

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



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DECEMBER 19, 2024

## Wreaths Across America



Representatives of the U.S. military service organizations stand with members of the Civil Air Patrol in preparation for the start of Wreaths Across America Dec. 14 at Alexandria National Cemetery.



Volunteers spread out across the Alexandria National Cemetery to place more than 4,000 wreaths honoring veterans as part of Wreaths Across America Dec. 14.

PHOTOS BY JOHN BORDNER/GAZETTE PACKET

### Thousands turn out to honor Alexandria's veterans.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

More than 1,000 volunteers braved below freezing temperatures to participate in Wreaths Across America, placing 4,229 Veterans Remembrance Wreaths in honor of local veterans Dec. 14 at Alexandria National Cemetery.

"The annual Wreaths Across America event at Alexandria National Cemetery was a huge success," said VFW Post 609 Commander Gerald Krueger. "Over 1,000 Alexandria area patriotic citizens joined military veterans from several VSOs, along with Scouts, cadets, church groups, and more, in placing wreaths on all 4,229 veterans' gravestones."

National Wreaths Across America Day took place at over 4,225 cemeteries across the country with over three million veterans honored this year.

"Every year we attempt to populate all tombstones in the Alexandria Cemetery with donated/contributed Veterans Remembrance Wreaths," said Krueger, lead organizer of the event. "We came pretty close, with over 95 percent donated wreaths this year."

VFW Post 609 hosted the public for the annual Wreaths Across America event at the historic Alexandria National Cemetery for its

16th year. The Alexandria tradition first began in December of 2009.

Collaborator Veteran Service Organizations included the American Legion Posts 24 and 1775, and the Association of the US Navy Kenyon Anderson local chapter.

"The mission of Wreaths Across America is to Remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach the next generation the value of freedom," Krueger said.

The event began with a traditional military ceremony honoring all the Veterans of the Military Services. Eight specially identified Veterans Service Wreaths were positioned in front of the historic 1890s Cemetery gates; and then a uniformed service member, either on active duty or retired, was escorted by uniformed Challenger Squadron I, Civil Air Patrol Cadets as they marched inbound to present their wreaths at the Cemetery American Flag Pole. There the special wreaths were hung on the railing behind the flag pole.

Then, the over 4,000 balsam wreaths were handed out two-to-a-visitor for respectful placement of the wreaths on veterans' graves.

Once again, Saint Rita Catholic School's American Heritage Girls was the largest contributor to wreaths, "as they are every year," Krueger said.

Other groups who raised significant numbers of WAA wreaths



New Jersey visitor Rita Caruso places a wreath at a headstone as part of Wreaths Across America Dec. 14 at Alexandria National Cemetery.



Members of Saint Rita's Catholic School's American Heritage Girls participate in Wreaths Across America Dec. 14 at Alexandria National Cemetery.

include: VFW Post 609; American Legion Post 24; Military Officers Association of America; Old Town Village and Christ Church; Sons of the American Legion Squadron 176, Springfield; George Washington Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution; three chapters of Daughters of the American Revolution - Dr. Elisha Dick Chapter, Mount Vernon Chapter, and the John Alexander Chapter.

This year's wreaths will be re-

moved and recycled on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2025, beginning at 8 a.m. Volunteers are welcome.

Fundraising for next year's Wreaths Across America has begun with the Wreaths Across America organization in Columbia Falls, Maine, again announcing they will match one-for-one additional wreath for pledges made through registered Sponsorship Groups. The offer runs through Jan. 17, 2025. The link to donate through

VFW Post 609-Alexandria is [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/VA0930P](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/VA0930P)

"We are inspired by the support of the community, including Saint Rita's American Heritage Girls, who have been the top organization for getting pledges for us for the last 5-6 years," Krueger said. "The Wreaths Across America veterans remembrance wreaths is a way for a community to honor those who have served."

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

## Naomi L. Brooks Elementary

LUISA TIO, ART TEACHER, ES

SEE MORE, PAGE 5



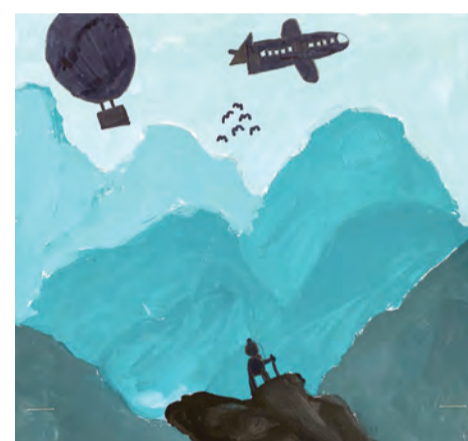
Ariyan Mobley, 6, 1st grade, markers



Nora Noble, 10, 4th grade, tempera paint



Riley Graham, 6, 1st grade, markers and crayons



Alexander Batt, 10, 4th grade, tempera paint

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# NEWS



Children pose for a photo in front of a replica of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/CAZETTE PACKET

A young girl visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

# Toyland

## ARHA Winter Wonderland marks 15th year.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Santa, Mrs. Claus and volunteer elves from the North Pole were on hand as the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority hosted its 15th annual Santa's Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Community volunteers joined Santa and ARHA staff in distributing toys and celebrating the holiday spirit with ARHA families. The Winter Wonderland is designed to ensure that every child has at least one gift for the holidays.

"Over the next two days we will

serve over 1,000 kids and give out over 1,200 toys," said ARHA CEO Erik Johnson. "Sometimes this is the only Christmas these kids will get so it's important for us to serve and spread some joy to our residents."

The event began with an awards ceremony for event partners and sponsors: Partnership awardees included Mayor Justin Wilson, ARHA Board member Willie Bailey, Toys for Tots, and SoHo (Space of Her Own, Inc.).

Toys were distributed among models of historic buildings in Alexandria, including the George Washington Masonic National Memorial and City Hall.

"We will be giving away \$60,000 of toys and gifts but we need \$100,000 in toys and gifts to meet the need," Johnson said. "Hopefully we can meet that need in our 16th year."

[www.arha.us](http://www.arha.us)



Volunteers pose for a photo during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



An attendee picks out a toy during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Santa embraces two young children during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



A young boy holds a new toy during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



A volunteer elf waves during the ARHA Winter Wonderland Dec. 13 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

# Making Spirits Bright

Firefighters and Friends holds annual toy drive.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Volunteers pose for a group photo at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**F**orget Santa. This year it was the Grinch that was especially generous in giving out toys as part of the annual Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

“We gave away over 450 toys and \$750 in gift cards to families in the West End of the city,” said Firefighters and Friends founder and former City Councilman Willie Bailey. “This was a wonderful event that brought joy to the kids and took some financial pressure off of the families this holiday season.”

Volunteers were on hand to help the Grinch spread holiday cheer, including members of the Psi Nu Chapter of Omega



Psi Phi Fraternity.

“This is our third year working with Firefighters and Friends,” said fraternity representative Dennis Craig. “It’s a great event and we love to give back to the community. We do our small part and seeing the smiles on the kids’ faces lights up my world.”

Sponsors for the event include: Five Guys (Sam); Chadwick’s Restaurant; John Taylor; Duncan and Susan Blair; Union Street Public House Restaurant (Bruce); David Millard; Mr. and Mrs. Cabral; Alexandria City Parks

Police Officer Dylan Ignacio helps a child pick out a Christmas toy at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

& Recreation Department; Psi Nu Chapter Of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP); Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue; Alexandria Police Department; Alexandria Sheriff’s Office.

Bailey said that this year was particularly hard on families.

“Many families mentioned that with inflation it would be a tough holiday so the giveaway really helps,” Bailey said. “A huge thank you to our sponsors. This would not be possible without their support.”

Added Craig, “There’s a reason we like coming to this. We get to directly impact these children, particularly around the holidays. For a lot of these families, it is a tough time so just being able to do our small part means the world to all of us.”



A holiday Grinch poses for a photo with children at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.



John Porter, Willie Bailey, Michael Johnson and the Grinch volunteer at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.



Deputy Sheriff Kelly Allen and the Grinch pose for a photo with children at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 14 at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

# CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

## Naomi L. Brooks Elementary

LUISA TIO, ART TEACHER, ES

FROM PAGE 2



Asis Lalley, 10, 4th grade, tempera paint



Bella Mendoza, 10, 4th grade, tempera paint



Eleanor Wolin, 6, 1st grade, markers and crayons



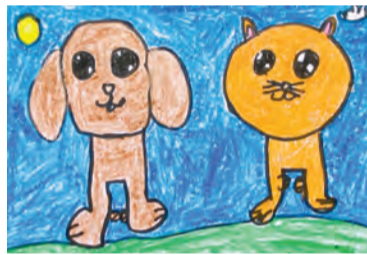
Ernie Doyle, 8, 2nd grade, crayons



Audrey Loud, 9, 3rd grade, markers and crayons



Caroline Fray, 8, 2nd grade, crayons



Yusra Joya, 8, 2nd grade, crayons and markers

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# Girl Power

**GWMS beats Jefferson-Houston in inaugural girls' championship game.**

The girls basketball teams of George Washington Middle School and Jefferson-Houston Pre-K-8 IB School made history Dec. 3 when GWMS defeated Jefferson-Houston 22-14 in Alexandria's inaugural Middle School Girls Basketball Championship.

Played at the Alexandria City High School gym, the game consisted of two halves. GWMS point guard Dallas Broussard, an eighth-grader, was named MVP. Jefferson-Houston was led by sixth-grader Kali Bates.

Both teams entered the game

with a 5-1 record. The championship marked the end of an eight-game season for the middle school girls. With four middle schools in Alexandria, the schools play against each other twice before the playoffs.

The girls championship also marked the expansion of additional athletic programs for middle school students. Middle school boys basketball has begun with football, volleyball, soccer, cheerleading, and boys' and girls' tennis scheduled to begin in the 2026-2027 academic year.

- JEANNE THEISMANN



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Members of the GWMS and Jefferson-Houston girls basketball teams pose for a photo after the inaugural Middle School Girls Basketball Championship Dec. 3 at ACHS. GWMS won the game 22-14.



"Surrounded by Stars" by Elan Kenneth Medina, age 4



Sylvie Wetzel, 11, Grade 6, Alexandria, Portrait, Drawing, St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Recipients of the 2024 DRBA Star Awards pose for a group photo Dec. 16 at Lena's Restaurant. Pictured are Larry and Christine Ponzi, Tim and Elissa Laderach, Leslie Staples and Lisa Neurohr.

# Starstruck

## DRBA presents annual Star Awards.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Del Ray Business Association recognized individuals who have gone above and beyond in service to the Del Ray community at the organization's annual Star Awards Dec. 16 at Lena's Restaurant.

This year's honorees include: Outstanding Small Business owner, Larry and Christine Ponzi, owners of St. Elmo's Coffee Pub

and Piece Out; Outstanding City/Government Service, Mayor Justin Wilson; and Outstanding Citizens, Tim and Elissa Laderach, Lisa Neurohr, and Leslie Staples.

The DRBA also celebrated a successful year, ending with the 9th Annual Candy Cane Bar Crawl, which raised \$9,267 for Cook for Vets, a local nonprofit that provides food security for veterans and their households through the distribution of healthy meals and groceries.

"When I moved to Virginia, the first place I went to was Del Ray," said Cook for Vets founder L.J. Raspler.

"The giving, honest, and genuine people I have met in Del Ray have blown my mind."  
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Cook for Vets founder L.J. Raspler, right, accepts a donation from the Del Ray Business Association president Lauren Fisher at the DRBA Star Awards Dec. 16 at Lena's Restaurant.

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## 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	File #/Date	Route #	Route Name	Structure	Posted Date
GRAYSON	8878	678	FOX CREEK ROAD	MIDDLE FOX CREEK	12/2/2024
GRAYSON	8755	58	HIGHLANDS PKWY	STREAM & CATTLE PASS	11/19/2024
LEE	10775	600	ROUTE 600	BLACKWATER CREEK	11/19/2024
BRUNSWICK	3662	613	GILLS BRIDGE ROAD	NOTTOWAY RIVER	11/14/2024
LEE	10759	70	ROUTE 70	POWELL RIVER	11/13/2024
BEDFORD	2798	680	MURRELLS GAP ROAD	SHEEP CREEK	11/13/2024

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](http://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](mailto:haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov) or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 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](mailto:corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov).*

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# CHILDREN'S & TEENS GAZETTE 2024

The art and writing of local students is always a bright spot. We offer many thanks to the art teachers who guided these artists and compiled the art to appear here, and the English and Creative Writing teachers who inspired their students to write poetry, essays and short stories.

We heard from students who have participated in this edition for many years, and from teachers who also have compiled their students' art over the years, and in some cases from different schools and even school systems. We have homeschool families who have also made the Children's & Teens Connection or Gazette an annual tradition.

This edition is full of gems, but only a small percentage of the gems we received. We will print more in our next edition in January.

You can find the other Children's and Teens' editions by going to <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and then scrolling down to Children's. Thanks for reading.

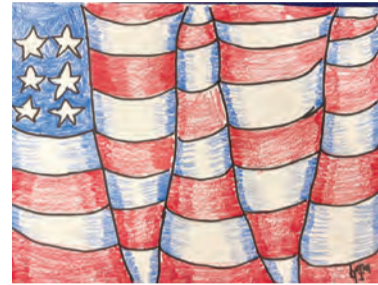
Now the Gazette will be on a break until

after the New Year, with the exact week we'll be back to be determined by ad revenue and other factors, but likely Jan. 8 or 15.

In the meantime contact us, for advertising, contact [debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com) or [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com). For content, contact me [mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com).

## Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy

ASHLEY SHELTON, ART TEACHER



Lena Widrick, 4th, Furling Flag



Belen Skugrud, 5th, Furling Flag



Charlotte Haga, 5th, A Study in Orange



Alice Gayner, 5th, A Study in Orange



Halema Ahmed, 3rd, Picasso Portrait



Azad Talouni, 3rd, Picasso Portrait



Sasha Stewart, 3rd, Portrait in Harmony



George Summers, 4th, The Hamburger Enthusiast



Grayson Irwin, 4th, Self-Portrait with a Feline Flair



Kiley Bannister, 5th, "Hi, It's Me"



Roosevelt Hayes, 4th, Self-Portrait



Sophia Feinberg, 2nd, Seurat Landscape



Catarina Hileman, 2nd, Seurat Landscape



Adelaide Wilson, 2nd, Seurat Landscape



Jackson Sims, 1st, Snowglobe



Christopher Khalil, 1st, Snowglobe



Josephine Ring, 4th, Waving



Brendan Kasony, 4th, Facing Mount Hood

## Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School in Alexandria

TEACHERS RANDY HOLLOWAY AND DOROTHY COCOLIN

The poems they submitted were interpretations of a book from their Reading class.

They painted a picture and wrote a poem based on what they felt in the book.

The book is called Two Degrees by Alan Gratz.

GRACIE ISRAEL, 9, GRADE 4

The fires burn around me  
It's red and hot and burns me.  
Where can I find a moment  
of peace

Out of the fire one second at  
least

All the animals run, run, run.  
While the fire acts like it's  
having fun.

Until it stops leaving every-  
thing in smoke

And then everything goes  
black.



LUVLEEN PASRICHA, 9, 4TH GRADE

Megafires raging  
High and blazing  
We all know, this is the end.  
Burnt leaves are the new  
trend

Running as hard as we can  
Sometimes I wish we had a  
plan

As the fire drapes over us my  
last words are:

It is over for us



Jordyn Campbell, 3rd, Harvest Hues



Jordan DeThomas, 3rd, Harvest Hues

## Charles Barrett Elementary School

ELLEN PATTISALL, ART TEACHER, ES



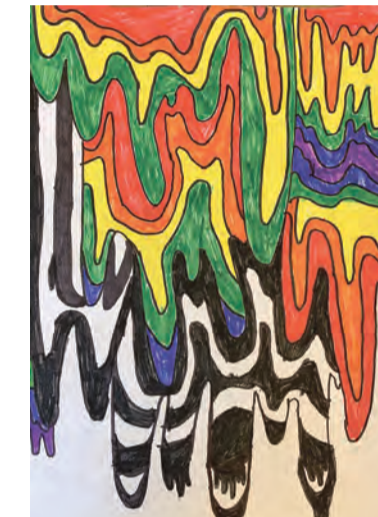
Eva Bond, 8, Grade 3, Alexandria, Kusama Pumpkin



Kimberly Raxtum Huerta, 10, Grade 3, Alexandria, Kusama Pumpkin



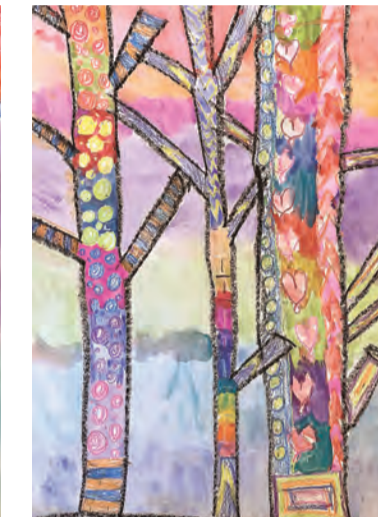
Tucker Holman, 6, Grade 1, Alexandria, Painted Poppies



Freddy LaFratta, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Jen Stark Inspired Drips



Sasha Cardenas Santos, 6, Grade 1, Alexandria, Colorful Patterned Leaf



Maeve Hamilton, 8, Grade 2, Alexandria, Colorful Trees



Beatrice Mills, 11, Grade 5, Alexandria, Pink Pup



Charlotte Cato, 11, Grade 5, Alexandria, Blue Dog



Fiona Patten, 10, Grade 4, Alexandria, Kusama Mushrooms



Avery Long, 11, Grade 5, Alexandria, Kusama Mushrooms



Maria Owens DeSalvo, 10, Grade 4, Alexandria, Story Quilt Flag



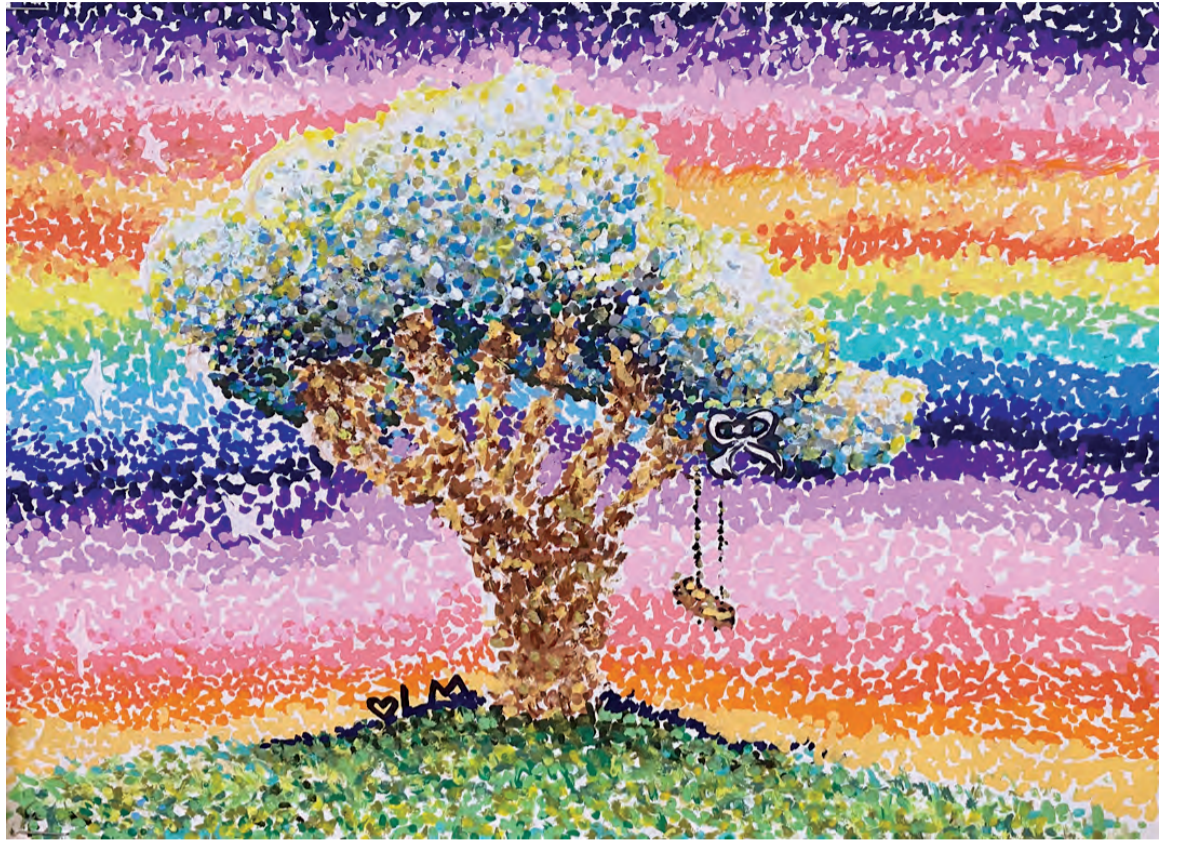
Andrew Marino, 10, Grade 4, Alexandria, Story Quilt Flag



# ST. STEPHEN'S AND ST. AGNES SCHOOL



Alex Kocsis, Grade 9



Lila Mclean, Grade 7



Alex Michael, Grade 9



Mia Reinke, Grade 9



Piper Fraley, Grade 5



Cambell Nguyen, Grade 8



Ruby Carnahan, Grade 9



Max Gura, Grade 6



Lucas Zang, Grade 4



Luca Vallozzi, Grade 6

**FERDINAND T. DAY  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
MADLINE MAHER, ART TEACHER



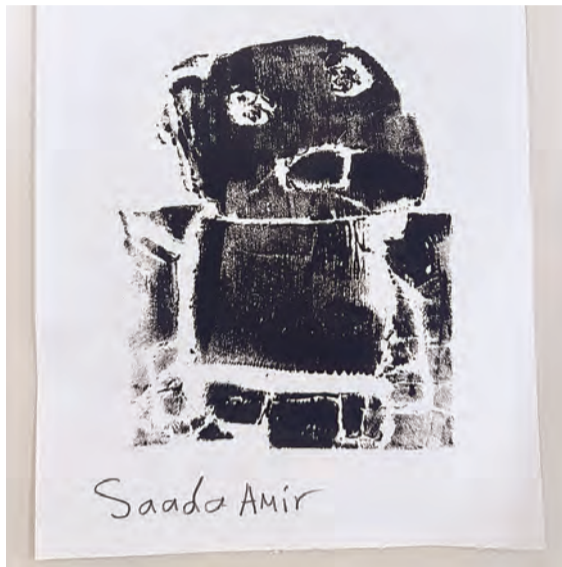
Zenat Shah, 12, Grade 5, Alexandria, Inktober 2024, relief print on heavyweight paper



Sabella Hamilton, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Inktober 2024, relief print on heavyweight paper



Sana Assadi, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Inktober 2024, relief print on heavyweight paper



Saada Amir, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Inktober 2024, relief print on heavyweight paper



Yara Alhayiti, 10, Grade 5, Alexandria, Inktober 2024, relief print on heavyweight paper



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Rendering of Innovation Campus two story loft, outside view.

# Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus to Open Soon

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
GAZETTE PACKET

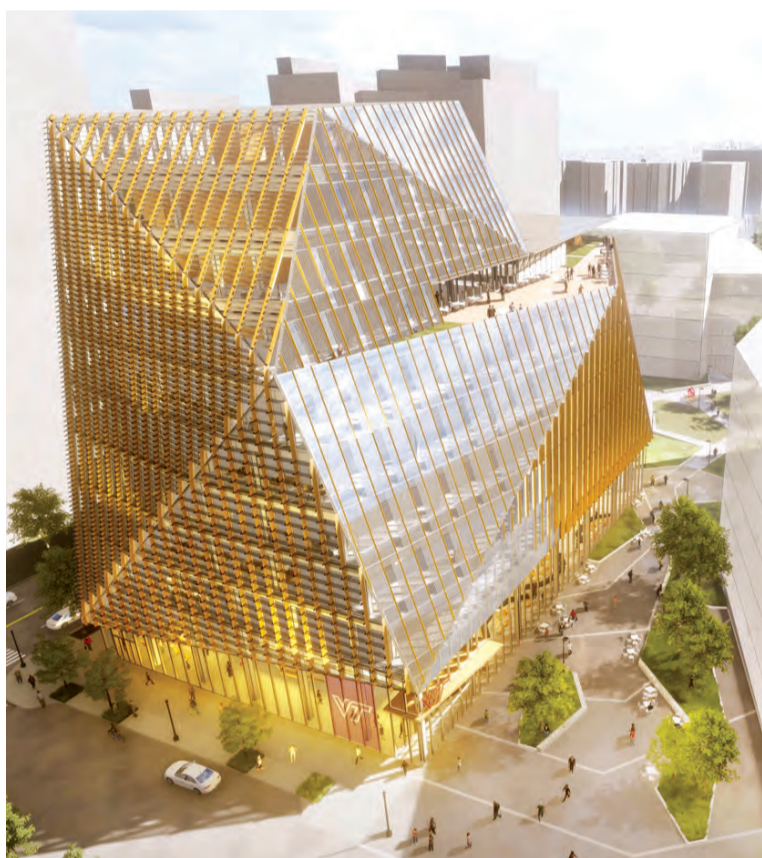
For the last three years, many people zipping by on the Metro or driving on the George Washington Parkway have commented that the glassy, oddly-shaped building rising just north of Alexandria's Potomac Yard Metro Station looks like a cruise ship. Others describe it as "gem-shaped."

Its rather bland name – Academic Building One – belies the complexity of its offerings. It sits on Virginia Tech's 3.5-acre Innovation Campus, a 300,000-square-foot, 11-story building at 3000 Potomac Avenue that will open in January to graduate students and focus on studies and research in several cutting-edge computer science and computer engineering fields.

The lead architect, Sven Shockey of the SmithGroup, who earned a master's in architecture degree from Tech, said in an online video that the building is shaped "to adapt to the movement of the sun," to maximize light exposure for solar cells. Photovoltaics are typically put on roofs, he noted, but on this building, they are on the façade and the roof and they generate electricity. The building's base is made of Hokie stone, the signature limestone rock on Tech's Blacksburg home campus. The building is a "calling card for Virginia Tech in Northern Virginia," Shockey commented.

## To Nourish Curiosity

Shockey "wanted the building to invoke curiosity," he said. Students will put their curiosity to the test in four areas: artificial intelligence-machine learning; wireless-next generation technology; intelligent interfaces; and quantum architecture and software development, explained Shannon Andrea, Director of Communications. She reported that currently 455 master of engineering students are enrolled and by 2030, there will be between 700 and 800. The faculty



Rendering of Virginia Tech Innovation Campus Academic Building One.

will grow from 17 today to 50 by 2029. Tech will not offer undergraduate courses on this campus.

The university's press announcement said, "We are committed to equipping graduates to become leaders in their careers while helping them gain real-world experience solving urgent challenges alongside researchers, industry executives and national policymakers." When asked to clarify the "urgent challenges," Andrea wrote, "A major component of Innovation Campus courses is project-based learning, in which industry and government bring actual problems they are trying to solve to students, who work together on them in teams over the course of the semester or year."

Inside the building, among other features will be a 3,000-square-foot classroom-auditorium for 200 people classroom style or 300 auditorium style; 14 classrooms with 25 to 90 seats; three studios for on-

line teaching and learning; and 32 "huddle rooms" for student-faculty collaboration; a 1,340-square-foot cyber physical lab; and a two-story drone testing "cage." The roof will have a 4,500-square-foot deck for up to 300 people with views of the Washington, D.C., skyline.

Tech is partnering with its south Arlington neighbor Amazon HQ2 in machine learning programs. Amazon's 2023 move to the area, announced in 2018, was a catalyst for Tech officials' choosing the Alexandria site. The aerospace company Boeing made a \$50 million investment to create scholarships, help recruit faculty and researchers and fund STEM programs for kindergarten through 12th-grade students. Northrop-Grumman committed \$12.5 million for quantum information science and engineering.

Students will commute to the campus. The Metro subway is a five-minute walk and buses regu-



The Virginia Tech Innovation Campus building under construction in 2023.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



The closest Metro subway station is at Potomac Yard.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

larly run nearby, but the building will have 169 parking spaces each costing \$140 a month. Virginia Tech has agreements with three Northern Virginia firms to house students.

Officials plan to eventually build two additional buildings there, each around 150,000 square feet.

Though classes will begin in January, the university will hold an official opening celebration on Feb. 28, 2025, open to the public and featuring a keynote address

by Regina Dugan, a two-time Virginia Tech alumna and now president and chief executive officer of Wellcome Leap, a nonprofit that its website says, builds, "Programs that aim to deliver breakthroughs in human health over five to 10 years and demonstrate seemingly impossible results on seemingly impossible timelines."

To learn more, including details on classes and research topics, visit <https://www.vt.edu/innovation-campus/index.html>.

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# ENTERTAINMENT



The 30th Annual First Night Alexandria takes place on Dec. 31, 2024 throughout Old Town Alexandria.

## ASSISTANCE LEAGUE'S DECEMBER WISH LIST

December is coming to an end but there is still time to share the gift of a book with a low-income child. Assistance League's December Wish List has an extensive range of books for elementary students and there are still many popular titles to choose from. Assistance League partners with Title 1 elementary schools throughout Northern Virginia, helping students at these schools develop a love of reading and sense of pride in owning books of their own through its Build A Child's Library program. They encourage the community to support this wonderful program by making a selection from the December Wish List. Use this link: <https://tiny.alnv.org/7gs>. Visit: [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

## THROUGH 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](mailto:RCarter@cbmove.com) or Nina Tisara, [Ninat@ninatisara.com](mailto:Ninat@ninatisara.com).

## FREE HOLIDAY LYFT RIDES

A local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this holiday season. Offered by the Washington Regional Alcohol

Program (WRAP), the 2024 Holiday SoberRide program will be in operation nightly from 10:00 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. from Friday, December 13, 2024 until Wednesday, January 1, 2025 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers. Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's separate 2024 Holiday SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 9:00 p.m. on December 13, 20 and 31 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

## THROUGH DEC. 21

**"A Christmas Carol"**. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Wednesdays - Fridays at 8 p.m. / Saturdays & Sundays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Alexandria's favorite yuletide tradition continues - from the first "bah humbug" to the final "wassail," this timeless classic is sure to rekindle your holiday spirit. Join all your favorite Dickens characters - Tiny Tim and the Cratchit family; the Fezziwigs; the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come; and, of course, everyone's favorite curmudgeon, Ebenezer Scrooge - as they transport us to Victorian England and remind everyone of the meaning of Christmas.

## 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.woodlawn-popeleighey.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 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](http://DelRayArtisans.org/holiday-market-2024)

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

**At Joe Theismann's Restaurant.** 8 a.m. Located at 1800A Diagonal Road, Alexandria. Dates: Saturday, Dec. 21; Sunday, Dec. 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. 21; Sunday, Dec. 22. 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. Located at 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Dates are: Saturday, Dec. 21; Sunday, Dec. 22. Join Ada's on the River for a delicious family-style



A Gentle Unroot: A Latinx Perspective can be seen now through Jan. 12, 2025 at The Athenaeum in Alexandria.

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. 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.

## DEC. 12 TO JAN. 12, 2025

**A Gentle Unroot: A Latinx Perspective.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Curated by Claudina Hannon. Artist Reception: Sunday, December 15, 4 - 6 p.m. Artist Talk: Sunday, January 12, 2:30 p.m. A Gentle Unroot: A Latinx Perspective uncovers the possibilities for what happens when someone leaves their native Latin American land to reside elsewhere, and what they choose to keep with them physically and mentally throughout their daily lives.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 21

**The Gift of Music.** 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria. Join the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra with this holiday musical tradition. Celebrate the season with family and friends. Join Conductor James Ross and the Alexandria Symphony for carols, classics, and sparkling holiday favorites. Plus, special guest violinist, Chelsey Green and The Green Project, fuse classical and contemporary, jazz and R&B.

## 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.

## CHRISTMAS EVE DINING, DEC. 24

**Ada's On the River, 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria.** Open from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Ada's will be serving two delicious Christmas Eve specials, the Chilean Seabass made with cherry tomatoes, asparagus, fingerling potatoes, herbs, and miso brown butter for \$45 or the Prime Kansas City Strip 24 Oz for \$89.

**BARCA Pier & Wine Bar, 2 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria.** BARCA Pier is inviting guests to enjoy two festive specials in addition to their regular menu on both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Featured specials include the Catalan Lamb Kebab for \$26 or the Crab Stuffed Jumbo Shrimp for \$27. BARCA Pier will open on Christmas Eve from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and 12 to 9 p.m. on Christmas Day.

**The Majestic, 911 King Street, Alexandria.** Open from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Majestic will offer two special additions to their regular menu on Christmas eve. Guests can enjoy Pan Seared Duck Breast made with butternut squash purée, honey glazed parsnips, and orange sauce for \$35 or Oven Roasted Rockfish made with zucchini, eggplant, red peppers, onions, tomato-caper sauce, and herb oil for \$32.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

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**Obituary**



**Maurice Robert Palmer II** died on October 8th in his home with his life partner Jane Hinn Palmer by his side. Maury was born in Alexandria, Virginia on September 23, 1951 to Richard and Mary Lou Palmer ("Dick and Emmy"). He was the third of four children: his brother Rick and sisters Debby and Mary. He grew up in an Old Town, Alexandria that only exists in memories, during a time of great social change, where he was influenced by the music, art, and fight for social justice that defined the late 60's. After graduating from St. Stephen's High School, Maury tried a couple of colleges before deciding to travel Europe for a few months. On his return, with a head full of his travels, The Catcher in the Rye, and Bob Dylan, Maury finally settled into the University of Tennessee where he graduated with a degree with honors in philosophy.

What does one do with a degree with honors? He always made sure to mention "with honors". He became a carpenter. Maury took an aptitude test in high school that said he should be a dentist because he was an intellectual who liked to work with his hands. He instead chose to start M.R. Palmer Construction Inc. which he owned and operated for over thirty years primarily in Old Town. Maury's focus throughout his career was historic restoration and fine remodeling. His love of old homes ultimately led him to downtown Charles Town, WV where he and his son Rob Palmer lovingly remodeled his pre-civil war home, truly his magnum opus. Despite ending up in West Virginia for the last 20 years of his life, Maury was a Washingtonian through and through. He was a rabid fan of the Capitals, Nationals, and a 30 year season ticket holder of the Washington Football Team, now The Commanders.

Maury was an endlessly curious person. He read The Washington Post every day and did the crossword, in pen. He was a voracious reader of almost any genre (evidenced by the piles of books in every corner of every room in his house), and when he didn't have time to read the books, he'd read the reviews. He was an amateur civil war historian, an avid watcher of PBS, and listener of NPR and WETA Classical. Maury loved music from Bach, to The Who, to Thelonius Monk. He played piano, and while painfully shy about playing in front of others, after just the right amount of Jack Daniels he could be heard playing out Moochies Blues, a mean boogie woogie. If you met Maury in one of these moments, you would know him by his alter ego Moch Grimes, a name given to him as a child by his beloved sister Debby.

Maury is survived by his life partner Jane Hinn Palmer, son Robert Palmer, and siblings Rick Palmer and Mary Palmer Brown. Maury is often remembered for a fascinating conversation, his generosity of spirit, and the sweet smell of his pipe. In lieu of flowers please remember Maury with a donation in his name to one of his favorite charities: World Central Kitchen, WETA, or your local public radio station.

**CALENDAR**

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**Legals**

**ABC LICENSE**  
Umiya Alexandria, Inc. trading as Umiya Sushi, 3000 Duke Street, Alexandria, Alexandria City, VA 22314. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant; beer, wine, mixed beverages; on and off-premises consumption license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Fanghuang Lin, President. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or (800) 552-3200.

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

**Editor & Publisher**  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

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

**Janet Barnett, John Bordner,  
Mark Mogle**  
Contributing Photographers  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

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

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

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

**Michael Pope**  
Senior Reporter  
[michellepope@gmail.com](mailto:michellepope@gmail.com)  
@michellepope

**ADVERTISING:**  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

**Debbie Funk**  
Disply Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

**David Griffin**  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Classified & Employment  
Advertising**  
703-778-9431

**Publisher**  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Art/Design:**  
Laurence Foong  
**Production Manager:**  
Geovani Flores

**Editor Emeritus:**  
Mary Anne Weber

**CIRCULATION**  
**Circulation Manager:**  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

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# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

## CHRISTMAS EVE DINING, DEC. 24

**Mia's Italian Kitchen, 100 King Street, Alexandria.** On Christmas Eve, Mia's will be open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., offering two special dishes. Guests can enjoy Veal Chop Parmigiana, made with a pounded and breaded bone-in veal chop, spicy rigatoni pomodoro, melted mozzarella, and saba for \$39, or Lobster Ravioli, featuring Maine lobster, pecorino, lobster sauce, ricotta, and sherry cream sauce for \$29.

**Vola's Docksides Grill, 101 North Union Street, Old Town Alexandria.** On Christmas Eve, Vola's will be open during regular hours, from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., ensuring a smooth and festive transition into the holiday spirit. For \$35 each dish, guests can enjoy two special dishes: Lobster & Spinach Ravioli with asparagus, tomato cream sauce, pecorino romano, and fried sage, or King Salmon with quinoa, confit pearl onions, roasted butternut squash, watercress, and salsa verde. The regular menu will also be available.

## CHRISTMAS DAY DINING, DEC. 25

**Ada's On The River, 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria.** Ada's will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Christmas Day, offering a three-course prix fixe menu for \$79 per person. The menu features dishes like Preserved Root Vegetable Tartare, Shrimp-Stuffed Halibut, Coal-Roasted Rack of Lamb, and more. For \$29, kids can enjoy options such as White Cheddar Mac & Cheese and Petite Filet Mignon.

**Joe Theismann's Restaurant, 1800A Diagonall Road, Alexandria.** Indulge in a sumptuous Christmas Day Buffet, available from 11:30am to 9pm. The buffet features a Carving Station, a Salad Table, a Bread and Dessert Table, and a Hot Table. Priced at \$59 per person and \$19 for kids, this festive buffet promises a delectable spread to satisfy every palate with dishes like Praline-Sweet Potato Casserole, Spiral Ham, Brioche Stuffing and more.

**The Majestic, 911 King Street, Alexandria.** On Christmas Day from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Majestic will offer a Christmas dinner for \$79 per person, featuring a four-course prix fixe menu with a variety of delicious options. Dishes include Butternut Squash Soup, Crab Croquettes, Roasted Turkey, Truffle Mash Potatoes, and more. The Majestic will also offer a Thanksgiving Bar Menu with an array of starters, main dishes, sides, and desserts. Children ages 12 and under can enjoy the Kids Menu, which includes three delicious courses.

**Mia's Italian Kitchen, 100 King Street, Alexandria.** Mia's



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

Italian Kitchen, the beloved traditional Italian eatery located at the riverside end of King Street in Old Town Alexandria, is offering a three-course Christmas feast for \$49 per person. The menu includes dishes like Shrimp Fra Diavolo Bruschetta, Lobster Ravioli, Braised Lamb Shank, and more. The restaurant will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Christmas Day.

**Royal Restaurant, 730 North Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria.** Royal will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., offering its regular menu, along with a new breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu, plus two Christmas specials. Guests can choose between Prime Rib with garlic mashed potatoes, honey-glazed carrots, horseradish cream, and au jus for \$35, or Spiral Ham with mashed sweet potatoes, candied pecans, garlic green beans, and pineapple glaze for \$25.

**Vola's Docksides Grill, 101 North Union Street, Old Town Alexandria.** Spend Christmas Day at Vola's Docksides Grill and enjoy a special three-course prix fixe menu for \$49 per person. The menu includes dishes like Charred Octopus, Pork Shank Osso Buco, Lobster & Spinach Ravioli, and more. Vola's will be open from 11:30am to 10 pm, offering plenty of time for friends and family to gather and savor a festive holiday meal with a beautiful waterfront view.

**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>

**JAN. 3 TO FEB. 1, 2025**  
**"Visual Humor."** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. A lighthearted art exhibit that explores how humor sparks the imagination. Opening Reception on Friday, January 3, 7-9 p.m. to meet curator Dr Erica Hughes and the artists. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

**FRIDAY/JAN. 3**  
**Lesson Zero.** 8:30-10:30 p.m. At The Evening Star Cafe, 2000 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Admission is free and parking is available. For more information see [www.youtube.com/lessonzero](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbNation.com/lessonzero](http://www.reverbNation.com/lessonzero).

**THE BIRCHMERE**  
**At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.** All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).  
**DECEMBER**  
Wed. 18: A John Waters Christmas

2024 \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 19: Carbon Leaf "Time Is The Playground Tour" \$49.50  
Fri. 20: Carbon Leaf "Time Is The Playground Tour" \$49.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 21: Pieces of a Dream \$49.50  
Sun. 22: Luther Re-Lives 'Holiday Show' starring William "Smooth" Wardlaw \$49.50  
Thu. 26: Tarsha Fitzgerald Prod. Presents VOICES OF MOTOWN Christmas Concert! \$39.50  
Fri. 27: Charles Esten "Love Ain't Pretty Tour" \$59.50  
Sat. 28: A Very MAYSA Christmas \$69.50  
Sun. 29: Bela Dona Band \$39.50  
Tue. 31: New Year's Eve with The Seldom Scene and Tim & Savannah Finch & Eastman String Band -7:30pm- \$49.50

**JANUARY**  
Fri. 3: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder \$55.00  
Sat. 4: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder \$55.00 SOLD OUT!  
Fri. 10: The Martin Sexton Abbey Road Show \$45.00  
Sat. 11: Last Train Home \$35.00  
Thu. 16: Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone \$59.50  
Fri. 17: EagleMania - The World's Greatest Eagles Tribute Band \$45.00  
Sat. 18: Kindred The Family Soul \$75.00  
Sun. 19: Kindred The Family Soul \$75.00  
Mon. 20: OMAR \$45.00  
Tue. 21: All You Need Is Love: Celebrate The Beatles in John Lennon's 85th Year! \$55.00  
Wed. 22: Langhorne Slim & Oliver Wood \$39.50  
Thu. 23: Chante Moore \$85.00  
Fri. 24: Chante Moore \$85.00 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 25: Dar Williams with special guest Pat Byrne \$45.00  
Thu. 30: Jarrod Lawson \$45.00  
Fri. 31: Will Downing \$79.50  
Sat. Feb. 1: Will Downing \$79.50

## This Time The Cookie Didn't Crumble



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that you all want/need to hear about my life or that what goes on (what I eat is the subject of this column) in it is of particular importance. Hardly. In fact, it's doubtful that any of it is relevant in your lives. But most of us eat food everyday and think of food every minute (you mean some of you don't?). Nevertheless, I thought I'd share a slice of my life that "plated" itself today. First, a little context:

We went away for the weekend to have turkey and fixin's with our oldest friends. They live in Ocean City, MD (Berlin, actually) so when we visit them it's for a couple of days. As I often joke about our stay - since it's Ocean City, it's "a two-night minimum" (per the typical hotel policy). This time, we stayed three nights. Given that Thanksgiving was/is on a Thursday, our friends who are still working, amazingly had both Friday and Saturday off so it made for a more sociable/available stay. Usually, their work schedules interfere. However, on this occasion, it did not so we were invited/stayed a bit longer than we otherwise would.

Since we were going away for three days and nights, it made little sense to stock/replenish our refrigerator/pantry with edibles and "drinkables." And when we got home Saturday afternoon (after arriving in Berlin Wednesday late afternoon) after enduring and semi unexpected delay crossing the Bay Bridge, the four hours-plus home sort of took the stuffing out of us and the last thing we wanted to do when we got home was to go back out to the supermarket/for dinner. "As such," to quote my 10thgrade Western Traditions' teacher Mr. Roberts, we were not high, but we were certainly dry. The cupboard wasn't exactly bare but hardly was it or the refrigerator up to its usual standards. Therefore, to simplify our transition back to normalcy, we simply got "Take away" as the Brits say and decided to call it a night after we ate dinner and watched a movie.

Waking up in our own bed on Sunday morning, however, did nothing for our household/dietary needs. Most of which is my fault since I'm the shopper in the family. And later that Sunday, after not watching the Redskins/Commanders for three hours, whatever I did, oddly enough, had nothing to do with food and drink. And as of Monday real time, as I write this, I'm still stuck in neutral and the house is still empty, comparatively speaking.

Having provided three-fourths of this column as context I now finally segue to the point. Since I haven't gone shopping means that I haven't bought any chocolate. And that's a problem not just for me, but for millions of other people worldwide who crave it as much as I do, so I'm certainly not alone in this admission/predicament. A predicament of my own lack of doing so I have no one to blame but myself. And as I was contemplating my situation, thinking about where I might have/hid (Dina doesn't need to know everything) some chocolate in the house, I was reviewing - in my mind, all the locations in the house where I might have stored/hidden the object of my desire. Then I "double-downed" by going around the house opening drawers and cabinets to confirm and sure enough, I came up empty handed. Disappointed by my search, I sat back down in my office chair and thought of an odd/uncharacteristic place where only recently had I used as a new hideout. I then looked down to the right and pulled open my desk drawer and thought: "Wouldn't that be great/funny if there was some chocolate in this drawer that I completely forgot?" Forgot about because this drawer is too obvious/convenient a location and one that's hardly hidden at all so I would temp fate by using it. Well, at a loss/need for chocolate and only partially desperate, I opened the drawer and guess what? Paydirt! A half-full box of fudge-covered Oreos. "How'd that box get there?" I sort of thought (Knowing full well I was responsible; just in this instance, a tad forgetful.) Six cookies. What a reward for my poor planning. "I can't go on like this," I thought. I must go shopping. I can't rely on this kind of random good luck. I know it's said that even blind squirrel finds a nut. But it says nothing about the squirrel being stupid and ill-prepared.

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



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