

Alexandria Gazette Packet

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MARCH 6, 2025



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums leads the 42nd annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade March 1 through the streets of Old Town.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Tom Mooney of Murphy's Irish Pub served as Grand Marshal of the Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

Sláinte!

City hosts 42nd Saint Patrick's Day parade.

Irish eyes were smiling as Alexandria played host to the city's 42nd annual Saint Patrick's Day parade March 1 through the streets of Old Town.

Founded and sponsored by the Ballyshanners, the parade is traditionally held on the first Saturday in March making it the first Saint Patrick's Day parade in the DC area.

Tom Mooney of Murphy's Irish Pub served as Grand Marshal of the parade, which featured Alexandria's Pipes and Drums, Irish dance schools, community groups and other organizations.

www.ballyshanners.org

— JEANNE THEISMANN



PHOTO/ALEXANDRIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The City of Alexandria honor guard in the Saint Patrick's Day parade.



PHOTO/ALEXANDRIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Sean Casey mingles with the crowd March 1 during the Saint Patrick's Day parade.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Grand Marshal Tom Mooney with family and friends following the Saint Patrick's Day parade.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Reenactors take to the streets during the Saint Patrick's Day parade.

FROM PAGE

alexandria
REHABILITATION & HEALTHCARE CENTER

Helping you Transition from
Hospital to Home

Subacute Rehab • Long Term Care • Memory Care
Respite Care • Pulmonary Care • Urgent SNF™

900 Virginia Avenue, Alexandria, VA, 22302
(703) 684-9100 | alexandriahc.com

NEWS

Tax Rate Stays the Same in FY 2026 Proposed Budget

On Tuesday, Feb. 25, City Manager James Parajon presented the proposed operating and capital budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 to the Alexandria City Council. The FY 2026 Proposed Budget is the result of careful analysis and fiscal prudence, focusing on service delivery, resident quality of life, program sustainability, affordability, and community investment.

“In crafting this year’s budget, we built on the progress made over previous years by making investments that residents can feel improve their lives,” said Parajon.

The proposed budget, while focused on the community’s priorities, is being developed during unprecedented times in our country. The federal administration’s policies and directives present an uncertain future for many of our residents, including over 13,000 federal workers residing in the City of Alexandria. Alexandria’s immigrant community also face uncertainty. It is against this backdrop that the FY 2026 budget is developed. The FY 2026 Proposed General Fund Operating Budget totals \$956.5 million and prioritizes key investments without proposing a real estate or property tax rate increase, or significant service reductions.

The budget recommends a step increase and a 1% pay scale adjustment for non-collectively bargained City employees and funds the respective collective bargaining agreements for Fire, Police, and Labor and Trades groups.

The proposed budget also makes significant investments in City Council priority areas, including employee attraction and retention, affordable housing, eliminating community disparities, and improving the City’s economic strength.

Key highlights of the proposed budget include:

- ❖ Maintains the current real estate tax rate of \$1.135 per \$100 of assessed value.
 - ❖ Does not propose changes to personal property tax, sanitary sewer, or refuse rates.
 - ❖ Increases stormwater utility fee rates from \$324.10 to \$349.30 as scheduled.
 - ❖ Funds an increase of \$8.2M – which is 3.0% - in the ACPS Operating transfer to support the ACPS operating budget and a 1% pay scale adjustment for ACPS staff.
 - ❖ Increases DASH funding to support collective bargaining and inflationary costs of operations.
 - ❖ Supports community-based food hub operations.
 - ❖ Funds a business accelerator pilot program operated by the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP).
 - ❖ Allocates funding for early childhood support and intervention projects.
 - ❖ Increases funding for Neighborhood Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center.
 - ❖ Uses \$6.4 million in efficiency and cost-cutting
- SEE TAX RATE, PAGE 15

COGIR | WEST END ALEXANDRIA SENIOR LIVING

OFFERING INDEPENDENT LIVING, ASSISTED LIVING & MEMORY CARE

FIRST MONTH FREE!*

400 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

*Limited time offer. Some exclusions may apply. Contact community for more details.

CALL US TO
SCHEDULE A TOUR!
(571) 581-1287

COGIROFWESTEND.COM

City Attorney Snow Retires

Snow served 33 years in CAO.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Assistant City Attorney Karen Snow was celebrated at a retirement reception in her honor following 33 years with the City Attorney's Office Jan. 29 at Julia's in Canal Center Plaza.

"Karen is sharp, fearless and fiercely intelligent," said Deputy City Attorney Jill Schaub. "She is also the heart of our office. No one is more thoughtful, caring or generous than Karen."

Snow graduated from Hamilton College in 1978 and earned her law degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1982. She joined the city attorney's office in 1991.

"Karen and I together have worked under five city attorneys and at least five city managers," Schaub said. "She has been the soul of this office and her absence will be deeply felt by the city and all of us in the CAO."



Karen Snow talks about her years in the city attorney's office at a retirement celebration in her honor Jan. 29 at Julia's.

"[Karen] has been the soul of this office and her absence will be deeply felt."

— Deputy City Attorney Jill Schaub



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

City Attorney Karen Snow, center, celebrates her retirement following 33 years of service; with Joanna Anderson, Christina Brown, Meghan Roberts and Jill Schaub Jan. 29 at Julia's.

Cornerstone Craftsman

New nonprofit teaches trade skills.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Cornerstone Craftsman, a nonprofit dedicated to mentoring local youth through trade skills, celebrated its grand opening Feb. 28 on Eisenhower Avenue.

The new space was donated by Simpson Development with Donnie Simpson joining Mayor Alyia Gaskins and local dignitaries for the ribbon cutting.

Roberto Gomez founded the program as a way to help teach marketable skills to low-income and underserved youth.

"This program is about transformation," said Mayor Alyia Gaskins, who helped Gomez cut the ribbon to the new facility. "It is about creating opportunities and about building up our young people. Not only are young men learning the skills they need for jobs of the future, they are also learning how to take those skills and those opportunities to make a meaningful difference in our community."

Gomez now serves as Executive Director of Cornerstone Craftsman.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

"I didn't really have a plan," Gomez said. "I just wanted to help recruit some kids, give them an opportunity to earn some wages and help them visualize what a career in the trades looks like. We know that school is not for everybody and that is ok."

Two Cornerstone Craftsman participants, Terry Dorsey and Mikel King-Talbert, spoke of their experiences with the organization and also announced the start of their own business, Wealthy Walls, a paint and drywall company.

"I love Cornerstone," Dorsey said. "It has helped me build new skills and focus on my future."

The vision of Cornerstone Craftsman is to "break the cycle of generational poverty and build a proficient and marketable workforce in the skilled trades."

Said Gomez, "We need to be thinking about how we can provide opportunities to our youth and our vulnerable communities so that they can live here. We need to provide opportunities that lead to high paying jobs so that we can have a safer community and a better economy."

WWW.CORNERSTONECRAFTSMAN.ORG



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Cornerstone Craftsman founder Roberto Gomez cuts the ribbon to the new nonprofit facility Feb. 28 on Eisenhower Avenue.



Cornerstone Craftsman participant Mikel King-Talbert talks about the benefits of the organization as Terry Dorsey looks on.

"This program is about transformation."

— Mayor Alyia Gaskins



Mayor Alyia Gaskins speaks at the ribbon cutting for Cornerstone Craftsman Feb. 28 on Eisenhower Ave.

Uncommon Valor

Survivors gather to mark 80th anniversary of Iwo Jima.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Survivors of the Battle of Iwo Jima pose for a photo following a wreath laying Feb. 21 at the Marine Corps War Memorial to mark the 80th anniversary of the battle.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Battle of Iwo Jima veterans Louis Bourgault and Frank Wright speak with visitors to the Marine Corps War Memorial Feb. 21 in Arlington.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

They are part of the Greatest Generation and survivors of one of the bloodiest battles in U.S. history. As their numbers diminish with each passing year, eight veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima gathered in Arlington to remember the 80th anniversary of the landmark battle of World War II.

"I fought like hell," said retired Marine Raider Frank Wright when asked what he did during the Battle of Iwo Jima, which became a

major turning point in the war. He was among the veterans participating in a weekend of events sponsored by the Iwo Jima Association of America Feb. 20-24 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.

"Five years ago we had more than 50 Iwo Jima survivors gather at the 75th reunion," said David Fields, a board member of the Iwo Jima Association of America that sponsored the gathering. "This year only eight veterans were able to return."

The battle of Iwo Jima began

SEE SURVIVORS, PAGE 6



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/THE CONNECTION

Sailors from the USS Iwo Jima pose for a photo with dignitaries and veterans of the WWII battle following a survivors panel discussion Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Arlington Police officers escort survivors of the Battle of Iwo Jima to the wreath laying ceremony Feb. 21 at the Marine Corps War Memorial.

New Oscar Winner Among 2024 Alexandria Film Festival's Alumni Filmmakers

In the Shadow of the Cypress,” which had its Virginia premiere at the 2024 Alexandria Film Festival, won the Oscar for Best Animated Short at this week’s 97th Academy Awards presentation. Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani wrote, directed and produced the film. Produced without dialogue, the film tells the story of a father and daughter unable to connect with one another due to his PTSD-triggered fits of rage, and how an unexpected crisis gives them an opportunity to find common purpose, and perhaps finally make peace.

This is the third nomination and the second Oscar win for an Alexandria Film Festival alumni film, but it is the first to directly apply to the festival for screening, rather than curated (invited) by festival leadership.

The filmmakers, located in Iran, submitted it to the AFF last summer. Their application read “Our film centers around the human spirit, and we embarked on a six-year journey to make this film. Despite facing challenges like sanctions, limited budget and illness, our personal experiences and a sense of mission provided the motivation we needed to keep pushing forward. Thanks to this power drive, we ultimately managed to accomplish it.”

The filmmakers were not able to leave the country last year to attend the Alexandria Film Fest and this year barely made it to the Oscar ceremony when they

were only able to obtain their visas three hours before the departure.

Patti North, Executive Director of the Alexandria Film Festival says this is not unusual; they have always had difficulty getting films out of Iran, although being able to accept digital format has made it much easier.”

“We knew this film was something special as soon as we first screened it,” said Dara Sanders, AFF Chair, “That the filmmakers chose to submit their work to the AFF for its Virginia premiere is a testament to our reputation for showcasing high quality films from around the region, around the world, and even from our own talented artists in Alexandria’s backyard. The Academy’s validation of our judgment is very gratifying.”

North added, “In our own way we’re making the world smaller, more accessible, and more interesting for our audiences.”

She continued, “Of over 13,000 film festivals they could have chosen, they submitted their film to the Alexandria Film Festival last year and also screened at some of the majors including the Venice International Film Festival and Tribeca so we’re in pretty august company.”

“In the Shadow of the Cypress”

View the Trailer or Watch Online <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/intheshadowofthecypress>

Mid-Winter Festival

The Mid-Winter Festival returns in a new location this month.

Come enjoy this free Folk Festival featuring musical performances, dance demonstrations, singing and instrument workshops, storytelling, family programming, and more.

Featured performers 2025 Include: Capital Accord Chorus, Capitol Hillbillies, Wombat Crossing, Rock Creek Morris Women, Foggy Bottom Morris Men, RAYMI, Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation, Fiddlin’ Willie Band, and more

Volunteers needed. Contact president@fsgw.org
Questions about performing contact office@fsgw.org

WHERE: Browne Academy, 5917 Telegraph Road Alexandria, VA 22310

WHEN: March 22, 2025, 11am - 6pm, with a community dance from 7 - 10pm

FOOD: We will have food trucks - Two Smooth Dudes Food Truck from 11am-3pm, and The Roaming Coyote from 3-8pm.

Alice’s Kids to Pay for Prom Tickets for Altadena High Schoolers

Sometime this week, every senior at the six high schools in Altadena, California, learned that Alice’s Kids, a nonprofit organization based in Mount Vernon, Va. is paying for their prom tickets. This will help about 850 kids, many of whom have had their lives turned upside down by the tragic fires. Normally, we approve one request at a time but we thought this was a very special circumstance.

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Every school held special assemblies to announce the good news and, to top it off, they will learn the news in a video prepared by actor Steve Carell. Steve apparently is very popular with high school seniors as they re-discovered his show “The Office” during COVID and for his voiceover in “Despicable Me.”

Find out more and donate at <https://www.aliceskids.org/>



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA BOARD OF EQUALIZATION HEARINGS

Pursuant to Section 58.1-3378 of the Code of Virginia, the Board of Equalization and Assessment Review for the City of Alexandria will convene to hear complaints of inequalities wherein the property owners allege a lack of equity or uniformity in assessment, errors in fact in such real estate assessments, or that the real property assessment is not assessed at fair market value. Upon hearing such complaints, the Board is legally authorized to INCREASE, DECREASE OR AFFIRM such real estate assessments.

Participants can attend via Zoom Webinar or in person in room 3008, City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA. The 2024 hearing dates were previously advertised. The office has added the following date:

April 1st, 2025 – 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

The deadline for filing an appeal was June 3, 2024, however, this appeal deadline is not applicable to appeals of assessments for newly constructed real estate pursuant to Virginia Code 59.1-3292.

Dockets for each hearing may be obtained by contacting the Office of Real Estate Assessments, 301 King Street, City Hall Room 2600, Alexandria VA 22313, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, via email to realestate@alexandriava.gov or by calling 703.746.4646.

THE CHAMBER ALX

Looking for networking events, business updates, and advocacy support in 2024? Join The Chamber ALX now at thechamberalx.com

Find us on Facebook and become a fan!

www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers



The Connection to Your Community

www.connectionnewspapers.com

Survivors Gather to Mark 80th Anniversary of Iwo Jima

FROM PAGE 4

the morning of Feb. 19 and continued for 36 days. The raising of the American flag on Feb. 23, 1945, atop Mount Suribachi was immortalized in a Pulitzer-Prize winning photograph by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal.

Several of the survivors recalled vividly the moment when the Marines raised the flag atop Mount Suribachi.

“The flag wasn’t victory, it was hope,” said Nils Mocker, a Marine combat intelligence scout during the battle. “I was as far away from the flag as you could get – on the other side of the airfield. But at that moment everyone had stopped moving and just looked up at the mountain. There was still shelling going on all around but the ships began sounding their sirens and we felt hope.”

Approximately one-third of all Marines killed in action during World War II were killed on Iwo Jima. More than 100,000 Americans fought there and 6,821 died as a result — 5,931 of them Marines.

The four-day series of 80th anniversary events included a veterans panel, a visit to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico and wreath-laying ceremonies at the WWII Memorial and the Marine Corps War Memorial.

U.S. Naval Academy midshipman Preston White attended the weekend of events with fellow classman Kekoa Alexander.

“This is a wonderful opportunity and a great experience,” said White, who has attended the gathering for three years. “It is a great tie back to our history and a way to feel a connection to those who have served before us.”

Also in attendance were sailors from the USS Iwo Jima, an amphibious assault ship named for the battle. Among them was Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Isaac Rodriguez.

“You can always learn from older generations and people who have more experience than you,” Rodriguez said. “I’ll take what I learned from them into my future missions – to persevere and never give up.”

Also in attendance to commemorate the battle was the Japanese embassy’s Defense and Naval Attaché Rear Adm. Takaai Hayamizu, who spoke at the symposium on the alliance between the U.S. and Japan.

“The relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force is very strong,” Hayamizu said. “We conduct many joint exercises. One plus one equals more than two where our relationship with the U.S. is concerned.”

Delmar Beard, a Navy veteran who served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, was on the USS-715, one of the first Tank Landing Ships to land on the island’s Green Beach.

“We were the first ship next to Mount Suribachi,” said Beard, who was 18 at the time. “We had to unload all the ammunition and high-octane gas and bulldozers. You couldn’t drive a jeep on the volcanic ash of the island.”

Beard narrowly missed being wounded in the battle but remembers seeing those that were left behind.

“You saw a lot of Marines — I’m sorry to say — dead on the beach because they couldn’t get them off the landing craft fast enough,” Beard recalled.

SEE UNCOMMON VALOR, PAGE 9



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Survivors of the Battle of Iwo Jima pose for a photo at the display of the original flags raised on the Japanese island Feb. 21 at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Members of the Arlington County police department pose for a photo with survivors of the Battle of Iwo Jima Feb. 21 at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington. The officers provided a motorcycle escort for the veterans during their visit to the memorial, which marked the 80th anniversary of the battle.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/THE CONNECTION

U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen Kekoa Alexandria and Preston White speak with Battle of Iwo Jima survivor Delmar Beard at a gathering marking the 80th anniversary of the battle Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Iwo Jima veteran Delmar Beard, left, is escorted by his son David at the Iwo Jima Association of America gala Feb. 22 in Arlington.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Iwo Jima veteran Frank Wright with an escort at the Iwo Jima Association of America gala Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.

NEWS



PHOTO/THE SMITH GROUP

A grand opening of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in Potomac Yard was held Feb. 28 in Potomac Yard.

'We Are Open'

VaTech Innovation Campus celebrates grand opening.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

An official ribbon-cutting was held Feb. 28 to celebrate the grand opening of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in Potomac Yard with more than 1,000 people on hand to witness the christening of the new graduate school facility.

"I have been waiting nearly five years to say these words --- we are open," said Lance Collins, vice president and executive director of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus. "We are so honored to have all of you here to celebrate this historic achievement."

The new facility is the first academic building on the Innovation Campus in Alexandria, which was initially conceived as part of the bid to attract Amazon's second headquarters to the region.

The 11-story building spans 300,000 square feet and is located at 3625 Potomac Ave. Construction was completed in January when 500 students began attending classes at the new location.

Referred to as Academic Building One, the facility is home to a public visitor's center, the Boeing Auditorium, 14 classrooms, a two-story drone testing cage, a cyber physical lab for testing wireless technology, and a center for artificial intelligence and data analytics.

Also included are a center dedicated to K-12 education, a roof deck, wellness spaces like a stretching station and relaxation rooms, a maker's space with 3D printing tools, and an immersive visualization lab, where art and

data can be projected visually onto the walls and floors.

An outdoor classroom and multiple plazas are part of the landscaped green space surrounding the building, which sits on three-and-a-half acres.

The grand opening event was briefly interrupted shortly after the arrival of Governor Glenn Youngkin as protestors approached the stage singing "Ain't Gonna Study War No More." Flyers condemning Virginia Tech's relationship with Amazon, BAE Systems and Boeing were passed out reading "The Virginia Tech Innovation Campus

"I have been waiting nearly five years to say these words --- we are open."

— Innovation Campus VP
Lance Collins

proudly boasts at least four of the world's largest weapons manufacturers as our sponsors!" The disruption lasted just over five minutes before the program continued as planned.

Amazon selected National Landing for the location of its East Coast corporate office, also known as HQ2, in 2018 with the first phase of HQ2 opening in May 2023. National Landing encompasses parts of Crystal City and Pentagon City in Arlington and Potomac Yard in Alexandria.

The SmithGroup served as architects for the roughly \$1 billion Virginia Tech Innovation Campus project.

**Same Company, Same Employees,
Same Great Value - Now Celebrating 20 Years!**

TWO POOR TEACHERS

Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling



- Electrical (ELE)
- Gas Fitting (GFC)
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVA)
- Plumbing (PLB)
- Residential Building (RBC)

Fully Insured & Class A Licensed
Since 1999



Free Estimates 703-999-2929

Check if your contractor is licensed at the state level
<http://www.DPOR.virginia.gov>

Visit our website: www.twopoorteachers.com

THE UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE BAND
WASHINGTON, D.C.

heritage
爵士
series
2025
airmen
of note



PASQUALE GRASSO

THURSDAY, APRIL 3 AT 7:30 P.M.
RACHEL M. SCHLESINGER
CONCERT HALL AND ARTS CENTER
Free registration at:
USAFBAND.TICKETLEAP.COM

Plus Guest Artist Series continues on May 1 and 9
More information at usairforceband.com



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Iwo Jima veteran Frank Wright is introduced at the Iwo Jima Association of America gala Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Iwo Jima veterans are greeted by well wishers at the Marine Corps war Memorial Feb. 21 in Arlington.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Iwo Jima survivor Louis Bourgault, right, with an unidentified guest at the Iwo Jima Association of America gala Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Paula Davis, right, was among the Gold Star family members attending the Iwo Jima Association of America Gala Feb. 22 in Arlington.

Uncommon Valor

From Page 6

Beard provided a bit of levity when he was asked what he did once he returned home after the war.

“We were a bunch of high school dropouts – 16, 17, 18 years old,” Beard said. “As soon as we got home we had sex for the first time – that was the best.”

The culmination of the weekend was a gala, where Tower to Tunnels Foundation CEO/Chair Frank Siller was presented with the IJAA’s Woody Williams Award, named in honor of Herschel Wood-

row “Woody” Williams, a Marine survivor of Iwo Jima and the last living Medal of Honor recipient from WWII prior to his death in 2022.

“We are in their debt for the life we live today,” said Dean Laubach, a 28-year-old historian who traveled from his home in Pennsylvania to honor his great uncle, who was a colonel in the 5th Amphibious Corps. “My life has been forever changed because of these veterans, for having shared their company.”



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISSMANN/THE CONNECTION
Historian Dean Laubach stands among his collection of WWII artifacts at the Iwo Jima Association of America symposium Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Japanese Embassy’s Defense and Naval Attaché Rear Adm. Takaaki Hayamizu speaks at the Iwo Jima Association of America’s symposium Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/THE CONNECTION
Navy Lt. Jennifer Bowman, right, greets veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima following a survivors panel discussion Feb. 22 in Arlington.



PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
Tunnel to Towers Foundation CEO Frank Siller, center, is presented the Woody Williams award by Maj. General David Bice (USMA ret), right, president and CEO of the Iwo Jima Association of America.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/THE CONNECTION
Marine Corps veteran David Fields, standing, leads the Iwo Jima veterans panel Feb. 22 at the Crystal City National Landing Hilton.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS – Representatives of the Old Dominion Boat Club presented a check for \$5,000 to the Alexandria Police Foundation to support the APF in its work in the community and the care of Alexandria police K-9s. APD Chief Tarrick McGuire was on hand as the check was presented to APF chair Charlotte Hall Feb. 20 at police headquarters. www.alexandriapolicefoundation.org

Guest House Art Show Brings Joy to Artists and Guests

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE GAZETTE

Guest House residents are busy working with the art therapy intern to create their submissions for their annual art show. The show is scheduled this year on April 9 from 6-8 pm at Principle Gallery on King Street. Guest House is a residential facility providing a six month program of services to newly released women who are non-violent offenders.

Katie Shapiro says about half of the women currently at Guest House are participating in the show whose theme is metamorphosis.

“In the past we have had everything from paintings, sculpture, photography, songs written out on sheet music accompanied by a recording and even poetry written out and framed.”

Shapiro says when these women arrive at Guest House from imprisonment, it is a huge struggle — a big adjustment. “They may know the other people here, maybe not. They have to build new habits, go to classes, try things they have never tried before. They have to go outside their comfort zone.

“The Art Show gives them an opportunity to find joy in what they do. Many of them have never thought in the past about what

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



GUEST HOUSE ART SHOW PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Artwork from the Guest House Art Show in 2024.

really gives them joy.” Shapiro says this Art Show takes them out of their comfort zone. One of the participants had been a poet but had been away from it for a long time. “The Art Show reignited her flame.”

Another was impressed at the beautiful gallery where her work will be shown. She said she never thought her work would be displayed right next to someone else whose work would sell for thousands of dollars.

Shapiro says another of the artists is trying to build her art network so she can continue as a professional when she leaves Guest House. Shapiro describes the artist as a reflective person who is really determined to hone her skills and plan ahead for a life “out there” which is really good. And she is

an encouraging person who gets some of the more shy people to give it a try.”

As one of the many programs and classes offered at Guest House, an art therapist is available to work with the Guest House residents. This year the art therapist is a student at George Washington University. “She spends 5-10 hours a week at the open art studios at the resident houses or just helping a resident unwind after a stressful day. It can be an extra support session.”

Shapiro says the Art Show will have amazing work. “Our women are amazing.”

Principle Gallery at 208 King Street was established in 1994 for merging, mid-career and established artists with a distinct personal approach.



McLean Community Center
Celebrating 50 Years

Saturday, March 22, 5-10 p.m.

Fiesta del Sol is back! Taste sumptuous tapas, enjoy great live music and hear the sounds of Latin America and the Caribbean right here in McLean.



1234 Ingleside Ave.,
McLean, Va. 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711

Find more information at:
mcleancenter.org

MEET & GREET WITH SHERIFF SEAN CASEY

Hosted By:
Donita Greene



SUNDAY, MARCH 16TH
2PM-4PM

GREENE FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL
814 FRANKLIN STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

Join us to learn more about Sheriff Casey and his campaign!

RVSPs are welcomed but not required.
[You can RSVP at gfh.va@verizon.net](mailto:gfh.va@verizon.net)

Join Us!

CASEY FOR SHERIFF



Dean Naujoks, Potomac Riverkeeper



Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and Naujoks



Post of mussels found in Four Mile Run

More Mussels Make Cleaner Rivers

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

Mussels are not cute, cuddly or charismatic. They are bivalves with a soft body inside two shells hinged together by a ligament, shellfish that like to embed in river bottom sediments. While they typically don't get the attention of other wildlife, they are important, known as nature's "cleanup crew." Mussels can augment people's Potomac River cleanup efforts, Dean Naujoks told 45 attendees at a meeting of the Friends of Dyke Marsh on Feb. 23 at the Mount Vernon Government Center. Naujoks is with the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN).

"Freshwater mussels are mollusks, similar to their marine clam and oyster cousins and are an essential component of our rivers and streams that improve water quality by acting as filters," explains the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources website. They filter bacteria, algae and other small particles.

National Harbor and Alexandria

Naujoks described two Potomac River mussel restoration projects.

For their 50 Million Mussel Project launched in 2019, they suspended cages of young mussels into the Potomac River in Smoot's Cove at Maryland's National Harbor with the goal of restoring 50 million by 2030. Though they have had to cope with waves, currents, hungry birds and enterprising otters, they are persisting and hope to soon have a new system called an "up-weller" to serve as a mussel incubator.

Naujoks also described a mussel restoration project just off Alexandria's Oronoco Park, started in 2023, where they will have introduced over 14,000 mussels into the Alexandria waters of the river by 2026. This restoration is funded by their \$300,000 settlement with the city of Alexandria to remediate decades of coal tar residue pollution from the abandoned Alexandria Town Gas Plant, in operation from 1851 to 1946. Coal tar, a liquid byproduct of coal processing, contains some carcinogenic chemicals like benzene. The city is now capturing the coal tar, has re-lined the pipeline and will dredge the soil to remove the pollutants, Naujoks reported.

Helping Mussels Upstream

Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director of



Lowering cages with mussel larvae into the Potomac River at National Harbor



PHOTOS BY GLENDA



The Potomac Riverkeeper's sign at National Harbor describing the project

the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB), attended the meeting and later described a related ICPRB project. "Freshwater mussels act as filters of the Potomac River," he said. "Once plentiful, these bivalves depend upon American eels to transport glochidia (baby mussels) upstream in their gills.

"Unfortunately, eels were cut off from the north branch of the Potomac by old dams built for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. ICPRB has secured a Chesapeake WILD grant to build eel ladders around dam 4 (near Williamsport, Maryland) and dam 5 (near Shepherdstown, West Virginia) to restore freshwater mussels to the upper Potomac River. More eels lead to more mussels and cleaner water," he said.

At the meeting, Kurt Moser, President of the Four Mile Run Conservancy, shared posters describing five freshwater mussel

species that his organization found in Four Mile Run.

Is the Potomac Clean?

In the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson labeled the "nation's river" as a "national disgrace" and people were advised to get a tetanus shot if they fell in.

Today it is much cleaner, receiving an overall grade of B in 2023 from the Potomac Conservancy, but the watchdog group warned that pollution is still a problem. "Polluted urban runoff is the only growing source of pollution to the Potomac River. Polluted runoff occurs when excess rainwater flows across paved and hardened surfaces and carries street oils, lawn fertilizers, trash and even diluted sewage directly into local streams," the report said.

The riverkeeper network wants to make the river swimmable again for people, Naujoks said. Volunteers conduct water testing at 30 points from May to September along the Potomac, including one at Belle Haven Marina.

"When the first English settlers arrived on these shores, they were astonished to discover rivers practically paved in freshwater mussels," according to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Today, 70 percent of mussel species in the U.S. are extinct or at risk of extinction. Virginia experts say that of the state's 82 species, only 30 percent are stable.

Naujok wants to reverse that disturbing

trend. "The river will be a lot cleaner than it is today by 2030," he predicted.

Information

Friends of Dyke Marsh www.fodm.org
Potomac Riverkeeper Network, www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, www.icprb.org
Four Mile Run Conservancy Foundation, www.fourmilerun.org

How Do Mussels Reproduce?

The life cycle of the freshwater mussel is one the most complex and interesting in the animal world. Unlike other animals that can actively search for a mate, the sedentary mussel depends on the river current to reproduce. The process begins with the male releasing sperm, and the female located downstream drawing it in through her in-current siphon. Numbering in the 100's to hundreds of thousands, the fertilized eggs develop into glochidia within her gills. Once mature, they are released into the water column to begin the second part of their lives-attaching to the gills, fins, or scales of freshwater fishes. At this point, the process is further complicated because not only do the glochidia have to find a fish, but it has to be one of a few specific fish species for the life cycle to continue. If a glochidium attaches to the correct fish species, it encysts into the fish's tissue and undergoes a short life as a parasite.

Potomac Riverkeeper Collected Air Wreckage Debris

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

On Jan. 29 around 9 p.m., Potomac Riverkeeper Dean Naujoks was relaxing at home watching a movie on Netflix when Betsy Nicholas, his organization's vice president called and said, "Turn on the news." The news kept him up all night.

American Airlines flight 5342 from Wichita, Kansas, preparing to land at Reagan National Airport, collided with a southbound Army Black Hawk helicopter over the Potomac River near the airport in 35-degree weather. Both plummeted into the icy waters. Around 11:30 p.m., Naujoks heard that no one had survived. That night, he debated with himself about what he could and should do.

In a Feb. 19 online talk, Naujoks told participants that the next morning at sunrise he decided to try to help. He went to the Dangerfield Island Marina, where his boat is kept, within sight of the airport, and met Alexandria police officers. "It was eerily calm, a quiet, gray, cold day," he recalled. A man who docked his pontoon boat there had found some airplane debris on the river so the police called the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) to retrieve it.

"I was there to help and provide assistance," Naujoks stressed. He got permission from the FBI to go out on the river, as long as he stayed away from the crash site. Having intimate knowledge of the river, Naujoks surmised that based on the outgoing tide and wind direction, debris would likely collect in Oxon Cove and Smoot's Cove two miles down river near the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, places where most boaters rarely go.

Navigating in these coves is "tricky," he said. An inexperienced boater could run aground easily in Oxon Cove and a rock jetty in Smoot's Cove "can rip your prop off."

What Did He Find?

There was debris "all over the place," he said. "It was eerie." He collected items like yellow foam from the airplane, a metal handle that probably came from an emergency exit and a sweater. The largest pieces he snagged were a seat and a window. He found packets of sugar and a shredded landing gear manual. Bags of chips "perfectly intact" were floating in the water. Everything was coated in jet fuel.

Once back at the marina, he put it all in a cart and contacted the Alexandria Police Department who turned it over to the FBI. Later, others also spotted debris near



FACEBOOK, POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER

FBI and Alexandria Police told Dean Naujoks, Potomac Riverkeeper, he could go out on the river if he stayed away from the crash site. He headed down river toward Alexandria, finding debris fields and parts of the plane in an area most boats don't go or know how to access on the Maryland side. Everything reeked of jet fuel, he said.

Maryland's National Harbor.

On his experience, he said that "driving the boat, retrieving wreckage and dodging ice floes, it was a hectic day on the river. It was very intense and I was terrified I'd come across something I did not want to see."

On the Sunday after the Wednesday crash, FBI officials called Naujoks because of his knowledge of the river. They wanted to go into Oxon and Smoot's Coves so he guided them there by phone using visual landmarks.

Jet Fuel Everywhere

Everything was covered with jet fuel, Naujoks told listeners. WTOP radio reported that many of the 300 first responders were covered with jet fuel and some developed rashes and lost their sense of taste and smell temporarily from the exposure.

Two days after the crash, people observed a fuel sheen and fish kills near Alexandria's waterfront, Naujoks said. He contacted several academic experts to learn about the fuel's chemical components and the risks of exposure to the fuel. He believes that much of the jet fuel volatilized into the air and some came down on Alexandria rooftops as atmospheric deposition.

He is hoping that a state agency or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will take some water samples, testing that he described as very expensive. And while his network has a water testing program, they do not have the resources to do this kind of testing.

"No one knows how far south the jet fuel went," he said. To be safe, PRKN cancelled their annual "polar bear plunge" at National Harbor the weekend after the crash.

Asked if it is safe to eat fish caught in the Potomac, he recommended following the states' fish advisories. He does not know the

true impact of the fuel on fish. Long-term exposures to pollutants are typically more dangerous than pollution from a one-time event, he maintained.

"I would never tell anyone to stay away from this amazing river," he said, and summarized, "I was grateful for the opportunity to help and to experience what was happening in the river. You serve as a witness to what's happening to the river, the good, bad and ugly. We are the watchdog and defender."

The Collision

The collision was the deadliest airplane crash in the country since 2001, many media outlets reported, when a jet slammed into a New York City neighborhood after take-off, killing all 260 people on board and five more on the ground. A region-wide alert for the Jan. 29 Potomac River collision brought in 300 first responders from the District, Virginia and Maryland, as far away as Baltimore and the Eastern Shore.

"It was a horrible tragedy, one of the saddest days on the Potomac River ever," Naujoks said.

The Potomac Riverkeeper Network's mission is "to protect the right to clean water for all communities and all those who live in and rely upon the Potomac and Shenandoah watersheds by stopping pollution, making drinking water safe, protecting healthy river habitats and enhancing use and enjoyment for all." Visit www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/

If You See Debris

If you see suspected debris from the collision, do not touch it, Naujoks advises. Call 911. Photographs of visual evidence and GPS coordinates are helpful to authorities. The network's hotline is 336-809-6041 or www.waterreporter.org/.



US COAST GUARD

A temporary safety restriction zone depicted here was established due to possible contamination from fuel and other chemicals after the Jan. 29 plane crash.

www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION Newspapers & Online

Alexandria Gazette Packet

Mount Vernon Gazette

Potomac ALMANAC

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

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.

For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email sales@connectionnewspapers.com

Stunning Stitchery Stars at Woodlawn



Beached coral reef by Kim Berry-Rogers, surface embroidery.



Quaker sampler wing chair, counted thread, by Kathy Rabun.



Lt. Col. John Mosby by Dennis Yeatts, counted thread cross stitch.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

Stitchery is both artistry and therapy, say needle arts practitioners, who called themselves “needlers.”

Diane Clark says that stitching “is excellent for one’s mental health. It’s calming and relaxing.” Dennis Yeatts credits his years of stitching with helping him recover from a serious injury and his wife’s passing.

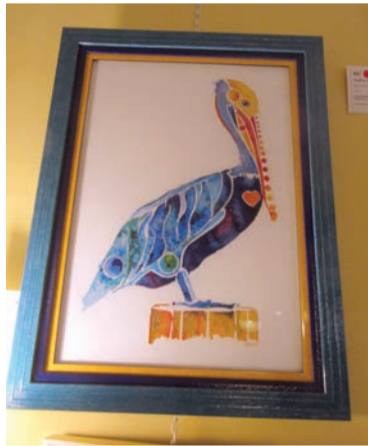
In eight rooms, Woodlawn Plantation’s mansion is displaying 600 stitched pieces from 33 states and three countries at their annual needlework show. The event, continuing until March 31, is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the show’s founders, Nelly’s Needlers, a group celebrating their 50th anniversary and named for the first owner of Woodlawn, Eleanor “Nelly” Custis Lewis, a needlecrafter herself.

600 Pieces of Art

Exquisite needlework pieces depict nature, landscapes, buildings, people, food, abstract designs and many other subjects. The judged show has embroidery, crewel, drawn thread, needlepoint, counted cross-stitch, lace, smocking, beadwork, canvaswork, quilting and more. One show-stopper is Kathy Rabun’s blue-ribbon-winner, a Quaker sampler wing chair on which she meticulously sewed messages like “Highlights of My Life” and “My Heroes.”

This year’s entries “eclipse pre-pandemic numbers,” says Heather Johnson, Woodlawn’s Interim Executive Director. Sponsors tout that the show is the largest and longest-running needlework show in the country.

Deb Kempton, an event co-chair, offered, “It’s a universal language. Every culture has some type of



Pelican by Kim Smith, counted thread cross stitch.

cross stitch,” citing Scandinavia and Ukraine as examples. One example is a counted thread Romanian national blouse by Diana Grichuk. Clark, a Clifton resident, is the other co-chair.

Entrants span all ages. A group of Bush Hill Elementary School sixth graders crafted a quilt under the supervision of their teacher, Jenny Pratt. Each student made a nine-patch square and they dedicated the quilt to Ona Judge, an enslaved woman at George and Martha Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate who escaped and was never captured. The youngsters won first place in their division.

Yeatts first entered a Woodlawn show in 1981. He echoed Clark’s view, explaining that stitching helped him recover from an injury and to rebound again after his first wife’s death. He designs his own pieces and entered a cross-stitch piece with 22 shades of black and gray, depicting Confederate Civil War Colonel John Mosby and a map of Mosby’s Virginia environs. Yeatts has already completed next year’s entry, a piece with 505 different colors to honor the 250th anniversary of the nation’s founding.

The show had three needle arts judges, who rated entries by the

creator’s age and type of item. All work had to be done within the last year by a living person, stitched with a hand-held, threaded needle and “appropriately finished.” The age categories were 18 years or older, 70 years or older, 17 years or younger. The youngster’s group had three subdivisions -- nine and under, 10 to 13 and 14 to 17.

In the printed program, the judges listed several features that can make a work outstanding:

“Each stitch is well executed.”
“Tension is consistent throughout the piece.”

“The thread is pristine, not worn.”
Nelly’s Needlers made a needlepoint rug to raffle off in a drawing on May 12.

Paleoindian Stitchery

In a timely coincidental twist, this writer’s son, Dr. Todd A. Surovell, was an author of a recently published paper on “needling” 13,000 years ago. He and others working at the La Prele mammoth kill site in eastern Wyoming analyzed proteins in bones and for the first time identified some of the animals that Paleoindians used for bone sewing needles, including hares, foxes, bobcats and perhaps extinct cheetahs or lions. Surovell teaches archaeology at the University of Wyoming. He attended Wayneswood Elementary, Carl Sandburg Middle and West Potomac High Schools. Read more at <https://www.uwyo.edu/news/2024/11/uw-based-research-shows-early-north-americans-made-needles-from-furbearers.html>.

The Woodlawn show’s business sponsors are In Stitches, Hampton Inn and Suites, Artistic Artifacts and Creative Print Group. All proceeds support preservation and education at Woodlawn and the next-door Pope-Leighey House. For more information, visit <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/needleworkshow-visit-the-show-1>.



Diane Clark, show co-chair, and her Hardanger embroidered pillow.



Bush Hill students’ quilt on the Lewises’ original bed.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU APRIL 6

Artist Jeff Bohlander. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Through the language of mixed-media, collage, assemblage, and found objects, Jeff's narrative reflects our collective journey through the complexities of our time — from climate change and social constructs to migration and technological advancements.

NOW THRU MARCH 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.

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

MARCH 7, 8, 9

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Presented by MVCCT: Mount Vernon Community and Children's Theater. At Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria.

FRIDAY/MARCH 7

Official Unveiling of the Dr. Gladys West Mobile Exhibit. 11 a.m. At New Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, 3625 Potomac Ave., Alexandria. Mayor Gaskins of Alexandria has proclaimed March 7th Dr. Gladys West day in honor of her world-changing impact as a mother of GPS (Global Positioning System). After two years of dedicated designing and fundraising, this exhibit, underwritten by Trimbel, will honor Dr. Gladys West, whose pioneering work in mathematical modeling made GPS technology possible. The exhibit, which is free and open to the public, invites attendees to explore Dr. West's contributions through interactive displays.

March 7: Fundraising Celebration Lunch – Women Start Your Engines! Directly following the exhibit unveiling, at 12:30 p.m., NCWI is sponsoring a fundraising celebration lunch at Royal Nepal (3807 Mt. Vernon Ave, Alexandria). This special luncheon will feature the announcement of NCWI's Women Driving Change programs, spotlighting engineer Christina Lam, the first Asian American woman racer, who competes in endurance races through IMSA. NCWI's logo appears on her race car and racing suit, inspiring young girls to discover their place in STEM both at the racetrack and in their careers.

SATURDAY/MARCH 8

Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. 1 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Founder and Facilitator, KaNikki Jakarta, welcomes



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

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

SATURDAY/MARCH 8 International Women's Day Art

Open House with Nina Tisara who will sponsor an Open House at her gallery (6408 Hayfields Place, Alexandria, VA) featuring her latest mosaics. 20% of all sales during March will go to NCWI.

SATURDAY/MARCH 8 Transformations: Celebrate,

Support, and Be Inspired. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Serenity Gallery, 6408 Hayfield Place, Alexandria. Come feast your eyes on inspiring artwork -- and take home a piece that brings energy and creativity to your space -- while making a difference! Visit the Open House featuring the mosaics of Alexandria artist Nina Tisara and creative art photography of Steven Halperson. Tisara is the founder of Living Legends of Alexandria. The work captures the transformative spirit of life, making this event a perfect way to celebrate and support women's achievements. Plus, 20% of all March sales will be donated to the National Center of Women's Innovations, helping to uplift and recognize women innovators.

SATURDAY/MARCH 8

Plant Swap - Houseplants, Cuttings and Containers. 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (16-Adult) Join Green Spring Gardens' fourth annual Plant Swap. Bring your unwanted houseplants, cuttings and containers to swap with others or simply give away. A lecture will be included. Leave with new plants, containers, garden friends and expert advice. \$15 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

[fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 1AT.8DO5.

SATURDAY/MARCH 8

Intro to Tree and Shrub Pruning. 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) Did your hydrangea fail to bloom? Nervous about shaping your specimen tree? Green Spring Gardens staff will teach you about timing, tools and techniques for pruning common woody plants to keep them healthy and looking their best. Dress for the weather. \$23 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 7CT.FY4M

SATURDAY/MARCH 8

Garden Exploration - Migration or Hibernation. 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (5-Adult) Discover how the animals of Green Spring survive the cold of winter by either hibernating or migrating. Join one of our educators for a walk around the park as we search for signs of spring. All attendees, including parents, must be registered for the program. \$8 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 4YM.LHE8

FRIDAY/MARCH 14

Women's Leadership Forum. 7:45-10:30 a.m. At The Westin Alexandria Old Town, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Sponsored 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. Cost is \$80 for Members | \$105 for Prospective Members.

SATURDAY/MARCH 15

Garden Talk - Winning Plants for Containers. 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) Whether its flow-erpots, hanging baskets or window boxes, container gardens are beautiful, easy and rewarding for winter



The "Fairy Tales Around the World" exhibit will be held March 7-29, 2025 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.

gardening. Learn how to create a dazzling display with eye-catching colors of perennials and annuals. Join Extension Master Gardener docents to gain information and inspiration for your container. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code DOC.DWRB

SATURDAY/MARCH 15

Special Garden Tour - Witch Hazels. 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) An Extension Master Gardener docent showcases our nationally accredited witch hazel collection, featuring over 200 specimens. Fragrant, willowy blooms glow red, yellow, purple and copper throughout the gardens from fall through March. \$18 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code U52.MYVT

SATURDAY/MARCH 15

Watercolor Workshop – Eyes of March. 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (16-Adult) Learn to draw and paint eyes in watercolor. You will study the beautiful shapes, colors and reflections that can be seen in a close up eye with the direction of artist and instructor Marni Maree. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 2EZ.KØMA

SUNDAY/MARCH 16

11th Annual Nowruz Festival. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. At Hilton Washington Dulles Airport. Join in a vibrant celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, and the arrival of spring! This event is free and open to the public, so bring your friends and family for a day of fun, culture, and community. What to Expect: Live music and dance performances by talented local artists DJ music to keep the energy flowing all day long

Fun and exciting kids' activities A grand Nowruz Bazaar featuring amazing art & craft vendors, delicious sweets, and a variety of services to explore

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.

SUNDAY/MARCH 16

Fairest of Them All. 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Adult) This Women's History Month, learn about the not-so-pretty history of beauty pageants. Explore their origins and culture and the growing controversy surrounding them. Hear about recent steps towards inclusion and empowerment and consider how such contests must adapt to survive. \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 19

Senior Services Event. 10 a.m. At Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) will take its weekly newsletter "SSA Connection" live at a fun event. The program will follow the newsletter format including: a "Ted Talk;" fitness segment; cooking demonstration; local happenings and a fun "sing-along." The event is free, but rsvp by emailing events@seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Bishop Ireton High School 60th Anniversary Gala. 6 p.m. to Late. At Westin Alexandria Old town. Reception dinner and dancing. Cocktail/formal attire

**The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted
IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY**



\$1000 OFF*
OR
\$1500 OFF when financing with remodelingloans.com™ OR **0% Interest** For 18 Months™

OFFER EXPIRES 3/31/2025

BATH CONCEPTS INC

CALL NOW (844) 945-1631

*Includes labor and product; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 3/31/25. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify/ Participating dealers only. See your dealer for details. ©2024 BCI.

**Call today and receive a
FREE SHOWER
PACKAGE
PLUS \$1600 OFF
SAFE STEP
WALK-IN TUB**

1-877-591-9950

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445







FINANCING AVAILABLE WITH APPROVED CREDIT

Be prepared before the next power outage.



**It's not just a generator.
It's a power move.™**

Receive a free 5-year warranty with qualifying purchase* - valued at \$535.

Call 844-947-1479 to schedule your free quote!

GENERAC

*Terms and Conditions apply.

CLASSIFIED
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM
TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

CALENDAR

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

Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Announcements

CLARIDGE HOUSE II ALEXANDRIA
301 N. Ripley St.,
Alexandria VA 22304
Tel: 703-823-5444
Claridge House

Waiting list opens on 3/11/25.

Claridge House is an Elderly subsidized Section 8 apartments community for 62 years old & over and persons with disabilities.



LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION

**CALL TODAY FOR A FREE INSPECTION!
1-877-614-6667**

20% OFF + 10% OFF
Your Entire Purchase* Seniors + Military

++ We offer financing that fits your budget!†

Promo: 285

* See Representative for full warranty details. *One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. †Subject to credit approval. Call for details. AR 366920923, AZ ROC 344027, CA 1035795, CT HIC 0671520, FL CBC056678, IA C127230, ID RCE-51604, LA 559544, MA 176447, MD MHIC111225, MI 262300173, 262300318, 262300328, 262300329, 262300330, 262300331, MN IR731804, MT 226192, ND 47304, NE 50145-22, 50145-23, NJ 13VH09953900, NM 408693, NV 86990, NY H-19114, H-52229, OR 218294, PA 179643, 069383, RI GC-41354, TN 10981, UT 10783658-5501, VA 2705169445, WA LEAFFNW822J2, WV WV056912.

**Sign up for
FREE DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTION**

to any or all of our 15 papers

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE




**Alexandria
Gazette Packet**

www.AlexandriaGazette.com

Twitter @AlexGazette

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

**Published by
Local Media Connection LLC**

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

**Janet Barnett, John Bordner,
Mark Mogle**
Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe
Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

**Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier,
Glenda Booth**
Contributing Writers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Hope Nelson
Food Writer
hope@kitchenrecessionista.com
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope
Senior Reporter
michaellepopo@gmail.com
@michaellepopo

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Disply Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Art/Design:
Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:
Mary Anne Weber

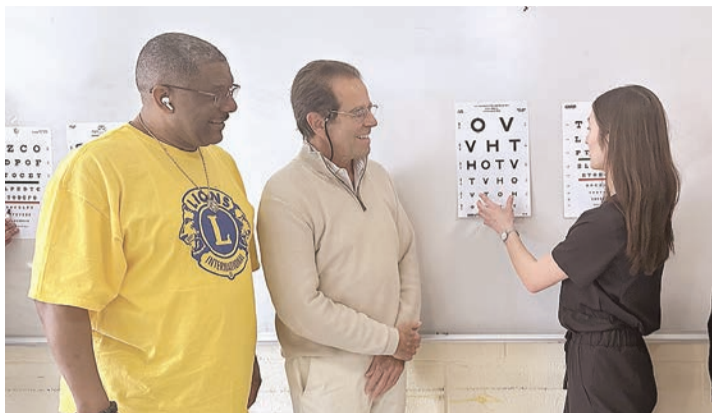
CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.

**Virginia
PRESS
Association**

**Award Winning
Newspaper**



Volunteer Natalie Lim, right, reviews an eye chart with Rodney Louis and David Rosenblum at the Community Eye Clinic Feb. 1 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Free eye exams are performed as part of the Community Eye Clinic Feb. 1 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Community Eye Clinic

Exams, screenings help promote eye health.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

More than 100 people turned out for the Community Eye Clinic held Feb. 1 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center. Free eye exams and glaucoma screenings were provided as part of the clinic for both children and adults.

"We're the first stop along the way in eye care," said James

Paige, Executive Director of Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria and one of the co-sponsors of the event. "If it turns out someone needs glasses, they are able to pick out the glasses of their choice -- one pair of glasses per adult and two pairs for each

"We are the first stop along the way in eye care."
— CCNA executive director James Paige

child. These are all free as part of the clinic."

The Community Eye Clinic is a joint effort with CCNA, the Alexandria Host Lions Club and the Prevention of Blindness Society.

"It's important to have people get tested and get glasses if necessary," said David Rosenblum, president of the Alexandria Host Lions Club. "Seeing well can improve your life tremendously -- kids can see a blackboard and learn better -- so there is no danger in coming out to get help at an event like this."

Volunteers for the event included Natalie Lim, a medical assistant in the region.

"Volunteering at something like this helps me learn as well as I pursue my own medical career," Lim said.

Added Paige, "Today is not just about the eyes, it's about the hearts and the connections to the community."

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



An attendee receives a free eye exam as part of the Community Eye Clinic Feb. 1 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Tax Rate Stays the Same in FY 2026 Proposed Budget

FROM PAGE 2

savings to balance the budget.

The Proposed FY 2026 – 2035 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) totals \$2.08 billion and is focused on improving existing infrastructure and making strategic new investments.

Funding Allocated for FY 2026 Capital Budget Projects:

- ❖ \$21.0 million for Alexandria City Public Schools capital funding request - in line with the funding level requested for FY 2026 in the School Board Approved capital funding request.

- ❖ \$40.0 million to support the Waterfront Flood Mitigation project.

- ❖ \$15.4 million for the City's contribution to WMATA's Capital Improvement Program.

- ❖ \$19.3 million for the renovation of City Hall, Market Square Plaza, and Parking Garage.

- ❖ \$5.5 million for street reconstruction and resurfacing, which will support the re-

surfacing of approximately 50-55 lane miles in FY 2026.

- ❖ \$5.0 million to provide multimodal upgrades as part of the South Van Dorn Bridges project.

- ❖ \$5.2 million to support DASH Bus Fleet Replacement/State of Good Repair.

- ❖ \$1.8 million to support the Old Town Pool Renovation project.

Attend a FY 2026 Budget Event

This year, there will be five budget public hearings and a public presentation. All events listed begin at 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Scheduled budget meetings will have both in-person and remote attendance options.

Visit alexandriava.gov/Budget for the most up-to-date list of meeting dates, times, and locations.

- ❖ Monday, March 10 - City Council Public Hearing: FY2026 Budget

- ❖ Tuesday, March 11 - FY 2026 Budget Set Maximum Tax Rate

- ❖ Wednesday, March 12 - Budget Work Session #3

- ❖ Saturday, March 15 - City Council Public Hearing Meeting - FY 2026 Budget Public Hearing (9:30 a.m.)

- ❖ Monday, March 17 - Budget Work Session #4

- ❖ Wednesday, March 26 - Budget Work Session #5

- ❖ Tuesday, April 8 - City Council Public Hearing Meeting - FY 2026 Budget Tax Rate Public Hearing (5:30 p.m.) followed by FY 2026 Budget Add Delete Public Hearing Meeting (6 p.m.)

- ❖ Tuesday, April 22 - FY 2026 Budget: Non-Real-Estate Tax Public Hearing (6:30 p.m.) followed by Budget Work Session #6-Preliminary Add/Delete (7 p.m.)

- ❖ Monday, April 28 - Budget Work Session #7-Final Add/Delete (if necessary)

- ❖ Wednesday, April 30 - FY 2026 Budget Adoption/Tax Rate Adoption (6 p.m.)

- ❖ Tuesday, July 1 - Fiscal Year 2026 starts

Source: City of Alexandria

Not About The Beatles



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It was not 20 years ago today (it was only 16), and there was no Sgt. Pepper teaching a band how to play (only an oncologist to share a very unexpected initial non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis), and certainly there was no Billy Shears to introduce and/or sing (only Team Lourie to absorb the devastating news. Moreover, the oncologist had said in his presentation to us that he could treat me, but that he couldn't cure me. It seemed simple enough to hear but oddly enough, it was puzzling in a way). It was, as we realized a few minutes later, a "terminal" diagnosis. And a "terminal" diagnosis/prognosis like that kind of takes the bounce out of your step. It may not keep you from singing; well, maybe the infused chemotherapy does a little bit physically, and emotionally, the hills are not exactly "alive with the sound of music." Remembering some of those early, heavy-duty chemotherapy days, getting out of bed and onto the living room couch was as much as I could muster. And singing? Maybe in the shower if I could ever gather the strength to get there - which I rarely could. And when I did manage to get in the shower, I barely felt like standing, let alone singing. That was then. This is the next paragraph:

Now there's a Beatles channel on Sirius XM Radio and televisions in the Infusion Center. In addition, my chemotherapy these days is "targeted" and treated at home where I take five pills a day. Also, a few years ago my cancer diagnosis was changed from non-small cell lung cancer to papillary thyroid cancer, a much better scenario, generally. Unfortunately, when all my things are considered however, not so much. Instead of quarterly CT Scans, I'm now getting a PET Scan every four months or so. (A PET Scan provides more/accurate detail of what's happening in my lungs.) And most importantly, I have a new oncologist who I see at a different facility. One that I hadn't ever been to all those previous years dating back to Feb. '09 when this cancer business first began.

It would be naïve to say one is happy to see their oncologist. Because if one is seeing an oncologist, it's not what you'd call "a pleasure trip," as the late, great, Henny Youngman joked repeatedly, about "taking his mother-in-law to the airport." It likely means there's a cancer diagnosis that needs treating. And cancer is the medical version of a four-letter word and likewise one you'd rather not hear said in your direction. Nevertheless, the oncologist we're now seeing/being treated by has made a difference in our lives. And to invoke "Forrest, Forrest Gump," "That's all I want to say about that."

My perspective has also changed. When I was first diagnosed, my future was behind me, sort of. All I had was the present. Statistically, according to what my oncologist had said, my best days were behind me. He said there was a two-percent chance I'd survive beyond five years. Hardly was I the kind of horse you'd bet to win. Probably not one you'd bet on at all. No doubt I was a long-shot. But here I type, 16+ years later. Now that's something to sing about. But since I rarely sing, I'm left to toot my own horn (and I don't even play any instruments).

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

corcoran

MCENEARNEY



Old Town 321 S Pitt Street

\$1,895,000 | 1890 townhome blends historic charm with modern comfort. Features original wood floors, gourmet kitchen, luxurious bedrooms, and a private oasis backyard.

Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
LaurenBishopHomes.com



OPEN 3/6, 5-7PM; 3/8 & 3/9, 2-4PM

Old Town Village 409 S Fayette Street

\$1,390,000 | Impeccably maintained and updated townhome in the heart of Old Town with new chef's kitchen, open living and dining, sunny deck, primary suite with spa bath & 2-car garage.

Lisa Groover : 703.919.4426
LisaGroover.com



Liberty Row 504 Second Street #202

\$1,330,000 | Serene and sophisticated, 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home with a gourmet kitchen, office nook, private deck, fresh paint, gas fireplace, stainless appliances, and 2 parking spaces.

Ann Duff : 703.965.8700
AnnDuff.com



Old Town 621 N Saint Asaph Street #405

\$1,175,000 | This Old Town condo is the height of sophistication with classic moldings, plantation shutters, hardwood floors, custom built-ins, 2 fireplaces, 2 balconies, and 2 parking spaces.

Babs Beckwith : 703.627.5421
OldTownAlexandriaLiving.com



OPEN SAT 3/8 & SUN 3/9, 12-2PM

Dalecrest 102 N Floyd Street

\$1,050,000 | Remodeled in 2014, this 3-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom, 3-level home is situated in a prime location with easy access to DC.

Jillian Hogan Homes : 703.951.7655
JillianHoganHomes.com



Old Town 823 S Fairfax Street

\$999,900 | Prime location! This 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom townhome features new roof and windows, built-ins, hardwood floors, and 2 fireplaces. Large yard offers expansion potential.

Babs Beckwith : 703.627.5421
OldTownAlexandriaLiving.com



OPEN SUN 3/9, 1-3PM

Old Town 506 S Columbus Street

\$925,000 | 2-bedroom, 2.5-bath townhome with hardwood floors, a fireplace, updated kitchen, en suite bedrooms, ample storage, a private patio, and designated parking.

Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
LaurenBishopHomes.com



OPEN SAT 3/8 & SUN 3/9, 2-4PM

Townes At Cameron Parke 123 Cameron Parke Place

\$599,990 | Underpriced townhome in good condition awaits your TLC to make it your own. Convenient location. 2 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, 2-car garage. Great community amenities.

Brian Hong : 703.929.5764
Jery Beamer : 703.929.5763



Newington Heights 8532 Golden Ridge Court

\$435,000 | Charming 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom townhome with an updated kitchen, spacious bedrooms, a cozy rec room with a fireplace, a private deck, and a fenced backyard with a patio.

Miriam Miller : 703.598.6619
MM-RealEstate.com

live who you are

Corcoran McEneaney | 109 S. Pitt Street | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.549.9292 | corcoranmce.com

©2025 Corcoran Group LLC. All rights reserved. Corcoran® and the Corcoran Logo are registered service marks owned by Corcoran Group LLC. Corcoran Group LLC fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Each franchise is independently owned and operated.

ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE