

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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OCTOBER 31, 2024

Happy Hauntings

CDC tips for staying safe on Halloween.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Homes across the city are decorated for Halloween. The CDC has several tips for staying safe over the holiday.

Halloween is taking center stage across the city as homes are creatively decorated to celebrate the ghoulish fun of the holiday. Time to grab something pumpkin spice, plan an impressive Halloween costume and stroll the streets of Alexandria to enjoy the spirited neighborhood décor.

But Halloween also comes with risks, and the Center for Disease Control offers guidelines for staying safe.

The CDC recommends you or your child eat only factory-wrapped treats. If you have any



doubt about the safety of a treat, throw it out.

Carrying a glow stick is one way to see and be seen as night wears on, but be aware that the luminescent liquid inside a glow stick is minimally toxic in small amounts. Do not allow children to chew on glow sticks. Symptoms of ingestion can include mouth or throat irritation and vomiting. A better option is to take a flashlight.

Children are curious and put all sorts of things in their mouths.

Confusing medicine with candies can make Halloween go from spooky to scary. Practice safe medication storage. Keep all medica-

tions and vitamins, including your emergency supply, up and away and out of reach and sight of children to avoid confusion with Halloween treats.

Halloween can be tricky for children with food allergies. Parents: always read labels (avoid treats without labels), carry an epinephrine auto-injector (if prescribed), and learn more about the Teal Pumpkin Project, an initiative started by Food Allergy Research and Education to provide non-food treats, such as stickers, school supplies, and small toys, to kids with

SEE CDC TIPS FOR PAGE 3



ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL NOV.7-10.2024

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL 

ENTERTAINMENT

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://tallshipprovidence.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



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



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

"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. 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!

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 mosaics 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 Alex-

andria. A portion of all sales will be donated to the Coldwell Banker Realty Cares Foundation, a program that helps support selected nonprofits in Alexandria and throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. For additional information, contact Rachel Carter, RCarter@cbmove.com or Nina Tisara, Ninat@ninatistisara.com.

NOV. 1 TO DEC. 1

Del Ray Artisans " \$100 & Under" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Showcases members' artwork all priced at \$100 or less. The art is sold on an art-to-go basis. The gallery walls are packed with great art at prices all art-lovers can afford. Opening Reception: Friday, November 1, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Closed Thanksgiving Day. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/NOV. 2

Forest Bathing. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Ave., Alexandria. Forest Bathing, also known as Forest Therapy, is a slow, mindful immersion in nature. During a two and a half hour period, we move through the Forest and connect with the environment using all of our senses. This practice is deeply grounding and has many

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Prost!

SSA raises \$45k at Oktoberfest.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The lederhosen and traditional dirndls were on display as Senior Services of Alexandria celebrated with its traditional Oktoberfest fundraiser Oct. 9 at Port City Brewing Company.

"This is by far our biggest turnout yet," said SSA executive director Mary Lee Anderson. "We have more people here tonight than we've ever had before."

The event was sold out and raised over \$45,000.

"This was a good event for us," Anderson said. "It was our biggest revenue ever and our biggest attendance ever."

Attendees sampled traditional fare along with the best of local brewery Port City Brewing Company. Tours of the brewery were available throughout the evening with attendees entertained with traditional Bavarian folk music.

"Port City did their usual wonderful job," Anderson said. "And the funds raised go to support all our programs – Meals On Wheels, Groceries to Go, Friendly Visitor, information and education programs. Tonight helps us help seniors across the city."

Presenting sponsor for the event was BrightView Senior Living of Alexandria.



Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home staff Matt Lehman, Andrea Espinoza and Anthony Wilson make a toast at the Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 9 at Port City Brewing Company.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Pam Phillips, Rachel Gilbert and Joyce Titeich enjoy the SSA Oktoberfest Oct. 9 at Port City Brewing Company.

Added Anderson, "We had such a great turnout. This is always a nice, fall celebration for a great cause."

For more information, visit www.seniorservicesalex.org



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kathleen Barnett sent in this photo of pumpkin carving in action, a group on the porch of a house in the 3-hundred block of Rucker Place Alexandria on a Sunday morning. "As I was passing by I offered to take their photo and I texted these to them but they also said it was ok to send to you (my idea!)"

CDC Tips for Staying Safe on Halloween

FROM PAGE 1
allergies.

Street smarts are important on Halloween. On average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year. As a parent or caregiver, there are a few important rules of the road to share with your costumed pedestrians before stepping out.

Prepare your trick or treat with trick or treat safety items: a flashlight, reflective tape or strips applied to costumes and candy bags, and an emergency contact information card in case they get lost or separated from the group.

Trick or treat as part of a large group with a responsible adult. Walk on sidewalks whenever possible, or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe.

Look both ways before crossing the street at a crosswalk or intersection and walk, don't run between houses to avoid trips and falls.

Regarding costumes, do not wear decorative contact lenses without a prescription. Decorative lenses purchased without a prescription may not fit properly, leaving the eye more susceptible to scratches on the outer layer of the eye, or getting an ulcer (an open sore) on the cornea — the clear covering over the front of the eye.

Painting your face can be a fun alternative to wearing a mask. Test novelty makeup on a small area on the arm to test for an allergic reaction before applying it to your face. Remove makeup according to the manufacturers' instructions before bedtime to prevent possible skin and eye irritation.

Make sure costumes fit well to avoid blocked vision and help prevent trips and falls. And choose costume accessories that are short, soft (i.e., made of plastic or foam) and flexible.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Bette Samuel and Lindsay Hemphill at the Oct. 9 SSA Oktoberfest at Port City Brewing Company.



Vanessa Agnes and Khadijah Sulaiman are dressed for the occasion at the Oct. 9 SSA Oktoberfest at Port City Brewing Company.

ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL

Film 'The Test' Tells Simple, Profound Story

Set at Goodwin House in Alexandria, story of striving to become a citizen.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Fifth in a series about the Alexandria Film Festival, Nov. 7-10. See <https://alexfilmfest.com/>

The Alexandria Film Festival takes place Nov. 7-10 at the Beatley Library, Lyceum, and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Alexandria campus with a special screening on Nov. 3 at Patagonia.

This interview is with filmmakers Claudia Myers and Laura Waters Hinson who co-produced "The Test" which will be shown on Nov. 9 at NOVA Alexandria campus.

The Test

"The Test" has been shown at a number of previous film festivals in the last two years including the Austin Film Festival, Annapolis Film Festival, Women's Film Festival, Atlanta Docufest and Winner at the Santa Fe International Film Fest in 2023.

Both Myers and Hinson are full-time faculty members in media and arts at American University. Myers is a screenwriter and director of fiction having directed four features and written an equal number. Previous to that she attended film school. Hinson is a director of documentaries having directed 7 previous to this most recent collaboration with Myers on "The Test." She started her career in 2008. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q. Describe the film.
Myers: This is the story of a Ghanaian maintenance worker, Eric Frimpong, who works at Goodwin House, a retirement community in Alexandria. He enlists two residents, Jill and Carl Miller, to help him study for his citizenship test. He had been in America for 8 years,



Laura Waters Hinson (left) and Claudia Myers, filmmakers who produced "The Test" pictured before a screening in Washington D.C.

and his youngest daughter was 2-years-old when he left Ghana.

Hinson: This is the brief narrative, primarily of the friendship that developed between Frimpong and the Millers. We hear about his life in Ghana, his goals. He is isolated and alone here. We followed the Millers studying with him, the day he got his citizenship. We knew we couldn't film him taking the test but we got what was going on in his mind, the emotional stakes of that moment of citizenship. It

builds a sense of tension. Our approach is how these two marginalized communities, the aging and the immigrants underrepresented in the media, came together.

Q. Take me back to your childhood—when did you know you were headed for your current career.

Myers: I thought I would be a lawyer. I worked in a law firm for a year and then course corrected. I had no connection to the film industry but it seemed exciting, daunting and mysterious. I got a job at a small N.Y. firm and got to understand how films are made. I always wanted to be a writer but didn't think it would be possible to earn a living.

Hinson: As a kid I made movies with the VHS recorder, threw dead bodies out of second story windows, blood collected down the drain when I was making psycho. But I didn't think it was a viable career, especially fiction. I've done documentaries; they seemed more manageable. I knew I didn't want to work in an office, and I knew I was interested in people, in writing and in photos so it all came together, and I went to film school.

Q. What were your challenges in making the film?

Myers: Funding! This was completely independent; we financed it ourselves. We used an advanced student crew, and the cinematographer was a recent graduate of our program. It was a very small crew but we were moved to tell the story. It was poignant, uplifting at the end of the pandemic when people needed something positive. We were driven by our passion for the story. It was also a challenge finding the time. Laura and I each work full time and do other projects. We had to be resourceful and efficient. But we had engaged participants and no restrictions on where we could film (except the test) and complete creative freedom.



Behind the scenes making "The Test" which will be shown at the Alexandria Film Festival on Saturday, Nov. 9 at 1 pm at NOVA Alexandria campus.



Jill Miller and Eric Frimpong at the screening of "The Test" in U.S. Rep. Don Beyer's office on Sept. 24.

Q. What's Next?

Hinson: We do have an outreach campaign. We have been working with community, university and civic groups. We have developed a toolkit to go with the film to get people dialoguing about the issue of citizenship for immigrants. We have had 25 community screenings and hope to expand our outreach. This program, which Goodwin House has created, can be replicated—the costs are low, and the rewards great.

Myers: When we both read the article in the Washington Post that inspired "The Test," we teared up. It was beautiful from folks at the end of life giving back to those at the first of life. It was two marginalized communities coming together and the transformational relationship for all of them. They became a family together. It was what it is about to be human.

Hinson: We may partner again. Claudia does primarily fiction and I do documentaries but they are very complimentary. What each of us got from it made the experience richer. Given the divisive trends it's really important to see people coming together as they did in our film. It's a simple story but so profound.

Myers: We had so much fun. It was really great for us.

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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

| | John Chapman | Kirk McPike | Canek Aguirre | Abdel Elnoubi | Sarah Bagley | Jacinta Greene | Celianna Gunderson | Roy Byrd | Mason Butler |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 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."

SEE CHAPMAN, NEXT PAGE

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.

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 2

health benefits. The total distance traveled is often less than a mile. Forest Bathing is not a hike, and it is not a plant identification walk. Leading the session will be Emily Hampton, an Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs (ANFT) certified guide. She is a graduate of Stanford University and a 23 year veteran of the U.S. Navy. Emily is also a certified yoga teacher and Nidra meditation teacher. Cost: \$30.

SATURDAY/NOV. 2

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

NOV. 3 AND NOV. 7-10

18th Annual Alexandria Film Festival. Featuring more than 60 films and 40 filmmakers at four venues. For the schedule, tickets, and passes, visit AlexFilmFest.com.

THURSDAY/NOV. 7

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SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11



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Roy Byrd for Alexandria City Council

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- John Taylor Chapman
- Abdel S. Elnoubi
- Jacinta E. Greene
- R. Kirk McPike
- Celianna R. Gunderson
- M. Mason Butler
- Roy R. Byrd** ✓

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Mason Butler

For City Council



The Moderate Candidate

Paid for Mason Butler for Alexandria

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 9

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ELECTION GUIDE 2024

REPRINTED FROM ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET SEPT. 18, 2024

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 transition 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 start-ups. 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.

**SAT. 10-5
SUN. 11-4**

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Obituary




Herbert Charles Puscheck, 88, passed away on September 29, 2024 in Alexandria Virginia after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease and recent esophageal cancer.

Herb was preceded in death by his wife Betty, parents, Ella and Herbert Puscheck and sister Mary (Jerry) Kronberger.

Herb is survived by his children: Elizabeth (Daniel Rappolee) Puscheck and Lisa Puscheck, grandchildren Eleanor (David Sandahl) Rappolee, Thomas Rappolee, Benjamin Rappolee, Isabel and Jackson Zamer, nieces Ann (Mark) Knudson, Renee (John) Burda, nephew Alan Kronberger, and a number of other relatives from WI.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2024 at Demaine Funeral Home, 520 S Washington St, Alexandria, VA. Viewing at 11 am, service at noon w/ fellowship to follow. Herb will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery at a future date. Friends and relatives may offer condolences to the family at: www.demainefuneralhomes.com

Obituary



Charles Creighton Carlin IV died March 13, 2024. He was born to Charles C. Carlin Jr and Sarah Mae Studebaker on March 25, 1947. Charles C. Carlin Sr was the Congressman for Alexandria from 1907-1919. Charles C. Carlin Jr served as Editor and Publisher of the Alexandria Gazette for 44 years.

Charles C. Carlin IV graduated from the Univ of Tennessee with a degree in Journalism. He worked in the field of finance for several banks and mortgage companies. He also taught special education students in Alexandria and Falls Church schools.

He is survived by a sister Sarah Carlin Roe, and her husband Gerald John Roe, a nephew Charles Lawrence Roe and his wife Elizabeth, a niece Caroline Lee Roe, and a friend Christine Hopps.

A memorial service will be held November 2, 2024 at 11:00 at the grave site. Burial in Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria will follow.

Legals

AT&T Mobility, LLC is proposing to modify the collocation on an existing rooftop on the 113-foot-tall (113-foot overall height) building wireless telecommunications facility located at 1101 King Street, Alexandria, Alexandria City County, VA 22314 (N38° 48' 22.8" and W77° 3' 6.1"). AT&T Mobility, LLC invites comments from any interested party on the impact the proposed undertaking may have on any districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects significant in American history, archaeology, engineering, or culture that are listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under National Historic Preservation Act Section 106. Parties interested in commenting on this Federal undertaking or with questions on the proposed facility should contact Eocene at 8951 Windsor Parkway, Johnston, IA 50131 or call 515-473-6256 and reference project #NE 1224/JC. Comments must be received within 30 days of the date of this notice.

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The Nepenthe Gallery is offering original works by Hunt Slonem on Thursday, Nov. 7, 2024, in Alexandria.

FROM PAGE 7

Slonem is celebrated around the world for his vibrant and joyful paintings of bunnies, birds, butterflies and beyond. Known for his distinct neo-expressionist style, Slonem blends Pop Art with expressionism and captures the magic and energy of the natural world. His works can be found in the permanent collections of more than 250 museums, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and New Orleans Museum of Art. Five new works will be unveiled and added to the current collection of original pieces by Slonem.

THURSDAY/NOV. 7

Evening of Perfect Pairings: Wine + Chocolate, Women + Business. 5:30-7 p.m. At Goodwin House Alexandria, 4800 Fillmore Ave., Alexandria. Presented by The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network. Join in an unforgettable night of curated wine and food pairings, networking, and celebration. Contact Maria Ciarrocchi at mciarocchi@thechamberalx.com

SATURDAY/NOV. 9

Designing American Living. 3-4:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House provide a unique opportunity to put two American styles of architecture – separated by over a century – in conversation with one another. Take a close look at both houses to examine what it was that the architects who built these homes were trying to convey about the people who lived here, the period they lived in, and what they thought the future held. Cost \$25 for adults, \$12 students (K-12). Website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents/2024/10/12/designing-american-living>

NOV. 15-23

"A Man for All Seasons." At Bishop Ireton High School, Garwood Whaley Auditorium, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. It runs November 15,

16, 22 and 23 at 7 p.m., and November 17 at 2 p.m.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16
Celebrate Gum Springs' 191st Anniversary. 6-9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Celebrate Gum Springs -- The oldest African American community in Fairfax County with Keynote Speaker Don Scott. Tickets \$125. Event host: The Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16
Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents Carmina Burana "Abound". 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center. Featuring the Chorale and Youth Choir with Ingrid Lestrud, Artistic Director. Visit alexsym.org.

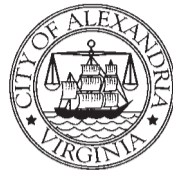
SATURDAY/NOV. 23
Alexandria Cider Festival. 1 to 5 p.m. At Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St., Alexandria. Celebrate Virginia Cider Week with a special tasting event on the grounds of the historic Lloyd House in Old Town Alexandria. Event tickets include cider tastings, live music, a tasting glass and a little history, too. This event will take place outdoors. Proceeds benefit the historic Alexandria museums. Admission: \$50 (Presale through October 31); \$55 (November 1 to 22); \$65 (at the door); \$25 designated driver purchase.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23
The Good Folk Performs. 7 p.m. At Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. FocusMusic and WFMA present The Good Folk at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church. The Good Folk, Meghan Mette, Eileen Estes, Joanna Clare, Sophie Chang, Agi Kovacs, and Patrick Winch, deliver powerful instrumentals, haunting vocals and three styles of percussive dance. Cost is \$25 in advance (members \$22.50) / \$30 at door (members \$25) Virtual Tickets: \$15 (\$13.50 for members. Info at <https://focusmusic.org/shows#sat-11-23-the-good-folk-alexandria-and-virtual>

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Income Limits Increased for Tax Relief Program

The second half 2024 real estate tax, refuse fee and stormwater utility fee must be paid by Friday, November 15, 2024, to avoid late payment penalty and interest.

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Pay in-person at either the Treasury Division, City Hall, 301 King Street, Room 1510, or at the West End Finance Office, 4850 Mark Center Drive, Suite 2011, between 8AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. A drop box on the Royal Street side of City Hall is available 24 hours a day. Payments must be in the drop box by midnight on November 15, 2024, to be on time.

General real estate tax information is available on the City's website at alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax. Detailed assessment, tax balance and payment information is available at realestate.alexandriava.gov.

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email payments@alexandriava.gov. For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email realestate@alexandriava.gov. For questions on refuse fees or stormwater utility fees, please call Alex311 at 703.746.4311 or submit questions online at alexandriava.gov/Alex311.

The Alexandria City Council has increased the allowable income limits for the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief program starting in Calendar Year 2024. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/TaxRelief, or contact the Revenue Division, City Hall, 301 King Street, Room 1700, Alexandria, VA 22314, by email taxrelief@alexandriava.gov or by phone 703.746.4800. The City also provides tax relief to certified permanent and totally disabled veterans or to their surviving spouses.

**Now That's What
I'm Talking About**



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Double Chocolate Chip Bagels." How long do you think it took me to grab that item off the shelf? We'll just say, "not long," and leave it at that. You regular readers, especially those from the last few weeks when I've immersed you all in my Entenmann's Bakery issues, probably know. I love "chocolot." Rarely do I "chocolittle." It's likely that I eat more chocolate in a day than any of you eat in a week - or maybe a month. Let me clarify, I don't simply eat chocolate, like a normal person might. I consume chocolate. As in once I get started; unwrap a candy bar, tear open a bag, rip the top off a cardboard box or unseal a pint of ice cream, I'll finish what I start.

Though my regular chocolate items dominate my purchasing tendencies, I am not above scanning the supermarket shelves looking for a new candidate to satisfy my cravings. I must be honest here about my chocolate consumption: I'm the kind of customer who can make a product profitable and keep the production lines moving. If this were baseball, I'd be your number four/clean-up (pun intended) hitter. I can do more damage to a bowl of Halloween candy, brimming with bite-size favorites for trick or treaters than any group of elementary school kids dressed in costumes - or not, could possibly imagine.

Nor could I imagine that I would unexpectedly find in my local Walmart, this combination of bread and chocolate together as a gourmet bagel. (After all, it was on the top shelf.) In addition to this gourmet chocolate fantasy item, one shelf below were the regular bagels. And in the bread pecking order, for me anyway, bagels are at the top. Combined with chocolate, this purchase was the definition of a no-brainer.

One of my earliest memories in life (aged four or less) was accompanying my father to buy bagels at a man's house in Dorchester, Ma. I remember waiting in a line as we snaked through this hallway to where one of those half doorways was open at its top half. Ten feet or so beyond this door was a man scooping out bagels or something. My father said something, and we got a bag of bagels. Sometimes, when those bagels were still warm, my father would hand me one to eat on the way home. To this day, if I buy a dozen bagels, I always feel around the bag. If there's a warm bagel in there, I'm eating it – in my late father's memory. And what a memory it is. I can't recall if there was a double chocolate chip bagel in the bag. Hardly. The bagels were usually egg, plain, poppy, and maybe an occasional pumpernickel.

But now I know, the varieties have evolved. I thought a blueberry bagel was pushing the bagel envelope. But now, a chocolate variety has been added. And oh, what a addition. It's the greatest pairing since Reese's paired peanut butter with chocolate, a combination known worldwide as Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. The first candy bar to be selected for a place in the candy Mt. Rushmore. Likely future candidates are the Hershey's kisses – now that they've created the technology to fill the kisses with all sorts of goodies, the Mars confectioner for all its iconic candies, especially the M&Ms, and lastly, whomever decided to try combining chocolate and caramel in the same bar (Milton Hershey maybe). I could go on, but I think you get the picture. Chocolate and bagels are both extremely important to me. They're staples of my diet/existence. But I digress.

Having lived 70-plus years, one would have thought chocolate and bagels would have been combined before. Maybe they have. But not to me. This item is a first for me. I didn't anticipate this marriage of bagels and chocolate. Sure, I've eaten pastry and croissants that married the two, but bagels were never involved. And I never even wondered why. I just ate my bagel and cream cheese - with American cheese, like always. Now I know. Better late than never. Don't worry, I'll make up for lost time.

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

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