

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 24, 2024

## Stepping Up

Hundreds help raise \$88k for ALIVE!

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**M**ore than 450 participants took to the streets of Alexandria in the 43rd annual StepALIVE! Walk-a-thon, helping the nonprofit raise more than \$88,000 to serve at-risk communities.

“Not only is this event ALIVE!’s largest single fundraising day, but it also creates a space for our community to come together and take a step toward alleviating food insecurity and housing insecurity in the City of Alexandria,” said ALIVE! Executive Director Jennifer Ayers, “We continue to see an elevated level of need from people who seek access to food and other essentials, and the only way that ALIVE! has been able to sustain our programs that serve roughly 20,000 people each month is through strong community partnerships and the ongoing support of people in Alexandria.”

The 5-mile and 5k routes led walkers past many of the congregations that participate in ALIVE!’s work throughout the year. Fifty

faith communities work together to provide guidance, volunteers, and financial support to the organization.

Both Congregation and Community Teams were recognized with trophies for their fundraising efforts on behalf of ALIVE! Congregation Team Community Praise Church and Community Team Cameron Station Striders Plus were recognized for recruiting the largest teams of walkers, while the Congregation Team from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington and the Community Team made up of Church of Washington Street were recognized for raising the most donations for this event.

“It’s always inspiring to see hundreds of people gather in support of ALIVE!’s work to provide a safety net for our neighbors in need,” said event committee chair Jennifer Ferrara. “We have such a caring community and events like this help to highlight the people who are working together to make a difference.”

In addition to the walk through Alexandria, this event featured music from the Alexandria Citizens Band and Mountain Melody Band,



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria’s Town Crier, Ben Fiore-Walker, center, poses for a photo with participants in the StepALIVE! Walk-a-Thon Oct. 20 at First Christian Church.

a warm up lead by Sarita Bartaula of Pacers Running, remarks from Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and Alexandria’s Town Crier Ben Fiore-Walker, and a 50/50 Raffle.

Sponsors included 67 congregations, local organizations, and businesses including Voyager Level Sponsor Blaszkow Legal, and Trail-

blazer Sponsorships from Westminster Presbyterian Church, The Old Town Festival of Speed and Style, and Amazon.

ALIVE! is the largest organization preventing food and housing insecurity in Alexandria The organization serves 20,000 individuals each month through key program-

ing areas of food, housing, and financial assistance.

Added Ferrara, “As we enter this season of giving, I hope that people in our community consider donating food or giving financially so that ALIVE! can continue this important work.”

[www.alive-inc.org](http://www.alive-inc.org)



Participants from United Bank pose for a team photo at the StepALIVE! fundraiser Oct. 20 at First Christian Church.



Community Praise Church members pose for a photo at the StepALIVE! fundraiser Oct. 20 at First Christian Church.



Walkers participate in the Oct. 20 StepALIVE! Walk-a-Thon to raise funds for ALIVE!



# Drug TAKE BACK Day

DISPOSE OF UNUSED OR EXPIRED MEDICATIONS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 | 10 A.M.-2 P.M.



Pet prescriptions also accepted!

ALEXANDRIAVA.GOV/OPIOIDS | PREVENTITALEXANDRIA.ORG

## SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

The U.S. is experiencing an opioid epidemic and Alexandria is far from immune. The best way to fight this epidemic is to dispose of unused or expired prescription and over-the-counter medication. Individuals can drop off medication at these designated locations during this event or year-round at a permanent drop box location. Never flush medication down the toilet or place down the sink! Unsafe disposal of drugs can harm the environment.

To learn more about the importance of safe medication disposal, visit [alexandriava.gov/Opioids](https://alexandriava.gov/Opioids).

## Alexandria Take Back Day Drop-Off Locations\*

<b>Alexandria Police Headquarters</b> 3600 Wheeler Ave.	<b>The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray</b> 2204 Mt. Vernon Ave.
<b>Alexandria Fire Station 210</b> 5255 Eisenhower Ave.	<b>Walgreens Pharmacy</b> 3614 King St.
<b>Woodbine Rehab. &amp; Health Center</b> 2729 King St.	

\*NO NEEDLES ACCEPTED AT THESE SITES

## Can't make it to Drug Take Back Day? Dispose of medications year-round at one of these permanent drug drop box locations!

<b>The Neighborhood Pharmacy</b> 2204 Mount Vernon Ave. Monday-Friday: 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday: Closed	<b>Alexandria Police Headquarters</b> 3600 Wheeler Ave. Just inside the entrance Available 24/7
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**Inova Alexandria Hospital**  
4320 Seminary Rd.  
Emergency Department  
Available 24/7

**NEEDLE DISPOSAL BOX ALSO AVAILABLE AT THIS LOCATION!**



## ENTERTAINMENT



Alexandria Ghost Tours and Haunted Pub Crawls have started at various locations in Old Town Alexandria.

### ONGOING

**Alexandria Ghost Tours and Haunted Pub Crawls.** Alexandria Ghosts offers guided ghost tours and adults-only haunted pub crawls nightly that highlight the city's dark history and unique local lore highlighting Alexandria's haunted history. The tours feature stories from historic sites and iconic locations like the Carlyle House, Ramsey House, and the infamous Wilkes Tunnel. Each experience transports you to the city's eerie past, a time before it was a trendy place to live, work, and play. Alexandria has a tragic history so disturbing it's often hidden from tourists who descend upon the city daily.

The Four Terrifying Tour Experiences of Alexandria Ghosts:

1. Alexandria Ghosts: Phantoms of the Potomac: Explore Alexandria's haunted history as you follow in the ghostly footsteps of George Washington and other restless spirits in this colonial city.
  2. Alexandria Ghosts Boos and Booze Haunted Pub Crawl: Combine history, hauntings, and a lively pub crawl in Alexandria's haunted bars.
  3. Alexandria Ghosts Ultimate Dead of Night Haunted Ghost Tour: A deep dive into Alexandria's eerie past, from Native American history to Civil War hauntings.
- ❖ Meeting Locations: 323 Cameron St, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Phantoms of the Potomac); 138 N Royal St, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Pub Crawl & Ultimate Dead of Night Tour); 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Washington's Footsteps). Visit <https://alexandriaghosts.com>.

### WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

**Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallship-providence.org/>

### GROW WITH YOUR GARDEN AT GREEN SPRING GARDEN TALKS

**The Park Authority is here to help gardeners this fall with a plant-tastic lineup of Green Spring Garden Talks, 4603 Green Spring Road in Alexandria.** Learn some tips and techniques that will spruce up your plants and other "soil-mates" with the help from fellow gardeners, VCE Master Gardeners and naturalists. All events are held at Green Spring Gardens and are \$12 per person. Additional fees apply for out-of-county residents. Make a Backyard Sanctuary for Wildlife. Saturday, Oct. 26, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Learn gardening techniques for attracting pollinators, birds and other native insects into your garden to improve habitat loss.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11



Celebrate Old Town Family Trick or Treat on Saturday, Oct. 26, 2024 at various locations in Old Town Alexandria.

## Experience The Dialysis Difference

Introducing our On-Site Hemodialysis Unit, in partnership with Nova Dialysis, providing advanced care and personalized services to meet all your dialysis needs.

### Clinical Capabilities:

- IV Antibiotics
- Vent & Trach Dialysis
- Short-Term Dialysis Management

### Comprehensive Services Include:

- Consultative Visits by On-Staff Nephrologists
- On-Site Cardiology & Pulmonary Rounding
- Health Coaching & Dietary Education
- Routine Medical Management of Co-Morbidities
- CKD Monthly Support Group led by community CKD experts
- Dialysis Wing
- Dedicated Transport Aides
- Full Case Management Services
- 24/7 Guest Service

**WOODBINE**  
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

Learn more about our on-campus Hemodialysis Program, call us today!

703.836.8838 • [WoodbineRehab.com](http://WoodbineRehab.com)  
2729 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302





Costumed witches demonstrate a science experiment during the ninth annual Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.



A "mad scientist" demonstrates a chocolate experiment at the Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

# Spooky Science Mad Science Expo inspires STEAM learning.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**H**undreds of future astronauts, scientists, mathematicians and engineers turned out for the 9th annual Chrysalis Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at the Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

The popular event, which combines Halloween and science learning projects, is the brainchild of Watergate at Landmark resident Zohreh Khoshnamak, who founded the community's Science Club. The volunteer-based event began as a way to serve

**“We strive to inspire the next generation of innovators, problem solvers, and leaders in the fields of science and technology.”**

— Mad Science Expo founder  
Zohreh Khoshnamak

the families at The Watergate at Landmark, which has around 4,000 residents, but outgrew the residential complex and now attracts families from throughout the city.

“This event has become a cherished tradition in our community, bringing families and children together to explore the wonders of science in an engaging and enjoyable man-



Children participate in a science experiment at the Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

ner,” Khoshnamak said. “We have more than 50 national size and local organizations, including USPTO, NASA, NSF, ACS, Smithsonian Museum, Navy, USMC, Air force and universities like UMD, VT, and GMU, along

with several nonprofits and robotic teams. It's a highly popular event for both vendors and families, celebrating Halloween and science together.”

SEE MAD SCIENCE EXPO, PAGE 4



A display at the Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at Patrick Hendry Recreation Center.



# Aw Shucks

**Fish Market repeats as oyster shucking champs.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he competition was fierce, but in the end it was the Fish Market that took top honors for the second year in a row at the 5th annual Oyster Week Oyster Shucking contest Oct. 12 in Old Town.

Sponsored by the Old Town

Business Association, the contest kicked off Oyster Week, which ran Oct. 12-20, with several restaurants featuring oyster specials.

Representatives from local restaurants were judged on shucking speed as well as the quality of presentation.

The Fish Market representative shucked and plated a dozen oysters in 44 seconds. Whiskey & Oyster came in second at 1 minute and

36 seconds followed by Vola's at 1 minute and 44 seconds.

At the Vola's Oyster Fest held Oct. 5 at the City Dock, Levin Kates of Rock Point, Md., skillfully bested the competition under the watchful eye of Vola's executive chef Javier Rodriguez. Old Town's John Bordner was a distant second to Kates, who grew up shucking oysters in Cape Charles.

[www.oldtownbusiness.org](http://www.oldtownbusiness.org)

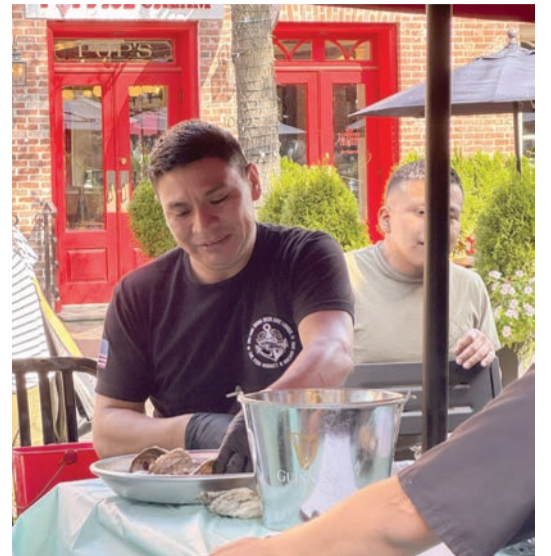


PHOTO BY  
CHARLOTTE  
HALL/OTBA

**The Fish Market took top honors in the oyster shucking contest Oct. 12 at O'Connell's to kick off Oyster Week in Old Town.**



Attendees watch the oyster shucking contest Oct. 12 in front of O'Connell's in Old Town.



Levin Kates, left, won the oyster shucking contest at Vola's Oyster Fest Oct. 5 at the City Dock. At right is Vola's executive chef Javier Rodriguez.

PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

# Mad Science Expo Inspires STEAM Learning

FROM PAGE 3

The event is the only community-based science event of its size in the region and provides students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). More than 50 organizations participated in the event and provided hands-on demonstrations for attendees.

Interest in the event has grown continuously over the years with more than 500 attending this year's event. Highlights included STEAM activities, a costume parade and contest, Live DJ and food trucks.

"We were limited in size due to the nature of our gated community," said Khoshnamak in explaining last year's move to Armistead Boothe Park and this year to Patrick Henry Recreation Center. "Our primary objective is to provide more students in Alexandria's West End, which has many low-income families with limited access to opportunities, and their families with interactive and engaging activities, exciting exhibits, and demonstrations. We strive to inspire the next generation of innovators, problem solvers, and leaders in the fields of science and technology."

<https://chrysalisdg.org/spooky-mad-science-expo>



Participants prepare for the costume contest at the Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.



A participant sets up Candy Corn bingo at the Spooky Mad Science Expo Oct. 19 at the Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



# Nine Candidates Seeking Six Seats

On the ballot for City Council: Six Democrats, two independents, one Republican.

Early voting begins  
Friday, Sept. 20

BY JAMES LIBRESCO  
AND MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Voters, get your ballots ready. In-person absentee voting starts Friday, and all six seats on the Alexandria City Council are up for grabs.

In a series of interviews with the Alexandria Gazette Packet in collaboration with Alexandria City High School's student newspaper Theogony, nine candidates for six seats reveal that they are sharply divided over everything from election processes to bike lanes. The four Democratic incumbents and two Democratic candidates support programs like Zoning for Housing and Duke Street in Motion.










The two independents and one Republican offer an alternative to recent trends at City Hall, including free DASH buses and a failed arena proposal.

"There is no effective opposition to the Democratic Party in any organized way, and it's very similar to what you see in the rural parts of Virginia. Just flip the colors," said Jeremy Mayer, associate professor in the Schar School at George Mason University. "You see in one community in rural Virginia, they are the only place in the nation that reversed and went back to Confederate names, and they did that because the Republicans are so dominant that no one could stop them. So Democrats when they are in uniform control of a local government, they may go too far."

Labor groups are playing an outsized role in this election cycle. While real-estate developers usually dominate the money game, this year has seen a flood of campaign cash from NOVA Area Labor Federation and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. A group known as Workers Vote made a \$26,000 in-kind donation to one of the candidates for paid canvassing. The spending spree comes at a time when city workers and school employees are finally able to engage in competitive bargaining after anti-labor restrictions were overturned in 2020.

"A historic wave of workers are proving that the only way to improve their jobs is through a union," says Jaime Contreras, chairman of the SEIU State Council for the Commonwealth. "These candidates understand it's in everyone's best interest to ensure workers earn enough to support their families and our economy through local spending."

## City Council Election 2024 WHERE THEY STAND

									
Party	DEM.	DEM.	DEM.	DEM.	DEM.	DEM.	REP.	IND.	IND.
Zoning for Housing									
More bike lanes									
Cooperate with ICE	Did not directly answer						Did not directly answer		Did not directly answer
2nd high school									
Free DASH							Free for students, discounts for residents	Free for low-income residents	Free, but just in the short term
Ward elections	Open to hybrid					No, but open to the idea			Pilot program
Duke St. in Motion									

GRAPHIC BY JAMES LIBRESCO

### John Chapman



**Raised: \$111,000**  
top donors  
 ❖ \$8,500 from Reginald James Brown, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP  
 ❖ \$5,000 from labor group NOVA Area Labor Federation  
 ❖ \$5,000 from Danielle Romanetti, owner of fibre space  
 ❖ \$3,000 from labor group International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
 ❖ \$2,000 from Jack Taylor at Alexandria Toyota

Democrat John Chapman is a fourth-term city councilman, a community-use program specialist for Fairfax County's school system and a tour guide for the Manumission Tour Company, which he founded.

A fourth-generation Alexandrian, Chapman attended St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School before heading up north to St. Olaf's College, where he received an undergraduate degree in social studies education. He then moved back to Alexandria, where he worked in the Alexandria and Fairfax county school systems and eventually became an administrator.

Outside of council, Chapman has held positions on several boards, including the Youth Policy Commission, the Redevelopment and Housing Authority task force and the HIV/AIDS Commission. By far the candidate with the most city government experience, Chapman has served on council for the last 12 years.

"There's still work that needs to be done," Chapman said. "Policy work continues, so there's a need for good people to get involved and stay involved."

Among the policy work Chapman says he

is passionate about is affordable housing. He voted in favor of Zoning for Housing, and says he hopes it can "provide additional options for people in various, socioeconomic backgrounds to find housing." To further address the housing crisis, Chapman said he would like to "advocate for additional support" at the state and federal levels on things like increasing the state housing trust fund instead of further raising city taxes. He says he wishes the Potomac Yards arena deal had "panned out" because he says it could have provided revenue towards housing affordability and programs like rental assistance vouchers.

"Right now we commit a lot of our dollars to new housing opportunities, but people who are already in housing are also struggling to afford it," Chapman said. "The rental voucher program would address some of those people's needs, but we need additional resources to do it."



# Nine Candidates Seeking Six Seats

## Chapman

As for transportation, Chapman says he supports keeping DASH buses free “as long as high ridership continues” and would like to expand bike lanes and sidewalks to ensure residents can “be safe moving around the city.” He says he supports the Duke Street in Motion project, as “something has to be done to get people to move around,” though acknowledged there is room for improvement before it is finalized.

Chapman says he is “not super excited” about the idea of switching to ward-based city council elections, though he says he’s open to a hybrid model that includes at-large positions. Though Chapman did not directly respond to a question asking if he would support city cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in the event of a second Donald J. Trump presidency, he says he would look to what the council has “historically done.” (Alexandria turns over some inmates to ICE voluntarily, though this process has decreased in recent years. In 2018, the sheriff’s department transferred 121 inmates to ICE, compared to 33 in 2023.)

## Kirk McPike



- Raised: \$108,000**  
top donors
- ❖ \$6,000 from the candidate
  - ❖ \$5,000 from labor group NOVA Area Labor Federation
  - ❖ \$3,000 from labor group International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
  - ❖ \$2,500 from Reginald James Brown, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP
  - ❖ \$2,000 from labor group United Brotherhood of Carpenters

Democrat Kirk McPike is a first-term councilman who works as chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA 39). Born in Dallas, McPike attended Southern Methodist University and received an undergraduate degree in political science. He remained in Dallas for several years, coordinating and running campaigns for local Democrats. In 2010, he moved to Alexandria to manage Adam Ebbin’s campaign for state Senate District 39. Settling in the city, he chaired the Economic Opportunities Commission and worked on the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee, with a special focus on housing affordability. His first time running for office was in 2021, when he was elected to the City Council.

“I’m very proud of the things that we’ve done on this council and the investments we’ve made,” McPike said. “We’ve achieved a lot in the last three years, but challenges still remain and we need to stay focused on addressing them.”

Among the “investments” referenced by McPike are those into affordable housing, which he says was the reason he ran for office in the first place. If elected again, McPike says he would support the implementation of further stages of Zoning for Housing, of which he is a self-described “big proponent,” although he says he would prefer to monitor current changes before implementing new ones. In the meantime, McPike says he would like to increase funding to the city affordable housing trust fund, even if it would mean possibly raising property taxes. He also supports “looking at what would be involved” in a housing voucher system.

“I think we need to take a look at every possible tool that we could use to make housing more affordable for folks,” McPike said.

McPike also says he is enthusiastic about alternate forms of transportation. Cycling is “one of the main ways” he gets around the city, and McPike supports the Duke Street in Motion project as it strengthens his goal of building a “comprehensive, safe bicycle lane network” throughout Alexandria.

“Obviously, you can’t put a bike lane on every road in the city,” he said. “But we do need to make sure that you can use our bike lane network, whether you choose to drive, bike, or ride one of our free DASH buses, ... and you will pull free DASH buses out of my cold, dead hands.”

As for election reform, McPike says he would not support ward-based City Council elections. He also says he would not like the city to cooperate with ICE if Donald Trump were to win the presidency.

## Canek Aguirre



- Raised: \$84,000**  
top donors
- ❖ \$5,000 from labor group NOVA Area Labor Federation
  - ❖ \$3,000 from labor group International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
  - ❖ \$2,500 from Reginald James Brown, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP
  - ❖ \$2,000 from Guadalupe Silva-Krause, parent liaison at ACPS
  - ❖ \$1,000 from Bradley Beychok

Democrat Canek Aguirre is a second-term City Council member and health consultant. Born in Los Angeles, Aguirre graduated from the University of North Carolina with an undergraduate degree in Latin American studies. After college, he worked in North Carolina as a tutor for academically-challenged students, among other jobs. Aguirre moved to Alexandria in 2011, where he was the bilingual parent liaison at George Washington Middle School before creating a communi-

ty outreach program at the district central office. He then worked as an outreach specialist for Virginia Medicaid, and is now a health consultant. Among the civic positions Aguirre has held are chair of the Virginia Board of Social Work, president of Tenants & Workers United and chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

“I really care and am passionate about the policies that impact the community, and I want to shape them in a way that improves the lifestyles of our residents,” Aguirre said. “A lot of what I’m about is making things easier for people or creating better opportunities so that people can succeed.”

Aguirre says he’s passionate about housing affordability, and he voted in favor of Zoning for Housing, a plan he says “expanded opportunities” for residents. He also expressed support for building new developments around transit hubs. Aguirre says he would like to see the city contribute more toward affordable housing in the budget, and that he wishes the Potomac Yards sports arena plan, which would have provided millions of dollars in city revenue, could have been “discussed locally.” (The plan was shot down by state lawmakers in Richmond.) Instead of raising property taxes on residents again, Aguirre would like the state to allow Alexandria to progressively tax income, which he says would have little impact on low-income residents.

“Right now we’re overly dependent on the real estate tax,” Aguirre said. “I’d really like to ask for more flexibility and authority from the state to tax differently and generate some more revenue.”

In the event that Trump were to win the presidential election and begin mass deportations, Aguirre says he would do everything he could to stand in the way of ICE. On the transportation front, he says that he supports building a “sufficient bike network” and the Duke Street in Motion project, and “absolutely, 100 percent” wants to keep DASH buses free in the long term. He also says he is against ward-based City Council elections.

## Abdel Elnoubi



- Raised: \$77,000**  
top donors:
- ❖ \$26,000 from labor group Workers Vote
  - ❖ \$5,000 from Farrukh Hameed, founder of Computer World Services of Falls Church
  - ❖ \$2,500 from labor group NOVA Area Labor Federation
  - ❖ \$2,500 from Reginald James Brown, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP
  - ❖ \$2,000 from labor group International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Democrat Abdel Elnoubi is a first-term school board member and capital program manager for Metro (WMATA). Born in Chicago to Egyptian parents, Elnoubi moved to Alexandria, Egypt at seven years old. He would stay there for 13 years, before returning to the states and receiving an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from the City College of New York and a masters degree in engineering management from George Washington University. He then moved to Alexandria, Va. to work at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, before transitioning to Metro, where he has worked the last 12 years. In addition to serving on the Alexandria School Board since 2021, Elnoubi has worked on the City Community Criminal Justice Board and the Building Code Board of Appeals. He was also president of Samuel Tucker Elementary’s parent-teacher association, the school his two children attended.

“I grew up in a corrupt dictatorship where there’s no such thing as ordinary citizens being represented in government,” Elnoubi said. “Leaving that, putting myself through college, and working minimum wage jobs has shown me how policies that are really meant to help people can transform lives. I feel that I have an obligation to be part of that and make sure I’m helping shape progressive policies here in Alexandria so everyone can thrive in our city.”

One of Elnoubi’s top priorities is transportation, and he says he envisions an Alexandria where residents are able to “move freely” across the city with or without access to a car. He says he supports keeping DASH buses free in the long term and is a big fan of the Duke Street in Motion project, though “the devil is in the details — fine tuning and adjusting it as we go will be important.” Elnoubi was also enthusiastic about “transit oriented development,” and public-private partnerships to “add as much density as we can” around transit hubs. He says that he would like to add more bike lanes to the city, especially in the West End.

“As we all know, the West End is less transit-friendly,” Elnoubi said. “That’s where our economically disadvantaged population tends to live, and if they can’t move freely, that further limits their access to opportunities.”

As a School Board member, Elnoubi supported collective bargaining and voted to raise teacher salaries by 6 percent this past year, in addition adding school psychologists positions to the budget. Like all other candidates, he says he supports adding a second high school. On the city-wide level, he says he is not in favor of transitioning to a ward-based election system for city council, and would support the city not complying with ICE in the event of a second Trump presidency.



# BULLETIN

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.

## 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.volunteeral-alexandria.org](http://www.volunteeral-alexandria.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.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE>

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




Last on the ballot, but **FIRST** as a voice for Alexandrians!

Authorized and Paid for by Roy Byrd for Alexandria City Council

# VOTE ROY BYRD

## Member City Council

Vote for not more than six

- Canek Aguirre
- Sarah R. Bagley
- John Taylor Chapman
- Abdel S. Elnoubi
- Jacinta E. Greene
- R. Kirk McPike
- Celianna R. Gunderson
- M. Mason Butler
- Roy R. Byrd 

# SAMPLE BALLOT

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

# Reach your audience in 2024

Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!



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[www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising)



## Celianna Gunderson City Council

**PUBLIC SAFETY is Issue #1.** Give our police the financial and moral support they need to protect Alexandrians and visitors throughout our city, including hiring and retention bonuses. I will encourage innovative deterrence programs addressing crimes targeting our youth and the elderly.

**TAXES** paid by homeowners and renters (passed on to them in their rent) have risen too high. Our city budget must re-focus on essential government services and be extremely judicious about funding other programs and subsidies. I will work to expand our commercial tax base to reduce the tax burden on residential property owners.

**TRANSPORTATION AND ROADS** issues affect every resident. Altering roads for a few hobby cyclists negatively impacts everyone else. Our main roads are designed and needed for high volumes of motor vehicle traffic. *Road diets* reduce travel lanes, impede emergency vehicles, remove tree canopies in medians, create confusing and unsafe road markings, and increase pollution with longer idling times for cars. I will support only common-sense road safety modifications.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING** proposals need to prioritize our existing city residents, avoid taxpayer subsidization, allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and protect single family zones.

**CITY ELECTIONS** should be moved to odd-numbered years with 2- or 4-year terms to decouple from Federal elections. This would ensure more focus on our local issues. I also support voting by **WARDS**.

### I will **OPPOSE**:

- ❖ Casinos in Alexandria.
- ❖ Non-citizens voting in local elections.
- ❖ Changes to 40+ street names.
- ❖ Taxpayer-subsidized guaranteed income programs.

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# Nine Candidates Seeking Six Seats

FROM PAGE 6

## Sarah Bagley



**Raised: \$74,000**  
top donors:

- ❖ \$5,000 from labor group NOVA Area Labor Federation
- ❖ \$2,000 from Searles Bagley of Chesapeake
- ❖ \$2,000 from labor group Eastern Atlantic States Council
- ❖ \$1,000 from the candidate
- ❖ \$1,000 from Bradley Beychok

Democrat Sarah Bagley is a first-term city councilmember and the executive director of affordable housing non-profit Chisom. Born in the Virginia Beach area, Bagley received an undergraduate degree in government from the nearby College of William & Mary. She then received a law degree from the Catholic University of America and began clerking at the district court in Montgomery County, Maryland. Bagley spent the next eight years pursuing a career in law and worked at two firms based in Washington D.C. In 2015, she began working for Chisom. City council was Bagley's first city government experience, though she has volunteered on several political campaigns and served as local event lead for gun-violence prevention group Moms Demand Action and as captain of the Lyles Crouch ADC precinct.

"I genuinely want to be a part of making the place I love even better for everyone," Bagley said. "I've seen the impact that local government can have on improving the quality of life for people, and I want to be a part of what's possible for the community."

An environmentalist, Bagley helped create Alexandria's office of climate action, which works to mitigate climate change and improve energy efficiency. She is an avid cyclist, and says she would support the creation of a connected bike lane network across the city because there is "not quite enough" connectivity within existing bike lanes to "allow people to truly get from one place to another safely." She is an advocate for the complete streets program, which aims to make streets safer for all users, and says she supports the Duke Street in Motion project as well as free DASH buses.

"The DASH bus is a real point of pride for Alexandria in terms of the rideship recovery, the accessibility and the energy efficiency standards we're setting," Bagley said. "We need to continue investing in it so it can remain available to anybody who wants to give it a try or make it their primary transportation."

With a background in affordable housing, Bagley says it is also one of her top priorities. She voted in favor of Zoning for Housing and called it an "important" step

because it allows more housing to be built. She says she hopes to increase development around schools and transit hubs, and to "pursue legislative tools" that allow for "more protections for tenants." Bagley also says she would not like the city to cooperate with ICE and that she would support council doing "whatever we could" to make "immigrant families and communities in our city feel safe." In terms of election reform, Bagley says she is opposed to transitioning to ward-based city council elections because "our current style of government is serving us well" and "is reflective of geography all over the city."

## Jacinta Greene



**Raised: \$60,000**  
top donors:

- ❖ \$15,000 from Earl Wardell Stafford, founder of the Wentworth Group
- ❖ \$5,000 from Reginald James Brown, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP
- ❖ \$2,100 from Robert Greene of Arlington
- ❖ \$2,000 from O'Kelly McWilliams at Holland & Knight
- ❖ \$1,750 from Nicole Johnson at Cober Johnson & Romney PLLC

Democrat Jacinta Greene is a second-term school board member and independent marketing consultant. She was born in Glen Allen, Va., a suburb of Richmond. After receiving an undergraduate degree in mass communications from Virginia Commonwealth University, Greene stayed in the Richmond area and pursued journalism. She worked for WXCX, the local ABC affiliate, as a reporter, and for the Richmond Free Press as a copy editor and advertising specialist. In 2001, she joined the marketing team at Kraft foods and moved to Alexandria. Three years later, she began working for McDonalds Corporate as the regional marketing manager for the Washington, D.C. area. In 2013, she left corporate America and launched her career as an independent marketing consultant. Before serving on the School Board, Greene was vice chairwoman of the Alexandria Commission for Women. She was also vice chairwoman of volunteering at the Alexandria Democratic Committee and created the Ruby Tucker Readers program, which promotes literacy among disadvantaged children.

"There needs to be an advocate for our school system and our youth on the City Council, and that's why I'm running," Greene said. "Our children are our most precious commodities and they deserve to get the best education possible. I want to move into a role where I can continue advocating for our school system, but also fight for those who are less fortunate in our city."

Like Elnoubi, Greene voted to raise teacher salaries by 6 percent this past budget session. However, the City Council did not allocate the full amount of funding the school system requested, and Greene is now vying for the seat where she would have a say in city budget processes. In addition to education, Greene says she is a proponent of affordable housing, and that she "absolutely" supports providing a housing allowance to teachers, emergency responders and other city employees. She also says she supports Zoning for Housing, and would like to "make sure things are very transparent and that everyone is listened to" when council makes future housing affordability policy.

"I'm a strong believer that if you want to live here in Alexandria, you should be able to," Greene said. "I have friends who could not continue to stay here because renting prices kept going up. We need to really focus on affordability. That's extremely important to me."

Greene is all for keeping free DASH buses, what she called one of the city's "best programs," and says she would like to see a bike network in the city if it will ensure safety for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. Although she supports the Duke Street in Motion project, Greene says she "very much" would like to fine-tune the plan to a point where more residents are satisfied with it. She says she is also open to hearing residents' perspectives on transitioning to ward-based city council elections, though "as of now" she is not in favor. On the topic of immigration, she says she would resist the efforts of ICE as much as possible in the event of a second Trump presidency.

## Celianna Gunderson



**Raised: \$5,000**  
top donors:

- ❖ \$750 from Linda App, executive vice chairwoman of the Alexandria City Republican Committee
- ❖ \$260 from Lee Ann Gardner of marketing consultant Wiland
- ❖ \$260 from Marc Neifert
- ❖ \$260 from former candidate Bob Wood
- ❖ \$250 from former Councilman Frank Fannon

Republican Celianna Gunderson is a paralegal at an intellectual property firm in Old Town. With a father in the military, she was born in Germany and grew up around the world. After receiving an associate's degree in business management from the University of Maryland's global campus, Gunderson attended a vocational school in Stuttgart, Germany where she received a paralegal degree in international intellectual property. She moved back to the states in 1999, where she settled in Arlington before moving to Del

Ray a decade ago. Gunderson has worked as a paralegal for the last 30 years on and off, taking time away from the "strenuous hours" when family members were diagnosed with cancer. She has also worked at various restaurants in Del Ray, for Aldi and for the school system as a substitute teacher and instructional assistant in the special education department of the high school. Although she has never run for office or worked on any city boards, she described herself as a "concerned parent and citizen."

"I'm tired of seeing a one-party City Council operate in our city," Gunderson said, adding she decided to run for office after a meeting with current council members and parents about school safety went awry. "They didn't want to hear what we had to say. And I thought, 'Oh my God, somebody's got to do something.'"

Gunderson says a top priority for her is school safety and that she would support the installation of metal detectors in elementary schools (they are already in place at middle and high schools), as well as bulletproof doors and windows at all schools. She is also a staunch advocate for government reform, and says she would support transitioning to a ward or hybrid form of elections and increasing the number of seats on City Council. She also says the City Council should be non-partisan, similar to the School Board.

"I find little diversity of opinion or tolerance for disagreement on the council, and I think there needs to be more variety in the thoughts and the ideas," Gunderson said. "We're all trying to make the city a better and safer place to live, and I don't believe that has any bearing whether you're a Republican, independent or Democrat."

Although Gunderson is in favor of Zoning for Housing's promotion of accessory dwelling units, as she says they are "really important with all the affordable housing issues right now." She says she is opposed to its provisions allowing for construction of larger homes and buildings on land previously designated for single-family homes only. To confront the housing crisis, she says the city should lower property taxes. Gunderson did not directly respond to a question asking if she would support the city cooperating with ICE, but says she "is not in the business of sending ICE to someone's house if they're living quietly." Although she is a cyclist, Gunderson says that the city needs to be more conservative in installing new bike lanes and that she does not support the Duke Street in Motion project. She says she would like to keep DASH buses free for students but include a fare for adults with discounts for city residents.

SEE NINE CANDIDATES, PAGE 6

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# Nine Candidates Seeking Six Seats

FROM PAGE 8

## Roy Byrd

**Raised: \$2,000**  
top donors

- ❖ \$1,216 from the candidate
- ❖ \$500 from Bill Dickinson, president of the Environmental Policy Network



Independent Roy Byrd is a civic activist who co-founded and chairs the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria, an association that opposes increasing density and aims to improve quality of life in the city. Born in Berlin while his father was on active duty, Byrd moved around the world as a child. He secured a Marine ROTC scholarship to attend Purdue University, where he received an undergraduate degree in political science. After graduating, Byrd continued his global travels, serving in the Marine Corps for 30 years. He earned a master's degree in national security strategy from the Naval War College during this time, before eventually transitioning into private-sector aerospace and defense contracting. Although this is Byrd's first time running for public office, he has been active in Alexandria civic life. In addition to co-founding the Coalition, Byrd has served as co-chair of the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, president of the Clover College Park Civic Association and as a member of several city working groups.

"As an independent, my only allegiance is to residents. I don't have to have allegiance to a party," Byrd said. "I feel that there are certain aspects in the city and our governance that could be enhanced, and that I've got the experience to help do that."

Byrd is against Zoning for Housing, and his coalition is currently suing the city in an attempt to block its implementation. To increase housing affordability, he says he prefers providing a "mix of housing options that cater to various income levels." He also says he would like the city to work with nonprofits and leverage state and federal resources to promote "programs that help renters tran-

sition to home ownership." Byrd is especially enthusiastic about his plan for a "housing allowance" that would provide funds to teachers, emergency responders and other city employees to incentivize them to live in Alexandria.

"This is a complicated issue, and we need to come up with complex, realistic solutions that actually solve the problem," Byrd said. "You can't turn around and say you want affordability and then increase property taxes, because that raises the cost of housing for everyone. We're taking one step forward and two steps back."

Byrd says he believes more accountability for city elected officials is necessary, and spoke in favor of exploring alternative city council models, including increasing the number councilmembers, adding ward-specific positions (council elections are currently at-large), and transitioning to a strong-mayor form of government where the mayor is chief executive instead of the city manager. In terms of transportation, Byrd says he is against the Duke Street in Motion project, as he believes its "configuration [will be] inconsistent." He supports keeping DASH buses free, but just for low-income residents, and prefers bike trails instead of bike lanes. In the event that Trump wins the presidency, Byrd said he would like the city to refuse to cooperate with ICE.

## Mason Butler

**Raised: \$1,000**  
top donor  
❖ \$1,000 from the candidate



Independent Mason Butler is a technology executive for Accelerated Solutions Group. Born in Louisville, Ky., Butler received an undergraduate degree in English from Wittenberg University, where he also played soccer. After college, Butler got a job at IBM, and later worked for several tech startups. In 2004, Butler began working for Accelerated Solutions and moved to Arlington. He settled in Alexandria nine years later. Butler

is a graduate of the City Academy, a board member for the Campagna Center and a poll worker. He also served on the city Scooter Commission.

"I'm running a campaign based on moderate politics," Butler said. "When you have a country that continues to be as divided as ours, we have to find ways to recognize each other as Americans. What strengthens us is the ability to make decisions to benefit a greater group of people."

Butler says that he opposes Zoning for Housing, as "there was a huge disconnect" between the city and residents, and that he "can't support anything that causes the city and a group of citizens to fight it out in a courtroom." He also says that he envisions an Alexandria

where tall buildings are not constructed in historically "quaint" districts such as Del Ray. He says he does support "thoughtful" development throughout the city to increase housing affordability, and that he is "absolutely" in favor of a housing voucher program, though he says he would like to get to a point where that is not necessary to mitigate the cost of housing. He also says lowering the cost of housing could help change the culture of Alexandria.

"Where I grew up, there's a lot of pride that people take in the city they live in," Butler said. "They'll go to college, or wherever else, but then they want to move back. I've seen that here, people that come in, they make their money and they want to leave. I think the next generation of Alexandria should be fueled by people that want to put someone ahead of themselves."

Butler is open to the idea of ward-based city council elections, and says he would support a pilot program to test if they work, as he "doesn't believe that you should change global policy overnight." When asked if he would support city cooperation with ICE in the event of a second Trump presidency, Butler did not directly respond, saying that he "doesn't treat people differently" depending on their nationalities, but "is not in favor" of immigrants staying in the country if they "want to cause chaos and break laws." On the topic of transportation, he says he supports keeping DASH buses free in the short term, but not the long term, as he says the buses could provide critical city revenue. Butler says he is opposed to the Duke Street in Motion project and that he thinks there are too many bike lanes in the city, although he would support creating "sectioned-off" bike lanes and a "comprehensive" bike trail network.

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsOfAMHC@gmail.com.  
STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Sci-

ence's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.  
ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).



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**Obituary**



**Robert Milton Small, Jr.** a lifelong Alexandrian and noted musician died October 15, 2024. He was 74. Known to all as Randy, he was a kind neighbor, a cat dad extraordinaire, a champion on the frisbee golf circuit, and a talented, respected musician's musician. His love for music began early in life starting with a fascination for wind and brass instruments. He attended Fort Hunt High School and was part of the award-winning Symphonic Band under the direction of Mr. Christy as well as the Dance Band and Orchestra. Following graduation in 1968 and a year at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville he pursued his music with passion. There was almost no instrument he could not play -clarinet, concertina, fiddle, harmonica, and hammered dulcimer to name just a few, but he was most well-known for his baritone saxophone and banjo magic. A long-time member of the Uptown Rhythm Kings he was a versatile jazz player equally at home with bebop and jump styles of play. A Saturday jazz gig would just as likely be followed by a bluegrass concert on Sunday. An instrument was never far from his side. He played with many bands over a long career including the Tom Cunningham Orchestra and was a reliable pick-up player. He loved and lived for music. More recently he was a member of the all-volunteer National Concert Band of American celebrating the history, traditions, and heritage of U.S. Armed Forces military bands. He was the son of Robert Milton Small, Sr., a noted local developer, entrepreneur, and inventor, and Harriet Monet Small a teacher in the Arlington School System for many years. He is survived by his sister Betsy Small of Colorado, his cat Nicky, his loving aunt Pat Bragg of Williamsburg, Va and many lifelong friends and loving cousins. Funeral services are private with a future Celebration of Life to be announced. Donations in his memory can be made to the Alexandria Animal Welfare League and the Shriners Hospitals for Children in loving memory of his uncle Virgil Means.

**CALENDAR**

			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31		

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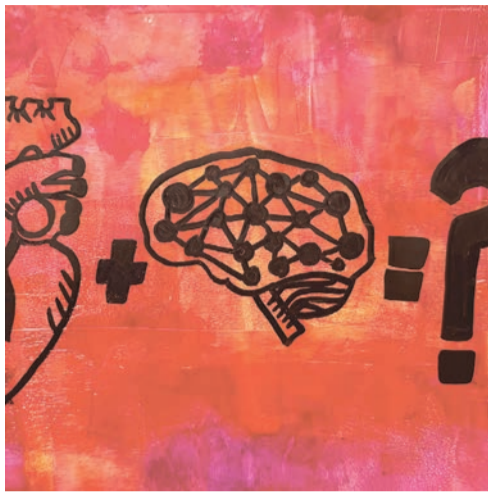
FROM PAGE 2

**Composting Made Simple.** Friday, Nov. 8, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Learn the value that comes with putting compost into your yard and garden instead of your trashcan.

**Adapt & Thrive with Climate Change.** Saturday, Nov. 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Extension Master Gardeners share ways to adapt your garden practices to changing climate patterns through plant selection, water management and more!

**NOW THRU OCT. 27 Alexandria Plein Air.** At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Six artists began regular outdoor painting sessions in and around Alexandria, VA to help cope with the pandemic. They have continued the practice and this exhibit displays their interpretations of local sites, natural and man made, in a variety of seasons. Featuring: Mary Anne Cochran-Fox, Calina Franzosa, Seana Gallagher, Renee Lachman, Theresa Miller and Karen Thuermer.

**OCT. 4-26 The "Artificial or Intelligence?" Art Exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that explores what the future



The "Artificial or Intelligence?" Art Exhibit runs Oct. 4-26, 2024 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.

might look like with AI and whether machine learning feels artificial or intelligent at the present moment. Opening Reception: Friday, October 4 from 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed October 27). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

**OCT. 24 TO DEC. 21 "A Focus on Nature."** At Coldwell Banker Realty, 310 King Street, Alexandria. Opening reception Oct. 24 from 6-7:30 p.m. Art exhibit featuring the nature-themed photographs of Steven Halperson and mosa-



"A Focus on Nature" can be seen Oct. 24 to Dec. 21, 2024 at Coldwell Banker Realty in Alexandria.

ics of Nina Tisara. Steven Halperson, Tisara Photography, has over 30 years' experience in portrait and event photography. For this exhibit, he is returning to his roots in fine art photography and making use of digital camera software to create strikingly beautiful images. Nina Tisara retired from the photography studio in 2007 and began creating intricate mosaics which are now widely exhibited and collected. Nina is the founder of Living Legends of Alexandria. A portion of all sales will be donated to the Coldwell Banker Realty Cares Foundation, a program that helps support se-

lected nonprofits in Alexandria and throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. For additional information, contact Rachel Carter, RCarter@cbmove.com or Nina Tisara, Ninat@ninatisara.com.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 26 Old Town Family Trick or Treat.** 11 a.m. to 3 pm. At Various locations in Old Town Alexandria. Bring the family and enjoy trick-or-treating in various shops and restaurants in Old Town along upper and lower King Street and select side streets. Visit oldtownbusiness.org in the coming weeks for details on the starting point and map pick-up location.

## Burton Will Be Hurtin'



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Of that I am certain, or maybe it's me who'll be hurtin'. And why might we both be hurtin'? Because on Wednesday, Nov. 20, I'll be takin' Burton to get neutered. I'll need to drop him off between 7:00 and 7:30 am. He'll be ready for pick-up between 2:00 and 3:00 pm later that same day.

I have waited until now (two-plus years old) to schedule this appointment for two reasons: (1) As a fellow male, I can feel/imagine Burton's future pain. Having had a male golden retriever neutered once before (Bailey), I've witnessed how resilient dogs are. At the office where I went to get Bailey after his procedure, I remember I checked in and they said he'd be right out. As soon as I saw him, I called his name and he came running over to me, like nothing had even happened. Amazing. I realized, in the scheme of veterinary surgery, this procedure, especially for a male, is fairly straight forward/uncomplicated. Nevertheless, I'm sure I'll be signing forms waiving the practice of any responsibility should something unexpected occur - just like we mostly do when we go for our own surgeries. But it's this particular surgery which has me unsettled a bit considering they're doing.

The second reason for the procedure to be scheduled two years and three months after Burton's August birthdate is the relatively recent/evolving opinion in the veterinary world concerning the appropriate timeline for these specific procedures. Back in Bailey's Day (golden retriever number two), the conventional wisdom/advice was neutering should occur six to nine months after birth. However, these days (and I'm not sure when this became a thing), the timeline has lengthened. The recommendation now is to wait 18-24 months-ish. The thinking is that it's better for the dog to wait until it reaches its physical maturity before any neutering happens so its development is not impaired by stunting the dog's growth by "proceduring" prematurely.

Well, 27 months in, you can't say we're stunting Burton's growth. He's over 70 pounds now like he's supposed to be. Moreover, having decided that we're not interested in the future puppy-making business, which is very much a business, especially if your dog is registered with the AKC (America Kennel Club) which Burton most definitely is (meaning he has papers/is pure bred). Also, Burton having this surgery sort of nips him the bud as a potential sire. In addition, not getting involved in this breeding business will simplify our lives and save us from worrying about Burtons comings and goings - and wanderings, particularly as a male. They can smell a female in heat a mile away (it's an expression, but far) and since we don't have a fenced-in yard/have any real means of restricting his movements, it's possible he could follow a scent and be who knows where in a matter of minutes. Not to mention the fact that we live a quarter mile from a relatively busy four-lane state road whose lights at nighttime and noise all the time fascinate Burton. I'm always afraid he'll head up that way. The surgery, generally speaking, decreases some of these urges in the male dog.

Not to invoke "Forrest, Forrest Gump" yet again, but "one less thing." And 'one less thing' for a cancer patient (yours truly if you haven't been reading along for the last 15+ years) to worry about is super helpful. My goal is to minimize the negative and maximize the positive, especially since my late brother Richard is not here. Because being diagnosed with cancer is all it's cracked up to be and oh by the way, so are golden retrievers. They're full of positivity.

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

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**Thank you to everyone who participated in the walk and supported our team.**



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