

Alexandria Gazette Packet

25 CENTS

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 21, 2024

Fire Destroys 3 Old Town Businesses



PHOTO BY LYNN NELSON/NEXTDOOR

Firefighters battle a blaze Nov. 17 on South Saint Asaph Street. Three women-owned businesses sustained significant damage and have been forced to close.

Blaze remains under investigation.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause of a fire that damaged three women-owned businesses Nov. 17 on the 100 block of South Saint Asaph Street.

Madame Coco's Emporium and Everything Chocolate, Friends to Lovers Bookstore and Little Birdie's Home and Gifts were all heavily damaged by the blaze that broke out late Sunday evening.

The Friends to Lovers Bookstore had just celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting the previous day.

Owner Jamie Fortin said that the building and inventory sustained extensive smoke damage and that the current space will not be operational for at least the remainder of this year "and likely longer."

"This morning, I was able to tour the store and assess the damage more closely," Fortin said in a Nov. 19 update to a GoFundMe page she has set up. "Sadly, it looks like none of our books or merchandise will be safe to sell, and therefore we have raised our fundraising goal to \$45,000."

It is unclear if Fortin will reopen in the existing space or relocate.

"As most of you know, we are committed to working with small, women-owned businesses and uplifting local/indie authors," Fortin said. "We also staff five booksellers who I am determined to keep employed, and a talented social media manager who I credit with F2Ls incredible online presence. Funds raised during this process will be integral

to ensuring F2L can maintain the people and culture we know and love while also recovering from significant losses related to the fire."

Shanlee Johnson, owner of Little Birdie's, also was able to assess the damage and said that nothing was salvageable from her boutique.

"Our merchandise, much of it designed with love and care in-house, was destroyed and our building will not be usable for the foreseeable future," said Johnson, who has

also set up a GoFundMe page.

Madame Coco's owner Meshelle Armstrong said in an Instagram post, "We are shaken by the losses, not just of our own space but of the incredible women-owned businesses that were also impacted. Though the damage is immense, our spirits remain rooted in hope and resilience. Together we will rebuild."

The fire continues to be under investigation.

"Though the damage is immense, our spirits remain rooted in hope and resilience. Together we will rebuild."

— Madame Coco's owner
Meshelle Armstrong

'America's Fastest Teacher' Named Turkey Trot Grand Marshal

Thanksgiving race to benefit ALIVE!

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Susanna Sullivan, named "America's Fastest Teacher" by Runner's World Magazine, will serve as the Grand Marshal of the 49th Annual Turkey Trot.

A five-time winner of the Alexandria Turkey Trot and a three-time course record holder, Sullivan received worldwide acclaim in October as the fastest American woman at the Chicago Marathon, finishing seventh overall with a time of 2:21:56. This personal best made her the 10th-fastest American woman in history and capped a triumphant

return from an injury that sidelined her from the 2024 Olympic Trials.

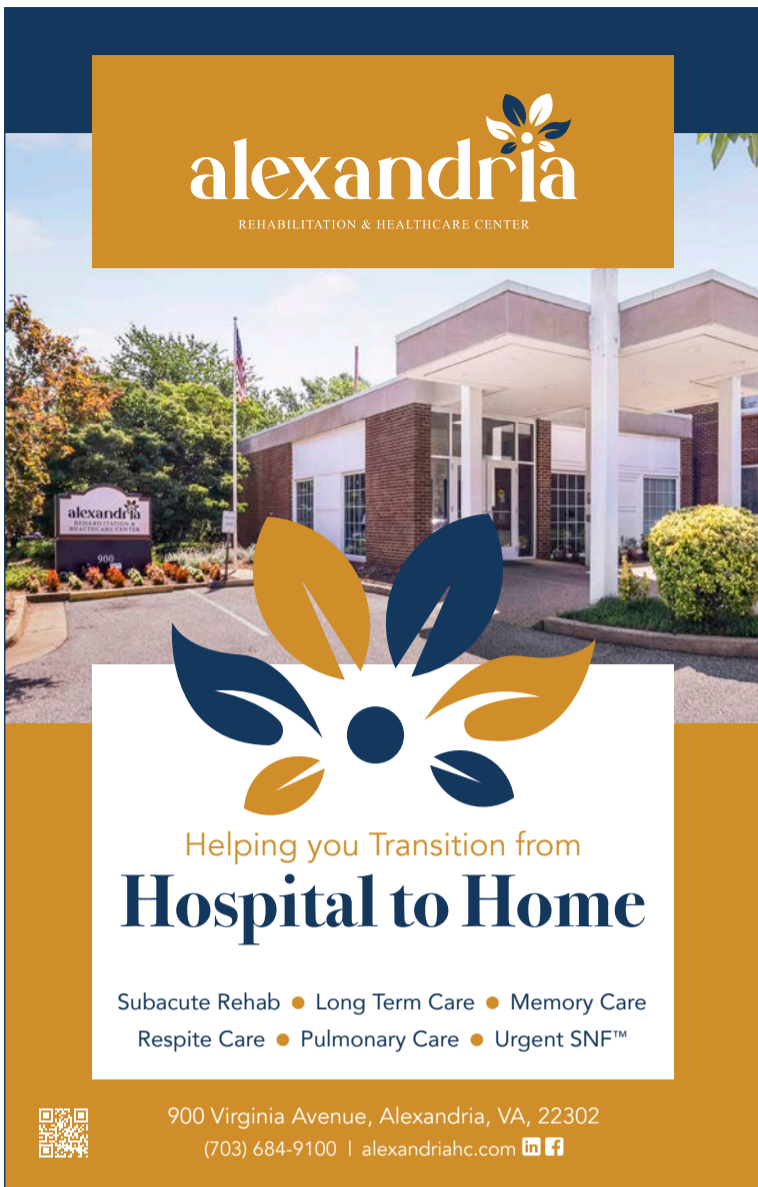
"As Grand Marshal, Sullivan's presence at the Alexandria Turkey Trot highlights the race's deep ties to the community and its celebration of extraordinary local talent," said Alexandria Turkey Trot race director Brian Danza of DC Road Runners announcing her selection as Grand Marshal. "Her journey inspires runners of all levels, and her dual role as an educator and elite athlete embodies the spirit of commitment and excellence. The Turkey Trot is honored to recognize Sul-



PHOTO/DC ROAD RUNNERS

Susanna Sullivan breaks the tape in the 2021 Alexandria Turkey Trot. She will serve as Grand Marshal of the 2024 Turkey Trot Nov. 28 in Del Ray.

SEE TURKEY TROT, PAGE 3



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ALEXANDRIA NEWS BRIEFS

Rabies Alert After Raccoon Tests Positive

Alexandria Health Department (AHD) is notifying Alexandria community members that a raccoon near Chambliss Park tested positive for rabies.

On Nov. 15, 2024, a raccoon came into contact with several dogs in the yard of a home in Alexandria near Chambliss Park. Upon testing, the raccoon tested positive for rabies. The raccoon is dead, and the dogs are in confinement, but there is an increased risk.

If you or your family member have had physical contact with a raccoon, please call the Alexandria Health Department at 703.746.4910 during normal business hours.

How to Keep You and Your Pets Safe

Make sure your dogs and cats are up-to-date with their vaccinations. Do not feed or approach any wild, stray, or feral animals, even if they appear friendly or

injured. Remember that dogs must be on leash in all public areas and parks.

Rabies is a preventable, deadly viral disease spread through the saliva due to a bite or a scratch from an infected animal.

Symptoms of rabies in animals include:

- ❖ unexpected aggression in an animal that would normally avoid people, or run away
- ❖ extreme drooling or foaming at the mouth
- ❖ walking as if drunk or unusual sluggishness or stupor.

If you see animals exhibiting symptoms of rabies, call Alexandria Animal Control at 703-746-4444. If you have concerns about you or your family being exposed to rabies, please call Alexandria Health Department at 703-746-4910 during normal business hours.

For more information and links to other recent rabies alerts, visit www.alexandriava.gov/Rabies.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a

diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. www.volunteeralexandria.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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 4

Celebrate

a Timeless Holiday at
George Washington's
Mount Vernon

★ ★ ★



mountvernon.org/Christmas

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT VERNON
THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION



NEW! Afternoon Teas

Enjoy a holiday tea service, surrounded by live harp music and festive decorations at the Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant.



Winter Glow

Nov. 29-30, Dec. 15-19, 23

See George Washington's estate aglow with festive lights set to holiday music and roast s'mores at a crackling fire.



Christmas Illuminations

Dec. 20-22

At this family-friendly celebration, watch fireworks soar over the Potomac River and shop a winter market featuring colonial artisans.



Unique Holiday Shopping

Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts, including our new tartan products that are made in Scotland and feature the colors found in George Washington's Commander in Chief uniform.

‘A Game Changer’ Woodbine opens dialysis center.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center celebrated the opening of its new Dialysis Den Nov. 13 with a ribbon cutting attended by local officials and healthcare industry leaders.

“Today is a momentous occasion as we open an in-house dialysis center at Woodbine,” said Donna Shaw, Administrator of Woodbine. “What is extra special about this dialysis center is that Woodbine takes care of many respiratory patients on ventilators that are unable to leave to be dialyzed. We will be able to support our ventilator patients that need dialysis and that is a game changer.”

Shaw attributed the realization of the new dialysis center to the efforts of Marquee Health Services.

“Marquee Health Services, who

“We will be able to support our ventilator patients that need dialysis and that is a game changer.”

— Donna Shaw,
Woodbine Rehabilitation
Administrator

consult with Woodbine, took the time, energy, and money and invested in this new dialysis center,” Shaw said. “This center will initially be for residents only but there is the possibility that we will be able to open our doors to the community.”

Assisting with the ribbon cutting were Interim Chief of Police Raul Pedroso, Sheriff Sean Casey and Chamber of Commerce CEO Joe Haggerty.

“This is one of the few assisted living facilities in the entire country to have this capability,” Haggerty said. “Woodbine is doing great things and the potential to open this to the community is unbelievable.”

Shaw, herself the recipient of a kidney transplant, noted that many dialysis patients are unable to be treated at other facilities.



Officials gather for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of the Dialysis Den Nov. 13 at Woodbine Rehabilitation Healthcare Center.



Donna Shaw, Administrator of Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, celebrates the Nov. 13 opening of the Dialysis Den, an onsite dialysis facility and first of its kind in the region.

“For patients that are special, that are on a ventilator or have a tracheostomy, other centers can’t accept them because of their clinical complications,” Shaw said. “That is one of the problems that we’re solving for the community -- those patients will be able to live here and be able to be dialyzed without ever having to leave home.”

According to the CDC, more than 1-in-7 adults have chronic

kidney disease with as many as 9 in 10 unaware of their condition.

“Chronic kidney failure is everywhere,” Shaw said. “I had a kidney transplant so I’ve been living with chronic kidney disease for a long time. I’m one of the lucky ones, though, but not everyone is as lucky as me and they need to be dialyzed to live. That is what makes having this facility such a blessing.”

www.woodbinerehab.com

Turkey Trot

FROM PAGE 1

livan’s legacy and her contributions to both the sport and the broader DC Metro community.”

Sullivan is a 6th grade math teacher in Falls Church.

“Susanna’s commitment to her students and her training is

“We’re thankful that this world-class athlete has spent so many of her Thanksgiving mornings running with us in support of ALIVE.”

— DRBA president
Lauren Fisher

such an inspiration,” said Del Ray Business Association President Dr. Lauren Fisher. “We’re thankful that this world-class athlete has spent so many of her Thanksgiving mornings running with us in support of

ALIVE.”

The Alexandria Turkey Trot will take place on Thursday, Nov. 28 at 9 a.m. The USATF-certified course runs through Del Ray, and is the Mid-Atlantic’s premiere Turkey Trot, featuring over 5,000 runners, including some of the fastest elite runners on the east coast. The five-mile run/walk begins and ends at George Washington Middle School. The event is Metro accessible to the Braddock Road Metro Station. Dogs and strollers are welcome and will have their own starting area.

As is tradition, runners and spectators are encouraged to bring nonperishable food items on race day to support ALIVE!, the oldest and largest nonprofit in the City of Alexandria dedicated to fighting

poverty and hunger. For information and to register, visit www.alexandriaturkeytrot.com. Due to high registration numbers, early pre-registration is recommended.



Alexandria Sportsman's Club president Ryan Fannon, left, interviews NFL great Santana Moss Oct. 16 at the Old Dominion Boat Club.



NFL great Santana Moss, third from right, poses with the October Athletes of the Month Oct. 16 at the Old Dominion Boat Club. Pictured from left are: Sportsman's Club president Ryan Fannon; Jack Lentini, accepting the award for his sister Emma Lentini; Tyler Stone; Amari James; Santana Moss; Renee Jenkins; and Julia Kelly.

ASC Welcomes Santana Moss

NFL great helps honor local athletes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Washington NFL pro wide receiver Santana Moss was on hand as the Alexandria Sportsman's Club celebrated local high school athletes at the organization's annual 2024 Commanders Night Oct.

16 at the Old Dominion Boat Club. "Our Commanders Night was a tremendous success," said ASC president Ryan Fannon. "It was a great celebration of our high school athletes of the month and we were joined by the great Santana Moss, who provided inspirational words and updates on the Commanders' exciting season."

Moss played 14 seasons in the NFL. He was selected by the New York Jets in the first round of the 2001 draft, where he spent four seasons with the team before ending his career with Washington. Moss was selected as an All-Pro in 2005.

"Tonight was a great celebration of our high school athletes."

— ASC president Ryan Fannon

More than 100 people attended the event which recognized the accomplishments of nine student-athletes from Alexandria's four area high schools and the city's recreation department.

Recognized for their athletic and scholastic

achievements were: Bishop Ireton's Emma Lentini, Girls Volleyball, and Amari James, Football; Alexandria City High School's Julia Kelly, Girls Volleyball, and Tyler Stone, Boys Golf; Saint Stephen's & Saint Agnes' Karina Constandy, Girls Cross Country, and Renee Jenkins, Girls Volleyball; Episcopal High School's Osi Onwudiwe, Boys Soccer, and Ayosa Stewart, Girls Volleyball; and Alexandria City Rec Department's Lucas Ness, Miracle League Baseball.

Said Fannon, "We are so proud of all our student-athletes and grateful for Santana's generosity."

Preserving Democratic Norms & Values Transcends Party Lines

In response to the opinion piece by Greg Paspatis published on Nov. 14, 2024 in the Mount Vernon Gazette, it's important to address several points raised.

Firstly, the assertion that Delegate Krizek's piece is merely Democratic Party propaganda overlooks the fundamental concern he raises about the state of democracy. His call to vote against Trump is rooted in a broader discussion about preserving democratic norms and values, which transcends party lines. It's not about fear mongering but about highlighting the importance of safeguarding democratic institutions.

Secondly, the absence of mention of the Democratic ticket of Harris and Walz does not diminish the validity of his argument. The focus was on the broader implications of Trump's potential return to power, which is a legitimate concern for many Americans who value democratic principles.

Regarding the lack of a Republican rebuttal, it's worth noting that the media landscape is diverse, and there are ample platforms for Republican voices to be heard. The notion that the American people are being

coerced into a particular way of thinking undermines their ability to make informed decisions. Voters can discern the information presented to them and making choices based on their values and beliefs.

The suggestion that the Democratic Party needs to take stock of itself is valid for any political organization. Self-reflection and adaptation are crucial for any party to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the electorate. However, it's equally important for all parties to engage in constructive dialogue and address the real issues facing the nation, rather than resorting to divisive rhetoric.

In conclusion, democracy thrives on informed debate and the exchange of ideas. It's essential to respect differing viewpoints and engage in discussions that contribute to the betterment of our society. Let's focus on the issues that matter and work together to uphold the democratic values that define our nation.

Martin Tillet
Alexandria, Virginia

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com.

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea

at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com. ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

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

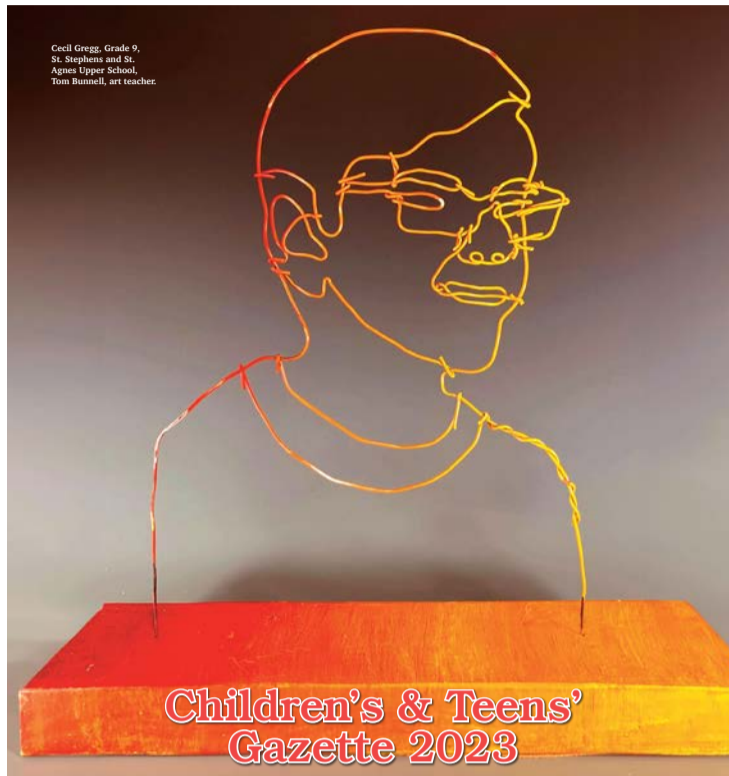
RSVP a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn

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OPINION

Alexandria Gazette Packet

25 CENTS
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DECEMBER 21, 2023



Cecil Gregg, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Tom Bunnell, art teacher.

Children's & Teens' Gazette 2023



ICE!

A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

CIRQUE: SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS | SNOW FLOW MOUNTAIN
SNOWBALL BUILD & BLAST | MERRY SNOOPY CHRISTMAS SCAVENGER HUNT
PHOTOS WITH SANTA | MRS. CLAUS' CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS | BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP™
GINGERBREAD DECORATING CORNER | HERE WE GLOW A-CAROLING LIGHT SHOW | SNOOPY & FRIENDS HOLIDAY TREATS

Nov. 15 - Dec. 28

ChristmasAtGaylordNational.com

SO MUCH CHRISTMAS



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Be Part of the Children's and Teens' Gazette

Our annual Children's Connection and Children's Gazette have been a long-standing tradition. We are once again welcoming contributions from children, youth, and teens in public and private schools, as well as homeschool, after-school care, and other programs, art and writing classes, and from individuals.

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more. We welcome written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

Visit <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/PDFs/> and scroll down to the Children's Edition to see last year's editions. Our plan is for the Children's Connection/Gazette to publish as part of the edition for the week of Dec. 18, 2024.

Submission Directions

1. Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided

in jpeg format. These can be submitted via Google Drive. Writing should be submitted in text format (docx or Google Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

2. Identify each submission as follows:

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Springfield, Summer Morning, watercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS

Writing example

Martina Alvarez, 17, Junior, Alexandria, I'm Not Just a Teen, essay | Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, VA, Gratia Rodriguez, English Teacher, HS

3. Please email your submissions by 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2023, [Earlier is Better] to Editor Mary Kimm at kimm.mary@gmail.com and fill in the Subject Line as Children's Connection 2024. If you are sharing via Google Drive, please share to kimm.mary@gmail.com



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

| Jurisdiction | Fed Struc Id | Route # | Route Name | Crossing | Posted Date |
|--------------|--------------|---------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| STAFFORD | 18062 | 1 | ROUTE 0001 | RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER | 11/1/2024 |
| LUNENBURG | 11672 | 688 | OWL CREEK ROAD | OWL CREEK | 10/11/2024 |
| PETERSBURG | 21087 | 0 | FORT LEE ROAD | INTERSTATE-85 | 10/8/2024 |
| LOUDOUN | 11300 | 709 | SANDS ROAD | TRIBUTARY OF CROOKED RUN | 9/30/2024 |

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Traffic and Travel/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota 804-786-4064.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.

Rethinking Autumn's Leaves

So many reasons to 'leave the leaves.'

BY GLENDA BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Autumn's leaf showers are well under way and many suburbanites are blowing, raking, bagging, vacuuming, cursing and sending the leaves away. Bulging bags of leaves and piles awaiting vacuuming line many streets.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website indicates that leaves and "yard trimmings" account for 12 percent of the nation's solid waste, 34 million tons a year. In 2023, in areas served by Fairfax County, yard waste collected totaled 1,591 truckloads or 17 percent of total waste generated. But the county provides leaf collection services only to 45,000 customers out of 426,400 housing units. Private haulers collect the remaining 90 percent.

Leaves are not trash, say entomologists and others. Fall leaves are assets. They should stay on the ground as nature intended.

"Composting is nature's way of recycling," says Fairfax County's website. Leaves and other plants, fruit and vegetable peels and other organic materials are biodegradable, which means that organisms break them down over time.

HEALTHY SOIL

Leaf mulch provides nutrients that enrich the soil and help suppress unwanted plants. Some gardeners call decomposed leaves "black gold."



Leaves line many streets ready to be vacuumed.



Redbud trees' heart-shaped leaves and seed pods are ready to fall.

Leaf mulch can improve soil's porosity, can retain moisture and reduce the need to water, which is especially important during the

dry spells Virginia has experienced recently.

Another benefit: By making your
SEE RETHINKING, PAGE 7



Leaves on the ground at the Sherwood Regional Library



Bagged leaves await pickup.

Why Care About Insects?

The late biologist Edward O. Wilson said that insects are "the little things that run the world." In "The Diversity of Life," he wrote the following:

"So important are insects and other land-dwelling arthropods that if all were to disappear, humanity probably could not last more than a few months. Most of the amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals would crash to extinction about the same time. Next would go the bulk of the flowering plants and with them the physical structure of most forests and other terrestrial habitats of the world. The land surface would literally rot. As dead vegetation piled up and dried out, closing the channels of the nutrient cycles, other complex forms of vegetation would die off, and with them all but a few remnants of the land vertebrates."

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

City of Alexandria Leaf Vacuuming and Leaf Bag Collection Started Oct. 28, 2024

Alexandria residents who receive City trash collection receive three passes by vacuuming trucks during leaf season. Crews will post signs listing the earliest dates of the second and third passes in each zone, but inclement weather may cause schedule delays. It will take crews several days to complete a single vacuuming pass in each zone, and it is not unusual to not see a truck on the first posted date for collection. Residents can find the Residential Leaf Collection Viewer map to look up assigned leaf collection dates based on their home address.

City of Alexandria Leaf Bag Collection

During leaf collection season, the City provides biodegradable paper bags for leaves. The bags are available at numerous City facilities and are free of charge. Bags are collected at the front curb on the regular trash collection day. Leaf bag distribution at City facilities began Tuesday, Oct. 15.

HOW TO PREPARE:

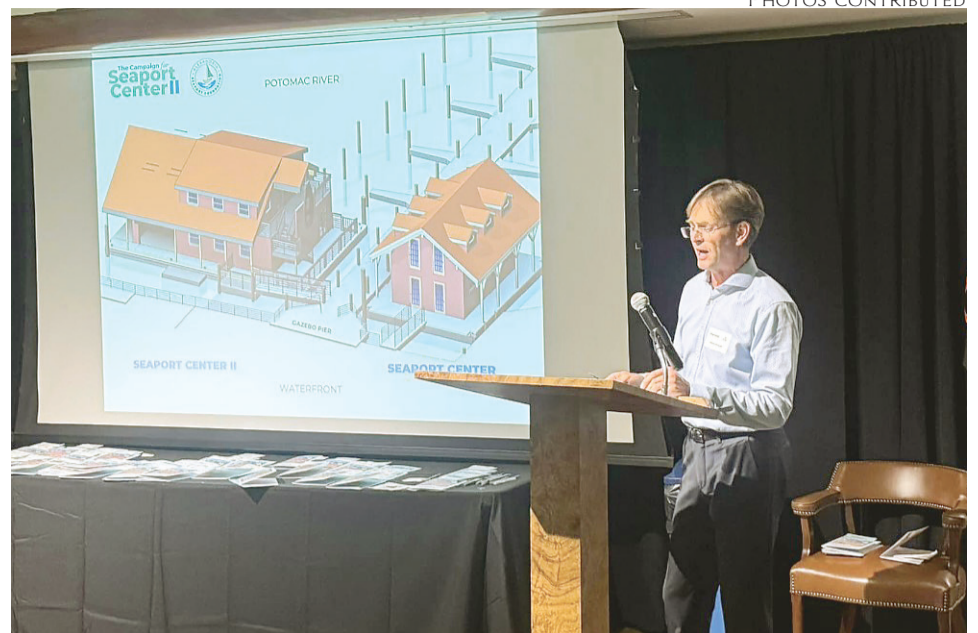
- ❖ Remove dirt, stones, litter and other debris from leaves before placing in bags.
- ❖ Only use paper bags. Leaves in plastic bags are considered trash, and will be thrown away as trash at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant.
- ❖ Place paper bags at the front curb, on your regular trash collection day. Free City leaf bags are available on a first come, first serve basis, while supplies last. Limit 15 bags per residential household per visit. Bags are available at the following locations:
 - ❖ City Hall, 301 King Street (Main Lobby)
Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
 - ❖ City of Alexandria Self-Serve Shed, Corner of Roth Street and Business Center Drive
Available 24/7
 - ❖ Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe Street
Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sunday, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
 - ❖ Patrick Henry Recreation Center, 4653 Taney Avenue
Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Composting Leaves at Home

Composting at home is an easy way to take advantage of the environment's natural recycling process, which creates valuable organic supplements, and can be done right in your own backyard. Visit alexandriava.gov/ResourceRecovery to learn more about grasscycling, backyard composting, the City's new curbside composting pilot, and the City's farmers' market composting stations.



A rendering of the Alexandria Seaport Foundation's new space along the waterfront.



At the recent fundraiser, a Seaport Foundation supporter speaks at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

Fundraising Underway to Expand Alexandria Seaport Foundation

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

When students are in the Alexandria Seaport Foundation learning boat building and woodworking skills, space is so limited that elbows rub and saw dust flies throughout this workshop designed to provide life and career skills to young people. Foundation leaders recognize the need for a bigger space so they've begun a fundraising campaign to expand their mission to improve the lives of at-risk students.

"Right now we're trying to do both in the same space," said Debra Roepke, an organizer and fundraiser behind the effort. "We're hoping to increase our capacity to serve more young people," she said.

They are aiming to raise \$1.5 million which is divided into \$1.1 million for a new building and the rest for new equipment. They have raised a substantial amount of those figures, thanks to the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, but still have more to go. They recently thanked their for-



Inside one of the Alexandria Seaport Foundation workshops, it's a tight fit for all the woodworking and learning going on.

mer supporters at a celebration in the Old Dominion Boat Club ballroom where they talked about the final goal.

"We should be able to double or maybe triple our students," said Roepke. The students learn boat building and woodworking

skills on the surface, supporters of this effort are hoping to provide positive options to these students that are many times from low income areas of Alexandria. "They often don't have a support network," she added.

The Alexandria Seaport Foundation started their efforts in 1992 when they began construction on the McIlhenny Seaport Center on the Alexandria waterfront. It evolved into an effort to improve the lives of at-risk youth, and this is done through boat building and woodworking skills as well as improved academic and social competence. A 42-foot replica of a Potomac River Dory was the first project they completed years ago.

Since then, many area teens have come through the doors to learn these skills and more. A couple of recent success stories include one student who earned a scholarship to George Mason University, and another who went on to join the U.S. Air Force.

To learn more about how to contribute to "change, educate, and save the lives" of young people who have yet to find their way in life, go to AlexandriaSeaportFoundation.com. On-site volunteers are also needed.

Rethinking Autumn's Leaves

FROM PAGE 6

own mulch, you don't have to buy it and lug it home.

CURB GLOBAL WARMING

A Sept. 22 Better Homes and Gardens article reports that leaving the leaves can help combat global warming because when leaves go to the landfill, they decompose without oxygen and produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas

that is warming the planet.

By not using a gas-powered leaf blower, you can also cut other air and noise pollution. Reducing truck traffic can curb vehicular pollution. Transportation accounts for around 43 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the county.

HOME TO CRITTERS

Leaves provide habitat for many critters. Turtles, toads, birds, mammals and invertebrates depend

on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material.

There's a busy ecosystem in and under those leaves. Worms, snails, spiders, beetles, millipedes and microscopic organisms like bacteria and fungi find a home in dead organic material. Leaves insulate animals that hide in or beneath the soil from the cold.

Many insects overwinter in leaves and animals like chipmunks, turtles, birds and amphib-

ians rely on insects for food. Most butterflies and moths overwinter as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis or adult. The National Wildlife Federation reports that 94 percent of moths rely on the leaf layer to complete their life cycle. Their caterpillars shelter under the leaves and emerge as adults in the spring. Caterpillars are a staple for many birds feeding their young in the spring. Removing leaves can mean reducing the number of beneficial

insects and birds.

Margaret Fisher, Outreach Coordinator for Plant NOVA Natives/Plant NOVA Trees, offers, "We need native plants in our yards to support the insects that support the birds and the rest of the ecosystem. Many of those insects overwinter in the fallen leaves, but if we blow or haul them away, we don't allow those insects to complete their life cycles."

ENTERTAINMENT



“Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” can be seen Nov. 15-24, 2024 at Bryant Alternative High School in Alexandria.

OCT. 31 TO DEC. 8

Susan J. Goldman Exhibit. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist talk, Saturday, November 30, 1 p.m.

OCT. 24 TO DEC. 21

“A Focus on Nature.” At Coldwell Banker Realty, 310 King Street, Alexandria. 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 Alexandria. 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@ninatisara.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

NOV. 10 TO DEC. 10

Pope-Leighey House Tours. 12-1 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. By 1941, the year Pope-Leighey House was complet-

ed, Frank Lloyd Wright had studied Japan for almost a half-century. He had become a serious collector of woodblock prints—even writing a book on the subject—and had won acclaim for his design of the Tokyo Imperial Hotel, one of the few buildings to survive the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. On this special tour, visitors will discover how the famous American architect incorporated his love of Japanese art, architecture, and philosophy into Usonian homes, and how this East Asian influence shines in Wright’s Pope-Leighey House.

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.

NOV. 15-24

“Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.” At Bryant Alternative High School, 2709 Popkins Lane, Alexandria. Presented by Mount Vernon Community Children’s Theater (MVCCT). Featuring 44 young actors between the ages of 8 and 18 from 27 schools across the DMV. The show will have a six-day run: Nov. 15 at 7 p.m., Nov. 16 at 7 p.m., Nov. 17 at 3 p.m., Nov. 22 at 7 p.m., Nov. 23 at 7 p.m., and Nov. 24 at 3 p.m. For tickets, visit MVCCT.org.

THURSDAY/NOV. 21

Jennifer Barlow: Food Inspired Art. At the Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Jennifer Barlow is a local oil painter with a sweet tooth! Come to Nepenthe Gallery to meet her and see the collection of unique and fun original artworks — just in time for the holidays! Barlow is absolutely an artist whose art will lift you up!

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

Tree Lighting Ceremony. 6 p.m. Celebrate the city’s official start to the holiday season at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, with appearances from Major Justin Wilson,

the Town Crier and even Santa himself. A few weeks later on December 8, take part in the Del Ray Tree and Menorah Lighting as you enjoy tunes and hot chocolate and hand-painted holiday windows along Del Ray’s storefronts.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

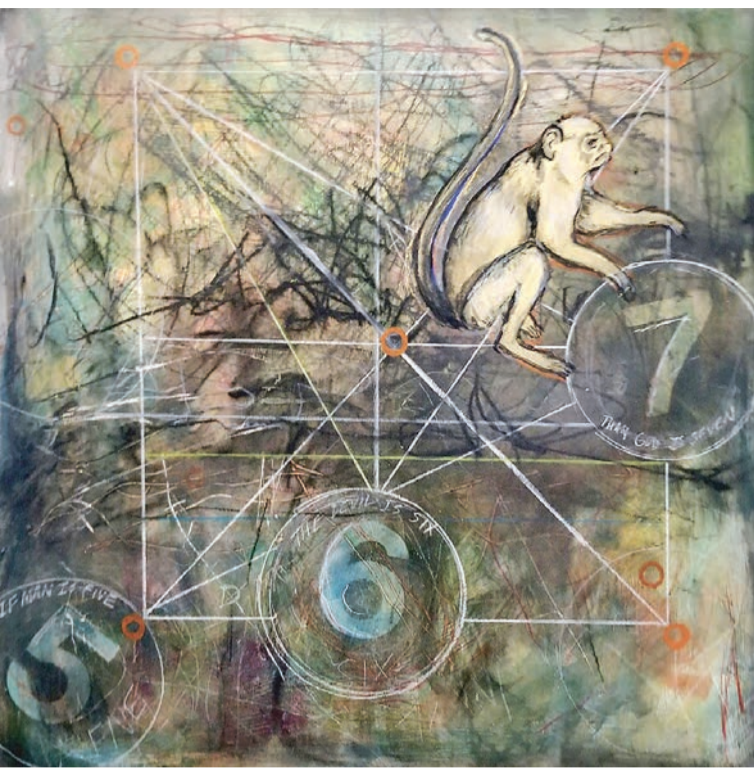
Alexandria Cider Festival. 1 to 5 p.m. At Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St., Alexandria. Celebrate Virginia Cider Week with a special tasting event on the grounds of the historic Lloyd House in Old Town Alexandria. Event tickets include cider tastings, live music, a tasting glass and a little history, 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

Holiday Shop 2024. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Over 50 vendors including Pottery, Ceramics, Glass, Wood, Metal, Fabric, Jewelry, Yarn, Paintings, Photography, Mosaics, Cards, Books, Bags, Candles, and Soaps, Baked and Canned Goods, Household Collectibles and Lunch. Quilt Raffle “Yakata Dreams” \$3 per ticket. Free entry, Free parking, Cash and cards accepted - some vendors may not be able to accept cards. Visit the website www.MVUC.org.

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:



The Del Ray Artisans “\$100 & Under” exhibit runs now through Dec. 1, 2024 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, Alexandria.

\$15 (\$13.50 for members. Info at <https://focusmusic.org/shows#sat-11-23-the-good-folk-alexandria-and-virtual>

Cost: \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents/2024/12/3/yoga-nidra>

SUNDAY/NOV. 24

Georgetown Saxatones. 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Get ready to rock the house with everything from alternative to pop to soul with the Georgetown Saxatones. As Georgetown’s only community service a cappella group, they are passionate about sharing their music in support of worthy causes.

Donations are welcome during the performance and the Saxatones will donate all of their proceeds to a humanitarian charity.

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

Plaid Friday Alexandria. Alexandria’s 50 Small Business Black Friday returns for another holiday season to highlight and celebrate Alexandria’s iconic array of independent businesses. Known as the top destination for locally owned retail, 50 participating businesses are asking customers to shift their shopping this holiday season by kicking off Black Friday shopping at Alexandria boutiques for steals and deals on Friday, November 29. Several participating businesses will open at 6 a.m. For more details on participating businesses and special offers, visit plaidfridayALX.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 1

8th Annual Old Town Tuba Christmas. Presented by WMPA - Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. 3 p.m. At Market Square/Old Town Farmers Market by City Hall, Alexandria. Free. Christmas carols and holiday tunes with tubaists of all ages. Free.

TUESDAY/DEC. 3

Yoga Nidra. 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Experience Pope-Leighey House in a unique way through Yoga Nidra, a type of guided meditation that allows participants to achieve deeper states of relaxation.

DEC. 6 - 8

Alexandria’s iconic holiday weekend. Taste of Scotland.Friday, Dec. 6. The 53rd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade is Saturday, Dec. 7, followed by the 24th Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. <https://visitalexandria.com/holidays/biggest-weekend/>

FRIDAY/DEC. 6

Taste of Scotland. 6:30 p.m. At The Atrium, Old Town Alexandria. Campagna Center and partners will celebrate the holiday season and its Scottish heritage during the Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend in Alexandria, starting with the 2024 Taste of Scotland. This festive party, held on the Friday before the parade, invites guests to sample Scotch and enjoy delicious food, music, and entertainment, with all proceeds supporting the Campagna Center. For 50 years, this beloved event has helped improve the lives of Alexandria’s children and families through impactful programs. Visit <https://www.campagnacenter.org/tasteofscotland2024/>

DEC. 6-21

Holiday Tours. 5-7:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Tour the Pope-Leighey House during special evening tours and see the home decorated for a mid-century holiday. Tours are offered Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, with tours every half hour between 5 and 7 p.m. Space is limited, advance registration is recommended. Cost: \$20. Visit the website <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org>

DEC. 6-22

29th Annual Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 29th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and

ENTERTAINMENT



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

crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2025 wall calendars support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Holiday Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 6-8, Dec 13-15, Dec 20-22). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/holiday-market-2024

SATURDAY/DEC. 7
Holiday Parade Day. Alexandria’s two

signature holiday parades starting with the 53rd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade sponsored by Wegmans at 11 a.m. followed by the 24th Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights sponsored by Amazon at 5:30 p.m., with riverside festivities for the whole family starting at 2 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7
Fall Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. The Friends of Barrett Library will

hold their annual Fall Book Sale. Come browse a great selection of fiction, nonfiction, and children’s books, as well as DVDs and CDs. Prices are \$3 for hardbacks, \$2 for paperbacks, and vary for special volumes and collections. Info: (703) 746-1703.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7
Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children’s books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7
Support Youth Musicians. WMPA – Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. 3 p.m. At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. Join both the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and the Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra as they perform. The program offers a variety of music: Hoffmeister Viola Concerto, Mvt. I - Isaiah Reed, soloist Seitz Viola Concerto, Mvt. I - Tate Commission, soloist Capriol Suite - Peter Warlock Slavonic Dance in C - Furi-ant - Antonin Dvořák. Free.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11



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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 5

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Holiday Dreams Orchestra

Concert. 3 p.m. At the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Street, Alexandria. Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic performs with the Alexandria Choral Society. Duke Ellington's "Nutcracker Suite" headlines, under the baton of Music Director Anna Binneweg. This concert promises to transport the audience into a realm of festive delight, "Holiday Dreams" offers a captivating blend of seasonal cheer and musical charm. Grace-Evangeline Mason's "The Imagined Forest" sets a magical tone, weaving together melodies that evoke the spirit of the holidays. Tickets \$35 adults, \$30 seniors, 18 & under just \$5.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Joe Theismann's Restaurant.

8 a.m. Located at 1800A Diagonal Road, Alexandria. Dates: Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. This holiday season, create unforgettable memories with Breakfast with Santa in the enchanting Old Town Alexandria at Joe Theismann's Restaurant. Start with a festive family-style breakfast featuring delectable options like french toast, smoked salmon, and tater tots. Children will love the take-home treats and a magical moment meeting Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo. Adults can indulge in bottomless Prosecco bellinis or classic mimosas for \$15. Babies join for free, while kids are \$29.50 plus tax and adults are \$53 plus tax.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Mia's Italian Kitchen.

8 a.m. Located at 100 King Street, Alexandria. Dates are Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. Celebrate the season with a festive breakfast feast featuring a delicious spread served family-style, including breakfast pastry & bagel basket, smoked salmon, and scrambled eggs. At Mia's Italian Kitchen, children will enjoy take-home treats and a magical visit with Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo that captures the Christmas spirit. Adults can enjoy bottomless classic mimosas and Prosecco bellinis for \$18. Babies join for free, while kids are \$34 plus tax and adults are \$57 plus tax.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Ada's on the River.

8 a.m.



The Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library is holding a Fall Book Sale on Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024 in Alexandria.

Located at 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Dates are: Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. Join Ada's on the River for a festive breakfast feast, where you'll enjoy a delicious family-style spread including breakfast pastries, pancakes, yogurt parfait, and tater tots. Children will receive take-home treats and a magical visit with Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo that captures the Christmas spirit. Adults can indulge in classic mimosas, bellinis, or Prosecco. Adults can indulge in bottomless Prosecco bellinis or classic mimosas for \$15. Babies join for free, while kids are \$29.50 plus tax and adults are \$53 plus tax.

THURSDAY/DEC. 12

Del Ray Holiday Sip & Shop.

Special promotions and complimentary wine and refreshments.

DEC. 13-15

Gustave Marche de Noel Gift Market.

New this year, be immersed in a magical new European Christmas market experience in Del Ray during the inaugural Gustave Marché de Noël Gift Market, a weekend chock-full of holiday happenings including the Old Town North Holiday Market & Farmers Market, Christmas Market & Holiday Craft Show at John Carlyle Square and more.

DEC. 14-15

Nutcracker Ballet.

At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. At 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. both days. Presented by the Metropolitan School of the Arts. Veronica Quezada, MSA alumnus and part of the International Tour of West Side Story, will play the part of Sugar Plum Fairy, joining a cast of 150 MSA students. Tickets are \$21 to \$35. Visit www.metropolitanschoolofthearts.org

TUESDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa Show.

1 p.m. Begins at BARCA Pier, 2 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. For a sight you have to see to believe, head to the waterfront between BARCA Pier and Founders Park to witness the Waterskiing Santa Show, featuring Santa and his friends gliding along the Potomac River. There is also a rumor the Grinch will try and steal the show at 12:45 p.m. before the show starts. Santa and his pals begin at BARCA Pier at 1 p.m. and ski north to Founders Park before circling back south and finishing at Ford's Landing.

DEC. 31, 2024

30th Annual First Night Alexandria.

2 p.m. - 12 a.m. Throughout Old Town Alexandria. Experience the region's signature

family-friendly New Year's Eve

festival of music and more. A community celebration of the performing arts, First Night Alexandria rings in the new year with music, comedy, and dance. This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m. on Alexandria's waterfront geared to families who want to enjoy the show with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront. Visit <https://visitallexandria.com/events/30th-annual-first-night-alexandria>

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.

All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

NOVEMBER

Wed. 20: Eric Benet \$79.50
Thu. 21: Ohio Players \$79.50
Fri. 22: Paula Poundstone \$59.50
Sat. 23: Paula Poundstone \$59.50
Sun. 24: Marshall Crenshaw w/ James Mastro \$35.00
Mon. 25: Girl Named Tom: The Joy of Christmas Tour \$55.00
Fri. 29: The Seldom Scene & Dry Branch Fire Squad \$45.00
Sat. 30: The Manhattans Featuring Gerald Alston \$65.00

Bar Mitzvah Boy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

On Wednesday Nov. 20th, my former puppy/how adolescent golden retriever Burton will become a dog (meaning no longer a puppy). What I mean to say is on that day, two years, and three months after his mid-August 2022 birth – and subsequent early October arrival in my arms (given to me as a surprise birthday gift from my wife, Dina), Burton will be neutered. It is advised that larger breeds have this procedure later in their lives to allow for their normal and complete growth. Having waited, we will now be dropping him off at the spay clinic between 7:00 and 7:30 Wednesday morning and picking him up between 2:00 and 3:00 pm later that same day. If my previous experience as an owner of a golden being who was neutered is any indication, when I see Burton at the clinic, after his procedure, he will be his old/new self. Dogs' resilience is amazing. When I picked-up my last male dog, Bailey, after his being neutered, he came running over to me like nothing had happened to him. And of course, something most definitely had happened to him.

If I am to be honest, Burton's procedure seems more of a problem for me, than it does/will be for him. And so, I've taken to calling this procedure Burton's Bar Mitzvah, the day when Jewish boys, me included, become men. And even though there was no surgery with that occasion, I will admit that singing my Bar Mitzvah part (a section of the Torah) in front of a congregation of hundreds of attendees (I shared the stage with two other boys) can be painful, especially if you never sing – which I never did, and then while singing your 'part,' your voice cracks. Then you overcorrect by repeating the crack (which you were advised not to do) until you "baritone" it down to a more singable tone. Such was my life on October 20, 1967. Not exactly a day in infamy, but a day to remember for sure.

And though singing in front of a congregation was incredibly stressful for me, it was/is nonetheless, a rite of passage of sorts. "Today, you are a man" is the refrain of the day, uttered by your rabbi and is a summary of the event. There won't be much I can say to Burton on his big day since he won't understand any of it. But I will follow doctors' orders and keep him calm for two weeks and make sure he takes his medicine and wears his "e-collar" ("E" for Elizabethan) to prevent his licking at the incision. But I won't be having a party for Burton back at the house as my parents did for me. I will be happy to get him home though so he can curl up on his bed and start to recuperate.

Once Burton's recovery period is over, he'll likely lead a healthier and less complicated life. Much less wandering, less territorial, no more being attracted to females in heat, and less aggressive in general, which for a golden translates to less excitement/exuberance in all things of interests to a dog, especially greeting people. As I often joke about goldens, the only risk to someone breaking into your home, a home protected by a golden retriever, is if the thief is allergic to dog saliva. But they're loud, almost ferocious barkers so with Burton in the house, we feel safe and secure. (However, once the intruder is in the house, it might be a different story.)

Hardly a problem if you're a golden retriever owner. You don't get a golden retriever as a guard dog. You get a golden retriever as the perfect family dog: loving, affectionate and playful. And as a member of the family, he is entitled to all the benefits forthwith. One of which is to maintain his health. (As an example, I just spent \$170 yesterday on an emergency veterinary appointment because he had a loose stool two nights in a row.) And the prevailing opinion about neutering dogs is, unless you're using them to stud/breed, it's better, all things considered, to neuter/spay the animal – and that's not just Bob Barker speaking.

Nevertheless, though this procedure is a net positive, it's still surgery. I'm sure I'll have to sign some sort of waiver. But I have been down the road before, not literally (I'm using a spay specialist-type veterinarian that's a referral) so I'm not worried, exactly. I'm more anxious, as I would be about any family member having any a medical procedure, no matter how minor. Stranger things have happened on an operator table, maybe even in an examining room. I'll be glad when it's over. Identical to how I felt on the days leading up to my Bar Mitzvah. I survived that. I'm sure I'll survive this.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in

school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during

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

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

Something historic is happening in Old Town Alexandria.

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