
On August 27th, in honor of National Dog Day that weekend, Robinson Landing encourages individuals to bring their dog out for a yappy social for play and fun for your furry ones.

The full event schedule of Robinson Landing programming is located at [www.RobinsonLanding.com/WaterfrontEvents](http://www.RobinsonLanding.com/WaterfrontEvents).

## JUNE 15-JULY 23

**Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan Exhibit.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan are presenting a vibrant body of work at the Athenaeum Gallery. Drefs and Nolan both play with bold lines and color in a way that is complementary of the other's work and style. Drefs' abstract pieces are highlighted by their layered components, and almost transparent

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

## Obituary

## Obituary

### Kathleen Mary McCarthy Sober 1965 – 2023



Kathleen Sober's journey in life ended on June 14, 2023, in Alexandria, Virginia, at her home with her husband and family. Kathleen was born at the US Naval Academy on April 7, 1965, to Donald and Valerie McCarthy and was raised in a traditional Irish / Navy family with three sisters, Deirdre, Megan and Erin and two brothers, Donald and Brian. As the daughter of a Naval Officer, she lived in Annapolis, Hawaii, Mechanicsburg, PA. Fairfax, Virginia and finally in Alexandria, Virginia.

She graduated from James W. Robinson Jr Secondary School in 1983 and went on to the College of William and Mary, graduating in 1987 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management. Throughout her school years, she was very athletic, succeeding in track, swimming, and excelling at soccer, as a defender on the W&M Women's Soccer Team. After college graduation and short work experiences at US Naval Sea Systems Command, she accepted a position at Planning Research Corporation (PRC / Litton Industries) as a Contracts Manager. Upon completing the Contracting & Government Procurement Program (CPCM & NCMA) at George Washington University, she rapidly advanced to Senior Contracts Manager managing several large PRC contracts with the Federal Government.

While at PRC she qualified for the PRC Sports Battle Team, a team that supported the area's commitment to support the Special Olympics Program. While on the team she met and married the love of her life, Harry Sober, a Program Management Leader at PRC soon to become part of Northrop Grumman Corporation.

Kathleen & Harry spent many years together building several cabins at Deep Creek Lake, Maryland. They vacationed there often with Harry's son, Sean, his wife Jen and their grandson Ashton.

Kathleen moved into a senior line management Operations Director position with Unisys and then accepted a COO leadership role with E3 Federal Systems.

In June 2018, with her current business partner, Will Fortier, they designed, developed and established their own Government Contracting Company which became operational in June 2019. Since they knew the company would be as busy as bees, they named the company Hive Group and for sure, Kathleen was their "Queen Bee!" She was CEO and partnered with President Will Fortier to grow a high performing government consulting firm, where she was known for her focus and passion on employee growth, customer satisfaction and delivery excellence.

In early 2023, Kathleen was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In her final months, she was loved and cared for by her husband and family supported by Vitas, a hospice organization. Her end of life's journey came shortly thereafter. She leaves her husband Harry Sober, his son Sean and wife Jen, and grandson Ashton. She also leaves her three sisters, Deirdre White and her husband Mark, Megan McCarthy, and Erin McCarthy, and two brothers, Donald McCarthy and wife Jaki, and Brian McCarthy and wife Meredith. Also, her parents Donald and Valerie McCarthy, her Aunt Kathleen Hammel and ten nieces and nephews, Keiley, Brennen, Riley, Colin, Kira, Rohan, Hannah, Aidan, Grace, and Clare.

Her Celebration of life will be at a later date as will her inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery. Her husband has served in the US Army. He was both a Company Commander for the 1st Bn / 19th Infantry, 24th Infantry Division, Mechanized, in Augsburg, Germany and as a Captain, Operational Detachment Alfa Leader for the 11th Special Forces Group, Airborne.

In honoring Kathleen's wishes, in lieu of flowers, the Hive Group has established the "Kathleen McCarthy Sober Endowment Foundation" ("for" memo on checks) scholarship program supporting the Women's Soccer Team at William & Mary. The address is: Jarrad Turner, William & Mary Athletics, PO Box 399 Williamsburg, VA 23817.

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## 18 New Police Officers; 15 New Sheriff's Deputies

City of Alexandria Police Department and Sheriff's Office announce the graduation of 18 police officers and 15 sheriff's deputies from the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy on Friday, June 16, 2023.

The graduation took place at the Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Va.

Multiple outstanding recruits graduated with honors.

APD Officer Michael Mattern earned the distinguished honor of receiving the Director's Award for Academic Excellence for the highest overall score in the law enforcement academy. Ofc. Mattern also was the overall top performer in the firearms portion, shooting 100% in all three qualification courses.

ASO Deputy Derek Mainville earned the Director's Award for Academic Excellence for the highest overall score of the combined deputy and law enforcement school. Deputy Mainville also tied for second in Excellence in Emergency Vehicle Operations Course Award and third in the male physical fitness category.

APD Officer Kurt Wiegand earned top honors for finishing first in physical fitness among men and performing over 300 straight push-ups, setting a new record for the academy.

Welcome: Ofc. Adam Aguirre, Ofc. Alex Anderson, Ofc. Alexander Burgos, Ofc. Jackson Hill, Ofc. Cory Ingram, Ofc. Joshua Jackson, Ofc. Dayja Jenkins, Ofc. Jose Lopez-Martinez, Ofc. Ryan Maher, Ofc. Michael Mattern, Ofc. Quincy Nelson, Ofc. Matthew Poe, Ofc. Ahmad Rahim, Ofc. Liam M. Reilly, Ofc. Jonah Ridgeway, Ofc. Jonathan Tyler, Ofc. Kristina Wheeler, Ofc. Kurt Wiegand, Deputy Anwar Bowman, Deputy Erica Eugene, Deputy Japaulus Hall, Deputy Gambo Ibrahim, Deputy Ehsan Khan, Deputy Derek Mainville, Deputy Jacqueline Perez-Carrillo, Deputy Shandra Redfearn, Deputy Corey Reiner, Deputy Ashonti Rice, Deputy Marc Rosario, Deputy Danyal Sran, Deputy Gregory Stillman II, Deputy Joshua Storella, and Deputy Jessica Tarius.

The cohort completed 20 weeks of training, including emergency vehicle operations, firearms training, defensive and control tactics, crash investigation, de-escalation techniques, basic legal training, and other areas of study. Deputies also completed additional training in jail operations, courthouse security, and civil process.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 9

hues that show all the details in the paintings. While Nolan shows more figurative forms that have a raw quality to the finished product through the strong paint strokes and bold gestural motions, which display the realness of the subject.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 24

**Alexandria Baroque.** 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. A Period-instrument Duo of Baroque Violin and Lute. Stop by for an engaging one-hour afternoon performance featuring duos for violin and lute from the 18th-century composers J.S. Bach, Silvius Leopold Weiss, Fridrich Wilhelm Rust, Paul Charles Durant, and colonial American tunes.

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 28

**Concert in the Garden.** 6-8 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. The evening garden concert promises to captivate both music enthusiasts and garden lovers alike, offering an enchanting experience that harmonizes the beauty of gardens with the power of live music. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets, pack a picnic dinner and kick back to hear the lively music. Come early and enjoy fun activities and a special guest appearance with Ribbit the Frog. The Green Spring Concert in the Garden is made possible by a partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Friends of Green Spring (FROGS).

## THURSDAY/JUNE 29

**Music at the Manor.** 5-7 p.m. At River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria. River Farm presents its first-ever Music at the Manor, a sunset evening featuring live music by 2 dames and a stand-up dude. Mary Bowers, Lynne White, and Scott Freeman are 2 dames and a stand-up dude. They play an array of cover songs that span several decades and multiple genres; from Bossa Nova and show tunes like Girl from Ipanema and Fly Me to the Moon to singer-songwriter and contemporaries like Sheryl Crow and the Indigo

Girls, with some country and Americana tossed into the mix. Guests are encouraged to pack a blanket and picnic basket with their choice food and beverage for an evening of crowd-pleasing tunes at sunset along the Potomac River. The BYOB outdoor garden event is free and open to the public.

## JULY 1, 2023

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

## SUNDAY/JULY 9

**The Capitol Collective Chamber Ensemble.** 2 p.m. The Capitol Collective Chamber Ensemble is partnering with the Athenaeum to present an afternoon of chamber music. Consisting primarily of DC military band musicians, they seek to promote accessible chamber music throughout the DMV area. Enjoy works for strings, winds, brass, and percussion in this program featuring composers Jesse Montgomery, Ivan Trevino, Aaron Copland, and Jean Francaix.

## 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](http://www.Birchmere.com).

## JUNE

Thu. 22: The Voice of The Moody Blues JUSTIN HAYWARD with Mike Dawes \$79.50  
Fri. 23: Tarsha Fitzgerald Productions Presents "THE VOICES" Tribute To Motown \$35.00  
Sat. 24: After 7 \$75.00  
Fri. 30: Newmyer Flyer Presents The Songs of Burt Bacharach & Hal David \$39.50

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 8

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](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com).

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

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

**Volunteer Drivers Needed.** Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to [cancer.org/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

**RSVP,** a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP

volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

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

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

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Postpartum Support** Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at [suzjdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:suzjdoyle@gmail.com) or 571-403-0673.

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**CENTRE VIEW**

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

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

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk.

The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

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

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

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Connection Newspapers—Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette, Centre View, Potomac Almanac  
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## Back to Abnormal



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Life in the cancer lane: slow and steady, thank God! And after 14 years and nearly six months past a terminal "13 month to two years" prognosis given in late Feb. 2009, "I am pleased as punch," to quote the late Hubert H. Humphrey, our 38th Vice President, serving Lyndon B. Johnson from 1965 – 1969, to say I am still in the game, the game of life, that is. This is no board game, however. Although, it can get very boring.

A game for which there are rules and responsibilities, although few guarantees (other than death and taxes, of course). Let me amend that. There is one guarantee: after a cancer diagnosis, your life will never be the same. Every action and reaction will likely be affected by your diagnosis, treatment, tolerance to chemotherapy/cancer medicine and any number of cancer-related appointments, as well as a variety of side effects which are often the inevitable result of your treatment (which is likely keeping you alive), and by your support system. Any joie de vivre you can muster under these extremely difficult circumstances will be welcome indeed. Sustaining that joie, however, can be challenging. As my close friend and breast-cancer survivor Lynne had advised us years ago at the beginning of our cancer journey concerning what to expect: "This will be the toughest thing you've ever had to endure," she said. And needless to say, although I'll say it anyway, she was 100% correct: "Cancer is not for cissies." (You can thank Suzanne Somers for little ditty.) It says it, and it's simple. But receiving a cancer diagnosis is anything but simple. It's the proverbial boom being lowered atop your head. And when I first received it from my oncologist, I sat stunned at what I was hearing. I said to myself: "How is this possible? I have never smoked cigarettes in my life." (I have since found out that up to 25 percent of lung cancer patients are non-smokers.)

Moreover, navigating the slings and arrows of your outrageous misfortune can get overwhelming. In fact, the medical industry has created a profession specifically to assist the patient in managing their care (scheduling appointments, ordering drugs, following miscellaneous protocols and in short, trying to help the cancer patient in any way possible to simplify and organize the demands of their diagnosis); so you have a chance, an assist even, in living your most rewarding, least worrisome life – under the circumstances. Nurse navigator is their name and helping the patient is their game. Family and friends are a great and necessary support system. Without their encouragement, patience and understanding, a cancer patient would be hard-pressed to endure the ordeal – which cancer treatment most definitely is. But what goes on in the hospital or infusion center is likely beyond their expertise. Having an in-house resource could make all the difference in your life.

And it is not a tangled web they weave. Quite the opposite. The nurse navigator's task is to untangle and cut through any figurative web that is interfering in your life. My oncologist has regularly encouraged me to do things to try and enhance the quality of my life. Because cancer is hard. Keeping up to date and current with all the cancer responsibilities, especially when trying to integrate/schedule it around your non-cancer/pre-cancer life, is nearly impossible. It's difficult to plan a future – which is measured in weeks or quarters, for recurring lab tests, doctor's appointments, infusions, and diagnostic scans when your present is so chalk-full of commitments. Commitments/appointments which could change if any result causes a delay. The cascade effect of rescheduled appointments will play havoc with any future plans – for what was passing as your normal-type life, anyway. Because once the word cancer is uttered in your direction, your life as you have known it is over and normal has very definitely left the building.

But if you don't find a path forward and stagnant/struggle instead with your present while trying to arrange and in many instances rearrange your future, it will make "Jack" a very dull boy, and not one who's able to live a normal-type life at all. And if you don't find a way to get a few highs, the lows, as cancer can certainly cause them, will more often than not, grind you to a screeching halt. If you do find them, you may still succumb to your disease but at least you'll do so in your own way with some sort of control (most of which you lose once your cancer diagnosis is confirmed). After all, if you're going to die, you might as well set the terms.

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

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