

# Alexandria Gazette Packet

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FEBRUARY 20, 2025

## Celebrating Washington

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

**Parade held under rainy skies marks 250th anniversary of Revolutionary War.**

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he longest running parade celebrating the birthday of George Washington returned to the streets of Alexandria Feb. 15 despite an uncooperative Mother Nature.

Rainy skies didn't dampen the spirits of parade goers that turned out to celebrate the 293rd birthday of America's Founding Father as the parade for the first time took place on a Saturday rather than on the official Presidents Day holiday.

With a theme of "George Washington: America's Commander-in-Chief" in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolutionary War, U.S. Army Lt. General Heidi Hoyle served as Grand Marshal of the 102nd parade, one of the city's signature annual events. First held in 1923, the parade featured military organizations, colonial reenactors including the First Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, and community and historical groups marching along the rain-drenched route.

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Arnold Fields

SEE CELEBRATING, PAGE 11



Grand Marshal Lt. Gen. Heidi Hoyle and Gen. George Washington, portrayed by Brian Hilton, enjoy the parade.



A four-legged participant waves from inside a vehicle during the parade.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

A representative of the Sgt. Maj. John Champe Chapter of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Legion rides on a float during the 102nd annual George Washington Birthday Parade Feb. 15 in Old Town.



Members of Falun Dafa perform under rainy skies during the George Washington Birthday Parade Feb. 15 in Old Town.



Alexandria City High School Titan Rowing members participate in the George Washington Birthday Parade.

# NEWS

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PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

## Reunion

Martin Smith, left, a two-time NCAA track Coach of the Year for the Wisconsin Badgers, was joined by high school friends from Francis C. Hammond, T.C. Williams and Ascension Academy at the Jan. 28 Rotary Club of Alexandria meeting at Belle Haven Country Club where Smith spoke about his storied track coaching career. Smith coached over 300 All-Americans and his teams won 26 conference championships. With Smith are John O'Conner, Jim Clark, Drew Carroll and Frank Spicer.



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PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Health professionals gather Feb. 7 for Wear Red Day at Alexandria Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center to support women's heart health.

# Red Alert

**Wear Red Day highlights women's heart health.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**H**ealthcare professionals gathered Feb. 7 at the Alexandria Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center to celebrate Wear Red Day, a national day for raising awareness of cardiovascular health and preventing heart disease in women.

Sponsored by the American Heart Association, the first Friday of February is National Wear Red Day, which coincides with National Heart Month. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of women in the United States with 45 percent of women 20 years of age or older having some form of cardiovascular disease.

Megan Shilling, regional director of market development for the center, is a 2025 Woman of Impact nominee by the American Heart Association and was on hand to share her personal health journey.

"Today we are starting our Go Red fundraising campaign, which is sponsored by the American Heart Association," Shilling said.

"The nine-week campaign is to raise funds for advocacy and education for women with cardiac conditions. And that includes me."

Shilling was just 22 years old when she was diagnosed with heart disease.

"I developed chronic hypertension following my first pregnancy with my daughter," Shilling said. "I was one of the two percent whose blood pressure number re-regulated in postpartum and developed hypertension from that point on. I had to seek out my own primary care and really change my lifestyle based on my cardiac condition, which all developed out of pregnancy."

Shilling hopes Wear Red Day and National Heart Month will help other women not have to go through what she experienced.

"Having a baby is such a joyful, wonderful experience but there's also a lot of risks to be mindful of," Shilling said. "You have to be an advocate for yourself, you need to seek out health care and you need to know and understand the signs from your body that just are not right. And when you have a provider that is not listening then you need to find another one that will listen. It will make a difference in your life."

For more information on women's heart health visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org)

**"You have to be an advocate for yourself, you need to seek out health care and you need to know and understand the signs from your body that just are not right."**

— Heart disease patient Megan Shilling



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## A Masonic Milestone

Universal Lodge #1, the first and oldest Prince Hall Lodge in the Commonwealth of Virginia, celebrated its 180th anniversary Feb. 2 at Third Baptist Church in Alexandria. Among those on hand were (in front row): Worshipful Past Master James Conway, Worshipful Past Master McArthur Myers, Worshipful Master Robert Johnson, Rev. James Jordan, District Deputy Grand Master CJ James, Worshipful Past Master Philip Brandon and Brother Tobin. For more information visit [www.universallodge1.org](http://www.universallodge1.org).



PHOTO/DRBA

## And The Winner Is

Gustave Boulangerie & Brasserie, a popular Mount Vernon Avenue eatery since 2023, was presented the 2025 Heart of Del Ray award Feb. 14 by the Del Ray Business Association. The annual award goes to the business or organization representing the "heart and soul of Del Ray" as determined by online voting. Other 2025 nominees were The Dairy Godmother, Del Ray Artisans, Del Ray Hardware and St. Elmo's Coffee Pub.

# Banding Together

Center for Alexandria's Children gala raises \$194k to end child abuse.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The rock stars of Alexandria were out in force as the Center for Alexandria's Children held its Banding Together Gala, a sold-out concert raising \$194,000 dollars for the fight against child abuse Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.

Banding Together: A Benefit Concert to End Child Abuse, was the culminating event of CAC's HeartWork Annual Campaign to support efforts in preventing and ending child abuse.

"Thanks to the support of 85 HeartWork Annual Sponsors, including 43 local businesses, we can continue our vital programs aimed at preventing abuse and providing intervention and education for families in need," said CAC executive director Giselle Pelaez.

During the event, CAC's board of directors honored Judge Constance Frogale (ret.) with the Outstanding Dedication to Children Award. Campaign Center CEO Tammy Mann and former CAC Board Member Judy Harmatz were honored with the Champion for Children Award for their outstanding contributions to children and families in Alexandria.

"These honorees represent the heart of our community's efforts to support children," said CAC board chair Melissa Riddy. "We could not accomplish our mission without their dedication and the continued collaboration of so many others."

The gala featured performances by Blue North and Guilty Ghost as part of the Banding Together theme.

"We are grateful for everyone who has answered the call to make Alexandria a safer place for children and families," Pelaez said. "Child abuse doesn't discriminate based on income, education or ethnicity. And we still need the help of those who can make a difference. It takes heart. It takes work. It takes all of us to end child abuse."

CenterforAlexandriasChildren.org

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Judge Connie Frogale, second from left, was an honoree at the Center for Alexandria's Children Banding Together concert to end child abuse Feb. 1 at the Durant Center. Pictured are: Sean Sherlock, Frogale, CAC executive director Giselle Pelaez and board chair Melissa Riddy.



Teresa Boli and Jennifer Ferrara rock out at the CAC Banding Together Gala Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.

**"We are grateful for everyone who has answered the call to make Alexandria a safer place for children and families."**

— CAC executive director Giselle Pelaez



Honoree Judy Harmatz, third from right, with CAC executive director Giselle Pelaez, Lori Morris, Cathy David, Kris Clark and Melissa Riddy.



Honoree Tammy Mann, center, talks with attendees at the CAC Banding Together Gala Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.



Jessica Anderson and CAC board member Whitney Russell at the Banding Together Gala.



Kris and Tom Clark at the CAC Banding Together Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.



Supporters surround honoree Judge Constance Frogale at the CAC Banding Together Gala Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.



Former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins, Saara Kaudeyr and Allen Lomax at the CAC Banding Together Gala Feb. 1 at the Durant Center.

# FOOD DRIVE



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

## Alexandrians Have Heart

Rep. Don Beyer, third from left, and wife Megan Beyer were on hand as former City Councilman Frank Fannon held his 17th annual Alexandrians Have Heart food and clothing donation drive Feb. 15 at the corner of Duke and South Henry streets. Canned food, clothing, winter outerwear and dry goods were collected to benefit ALIVE!, Christ House and Carpenter's Shelter.

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# The Home Stretch

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

**A**s we approach the conclusion of the 2025 legislative session, I am working to bring a number of my bills over the finish line. This week I wanted to discuss a few pieces of legislation that many of you have written to me about.

## Green Economy

Energy and a green economy for Virginia's future is a hot topic that comes up in the General Assembly. My bill on solar interconnection fees, SB 1058, deals with the costs of connecting new solar facilities to the electric grid. Recently, Alexandria Public High School's new Minnie Howard Campus and the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School faced unexpected costs of \$1.3 million and \$105,000 respectively to integrate their new solar installations with the electrical grid due to associated infrastructure upgrade costs assessed by Dominion Energy. My bill would require the State Corporation Commission to establish a cost sharing program for required system upgrades to interconnect new solar facilities. By spreading interconnection upgrade costs among all new solar installations connected to a particu-

lar substation, smaller projects, like those being built by Alexandria City Public Schools, can proceed while still contributing to maintain and upgrade the system. Delegate Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) has worked hard on the House version of the bill, HB 2266.

Delegate Rip Sullivan (D-Fairfax) brought us HB 1791, another bill that would help our green economy. This bill creates the Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Program and Fund, which would allow developers who install electric vehicle charging stations in rural areas to apply for a state grant. We have a growing number of electric vehicles, and easier drives to our state parks and other rural attractions help promote access and protect our environment.

## Reducing Underage Vaping and Tobacco Use

One of the bills requiring the most legwork this session has been my bill, SB 1060, which aims to reduce underage vaping and tobacco use. Delegate Patrick Hope (D-Arlington) is sponsoring the House



Ebbin

counterpart, HB 1946. Both bills would allow the confiscation of tobacco and vape products from underage persons and would increase random inspections to prevent sales to minors. My office has worked with stakeholders from the Department of Taxation, the Alcoholic

Beverage Control Authority, and representatives from convenience stores to come to a solution. Inspections are an important tool in deterring sales, but can end up costing as much as \$174 per location between ABC agent overtime pay, youth working with law enforcement on these buys, and transportation costs.

## Most Email

The bill I received the most email on this session was Senator Scott Surovell's (D-Fairfax) SB 982, which would have allowed the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to hold a referendum regarding the proposed Tyson's Corner Casino. More than four hundred of my constituents emailed me sharing concerns with this piece of legislation.

I spoke against and voted against SB 982. It was not requested by Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors, and further, the licensing fee and tax revenue split was not favorable to the county. SB 982 also would not have allowed the county to conduct an independent assessment of where the most appropriate site for the casino and accompanying conference center, entertainment center, and hotel would be located.

## Expanding Fair Elections with Ranked Choice Voting

As we continue working to improve our democracy, I am happy to support SB 1009, sponsored by Senator Saddam Salim (D-Fairfax), a bill that allows elections for any local governing body to be conducted by Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), ensuring that our electoral system more accurately reflects the will of the voters.

Ranked choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, rather than being forced to choose just one. If no candidate secures a majority outright, the system eliminates the lowest-performing candidate, reallocating votes based on next-ranked preferences until a winner emerges. This ensures that the winning candidate has broad support and reduces the risk of "spoiler" candidates splitting the vote.

SEE EBBIN, PAGE 14

# Standing with Federal Workers

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

**A**s a state legislator, and your Delegate, I am busy in Richmond working for my constituents and the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, I am deeply concerned about what is happening across the river and the impact of Elon Musk's reckless firing spree, which violates the U.S. Constitution. These mass layoffs undermine the rule of law, threaten government accountability, undermine public trust in our federal agencies, and directly harm hard-working Americans. The consequences are especially severe for our local communities, where abrupt staffing cuts to USAID, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and many more agencies will hit families hard.

Here in Virginia, these cuts are more than just numbers on a page — they affect real people. Foreign Service, Civil Service, veterans, and everyday Virginians rely on these essential services. For each government job lost, we lose over three government contractors, further harming government reliability and institutional trust.

Our Speaker of the House, Don

Scott, recently established the House Emergency Committee on the Impacts of Federal Workforce and Funding Reductions. This emergency committee will be chaired by my friend and colleague, Del. David Bulova, to ensure continued support for Virginia's vulnerable federal workers. There are 145,000 civilian federal employees in Virginia and more than \$106 billion in federal contracts in our state. The committee will begin meeting once the Virginia General Assembly session concludes next week. Furthermore, our Democratic leadership in the General Assembly is working on emergency legislation to expand unemployment benefits to impacted federal workers and contractors.

We've heard empty promises from President Trump. He claimed he would lower costs for Americans but has so far failed to act. In an Aug. 15 campaign speech, he told voters that if he won, he would "immediately bring prices down, starting on day one." After his election, all he could offer was a



Krizek

weak statement during a TIME Magazine interview about how "[i]t's hard to bring things down once they're up." Instead of lowering prices, President Trump has proposed 25% tariffs on our closest neighbors and allies that will further raise prices during this cost-of-living crisis. Meanwhile, Governor Youngkin doesn't protest as Washington prioritizes unelected billionaires over working families.

Effective governance relies on established rules, ethical standards, and the expectation of norms, with proper consequences if they aren't followed. Mr. Musk's extensive access to critical government institutions raise important concerns about accountability. Prior to his appointment as a "special government employee," his companies were reportedly promised "\$3 billion across nearly 100 different contracts last year with 17 [different] federal agencies," per the New York Times. Conversely, Mr. Musk's companies have been targeted in at least 20 recent fed-

eral regulatory investigations. Particularly troubling is Mr. Musk's access to the federal payment system, which might expose details on "public contractors who compete directly with Musk," as noted by the Campaign Legal Center. Responsible spending of taxpayer funds is essential, but so is protecting the security, stability, and integrity of these government institutions and their rules and ethics.

Let me be clear. These dramatic cuts are not just bad policy, they are an abuse of power. In spite of this, our community is fortunate to have strong leadership during this volatile time, and I commend Congressman Don Beyer and our Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine for speaking out and standing up for our constituents in Mount Vernon and Franconia.

We must continue to resist these reckless and harmful decisions and fight for the programs that hard-working Virginians depend on. Let us stand together for our families, our communities, and future generations. We must not allow unelected Elon Musk to dismantle our federal workforce and profit at the expense of the rest of us.



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# NEWS



Jack Fannon



Jane King



Colonel Jim Paige (Ret)



Lucelle O'Flaherty

## Senior Services of Alexandria Announces 2025 Gala Honorees

BY MARYANNE BEATTY  
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Senior Services of Alexandria's 2025 Annual Gala takes place on Saturday, March 29 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Westin Alexandria Old Town, and we are proud to announce this year's honorees. They are four individuals who have made a commitment to giving back to the community and making Alexandria a caring community for all. SSA thanks Benchmark at Alexandria for its generosity as the Gala's Presenting Sponsor.

The honorees are Jack Fannon; Jane King; Colonel (Ret.) Jim Paige and Lucelle O'Flaherty.

### Jack Fannon

Jack Fannon is a fifth-generation Alexandrian and Chief Operating Officer of Thomas J Fannon & Sons, the family HVAC company. Jack started his career at First Virginia Bank. He and his wife Kelly raised their four children in the Fort Hunt area where Jack became involved in youth sports, coaching, and officiating. Following the passing of his parents, Jack returned to the city limits of Alexandria where he now resides in his childhood home. Inspired by his father's life of community service, Jack served on the board and president of Senior Services of Alexandria for six years and is a member of Alexandria Rotary and will assume the presidency in July of 2025.

### Jane King

Jane King has resided in Alexandria for over 40 years. Having worked at AARP when it introduced its program supporting the capacity of communities to become age friendly, she encouraged its development of a plan as a member of the Commission on Aging following retirement. Alexandria became the first community in Virginia to be accepted into AARP's Network of Age Friendly Communities. For more than 13 years, Jane has been an active

AARP volunteer and is a board member for At Home in Alexandria (AHA). She is an Alexandrian "Living Legend."

### Colonel Jim Paige (Retired)

Jim Paige is a retired Army Colonel and an accomplished leader with a distinguished career spanning nearly three decades in international affairs, strategic communication, and senior-level operations. His unwavering commitment to social justice and equity has earned him recognition as a highly respected advocate for underserved communities. Jim serves as the Executive Director of the Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria (CCNA) where he addresses disparities in education, health and social justice. He is an Alexandrian "Living Legend," his leadership continues to drive positive change throughout Alexandria.

### Lucelle O'Flaherty

Lucelle O'Flaherty is part of a three-generation Alexandrian family, with a powerful track record for making a difference in the community and the world. Since retiring she has become the Community liaison, photographer, and reporter and Facebook Editor for The Zebra Press, a monthly publication that exclusively focuses on good news. Lucelle volunteers for Meals on Wheels with her Zebra colleagues and is an active member of Trinity United Methodist Church. She was a founding Board Member/Secretary of the National Center of Women's Innovations and is currently on their Honorary Advisory Board.

SSA's Gala will be a festive evening with a silent auction, dinner and dancing celebrating SSA's 57 years of providing programs and services for older adults to live independently and with dignity. Tickets are available at SSA's website - [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org). We look forward to seeing you on March 29th.

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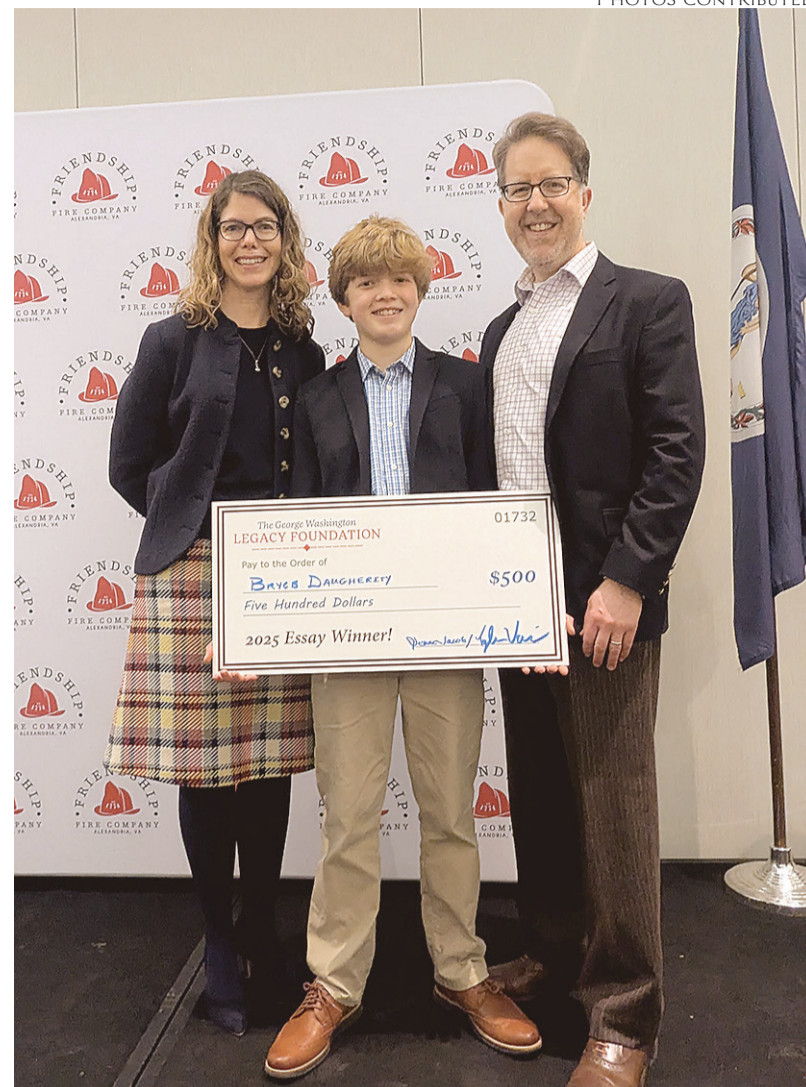
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Hudson Binder, a 7th grader at The Commonwealth Academy, tied for first place in the George Washington Legacy Foundation essay contest.



George Washington Middle School 7th grader Bryce Daughtery tied for first place in the George Washington Legacy Foundation essay contest.

# By George!

Students tie to win essay contest on Washington.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Two 7th grade middle school students tied for first place in the second annual George Washington Legacy Foundation essay competition.

Bryce Daughtery, a student at George Washington Middle School, and Hudson Binder, a student at The Commonwealth Academy, shared top honors in the 2025 contest for 7th and 8th grade students in the City of Alexandria.

This year's contest challenged students to craft an original 700-1,000-word essay

on "George Washington: America's Commander-in-Chief in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolutionary War." Each of the winners were awarded \$500 as part of the Friendship Firehouse Breakfast Feb. 17 at the Westin Old Town Alexandria Hotel.

"We aim to inspire students to better understand Washington's multifaceted relationship with Alexandria as a Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army and as the first President of the United States," said Tyler Vanice, the Foundation's Vice President. "This is a unique chance for budding historians in our community to showcase their knowledge, analysis, and writing skills."

Daughtery and Binder also participated in the city's George Washington Birthday Cele-

**"We aim to inspire students to better understand Washington's multifaceted relationship with Alexandria."**

— Tyler Vanice  
on the Legacy Foundation essay contest

bration Parade Feb. 15.

The George Washington Legacy Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2018 to support educational and civic activities that aim to enlighten

public awareness about George Washington and his legacy, in part by providing grants to qualifying tax-exempt nonprofit organizations and government entities for the support of such activities. The essay competition is sponsored by Alexandria's Fraternal Order of Eagles #871, with BMW of Alexandria providing the parade car.

For more information visit <https://washingtonlegacyfoundation.org>. Questions can be directed to the Foundation's President, Shawn Eyer, at [shawn.eyer@washingtonlegacyfoundation.org](mailto:shawn.eyer@washingtonlegacyfoundation.org) or 202-425-1025.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

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

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable 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](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com).  
STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part

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

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

Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).  
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@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:Carly.Hubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).



# 'A Life of Service, Commitment and Compassion'



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Judge Constance Frogale is surrounded by family in celebration of her retirement Jan. 30 at Belle Haven Country Club.

An official portrait of the Hon. Constance Frogale, Chief Judge of the Virginia Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, is unveiled at a retirement celebration in Frogale's honor Jan. 30 at Belle Haven Country Club.

## Chief Judge Constance Frogale retires.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Hon. Constance Frogale, Chief Judge of the Virginia Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, was celebrated at a retirement dinner Jan. 30 following a 46-career in the legal profession.

Held at Belle Haven Country Club, more than 250 people attended the event from across the state to honor Frogale and her service to the community.

"Judge Frogale's life has been marked by one of service, commitment and compassion," said Tom Curcio, who served as emcee for the event. "For 46 years she's been a great friend to the Alexandria Bar Association, is an esteemed trial judge and is just a wonderful person."

Frogale, who received her law degree from the College of William and Mary, served as an assistant United States attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia from 1985 until her election to the court in 2005. She also previously served as an assistant commonwealth's attorney in Alexandria. For 17 of her

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Judge Constance Frogale dons the baseball cap of the late Judge Donald Haddock Sr., a gift from Haddock's son, Jan. 30 at Belle Haven Country Club.

20 years on the bench she served as chief judge in Alexandria's Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

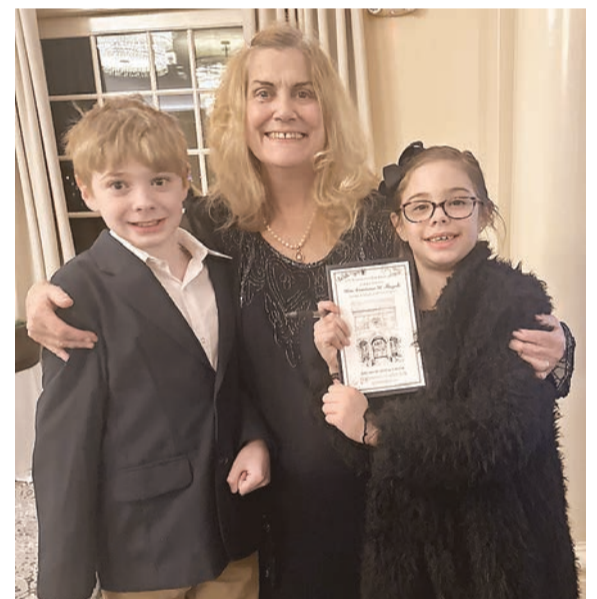
"Alexandria's juvenile court deals with the most challenging issues, including family separation and child custody," Curcio said. "These are tough cases and Judge Frogale was the perfect one to handle these challenging assignments."

The Hon. Becky Moore (ret), who worked for many years with Frogale, paid tribute to her longtime friend.

"The city has been so lucky to have had her," Moore said. "She's been a wonderful judge for two decades. She loves children, she is so patient and she's so smart. She has really served well."



Sheriff Sean Casey, with Judge Constance Frogale and former Sheriff Dana Lawhorne.



Hon. Constance Frogale with grandchildren Max and Charlotte.

When it was Frogale's turn to take to the microphone, she quoted the famous words of Lou Gehrig in his 1939 farewell to baseball speech, saying that the evening "has been the highlight of my career and the highlight of my life."

"One of the things I had a penchant to do after my law clerks came back from court or after they went to a trial was to ask 'so what did you learn?'" Frogale said. "So I decided that tonight I would answer my own question."

Frogale began with learning the importance of being on time, adding humorously that "the corollary to this is that parking is very important because if you forget that you won't be on time."

She also stressed the importance of maintaining a sense of humor before offering some advice from

her storied career.

"Don't take yourself too seriously," Frogale said. "Always do the right thing, treat people with respect and dignity, accept both victory and defeat graciously and listen to the other side."

Most importantly to Frogale is to help others.

"Since the day I first walked into Alexandria I saw that this was a special community," Frogale said. "This community, this Bar, these people – it is such a wonderful place to come to find that sense of community and a desire to help."

Frogale wrapped up her comments thanking her family, friends and fellow jurists, saying, "I am only here because of your love, support and guidance throughout my life's journey. It has been an honor."



Larry Agne, husband of Judge Constance Frogale, listens to remarks at the Jan. 30 retirement celebration in her honor.

# Bamboo: Food for Some, Problem for Many

**National Zoo pandas enjoying area's plants.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE PACKET

If you were a famous Giant Panda celebrity, Bao Li or Qing Bao, newly in residence at the National Zoo, who would be your best friend in Fairfax County? That might be Patricia Greenberg, an ecologist and manager of the Park Authority's newly formed Invasive Plant Management Program. As such, she is the person who could be described as having the keys to the bamboo kingdom, in charge of bamboo management and control.

Just as everyone knows Winnie the Pooh loves hunny, everyone knows the favorite food of adorable black and white panda bears is bamboo. It makes up about 99 percent of what they eat. Bamboo is low in nutritional value, so pandas need to eat a lot of it. They spend 10-16 hours per day doing just that. According to the World Wildlife Fund, pandas also sometimes forage on farmland and eat eggs, small animals, pumpkin, kidney beans, domestic pig food, and herbs, vines, shrubs and trees in small amounts. But bamboo is their go-to meal. They can be expected to eat 26-84 pounds per day. That's a lot of bamboo. Being far removed from their native Southwest China mountain habitat, where in the Washington Metro area to find the fresh bamboo varieties they find tasty?

In Fairfax County, Greenberg's job centers on knowing where bamboo is growing on public lands. The new section she manages was created after the county enacted its bamboo ordinance, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2023. With about 25,000 of the 31,000 county-owned acres, the Park Authority has a big responsibility when it comes to bamboo management. They estimate bamboo encompasses at least 250 known acres, at 190 sites here.

Greenberg's mission is to eliminate the fast growing, spreading plant from parkland; to comply with the bamboo ordinance. And, of course, to protect native trees and other plants which are out-competed by the invasive bamboo. Removal could take 15 years, at an estimated cost of \$9.25 million. She is now engaged in mapping and prioritizing the patches for removal. She is ranking the sites to determine where to start the huge, multi-year effort. Patches are ranked on factors such as, accessibility, size of patch and plants; proximity to active homeowner treatment sites, or sensitive or rare resources, or other invasive management projects; and social-political factors. As patch evaluation efforts continue, contractors are beginning use of lethal methods to remove the plants at a handful of sites.

## National Zoo Needs Fresh Bamboo

On the other side of the hate/love bamboo relationship, keepers at the Zoo are in need of a regular fresh bamboo source, and Fairfax County has a lot of the invasive plant

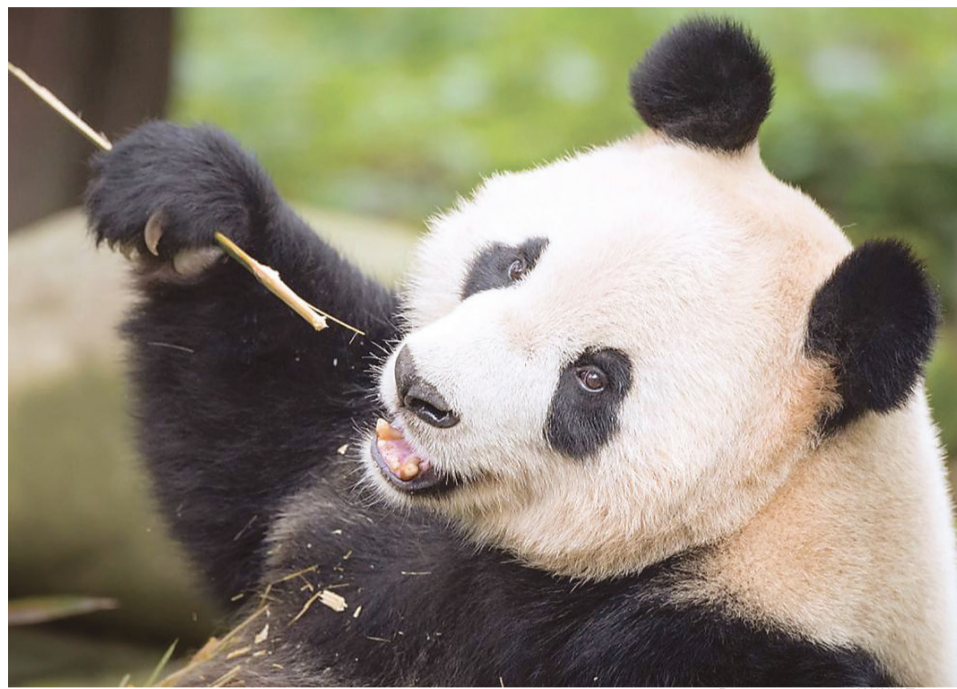


PHOTO FROM WWF.ORG

Black and white Giant Pandas have celebrity status among the world's animals



SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE PACKET

FCPA manager Patricia Greenberg is tasked with managing bamboo and other invasive plants on county property

material. As non-native plants, bamboo has a way of standing out against other plants in the landscape. Zoo employees noticed plants growing in a corner of Huntley Meadows Park, along the Dogue Creek in Alexandria. They sought, and were granted, a park use permit to harvest it. Cutting bamboo stalks from the approximately 1.5 acres, multiple



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE PACKET

Easy to spot this time year, running bamboo remains green when most native plants have lost their color, like this found behind Pohick Ridge Ct, Springfield

## Fairfax County Running Bamboo Ordinance

A bamboo owner must not allow running bamboo to spread from the bamboo owner's property to any public right-of-way or any adjoining property not owned by the bamboo owner.

A bamboo owner must contain the running bamboo to keep it from spreading onto any public right-of-way or adjoining property not owned by the bamboo owner.

If a bamboo owner fails to comply with a Notice of Violation, each day that running bamboo remains un-contained may result in a civil penalty of \$50, up to a maximum of \$2,000 in a 12-month period."

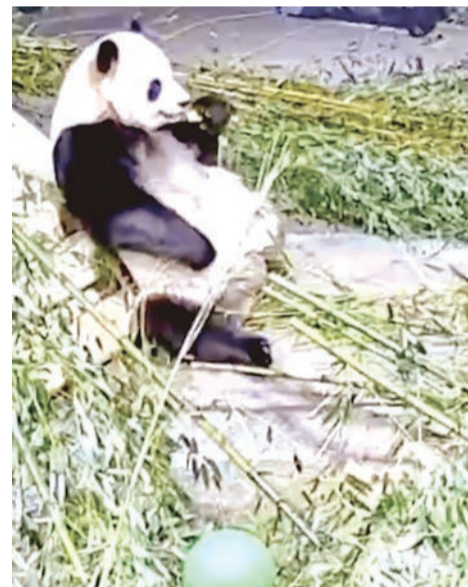
zoo's use permit, good through the end of 2025, may help to nourish other zoo residents as well.

Greenberg says, "It's a big help to us, getting the material removed from the site." Her thoughts are echoed by FCPA executive director, Jai Cole, who adds, "As an ecologist by trade, I'm very interested in sustainable solutions to achieve positive outcomes for our environment. I'm excited for the potential that this relationship could have for helping us dispose of unwanted bamboo and providing essential nutrition for the ever-popular pandas at the National Zoo."

There are many species of bamboo, and growing conditions are a factor in considering optimal sites for harvesting bamboo as panda food. FCPA planning director, Torsha Bhattacharya, hopes the pandas like the taste of our Fairfax County bamboo, seeing an opportunity to scale up the partnership. She calls it, "a two-for: we eradicate the bamboo and it becomes food for the pandas."

Growing bamboo is not illegal in Fairfax County, but it must be controlled within an individual's property. That control has proved a growing problem for homeowners, HOAs and faith communities. For a summary on dealing with running bamboo, see

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/20one%20pager%20translations/pdf/bamboo%20one%20pager%20translations/running%20bamboo%20one%20pager%20-%20final.pdf>



SCREEN PHOTO FROM PANDA CAM

This National Zoo panda's bamboo meal could have been harvested in Fairfax County

times per week, helps to satisfy the appetites of their panda charges. Since other zoo animals enjoy the fibrous plant as well, the



PHOTO - FCPA

Park maintenance operations and contractors use lethal methods to remove highest priority bamboo patches

# Celebrating Washington

FROM PAGE 1

(ret) kicked off the parade with a powerful rendition of the National Anthem. He was joined on the reviewing stand by Gen. George Washington, portrayed by Brian Hilton, and Mayor Alyia Gaskins.

[www.washingtonbirthday.com](http://www.washingtonbirthday.com)



A participant displays their patriotism during the George Washington Birthday Parade.



An Honor Guard from the Sons of the American Revolution.



The First Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line marches in the George Washington Birthday Parade Feb. 15 in Old Town.



Members of Falun Dafa perform during the Feb. 15 parade.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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**VDOT**  
Virginia Department of Transportation

## 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.

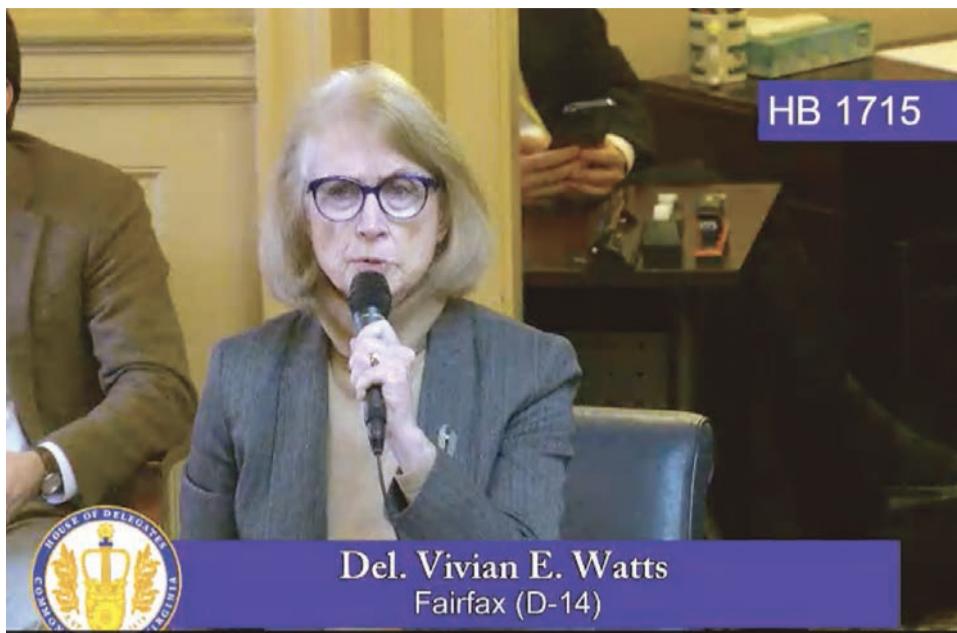
Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
POWHATAN	13851	621	COSBY ROAD	GADDES CREEK	1/22/2025
FRANKLIN	7916	705	CHESTNUT HILL R705	PIGG RIVER	1/22/2025

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).*



GENERAL ASSEMBLY SCREEN SHOT

Del. Vivian Watts speaks to her mail theft bill on the House floor.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY SCREEN SHOT

Sen. Saddam Salim introduces his mail theft bill on the Senate floor.

# Penalties for Porch Pirates

**Mail theft expected to rise to felony in Virginia.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

**H**ave you gone to your porch to collect a package after receiving a virtual delivery notice, only to find the item nowhere in sight? The number of packages stolen after home delivery is now so common that the term “porch pirate,” slang term for package theft, is well known to all.

With the rise and ease of e-commerce shopping, consumers also have made it easier for package thieves. Packages left outside at the delivery address provide easy access to anyone. Those with nefarious intent may target areas with high deliveries, or are even known to follow a delivery truck, reaching packages before the intended addressees. Front door surveillance cameras are in prevalent use as a deterrent. Rising thefts also are leading delivery services and customers to seek alternate delivery options, such as: package lockers, or using alternate addresses or setting delivery times when someone is available to receive the packages.

Del. Vivian Watts (D-14) and Sen. Saddam Salim (D-37) sponsored near identical bills in their respective legislative bodies in this session of the General Assembly in response to constituents’ frustration with the growing problem. Watts was particularly concerned with rising check theft. She says, “Mail theft has significantly increased with over half of altered checks being re-written for over \$14,000. The bank account number and routing information also can be sold to syndicates who will use them in identity theft.”

Mail theft, or receipt of stolen mail, is a serious crime under federal law. Depending upon the gravity of the crime, according to 18 U.S. Code § 1708, those found guilty of mail theft face the possibility of fines up to

\$250,000 and imprisonment for up to five years, or both. Watts shares that having a State law augments law enforcement powers. “Giving all law enforcement the power to go after this criminal activity will be much more effective than depending on a small number of federal law enforcement officers. In addition, since “mail theft” under federal law has always included stealing packages, this new state law also applies to stealing any package delivered your home or left for you in the apartment lobby. This includes any on-line orders or direct deliveries from retailers.”

Both bills passed with near unanimous bipartisan support in their respective bodies. They can be expected to go to the governor’s desk for signature after being combined into a single bill, and passed by the full General Assembly later this month. The bill language would add a new section to Virginia Code §18.2-110.1 to create the category of “mail theft” to the list of State crimes. Mail is defined in the section in its broadest terms. Theft of mail would include “any letter, postal card, parcel, package, bag or other material along with its contents.” That means that check theft, as mail content, is covered.

The Code makes fraudulent interference with mail a State Class 6 felony. Mail theft would join a host of other named crimes in the Code at various levels of penalties, from Class 1 to 4 misdemeanors, and Class 1 to 6 felonies. The highest level of seriousness being Class 1, and the lowest Class 4 or 6. Examples of listed crimes in Virginia include: unauthorized use of dairy milk cases or crates — a Class 4 misdemeanor; removing a shopping cart from store premises — a Class 3 misdemeanor; altering a price tag on a product to defraud the seller — either petit or grand larceny, depending upon the article’s value. Mail theft would be on a par with receipt of a stolen firearm — a Class 6 felony; participation in an organized retail theft ring is a Class 3 felony.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE  
**Neighborhood porches are popular spots for package deliveries and thefts**  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# ENTERTAINMENT

**JAN. 16 TO FEB. 23**

**Eclipse: An Athenaeum Sculpture Invitational.** At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist Talk: Sunday, February 23, 2 p.m. Curated by Alison Sigethy, Eclipse is an all sculpture show examining light and shadow, liminal space, and the passage of time. Every artist brings a unique perspective to their work. Pairing sculptures by different artists amplifies that perspective. Sometimes those perspectives sing in harmony, sometimes they debate. In either case, the experience of each individual work is heightened by the art it is paired with.

**FEB. 7 TO MARCH 1**

**The "MeWOW: Fabulous Felines" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Celebrate the mysterious and fascinating world of cats with "feline forward" artwork. Opening Reception on Friday, February 7, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

**FEB. 8-MARCH 1**

**Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical.** At the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. Thursdays to Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. Matilda Wormwood is an exceptionally gifted child with an extraordinary love of books, an incredibly vivid imagination, and just plain rotten luck in the parental department. Along with her friends and her teacher, Miss Honey, Matilda stands up for justice against the headmistress (appropriately dubbed "The Trunchbull") and other adults who "can't be bothered with the affairs of "wretched, filthy children."

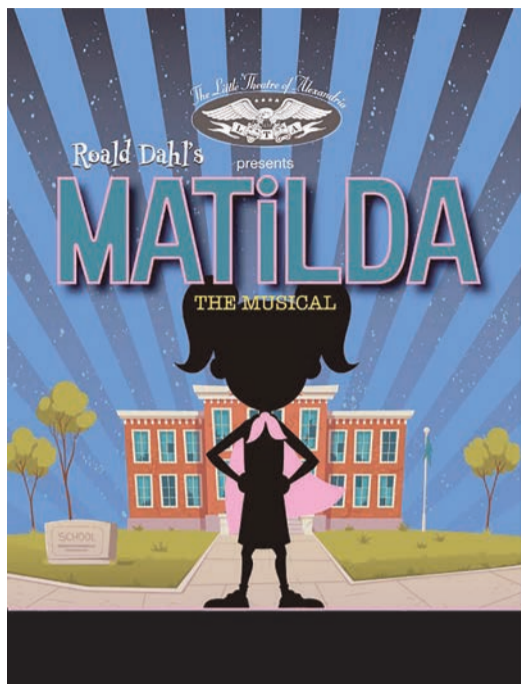
**WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19**

**"Strategies for Addressing Solo Aging, Social Isolation, and Mental Health for Seniors."** 1-2:30 p.m. At Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. Many older adults in our community are aging by themselves or what we like to call "solo aging." This can cause anxiety and a fear of loneliness, but it doesn't have to be that way. By taking advantage of resources to stay connected to the community and developing a network of friends, solo aging isn't so scary, and even maybe the best time of one's life. Senior Services of Alexandria, along with At Home in Alexandria (AHA), a local senior village, is bringing together a group of experts in the field to talk about this topic by exploring practical strategies for supporting older adults as they navigate solo aging, combatting social isolation and prioritizing their mental health. Speakers include Steve Gurney of the Positive Aging Community, and Rhonda Williams, Supervisor of the city's Older Adult Clinical Services Team. Also, attendees will learn about local resources on how to stay connected to the community. This event is free! Please RSVP by email at events@seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

**FRIDAY/FEB. 21**

**The Thirteen.** At 7:30 p.m. At Virginia Theological Seminary, Immanuel

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Roald Dahl's "Matilda The Musical" can be seen now through March 1, 2025 at the Little Theatre of Alexandria.

Chapel, 3651 Deanery Dr. Alexandria. The Thirteen returns to the mystical Camino de Santiago de Compostela - Camino of St. James of the Field of Stars - with two works that explore transfiguration: David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning the little match girl passion and Gabriel Jackson's 2011 To the Field of Stars.

**SATURDAY/FEB. 22**

**Watercolor Workshop - Watercolor from the Beginning.** 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) You will learn everything you need to build a strong foundation in getting started in watercolor. Learn detailed information on paper, paint and brushes explained clearly and demonstrated with helpful visual aids. Practice mixing colors, learn how to do basic washes and find out about special techniques unique to watercolor. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 7IL9G66

**SATURDAY/FEB. 22**

**Fairfax County NAACP Black History Month Celebration.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Harvest Assembly Baptist Church, 8008 Fordson Road, Alexandria. Featuring a Gospel Explosion Concert, Guest Speaker Leslie Houston, president of the Fairfax Education Association, who will share words of wisdom and encouragement on the importance of education, advocacy, and community empowerment. A light lunch will follow.

**SUNDAY/FEB. 23**

**Stolen History.** 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Throughout history, artifacts have been plundered from their countries of origin. Hear about cultural treasures stolen by souvenir-takers, relic smugglers and antiquities traffickers, past and present. Consider the significance of looted artifacts, whether they have been preserved or purloined and the arguments for giving them back. \$40 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

**MARCH 1-31**

**Woodlawn Needlework Show.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. Join in a special tour for a history of Woodlawn while discovering the stories behind pieces of the Needlework Show. Offered Fridays and Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. Throughout the month of March, enjoy free live needlework demonstrations. Tentative schedule will be available in mid-February.

**SATURDAY/MARCH 1**

**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> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

**SUNDAY/MARCH 2**

**Armato/De Sapio Duo.** 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Michael De Sapio (violin) and John Armato (guitar) return to the Athenaeum - this time branching out from their Baroque roots to play a delightful program of duos for violin and classical guitar. Enjoy a program of rarely heard chamber works from early Romanticism to the 21st century - music that is sweet, sensuous, and easygoing.

**MARCH 7-29**

**"Fairy Tales Around the World" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features artwork inspired by stories of faraway lands, perilous journeys with magical characters and fantastic creatures. Join them for the Opening Reception on Friday, March 7, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

book by **Dennis Kelly**  
music & lyrics by **Tim Minchin**  
orchestrations and additional music by **Chris Nightingale**  
produced by **Kadira Coley**  
directed by **Janie Downey**

Matilda Wormwood is an exceptionally gifted child with an extraordinary love of books, an incredibly vivid imagination, and just plain rotten luck in the parental department. Along with her friends and her teacher, Miss Honey, Matilda stands up for justice against the headmistress (appropriately dubbed "The Trunchbull") and other adults who "can't be bothered with the affairs of "wretched, filthy children."

**FEB. 8 - MAR. 1, 2025**

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[www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com)

Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)



The Woodlawn Needlework Show will be held March 1-31, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

At Westin Alexandria Old town. Reception dinner and dancing. Cocktail/formal attire

**SATURDAY/MARCH 8**

**Write Like a Woman Networking**

**Workshop.** 1 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Founder and Facilitator, KaNikki Jakarta, welcomes you to year 10 of the Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. This popular workshop invites amateur and professional women writers of all genres ages 18-100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles through writing prompts and encouragement. Space is limited, RSVP to [greatpublishing@yahoo.com](mailto:greatpublishing@yahoo.com)

**FRIDAY/MARCH 14**

**2025 Women's Leadership Forum Panel.** 7:45-10:30 a.m. At The Westin Alexandria Old Town, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Presented by The Chamber ALX. The forum will bring together women (and men) at all stages of their careers for an interactive, "straight talk" panel discussion filled with inspiration and insight.

**SUNDAY/MARCH 16**

**New Strings.** 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Original Works for Guitar Solo and Violin-Guitar Duet by Oscar Somersalo and Neal Learner. String-instrument lovers are invited to enjoy a unique recital of new works for guitar solo and violin-guitar duet by composers Oscar Somersalo (guitar) and Neal Learner (violin). The event promises something for everyone with virtuosic playing and delightful compositions that span musical genres from classical and jazz to pop and rock.

**FRIDAY/MARCH 21**

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** 7:30 p.m. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria. Bach has inspired across four centuries. His music is universal, his humanity eternal. In the splendor of St. Paul's Episcopal, James Ross leads the strings of the Alexandria Symphony in Dmitry Sitkovetsky's arrangement of Bach's Goldberg Variations.

**SATURDAY/MARCH 22**

**Bishop Ireton High School 60th Anniversary Gala.** 6 p.m. to Late.

**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).

**FEBRUARY**

Wed. 19: Billy F. Gibbons \$89.50 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 20: Drew Lynch \$45.00  
Fri. 21: Gary Gulman "Misfit Stand Up Tour" \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 22: Newmyer Flyer Presents: Laurel Canyon \$39.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sun. 23: Chayce Beckham \$29.50  
Fri. 28: Aaron Watson "Buy The World A Round" Tour 2025 \$35.00

**MARCH**

Sat. 1: A.J. Croce - Heart Of The Eternal Tour \$59.50  
Tue. 4: Robin Trower \$55.00 SOLD OUT!  
Wed. 5: Robin Trower \$55.00 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 6: Hank Azaria and the EZ Street Band - Performing the music of Bruce Springsteen! \$45.00  
Fri. 7: The High Kings & Mary Black \$89.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 8: The High Kings & Mary Black \$89.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sun. 9: Alan Doyle with special guests Fortunate Ones \$49.50  
Mon. 10: Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy \$49.50  
Thu. 13: Tigran Hamasyan - The Bird of A Thousand Voices (Concert Version) \$39.50  
Fri. 14: Loose Ends featuring Jane Eugene \$59.50  
Sat. 15: Loose Ends featuring Jane Eugene \$59.50  
Sun. 16: The Stylistics \$69.50  
Wed. 19: ZZ Ward - The Dirty Sun Tour, with Liam St. John \$49.50  
Thu. 20: Ladysmith Black Mambazo \$49.50  
Fri. 21: Rufus Wainwright - Going To A Town Solo Tour w/ Sloan Wainwright \$69.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 22: Edwin McCain \$39.50  
Sun. 23: WATCH Awards Ceremony -7pm- \$20.00 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 27: Leo Kottke \$49.50  
Fri. 28: Dave Hollister \$55.00  
Sat. 29: Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival 2025 Mid-Atlantic Regional \$35.00  
Sun. 30: Gaelic Storm with Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band \$59.50  
Mon. 31

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# Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS  
THROUGH APRIL 11, 2025

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the General Assembly to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia between 1954 and 1964 due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance. The scholarship is now available to those individuals and to their descendants. The program is open to eligible applicants for the 2025–2026 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:  
**BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV**



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## OPINION

### Ebbin

FROM PAGE 6

#### Supporting Affordable Housing

I was happy to support HB 2153 introduced by Delegate Betsy Carr (D-Richmond), a bill that empowers nonprofit organizations to expand access to affordable housing.

This bill would allow localities to waive certain zoning restrictions, reduce administrative fees, and expedite site plan approvals for nonprofit-led housing projects. By cutting through bureaucratic red tape, we are helping to create a pathway for trusted nonprofit organizations to provide quality, affordable housing for families in need. To ensure long-term affordability, the bill also requires that housing developed under these provisions remains affordable for at least 15 years.

By empowering nonprofits and local governments to work together, we can create real solutions to Virginia's housing crisis—ensuring that families and individuals have access to safe and stable housing for years to come.

#### Protecting Veterans from Exploitation

SB 1222 was introduced by Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Orange) and myself. Under this legislation, charges would be capped for veterans who use private application services in seeking to upgrade their VA benefits. The bill would also ensure transparency by requiring that veterans receive clear disclosures about their rights before agreeing to any services. This piece of legislation would have introduced new protections against fraud and financial exploitation targeting veterans by prohibiting the use of overseas call centers and solicitation of vets during the benefits application process.

This legislation was a bipartisan effort. Unfortunately the bill did not pass in the House Rules committee, which ended its consideration for this session. I look forward to continuing to work on these protections next year.

#### Prescription Drug Affordability

Finally, Delegate Karrie Delaney (D-Fairfax) has introduced HB 1724, which would establish the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to bring stakeholders together to lower the cost of prescription drugs here in the Commonwealth. This board would conduct a review of the affordability of these drugs and make recommendations to bring down costs by limiting drug payment amounts involving state regulated programs, and would require nonprofit organizations contracted by the Department of Health to provide more transparency on prescription drug pricing to the board. I cosponsored this bill in previous years. Virginians at large agree the cost of prescription drugs are too high.

Thanks for the continued opportunity to serve,  
**Adam P. Ebbin**

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# Local Couple Named Franchisee of the Year

## Michelle and Richard Lee prepare to open their second Bad Ass Coffee franchise location in Arlington, Va.

Michelle and Richard Lee, owners of Bad Ass Coffee of Hawaii's Alexandria, Va. and soon-to-open Arlington, Va. locations, have been named Franchisee of the Year by the International Franchise Association (IFA) at its Annual Convention in Las Vegas, NV.

The Franchisee of the Year awards recognize leading franchise owners from IFA member brands whose outstanding performance and contributions help protect, enhance, and promote the franchise business model. Nominated by their franchisor, Bad Ass Coffee of Hawaii, individuals are selected for their service to their communities, fostering a strong and vibrant workforce, opening the doors for career growth and entrepreneurship, and supporting their fellow franchisees.

"Receiving the IFA Franchisee of the Year award is an incredible honor and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team," said Richard and Michelle Lee. "This journey has been filled with learning experiences, and we're grateful for the support of our customers, team members, and the Bad Ass Coffee of Hawaii 'ohana at the home office. We look forward to continuing



Scott Snyder, Michelle Lee, and Richard Lee at the IFA Convention.

our growth and making a lasting impact in the communities we serve."

The Lees, a dynamic husband-and-wife duo with two small children, transitioned from corporate careers to franchise ownership, bringing a diverse mix of expertise to their entrepreneurial journey. Michelle, a coffee enthusiast, has a background in healthcare management, while Richard has experience in engineering, program management and real estate.

Since opening their Alexandria location, the first of a three-store commitment, the Lees have built a thriving business while becoming integral in their community. In 2024, Richard Lee was named a member of Bad Ass Coffee's first-ever Franchise Advisory Council, solidifying their leadership within the brand. Prioritizing a supportive workplace culture, they foster an environment where employees feel valued, empowered, and take pride in their work. Beyond their store, Richard and Michelle actively engage in charitable initiatives, from supporting Maui relief efforts at the national scale to partnering with local nonprofits like Lucky Dog Animal Rescue.

## It's All Relative



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As you regular readers may have gleaned from reading this column over the years, I had great parents and was raised in a wonderful and nurturing environment which enabled my brother, Richard, and I to go on and live productive lives. However, there was one element missing from our upbringing (more so for me since I was five years younger than my brother): grandparents. Oh, they were there all right (except for my maternal grandmother who had died a few months after I was born), but only during my childhood, not my adolescence and certainly not my adulthood as they all had died long before. As a result, I have fleeting memories of my two grandfathers (Hyman and Jacob) and one grandmother (Bessie), most of which involve visits to nursing homes.

However, when I married into my wife Dina's family, not only did I gain in-laws, I also inherited – for lack of a better word, Dina's two grandmothers (Frances and Filomena) and one grandfather (Cesare). All with whom I would develop adult relationships which would last over 25 years – and only occasional visits to nursing homes, an experience much different than I had with my own grandparents. It wasn't so much a revelation as it was an enriching and rewarding opportunity. An opportunity I feel extremely fortunate to have had. It makes me smile – and remember, to this day.

Juxtaposed against this history and combined with my own cancer diagnosis – which originally was a "13 month to two years" prognosis, I share the following story/acceptance of reality from Dina's Italian grandfather "Chez." The 'acceptance of reality' to which I refer is death. A very common thought/pre-occupation if you're diagnosed with "terminal" cancer or are an individual of a certain advanced age. And the type of conversation that I never had with my own grandparents as I was too young, and they were too old (if you know what I mean). Yet one I occasionally had with Dina's grandparents.

As per usual, it was a holiday, so Dina and I were visiting West Chester, Pa. where "all the relations" lived, and we were staying overnight with her grandparents – also as usual. "Chez" all I were talking about cars for some reason. Dina's grandparents owned one car, an Olsmobile Omega, a four-door sedan. Chez got to talking about all the cars he had owned, and he remembered back an impressive number of years/cars. And within this car context, "Chez" says that the Omega is the last car he'll ever own. He'll rarely drive the car anyway. Usually, I drove it when we visited. But his admission, at least to me, was a tacit acceptance of his own inevitable death (he was already into his late 80s at this juncture but still living at home). However, it was said with humor and sincerity if that's even the word. No regrets, no complaints, no why or woe is me. Just understanding that, to quote Forrest Gump's mother (Sally Field) "Death is just a part of living."

I am sharing this anecdote with you because recently I've been thinking an identical thought to myself lately. I've been saying that the 2019 Audi Q3 that I'm driving and still paying monthly for, ultimately will be the last car that I own/buy. Since I've been saying it to myself, I'm not sure I've been saying it with the same humor as "Chez" had said all those years ago. I sure hope so. If so, it's an attitude I learned from him. And one I'm proud to have learned.

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

# Freedom, Justice, Democracy

## MLK honored in student art exhibition.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. was celebrated Feb. 9 with the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Art Exhibition featuring artwork by Alexandria City Public School elementary students in grades 2-5.

With the theme "Mission Possible: Freedom, Justice and Democracy," students created artwork interpreting what can be done in families, schools and communities to bring King's vision to light.

The posters were unveiled Feb. 1 and will be on view in the Vola Lawson Lobby of City Hall throughout the month of February. The exhibit is sponsored by the Alexandria Black History Museum, in partnership with the Office of Historic Alexandria.

"The Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Art Exhibition is more than just an exhibition — it is a declaration that equity and justice are possible," said Alysha Page, African American History Curator for the Office of Historic Alexandria. "This year's showcase features 105 powerful



PHOTO BY J. PAMELA STILLS

ACPS students pose for a photo with city officials at the Feb. 9 ceremony celebrating the Martin Luther King Jr. Art exhibition at City Hall.

poster submissions from Alexandria City Public Schools students. Their art, vibrant and unapologetic, speaks to the importance of Dr. King's message in today's world."

The opening ceremony at City Hall and led by Mayor Alyia Gaskins and School Board Chair Michelle Rief. City Manager James Parajon, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, Sheriff Sean Casey, and members of City Council and School Board were also in attendance.

"These students have demonstrated re-

markable bravery, channeling their creativity to confront the pressing issues of our time," Page said. "Their work is not just seen, it is felt. This exhibition invites every community member to witness, reflect, and continue the mission forward."

Posters can be viewed online at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/museums/martin-luther-king-jr-poster-exhibition>

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## Braddock Heights

509 Lloyds Lane

\$3,295,000 | With 6 bedrooms and 5.5 bathrooms, this gated estate has luxurious gardens, high ceilings, vintage pine floors, thirty foot art gallery foyer, and 5 fireplaces all on a half acre.

**Janet Caterson Price** : 703.622.5984  
JanetPriceHomes.com

OPEN SUN 2/23, 1PM-3PM



## Del Ray

304 Clifford Avenue

\$2,150,000 | Stunning 2021 renovation features gourmet kitchen, spacious family room, luxurious primary suite, finished lower level, large yard, and prime Del Ray location.

**Jen Walker Team** : 703.675.1566  
JenWalker.com



## Old Town

510 Queen Street

\$1,750,000 | 1826 home features original hardwoods, gas fireplace, updated kitchen, garden patio, spacious primary suite with a balcony, and a finished basement with exposed brick.

**Bobby Mahoney** : 703.298.1161  
TheMahoneyGroupNow.com

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## Tauxemont

1212 Shenandoah Road

\$1,450,000 | Major renovations were completed in 2004 and throughout the time they owned the home. The beautiful home will be ready for the market very soon!

**Melissa Rosario** : 919.518.7288  
EnjoyLivingHere.com

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## Del Ray

417 E Windsor Avenue

\$1,350,000 | 4-bedroom Victorian features soaring ceilings, original hardwoods, a loft, a fenced yard with an outdoor kitchen, and easy access to shopping, restaurants, Metro, and DC.

**Jen Walker Team** : 703.675.1566  
JenWalker.com

OPEN SUN 2/23, 1PM-3PM



## Old Town

821 Queen Street

\$799,900 | Historic rowhouse with high ceilings, original floors, spacious living area, updated kitchen, large private patio, renovated primary suite, and easy access to shopping and Metro.

**Jen Walker Team** : 703.675.1566  
JenWalker.com



## Braddock Place

1200 Braddock Place #215

\$635,000 | Beautiful 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo 1 block from Metro, total high end renovation! New carpet, paint and windows; balcony facing pool, garage parking.

**Pat Crusenberry** : 703.980.8274  
PatCrusenberry.com

OPEN SUN 2/23, 2PM-4PM



## Pinewood South

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\$425,000 | Charming townhome features 3 bedrooms, 1.5 baths, updated kitchen, new flooring, Pella windows, and a spacious patio. Recent upgrades ensure modern comfort and style.

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WendySantantonio.com



## Highpoint

5911 Edsall Road #1214

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