

Local COVID-19 testing limited

Kit scarcity, lack of insurance, strict CDC criteria hinder testing efforts

BY MISSY SCHROTT AND
CODY MELLO-KLEIN

As the COVID-19 pandemic escalates, one of the biggest questions on residents' minds is, "How do I get tested for coronavirus?"

The number of available test kits is an ongoing problem nationwide, Dr. Stephen Haering, director of the Alexandria Health Department, said at a city council emergency meeting on March 18.

So who can get tested? Testing in Alexandria is limited to patients with symptoms of COVID-19 and a doctor's order, city spokesman Craig Fifer said.

"Localities do not determine test availability or criteria," Fifer said in an email. "... Localities can help around the edges of testing, but we can't just 'get everyone tested.' There are not enough tests yet to test people who don't have symptoms and/or high-risk factors."

Most doctors are following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's criteria for testing.

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Couple hones style through kitchen, bathroom renovation project

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PHOTO/MARTY DEVINE

The city closed all fenced playgrounds on March 21.

School's out

ACPS to stay closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

In response to the growing outbreak of COVID-19 coronavirus in Virginia, Gov. Ralph Northam announced at a press conference on Monday that schools throughout the state would be closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Alexandria City Public Schools

issued a statement on Monday stating that it had been preparing for "this eventuality." During a video Q&A session released on Tuesday, ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D., clarified that the school division would share more details with families and staff by April 3.

The state will largely leave it up to local school divisions to figure out how to best educate students from home; however, the Virginia Department of Education has

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Calm before the storm

Local healthcare providers brace for COVID-19 surge

BY MISSY SCHROTT

As the number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria continues to climb – there were 13 in Alexandria and 1,004 in the DMV as of press time – healthcare providers suspect that number will continue to rise.

While some medical facilities are operating with plenty of available beds and sufficient supplies, other practices are struggling and putting out calls to the community for help.

As the primary hospital in the city, Inova Alexandria Hospital is currently well stocked, but preparing for a surge of new COVID-19 cases.

"Currently, I think what we're experiencing is the calm before the storm," Dr. Rina Bansal, president of Inova Alexandria Hospital, said on March 20. "We are licensed for 303 beds. We run close to capacity around 250 beds because we do have private rooms. This morning, we were in the 150s."

As of March 20, Inova had tested between 80 and 100 people for COVID-19, Bansal said. But as the hospital anticipates an increase in cases in the city, leaders have been preparing to expand capacity.

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FILE PHOTO

An N95 facemask.

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WEEKLY BRIEFING

Spring2ACTion moves up to April 15

ACT for Alexandria is moving up the online giving day for Spring2ACTion, its annual day of giving, to respond to community needs around the COVID-19 coronavirus, according to a news release. Instead of April 29, the online giving day is now April 15, while early giving opportunities start on April 3.

Spring2ACTion is an all-day giving event that aims to

connect residents to the local causes they care most about. Since it started 10 years ago, 65,000 donors have given more than \$10 million to more than 160 nonprofits during Spring2ACTion, according to the release. In 2019, 9,816 donors raised \$2 million for 162 nonprofits.

For more information on Spring2ACTion, visit www.Spring2ACTion.org.

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Local businesses eligible for grants

The Alexandria/Arlington Emergency Layoff Aver- sion Assistance Program will award 11 grants to local businesses in order to retain their employees during the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, according to a news release from the Chamber ALX.

Businesses or nonprof- its with employees located in Alexandria or Arlington with 250 or fewer employees can apply for the grants by

submitting an application at <https://workforcecouncil.arlingtonva.us/covid19>.

The grants will only be awarded to businesses that will use the funds to benefit their employees. Acceptable uses include hiring a cleaning service and purchasing software, online programs or laptops that employees can use to work from home, according to the release.

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SCHOOLS

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provided some guidance and will apply for waivers for state testing requirements to ensure students stay on track to graduate.

"No student will be penalized for closure of any of our schools at this time," Hutchings said. "The Virginia Department of Education, they are looking to submit an application for waivers to the U.S. Department of Education and we will receive more information about that in the coming weeks. But at this time no student will be required to repeat a grade level or attend summer school due to our school closures."

The U.S. Department of Education called off all standardized tests on March 20, although advanced placement tests will continue in an abbreviated, online form.

Over the next few weeks, ACPS staff will be developing more "robust" learning materials that they will administer to students once they return from spring break

on April 13, Hutchings said. With an extended closure now in place, expectations for teachers and other staff will have to be adjusted.

"As we are now adjusting to an extended closure time period, we are going to have to make some revisions and refinements to expectations that we have for staff and we're working through that right now."

Since schools closed on March 16, ACPS has been working to provide meals to students and families in need. As of March 20, more than 10,000 meals had been served to students and their families.

On March 20, ACPS an-

nounced that it would be implementing a new food distribution schedule and strategy. Starting on Monday, ACPS is providing breakfast and lunch meals for any ACPS student on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 8 a.m. and noon.

Instead of distributing meals solely at T.C. Williams High School, ACPS will now be providing meals at William Ramsay Elementary School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School, Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology and Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 IB School.

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Council passes emergency ordinances to combat COVID-19



City offers tax relief for businesses, transitions to teleconference meetings

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Council unanimously adopted several ordinances and resolutions in order to respond to the growing impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus during an emergency meeting held over the phone on Tuesday evening.

In order to ensure continuity of city government,

council unanimously passed an ordinance that implements procedures around electronic public meetings. All government bodies will now meet exclusively in a teleconference format unless specified otherwise. The ordinance applies not only to city council, but to all boards and commissions.

Last week, Mayor Justin Wilson and members of council proposed several measures to help struggling businesses.

"Not to kind of overdramatize, but it's true: We have some businesses that are deciding whether to stay open.

And when they close, they will probably not reopen when all this is done," Wilson said. "So, I think anything we can do to facilitate them getting some revenue now so they can keep people employed as well as keep the business open is absolutely vital."

On March 19, the city suspended enforcement of certain regulations and special use permit conditions that limit businesses' hours of operation, deliveries, off-premises alcohol sales and outdoor sales, according to a news release. City Manager Mark Jinks said the city would consider lifting other regulations for businesses on a case-by-case basis.

A week later on Tuesday, council unanimously adopted an emergency ordinance placing a temporary moratorium on penalties and interest for restaurants and other businesses related to the restaurant meals tax, transient occupancy tax and Business, Professional and Occupational License tax.

Wilson likened the strategy to a loan. Businesses will not have to pay penalties or interest on these taxes until July, at which point they will have until the end of fiscal year 2021 to pay those funds to the city.

"This is essentially a loan that we are making to these businesses during a really difficult time to assist them with cash flow, but ... it does come with some risk to the city," Wilson said.

Council also passed three emergency resolutions on Tuesday, two that extended the filing deadlines for the business personal property tax and elderly and disabled tax relief applications. The third resolution authorized the city manager to apply for grants during the emergency instead of bringing them to council.

Jinks noted on Tuesday that the city's FY2020 budget has already been impacted

severely, with revenues dropping sharply due to consumer businesses closing.

"What we're seeing is probably the largest drop in city revenues in modern times, if not going back a whole lot further," Jinks said.

The city started FY2020 with an expected \$5 to \$10 million surplus but will end the fiscal year with an estimated \$35 million shortfall and very little time to respond to it.

"Our ability to deal with the \$35 million shortfall is limited, which means we have to go to other sources, such as capital projects that have not started, where we can seek to reschedule and recoup those dollars to help keep the current year budget in balance," Jinks said.

If the crisis lasts through the rest of the year, Jinks estimated the city could lose upwards of \$100 million.

The city manager's proposed FY2021 budget and FY2021-2030 capital improvement budget will have to go back to the drawing board, too, Jinks said. Jinks has instructed staff to make \$100 million in cuts to the FY2021 budget.

At another emergency council meeting on March 18, Alexandria Health Department Director Dr. Stephen Haering outlined what the city's health workers are doing to contain the virus.

AHD has cut back its clinical staff and moved most nurses and other medical staff into its epidemiology branch in order to investigate any cases the department hears about and trace point of contact. As of print, 13 cases of coronavirus had been confirmed in Alexandria, according to AHD.

"What this does is it helps us to isolate an illness so that when we find somebody who has had a contact with a positive case, we have them quarantined," Haering said.

AHD currently has about

50 health workers dedicated to the city's coronavirus response, Haering said. To provide some measure of relief to AHD employees who are working 12- to 16-hour days, the city is reassigning staff from departments that are no longer operating at full capacity to departments that are in need, including AHD and senior services.

As of March 22, all City of Alexandria facilities are now either closed to the public or open by appointment only until further notice, according to a news release. Closed facilities include recreation, nature and art centers, museums, indoor historic sites and library branches. On March 21, the city announced the closure of outdoor playgrounds, fenced play areas and fenced dog parks. Unfenced parks and trails are still open, according to the release. All other facilities, including city hall, are available by appointment only.

The city government's core services remain open; however, city employees are working remotely when possible, according to the city website.

City staff have also been ensuring that businesses are complying with Gov. Ralph Northam's order limiting public gatherings to less than 10 people, which went into effect on Tuesday evening.

"A lot of emergency planning is contingency planning. You hope you never need it – a lot of times you don't – but we need to stay ahead," Jinks said. "Sometimes it feel like we're on a surfboard and there's a tsunami at our back, the rate this is going."

The public can still access more than 175 city services online through the new Alex311 service at alexandriava.gov/Alex311. For more information, residents can call 311 or 703-746-4311.

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TESTING

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"The CDC criteria has been symptomology, which includes cough, fever, shortness of breath and previous exposure," Dr. Rina Bansal, president of Inova Alexandria Hospital, said. "It's really at this point clinical judgement. If you're being assessed by a provider and that provider's concerned that you are at risk for COVID-19, we will test you. What it excludes is people just walking in asking for COVID-19 testing, but if you see a provider and they're concerned, we will test you."

AHD advises that those with symptoms associated with coronavirus contact their private care physicians about getting tested. Private practitioners can either conduct tests themselves or direct patients to another provider with a doctor's order. Once tested, samples are typically sent to private labs run by LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics or to the state public health lab, Haering said. It usually takes several days to get test results.

There are ongoing challenges with pushing people toward PCPs, given that local PCPs might not have access to test kits or the personal protective equipment – goggles, masks, gowns – required to administer tests.

"I didn't have any [test kits] until a few days ago, and I was able to get 10 for my entire practice," Dr. Matthew Haden, owner of Modern Mobile Medicine, a local house call-based practice with about 400 patients, said. "It's the perfect storm of not enough test kits [and] even if you have the test kits, if you don't have the personal protective equipment, you shouldn't be doing a test."

Some private practices haven't been able to secure any test kits at all, including Bellevue Medical Partners, a private practice based in Old Town with about 150 established patients. However,

"We're lucky that we're in the DMV area where there are some world-renowned facilities that are actively taking care of patients with COVID-19."

– Dr. Vivek Sinha,
Bellevue Medical Partners

Dr. Vivek Sinha, founder of the practice, said there's a silver lining being located in this region.

"We're lucky that we're in the DMV area where there are some world-renowned facilities that are actively taking care of patients with COVID-19, so obviously they have the ability to test and so forth," Sinha said. "What we're waiting for is just widespread access to the testing."

Another challenge with pushing people toward PCPs is that some residents don't have access to private care. At the March 18 meeting, Councilor Canek Aguirre asked Haering for advice for those who are underinsured, uninsured or do not have a PCP.

"Not everybody has a PCP, a primary care physician. Not everybody knows where to go if they don't have a doctor," Aguirre said.

"That's the same problem the uninsured, underinsured have every single day in our country," Haering said. "It's exacerbated, compounded, when we have this sort of emerging infection. We don't have a good answer. That's the bottom line, I do not have an answer to that very complex problem."

AHD is currently referring uninsured residents to urgent care centers.

Residents who meet criteria can get tested at Inova Alexandria Hospital. As of March 20, Inova had tested between 80 and 100 people, Bansal said.

"Our testing capacity is good, as in we are able to test patients who meet criteria who need to be tested," Bansal said. "We have not turned

away anyone who came to any of our facilities who needed to be tested without testing them, and we are continuing to work on expanding that capacity as well, in addition to what we currently have."

Several community members have expressed interest in drive-through testing sites, which have been used in other parts of the country as well as abroad. However, there are currently not enough test kits in the region to do drive-through testing in Alexandria, Fifer said.

Haering cautioned residents to only attempt to get tested if they are showing symptoms. The high demand but low supply of test kits means health professionals need to prioritize who gets tested.

"I don't mean to minimize a person wanting to get tested to make sure that they haven't exposed somebody, because that's very important and this is a very, very serious illness," Haering said. "The challenge is the lack of test kits that [are] available."

Because of the scarcity of test kits, it's highly likely that far more Alexandria residents have COVID-19 than realize it.

"I believe that there are a lot more people that have it than we can test for," Sinha said. "And in a way, that's good and bad. It's good because there's people that have it who really are not showing symptoms and they're doing well, ... but it's also bad because if you don't know that you have it, then you're more likely to spread it to somebody who will not have a good outcome if they were to catch it."

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HEALTHCARE

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"I think when you think about capacity, there's two [ways to increase it.] One is [to] decrease patient use and the second is increasing beds," Bansal said. "By stopping elective surgeries, we have basically increased capacity because the surgical units will not have patients now who are here electively."

"The other way to increase capacity is really to access other areas of the hospitals that we don't normally use for inpatient care, i.e. the operating rooms, the pre-op area ... and many other areas that can be used safely and staffed appropriately to achieve capacity," Bansal said.

Bansal said a multi-disciplinary team at Inova has been closely following the coronavirus outbreak and response guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's a multi-disciplinary team, including clinicians, nurses, operational leaders, specialists, ... you name it, we have it," Bansal said. "This entire team is actually continually monitoring the CDC guidelines as well as the current situation from a supply perspective, from a protecting perspective, from a staffing perspective, as well as looking at models that are predicting what is about to come."

From a supply standpoint, Bansal said Inova has adequate personal protective equipment for its staff. However, other local healthcare providers are struggling to obtain needed medical supplies.

"The traditional medical suppliers that we use ... had no supplies left at all. We couldn't get any masks, any gloves or isolation gowns, which are also very important for us to be able to see people in person who might have the coronavirus," Dr. Matthew Haden, owner of Modern Mobile Medicine, a local house-call-based practice, said. "We've really

been sidelined and had our hands tied by not having the proper equipment and there was just no resupply going on. Basically, they're out of stock and we're just waiting, waiting, waiting."

Smaller practices throughout Alexandria are experiencing similar issues.

"The normal supply chain that we go through, it's difficult to get the medical supplies," Dr. Vivek Sinha, founder of Belleview Medical Partners, said. "I've spoken to a few other of my colleagues out and about in this area ... and we're all looking for the same things. We're all looking for the appropriate PPE because to properly see multiple people, PPE should be one-time use."

Haden put out a call to the Del Ray Business Association requesting supplies.

"N95 masks are frequently used in construction, remodeling, home building, anybody who's working as a contractor generally has those, so I figured that'd be an easy route to get my hands on a few," Haden said.

The call was effective, and Haden was able to get masks and gloves from local businesses.

Dr. Thomas Smirniotopoulos, a local pulmonologist, said that after running out of N95 masks once, his team is being selective about when to use the PPE that they have.

"We went over policy of when to put a mask on, which was basically to decide if a person had a high risk for having COVID-19," Smirniotopoulos said. "We're being rationed our supplies by the medical supplier, but they are giving us what we need. ... We're okay for now."

While there is no formal collection or drive for supplies, Haden recommended that people with extra PPE contact either their local healthcare provider or the Alexandria Health Department.

"People shouldn't be

stockpiling the masks and gloves and things that are needed," Haden said. "It's fine to have a small supply for your family if you're going out to get groceries and things, if you want to wear masks, but people shouldn't be stockpiling."

"I've heard that patients ordered two cases of N95 masks, and now they're just sitting at their house. That's not helpful to the situation. So don't stockpile masks and if you have some extras and you know a practice that's in need of them, reach out to them or maybe even contact the health department to see if they can find a use for them," Haden said.

Besides the shortage of medical supplies, smaller private practices reported that, similar to Inova, they were experiencing fewer patients than normal.

"The volume of patients we're seeing is lower than usual because there are people less certain that they should go out. We've had a lot of cancellations," Smirniotopoulos said. "Basically, mostly we're hearing about stuff and not actually seeing it. We know that there are cases of people who are sick with this. We haven't had any yet so far."

While they may be experiencing fewer in-person visits, several healthcare providers are keeping busy with telemedicine, a practice that both small and large operations have begun to expand upon during this time.

"I've been staying very busy with telephone calls, texting, portal messages, any way to screen people," Haden said. "My telemedicine app has a screening questionnaire specifically for COVID-19 so we've been sending that around to some of our patients to help give them some reassurance that they don't have symptoms or don't have risk factors for it."

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Former Alexandria Police Chief Charles Samarra dies at 74

Colleagues remember APD leader's integrity, innovation, inclusion

BY LOUISE KRAFFT

Former Alexandria Police Chief Charles Edward Samarra died March 17 following complications from surgery. He was 74.

Samarra, who served as chief from 1990 to 2006, was widely hailed for turning Alexandria's police department around following years of turmoil. He also modernized APD's use of technology, introduced community policing and fostered greater diversity in the department.

Prior to becoming Al-



PHOTO/LOUISE KRAFFT
Former Alexandria Police Chief Charles Edward Samarra.

exandria's chief, Samarra worked for 23 years as a police officer in the District of Columbia. He was a foot pa-

trol officer during the 1968 riots, and rose to become the District's lead officer on investigations.

Samarra helped oversee the Washington Metropolitan Police Department's participation in the FBI sting operation of former D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, who was arrested while smoking crack cocaine in a hotel room with a prostitute.

Samarra was APD chief during the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the Pentagon.

Restoring order

When Samarra became Alexandria's police chief in mid-1990, he took the helm of a department that had been wracked with budgetary woes and labor strife. He was the APD's third chief in three years, and was brought in by former City Manager Vola Lawson to clean up the mess.

"We had problems with budgets that didn't add up and memos that had parts missing. We spent more

time on police matters than almost all the other departments combined," Lawson said in a July 25, 2006 Connection Newspapers article.

The APD was \$500,000 over budget in fiscal year 1990, according to the Connection article. Alexandria's police force at that time had "a demoralized rank-and-file" and the city was struggling with "a growing street drug problem," according to a May 25, 2006 article in the Washington Post.

"I was looking for a professional chief who would have the respect of the officers," Lawson said in the Connection article. "Samarra has brought the Police Department into the computer age and created a professional police force that the city did not have before he came to Alexandria."

Before accepting the job, Samarra had dinner with Lawson and the city's two police union leaders, according to a May 28, 1990 Washington Post article. During the dinner, Samarra pledged to improve labor relations by seeking union input. He said labor representatives would be welcome participants in his staff meetings.

According to former APD budget chief Amy Flenniken, one of Samarra's greatest attributes was his vision.

"He took over a struggling organization and transformed it into a premier law enforcement agency: well run, fiscally responsible, innovative, able to flexibly address changing crimes and crises," Flenniken said.

Samarra was a "needed breath of fresh air" for the city's police department, former Alexandria Deputy City Manager Michele Evans, who was in charge of overseeing the public safety departments, said.

"He met with each employee when he arrived. He

used that information to make a plan for improving the department and to improve relations with all unions in the department which had been rather rocky before he arrived," Evans said.

According to Evans, one of Samarra's strengths was in seeking help from others when he wasn't sure of something.

"... He brought in people with expertise for the radio system, information technology, the forensic team. ... Early on Deputy Chief [David] Baker was hired and he came in as a manager," Evans said. "Bottom line was Charlie had excellent common sense."

Former City Manager Jim Hartmann also praised Samarra's vision.

"As a new city manager, I was blessed to have Chief Samarra at the helm of the police department when I arrived. He had been there for well over a decade and had the department in fine shape. I was very impressed with the depth of the management bench which made it easy for Chief Baker to succeed him when he retired and Chief Cook to follow along later. It was all designed to be that way," Hartmann said.

A man of integrity

Numerous people cited Samarra's strong personal ethics as a reason for his success, in his work and life.

"He was a very ethical man," former Alexandria Police Chief Earl Cook, who served as one of Samarra's deputy chiefs, said. "When you walked into his office, front and center was a Bible in his office. He never quoted from it or used it like that, but it was there and you knew it was important in his everyday life and it was reflected in how he treated people."

David Baker, another dep-

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PHOTO/LOUISE KRAFFT

Chief Charles Samarra is presented with a shadow box containing all of the police badges from the Metropolitan Area Police Departments.

SAMARRA

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uty who followed Samarra as city police chief, also cited the integrity of his former boss.

"Chief Samarra was well respected in the region and nationally for his intellect, integrity, vision, innovation and compassion for those who worked with him," Baker said. "He served with distinction. He made things better wherever he went, and everyone knew and respected him for it."

Hartmann concurred that Samarra was a man of integrity.

"He had very high standards and demanded they be met. He was a tireless advocate for the department and professionalism," Hartmann said. "Integrity defines Charlie."

Samarra also believed that people are fallible and deserving of second and sometimes third chances.

"All the times he did things for people, it was done to help people and he did it quietly," Cook said. "If he could give you another chance, he did. What I got from his actions was that you have to be able to make mistakes and overcome them to have a [successful] life."

Flenniken echoed Cook's assessment of Samarra as

both a leader and a man.

"He forgave mistakes whenever it was possible, and he encouraged every employee to become the best he or she could be," Flenniken said. "He gave his staff every opportunity possible to succeed."

Time to go

Samarra's resignation as Alexandria police chief in 2006 caught many in the city off guard. Despite the fact that he had been at the helm for 16 years, Samarra was only 60 when he retired. It was ultimately concern for his officers that convinced Chief Samarra it was time to retire.

Upon announcing his resignation, Samarra told the Washington Post, "I can only go to so many funerals," referring to the then-recent deaths of two Fairfax County police officers who had been killed in the line of duty.

At the time, Samarra told the Post that he was ready to begin a new stage where he wouldn't have to "send anyone out with the possibility they could get killed or have to kill someone."

In his resignation letter of May 16, 2006 to then-City Manager James Hartmann, Samarra said, "I cannot con-

tinue to work under the constant threat of having another of my officers killed in the line of duty or putting them in the position of killing another," he wrote. "While I was hoping that my personal feelings would subside, I know that daily occurrences such as in Fairfax would only serve to rob my life of the happiness that I otherwise enjoy."

Other accolades

Several other city leaders who worked closely with Samarra offered statements about their former colleague. Longtime Alexandria Congressman James Moran, Alexandria's mayor when Samarra became police chief, remembered the APD leader as a uniter.

"Charles was a bridge builder. During a time when there were contentious and unsettling elements in the community, Charlie Samarra became the bridge builder that we needed," Moran said. "He united the police force, expanding community policing to include non-traditional police work. Charlie was a professional and raised the stature of the entire force, gaining its respect and

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6103 Olivet Drive, Alexandria, VA | \$735,000



CONTRACT | Represents Seller
606 President Ford Lane, Alexandria, VA | \$1,895,000



SOLD | Represented Buyer
302 S Union Street, Alexandria, VA | \$1,882,325



SOLD | Represented Buyer
304 Virginia Avenue, Alexandria, VA | \$1,740,000



SOLD | Represented Seller
416 S Royal Street, Alexandria, VA | \$950,000



SOLD | Represented Seller
428 N Peyton Street, Alexandria, VA | \$883,000



SOLD | Represented Buyer
7774 Belvale Drive, Alexandria, VA | \$778,310



SOLD | Represented Buyer
7 W Alexandria Avenue, Alexandria, VA | \$750,000



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177 Cameron Station Boulevard, Alexandria, VA | \$742,000



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823 Church Street, Alexandria, VA | \$715,000



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1104 Colonial Avenue, Alexandria, VA | \$706,500

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PHOTO/CASE DESIGN

The Frittmans' renovated kitchen includes a mosaic backsplash for the oven and stove. Jaime Frittman said it's become her favorite piece of art in the kitchen.

Military veterans hone their style through kitchen, bathroom renovation project

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

When Jaime Frittman and her husband moved into their house in 2013, there was much about it that just felt right.

There was a beautiful iron fence, a front deck and cherry trees in the front yard. There was a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace and even enough space in the dining room for the Frittmans' rustic Ethan Allen table.

The neighborhood, in Fairfax County between Kingstowne and the Springfield Mall, is quiet, safe and unassuming, yet beautiful because of its location, Frittman said.

"It's right off of Franconia Road and there's this tiny road between two gas stations," Frittman said. "A lot of people call it Roller Coaster Road. It's got

SEE **RENOVATION**

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RENOVATION

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all these hills. It looks like nothing's back here and you go up all these hills and then all of a sudden you're in this beautiful neighborhood."

But no house is perfect – at least at first – and Frittman and her husband imme-

diately knew that the kitchen and master bathroom were in need of some work.

The kitchen had been sponge-painted yellow. Between the pine cabinets, black granite countertops and an oddly placed corner pantry and kitchen desk, the space just didn't feel like

home, Frittman said.

The bathroom was even worse. Although it conveniently had two vanity areas, sickly green head to toe tile and poor lighting made the space look less like a bathroom and more like a darkroom.

"You came in and the

floor was emerald green, and there was a jacuzzi tub and up the case of the jacuzzi tub was emerald green, and the shower was emerald green," Frittman said. "It was just too much. It kind of looked black almost. ... It just felt ugly to be in our bathroom."

An initial set of DIY renovations in the kitchen helped a bit, but the bathroom remained an ongoing problem. It wasn't just an aesthetic issue; tiles were starting to fall off the wall and the room was beginning to show its age.

Eventually, Frittman told her husband enough was enough.

"I said to my husband, 'We've got to do something about this bathroom. I hate our bathroom,'" Frittman said. "And he was like, 'Bathrooms don't really sell

houses, kitchens do.' And I said, 'Well, great, let's renovate the kitchen too. Sounds good to me.'"

Last year, the couple started bringing in contractors, many of whom kept on asking the same question: "What do you want?"

"I didn't know exactly what I wanted. I just knew that I wanted something beautiful," Frittman said.

After talking with a few contractors, Frittman saw the name Case Design in The Washingtonian and ended up calling the design group to see if they would be a better fit for the renovation project. Frittman knew right away that they had made the right decision, she said.

Case project manager

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COURTESY PHOTO

The Frittmans performed their own set of renovations before hiring Case Design, putting in new floors and repainting the walls.

RENOVATION FROM | 12

April Case Underwood and designer Elena Eskandari began by offering the Frittmans several design options for the kitchen and master bathroom. Frittman was immediately impressed by how they had worked in creative solutions that she hadn't even considered.

"One of the things that I had asked them to do was rework the pantry, and when I said, 'Rework this corner pantry,' I think I thought, 'Make it more square and put in some wood shelves, so it's not the wire [shelves]," Frittman said. "They came up with these designs and in one of them they totally had ripped the pantry out of that corner, and suddenly my kitchen looked so much bigger in the digital design."

Frittman and her husband started to nail down a design and before they knew it, Underwood and Eskandari were taking them on trips to warehouses and showrooms to pick out the right door pulls and tiles. Frittman knew she wanted the kitchen and bathroom to feel unique, like they had been designed with intention, thought and care, she said.

Once the couple started rethinking these spaces, they



COURTESY PHOTO

Left: Before the renovation, the Frittmans' bathroom was poorly lit and covered in emerald green tile that darkened the space even more. **Right:** The renovated bathroom was such a hit that the Frittmans' daughter said she now wants her bedroom to get a renovation too.



PHOTO/CASE DESIGN

just couldn't stop. "My husband and I suffer from what's called 'might-as-well disease.' 'We're painting the bathroom; might as well do the kitchen.' 'Well, we're spending a lot on that. I might as well have this,'" Frittman said.


Now, the renovated kitchen

features a new refrigerator, Thermador cooktop and, most importantly for Frittman, a spacious Bosch

benchmark oven. "[Before] we had a stove and an oven underneath it and that was fine, but I try

to host Thanksgiving or Christmas with my family, SEE **RENOVATION** | 14


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PHOTO/CASE DESIGN

A new white tub replaces the old emerald-green-tiled one.

RENOVATION FROM | 13

and I'm originally from the South, so we have to have a ham and a turkey and five casseroles even though three people are showing up," Frittmann said.

A new pasta arm is a hit with Frittmann's mother, who loves to cook whenever she visits.

"Three days later, you're talking about something completely different, and [she'll say,] 'I still can't get over that pasta arm,'" Frittmann said.

A new blue patterned backsplash and hand-painted tile mosaic bring some ar-

tistic flair to the kitchen.

"Elena picked it out for me – I would have never picked it out myself – and she sent me this picture and she's like, 'I think you'll love this.' I really like patterns, but sometimes I'm afraid to put it in," Frittmann said. "I love it. It's one of my favorite things: this beautiful blue pattern."

Despite the couple's initial hesitation about some of the design choices, the kitchen redesign was such a success that the Frittmanns are now shaping the rest of the house around the kitchen's aesthetic.

"We bought a new sofa and we bought a new TV that's mounted on our stone fireplace and have decluttered and changed some of our décor. I feel like all of that has been an inspiration from what we did in the kitchen area," Frittmann said.

Meanwhile, the design process for the master bathroom was pretty straightforward. The swirl of emerald green tile has been replaced with a bluish grey marble pattern. The floors are heated now and there's a mosaic on the shower floor.

SEE **RENOVATION**

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PHOTO/CASE DESIGN

The Frittmans have started to redesign other rooms around the aesthetic of their new kitchen.

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For Frittmann, renovating the bathroom was an exercise in understanding how important the little details are, especially in a room that gets used on a daily basis.

"There's just so many things that you don't [think of]: A cabinet that closes so softly, that doesn't have rough edges, or a piece of island stone that you don't see in any other house that you go into," Frittmann said. "... I think Elena and April were a big part in helping me understand what my vision was and really were strong guides on how to manifest my style in a classy way."

The renovation process lasted about three months, from about May to July of 2019, but the impact of that three-month process has stuck with the Frittmans. As military veterans – Frittmann served in the Air Force and her husband served in

the Marines – they had never really been able to make a space their own.

"My husband and I have worked very hard for a lot of years. There were a lot of deployments and this was kind of [recognition] that, OK, now that we're retired and we're going to stay some place, this is a way that we can really start making something our own, which we hadn't really been able to do before," Frittmann said.

Now that they're both retired from the military, the couple and their 5-year-old daughter feel more comfortable making their house into a home. They just have a little more work to do, Frittmann said.

"There is this feeling that I feel like I have a beautiful home," Frittmann said. "Now, I have two more bathrooms that I need to renovate, but we're saving up for that."

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Maintenance tips to protect your home value

BY ELIZABETH LUCCHESI

Homeowners today should heed the wise words of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Many Alexandria homes, especially those in Old Town, were built more than a century ago during the Federalist Era when the United States was just finding its footing as a nation.

Most of these century-old structures have aged like a fine wine and are still standing today. In fact, many are as good as new and demand a premium buying price. You can credit their sound construction, but more importantly, the regular maintenance that has kept these homes alive.

Perhaps the best investment a homeowner can make is to learn the ins-and-outs of home maintenance. Proactive measures, including the regular inspection and updating of a home's major systems and structure, will likely pay back in buckets.

Below are a few of the most important items, including the most damaging and costly to a homeowner if not properly maintained, and a few DIY improvements, mostly cosmetic, that increase value and curb appeal. Further down, you'll find a formula for what to do first and last and tips to keep your calendars and maintenance reminders in order.

Waterworks

Leaks cause more financial damage to homes than any of the other elements, including fire. The best approach to prevent water damage? Inspect and maintain plumbing fixtures annually – before leaks begin – starting from the top down.



COURTESY PHOTO



ELIZABETH
LUCCHESI

Gutters

Gutter maintenance is cheap, easy and a prime prevention of damage. In a short time, clogged gutters can affect the roofing material, fascia, soffits and even the siding. Free flowing gutters can allow for dry basements and crawl spaces. Bi-annual inspections are recommended. While you're up there, look for nails that may have bumped out and spot-check caulking, too.

Drip, drip, drip

No, not coffee – that's your hose bibb. Notorious for leaks, hose bibbs can cause water damage inside wall assemblies, basements or crawl spaces. Wetness or mold around the hose bibb is a sure sign of

leakage – usually caused by a loose tap or connection.

Winterizing hose bibbs is a must-do in your maintenance program. Before temps drop below 20 degrees, disconnect all hoses from their hose bibbs and drain excess water; turn off valves supplying water to your outdoor faucets; drain residual water from the hoses and leave the faucet handle in an open position to release pressure throughout the winter. You can also place an insulating cover – easily found at hardware stores – over your hose bibbs.

Leave heavy lifting to the pros

Do what you can with the skills and tools you have. When you see the need for professional assistance, reach out to your trusted HVAC techs, plumbers, electricians or painters.

Roof inspection and repairs

A costly but inevitable home improvement is roof replacement. Roofs are exposed to all of the seasonal stresses – rain, snow, ice, wind and heat. Though they may last longer, roofs typi-

cally have a 20-year lifespan.

If you are comfortable on a ladder, perform a regular, close-up inspection of your roof. If not, binoculars work, too. Early signs of roof distress include any warping of its

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REAL TALK

HOME VALUE FROM | 17

shingles. Also look for granules in your gutters – some asphalt granules are ordinary but an abundance of grit in the gutters is a sign your roof life is waning.

A serious indication for roof repair are waves or dips in a roof – these can mean the roof is leaking and could cause rot in the wooden sheathing below. For major maintenance like this, it's best to bring in the big guns and hire a professional roofer for an expert opinion.

HVAC need help?

Unless you're an HVAC technician, hire the help of a professional for regular inspection and service of your

HVAC system. With proper maintenance in place, you will likely ensure a long service life for your HVAC and demonstrate responsible homeownership to potential buyers when your home is on the market.

Fenced in

Just like anything else, fences need periodic maintenance. Simple fixes include new nails and fastening brackets. Light pressure washing and staining will freshen up fences after winter weather.

Windows, doors and drafts

Put your hand next to the window and door seals. Do you feel cold air coming in? Simple solutions to seal up

drafts includes weather stripping and/or caulking. These measures can eliminate upwards of 10 percent of your heating and cooling bills.

Liven up your landscape

Is that chickweed or dandelion? Henbit or bittercress? Assess sunshine exposure and which plants should go where based on their needs. Confused yet? roozensonline.com can help.

Attention to detail

Doors painted in a glossy color look larger and more inviting. Is your doormat worn and weathered or does it offer a warm welcome message? Are your house numbers visible from the street? Is your freedom flag flying

high with bright red, white and blue or is it tired and tattered? These things matter and are quick fixes.

How to prioritize projects

Put effort into what seems to pay off best. Find the current age of your house component and determine its remaining life expectancy. Overdue items go to the top of the list. Once you've created an immediate focus list, map out the maintenance for one, three and five years out, keeping seasonal conditions in mind when plotting your due dates.

Watch out for expense clusters. This is when your home's systems and appliances reach their expiration date around the same time.

Mapping out maintenance in advance is good protection against multiple costs at once.

Checklists and maintenance records

These documents provide an acceptable record of home maintenance to a prospective buyer – one more tool to protect your home value.

Words of wealth

Be the best steward of your home. Commit to regular home maintenance and keep small problems from becoming big, costly issues. Your efforts will offer plenty in return.

The writer is the founder of the LizLuke Team of Long & Foster Real Estate. She is also a buyer and seller agent.

HOME OF THE WEEK

River views in Harborside

Water vistas looking south are enjoyed from every level of this brick home in Harborside, which features extensive finish details and custom-milled built-ins.

For the buyer seeking distinctive living quarters on the Potomac River in Old Town, this floor plan offers open living and dining rooms ideal for entertaining and a kitchen with adjoining family room, all with water views.

Five fireplaces, hardwood floors and deep custom moldings add touches of character, plus an Otis interior elevator will transport you to all floors. This spacious home features three or four bedrooms, three full and two half baths, a library

with fireplace and custom bookshelves, a master suite with sweeping river views and a fireplace, spacious bathroom and ample closet space. Two large guest rooms are located on the top floor, with a guest bath featuring a skylight.

The private brick walled terrace with French doors

from the living room offers outdoor space. The southernmost terrace offers glistening water views and overlooks the park. There is two-car deeded parking. This townhouse boasts an ideal location with a short walk along the waterfront to Old Town's fine boutiques and restaurants.

AT A GLANCE

Location: 19 Wilkes St.

Neighborhood: Harborside

Price: \$2,300,000

Square feet: 3,886

Bedrooms: Three or four

Bathrooms: Three

full, two half

Year built: 1993

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PHOTOS/ BOB NAROD

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Times Living

LIFE WELL LIVED

Local businesses offer innovative wellness options during COVID-19 outbreak

BY MARA BENNER

In this moment, you are safe and secure. This is true and an important reminder as we embark into uncharted territory. With the arrival of coronavirus, there are very serious consequences for individuals' health, our vulnerable populations, our employment possibilities, our finances and more. In the midst of these very stressful truths, local Alexandria businesses are offering innovative ways to focus on physical health, inner balance and the community.



**MARA
BENNER**

care and Medicaid Services approved a range of providers such as doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists and licensed clinical social workers to offer telehealth to the senior population.

This, along with other healthcare services, may result in more options for at-home experiences. One example is Alexandria's Core Wellness and Physical Therapy, which announced online offerings to support therapeutic services at home.

Inner balance

There is no time like the present to work on sustaining your inner balance. Local mindfulness organizations are offering complimentary guided meditations. For instance, Mindful Junkie and @breathr have teamed up to help you maintain your inner state of peace and calm. The two organizations have daily offerings for Alexandrians to enjoy.

If you are experiencing any anxiety, depression or other intense emotions, you

Physical health

As we adjust to this new reality, local businesses are reimagining their health and wellness models in order to offer virtual experiences. Many yoga studios, for example, are now offering classes through online platforms to ensure daily exercise. Now you can remain at home while continuing your yoga practice with your favorite local studio.

Some studios offering online classes include Ease Yoga, Good Vibes Yoga and Mind the Mat Pilates & Yoga. Visit their websites for more information.

The whole healthcare virtual experience is also evolving with the onset of COVID-19. Telemedicine options are becoming the new normal. On March 6, the Centers for Medi-



FILE IMAGE

will likely find that your Alexandria-based psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker or other therapist has gone online. For those who have a therapist, continue your mental and emotional well-being with regular virtual sessions.

Also, be sure to check with your favorite local alternative or integrative wellness provider to receive relaxation, guided meditation or energy healing services online. Various healing techniques are now available virtually.

Community

We are in this situation

together. COVID-19 has truly shown us how connected we are to one another. Together, we will experience this new reality and together we will move successfully forward.

If you have time to offer, Volunteer Alexandria is seeking volunteers to help in our community. You could also give back during this time of need by asking your favorite nonprofit organization how you might be of assistance to them.

When faced with adversity, there are new and innovative ways to engage in our communities. Ask yourself some

of the following questions: What are your special gifts to share? How might those gifts be shared virtually? What creative solutions do you have to our current challenges?

Mara Benner is the founder of Four Directions Wellness, intuitively connecting body, mind, emotions and spirit. The organization is affiliated with the GW Center for Integrative Medicine and offers virtual individual sessions, classes and consulting. Learn more at www.fourdirectionswellness.com.

Speak Easy features special guest Olalekan Jeyifous

New Alex Times podcast episode available

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

On this month's episode of Speak Easy, the Alexandria Times welcomes its first non-native Alexandrian to the show, internationally-recognized artist Olalekan Jeyifous.

Jeyifous is the Brooklyn-based artist who designed the latest piece of waterfront public art for the city, "Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies." The installation replaced "Mirror Mirror" as part of the city's waterfront public art series.

"Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies" represents a concerted effort by the city to recognize its part in domestic slave trade. Jeyifous' installation includes four metal silhouettes of black figures and a mural on the ground that draws inspiration from Afri-



GRAPHIC/LYVI SIEG

can quilt patterns.

Times reporter and Speak Easy host Cody Mello-Klein spoke with Jeyifous about how he approaches art with an architect's mindset, why he's obsessed with megacities and how his work in Alexandria is bringing the city's African American history to the forefront.

This episode of Speak Easy is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Play. Make sure to catch up on previous episodes through your favorite podcast service or at www.alextimes.com/2020/01/speak-easy/.

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com



COURTESY PHOTO

A behind the scenes photo of Olalekan Jeyifous as he is being interviewed by Times reporter Cody Mello-Klein during their Speak Easy recording session.



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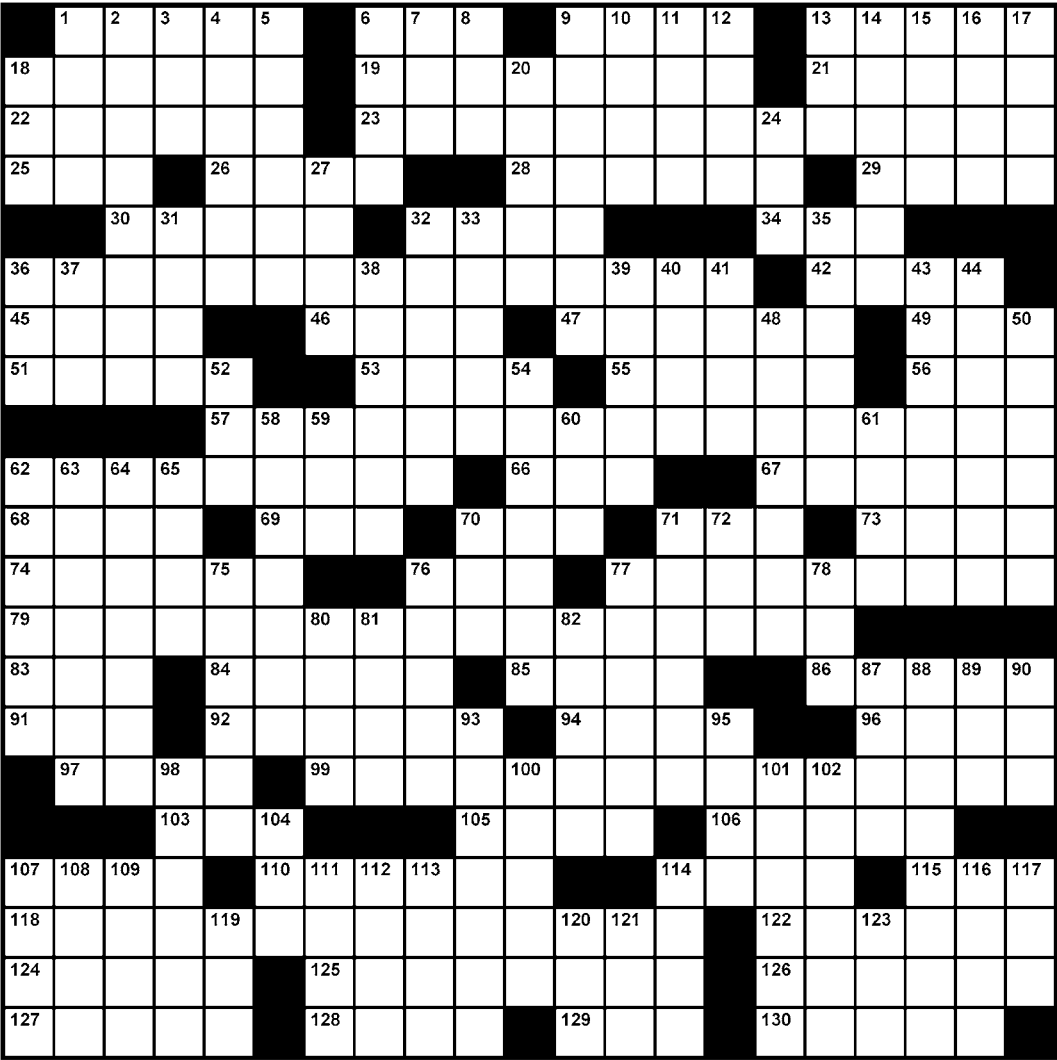
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Weekly Words



DEATH NOTICES

JOHN D. COCHRAN (87), formerly of Alexandria, March 11, 2020

CAROLYN MARSH-HALACHOFF (75), of Alexandria, March 20, 2020

PATRICIA KELLY (85), of Alexandria, March 19, 2020

SHIRLEY SUFFA (93), formerly of Alexandria, March 20, 2020

Solutions from last week

R	A	I	L	A	T	M	S	G	I	B	M	A	S	P	E	C	T
O	R	N	A	T	E	E	T	A	T	R	I	C	H	E	R	U	B
S	A	T	I	R	E	T	I	M	S	I	N	C	A	R	A	T	S
E	M	E	R	Y	F	I	L	M	I	N	D	U	S	T	R	Y	
T	A	N	D	O	M	E	A	S	O	L	I	D	P	E	C	K	S
T	I	S	C	E	R	E	S	S	T	E	T	S	T	A	H	O	E
A	C	I	D	I	C	C	A	B	N	O	R	O	O	M			
	V	I	T	A	M	I	N	D	A	D	R	I	A	N	C	S	I
C	L	E	A	R	L	I	Q	U	I	D	D	I	E	T	S	O	O
M	I	C	R	O	O	S	S	I	E	S	M	E	A	G	O	L	
S	T	A	I	N	S	I	N	A	L	E	M	A	N	S			
	R	E	S	O	L	E	D	I	M	A	C	S	O	P	T	I	C
H	O	E	S	B	E	N	J	A	M	I	N	D	I	S	R	A	E
A	P	U	D	E	T	E	S	T	G	A	S	L	I	G	H	T	
T	E	N	S	E	R	M	A	O	D	E	S	R	E	E			
E	R	I	C	A	M	E	D	I	C	S	I	Z	E	S	U	P	S
R	A	T	E	D	I	M	I	N	D	A	N	G	E	R	F	I	T
	P	L	A	S	M	A	S	C	R	E	E	N	F	A	F	S	A
A	V	A	T	A	R	E	P	I	O	A	T	C	A	R	L	O	T
S	A	G	E	S	T	T	E	D	S	K	I	A	C	C	E	D	E
S	N	O	R	T	S	T	R	E	E	S	T	M	E	S	S	E	S

FOLLOW THE RECIPE by Alison Ohringer, edited by David Steinberg

- ACROSS**

1. Comparable (with)

6. Show that had a Miami spinoff

9. Sound of sorrow

13. Knock the socks off

18. Established routine

19. State with a panhandle

21. Frequent sci-fi enemy

22. Subsides

23. Move like some babies (unscramble letters 9 to 13)

25. 1040 ID

26. German for "one"

28. Flurry of activity

29. Time at a lodge

30. Burn a bit

32. Elliptical

34. "Um, obvi!"

36. "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction"

42. The heart, functionally

45. "Mm-hmm"

46. Tools with teeth

47. Certain caucus voters

49. '19 and '20

51. Italian city known for cheese

53. Honey quaff

55. SiriusXM medium

56. Broadway backdrop

57. Event in which the moon obscures the sun (3 to 6)

62. Team-building activity that has
- a catch?

66. Veto

67. Music box?

68. The Biggest Little City in the World

69. Enemy

70. 4G ____

71. Blood type letters

73. Nailed, as a test

74. Stick with a point

76. Ad ____

77. Short jokes

79. Contemporary of W.E.B. DuBois (5 to 9)

83. Some MDs' workplaces

84. Spiritual emanations

85. French friend

86. Result of mixing the ingredients hidden in 23-, 36-, 57- and 79-Across

91. Atlanta-to-Miami dir.

92. Gushes

94. Home for a groundhog

96. Theater award

97. Margin

99. One may evoke pity (9 to 13)

103. Buckeyes' sch.

105. Raisins on a celery "log"

106. Part of OTOH

107. Conde ____

110. Wiley of "Orange Is the New Black"

114. Golden rule preposition
115. End result of this puzzle's recipe

118. Pointed green vegetable (5 to 9)

122. Maximally

124. Gulf of Guinea country

125. Literary periods?

126. Beer often served with lime

127. Cabernet sauvignon alternative

128. College official

129. Chapter of history

130. Prepared to pray
- DOWN**

1. Spheres

2. Reason to leave a message

3. Honey holder

4. Olay competitor

5. Step down

6. Clotted cream creators

7. Reggae precursor

8. Feverish, perhaps

9. Indecisive question

10. Particles like K+

11. MBA hopeful's hurdle

12. Lecture setting

13. Bark sound

14. ____ pork (Chinese dish)

15. Share a boundary with

16. ____ Neale Hurston

17. Online crafts marketplace

18. State of matter that fills its
- container

20. "Great" Mogul emperor

24. Guided

27. Jonathan Van ____ of "Queer Eye"

31. Couple, on a gossip blog

32. "Shucks!"

33. Travel documents

35. Convinced to spend more

36. Tiny bite

37. That, in Spain

38. Dish in a corn husk

39. Eco-conscious Dr. Seuss character

40. Wage ____ of words

41. Walk in a kiddie pool

43. Site whose users were all friends with Tom

44. News conference, informally

48. Machiavelli or Paganini

50. Knights' horses

52. QB's stat

54. 2005 Pussycat Dolls hit, or an informal contraction

58. Present, like a sacrifice

59. Chinese philosophy

60. Fib

61. Volunteer's response

62. Pawnee and Pueblo

63. Guilt

64. Natural, as a photo

65. Take a long bath

70. ____ Angeles
71. German chancellor Merkel

72. "Everything on red," e.g.

75. Rents

76. Must

77. They make some chefs cry

78. "Monsters, ____"

80. Word before "colors" or "crime"

81. Like flannel sheets

82. "It's 100 degrees out here!"

87. Lasso

88. Alternative to a Lyft Line

89. "Chandelier" singer

90. Business card no.

93. Has the lead role of

95. Musk of Tesla

98. Scored 95 out of 100, perhaps

100. Like Fortnite purchases

101. Engage the enemy

102. Unit of light

104. Patriotic acronym

107. Pesters

108. Dry, as skin

109. Practice boxing

111. Like fine wine

112. Horse/donkey hybrid

113. Cuba, por ejemplo

114. Astronomical bear

116. "This ____ my day!"

117. H, in sorority names

119. Cheerleader's syllable

120. Jargon suffix

121. It's about 21% oxygen

123. G.I. grub

Our View

Environmental impact of COVID-19

The emphasis of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessarily been on treatment for the sick and preventative measures to slow the spread of the virus. In this week's Times, we have two stories that examine hindrances to testing and treatment, respectively.

The economic impact of the preventative measures taken to flatten the COVID-19 curve are also staggering, and have rightly received significant attention. Many people are already reeling financially from being laid off from jobs, while companies ranging from large airlines to local restaurants are staggering. Their recovery is going to require both customer support and government assistance.

COVID-19 is also causing serious environmental harm.

Significant strides have been made in recent years alerting people to the harm single-use plastics pose for the environment. The mantra has been to avoid plastics altogether, to reuse those that we must utilize and then recycle them.

But during a pandemic, those refillable water bottles are walking germ catchers. The thought of a refillable bottle rolling around in an airport security bin on an x-ray conveyer belt, awaiting refilling, is unsettling. Right now, single-use plastics are safer than reusable bottles and grocery bags.

Also, think of all of the disposable surgical gloves in use right now. Food service and grocery store workers, postal workers, medical workers and regular residents are all safer from COVID-19 by extensively using one-time, disposable gloves. And though their advisability has been debated, disposable surgical masks are everywhere.

With restaurants closed to eat-in dining, eateries are staying afloat by providing food by takeout or delivery. While many restaurants have turned to biodegradable containers for their takeout, most still use plastic containers. Some still put things like soup, sauces or beverages in Styrofoam.

Normative wisdom on transportation best practices has also been turned upside down by COVID-19.

Mass transit is widely thought of as better for the environment from a pollution perspective than combustion engine automobiles. However, in a pandemic, driving alone in a personal vehicle – to work or the grocery store – is the safest way to avoid contagion if people must travel.

Riding Metro, a VRE train or even a publicly available e-scooter or Bikeshare bicycle puts people at much greater risk of spreading or contracting a contagious disease than does riding in a personal vehicle.

The COVID-19 pandemic will end one day, though perhaps later rather than sooner. Unfortunately, with increasing globalization, it's unlikely to be the last pandemic we encounter.

A period of reassessment is going to be needed when we emerge from this necessary period of isolation. As a community and as a nation we are going to need to re-examine previous assumptions on a wide range of topics.

Environmentally, the negative impacts of COVID-19 may last well beyond the current crisis.

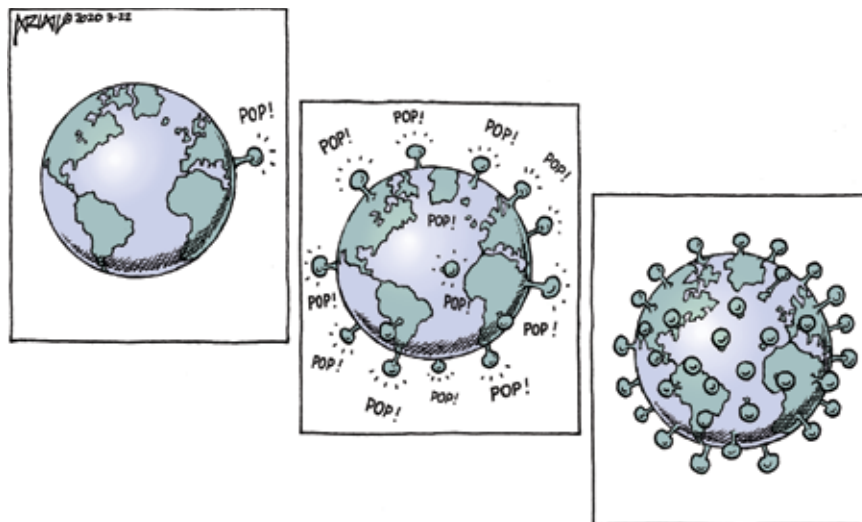
Will people eventually go back to their reusable water bottles? Will people prioritize reusable bags for grocery stores, or will they decide personal safety trumps environmental concerns? Will takeout versus eat-in dining become the norm, particularly for more vulnerable populations? And will people willingly go back to using mass transit – or will they decide they're safer, long-term, commuting in their private vehicles?

Time alone will tell. But the environmental toll from COVID-19 may be felt for decades.

Opinion

"Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe."

- Thomas Jefferson



Your Views

Remembering Chief Samarra

To the editor:

As someone who knew former Alexandria Police Chief Charles Samarra, who died last week at age 74 following complications from surgery, I would like to share the following memory of Chief Samarra:

As a young man, my dream was to be an Alexandria police officer. By the fall of 1996, I had made it through all phases of the hiring process and on to the last step: a one-on-one meeting with the chief. I was extremely nervous because I knew that interview was a "make or break" situation.

I arrived in the chief's anteroom. I remember his assistant being extremely pleasant and I remember the meeting starting exactly on time. I was struck by that – I was just a young applicant, but Chief Samarra made sure to be punctual. I walked into his office, silently running through the lengthy statement I had memorized to sell myself.

After a few pleasantries, Samar-

ra looked at me, smiled, and said: "I think we can make this interview very brief. The job is yours if you're willing to promise me a couple of things. First, you have to promise to work hard. Second, you have to promise to be willing to learn from your superiors. Third, you have to promise to be truthful, all the time, every time. That's what I expect from my officers."

Within minutes, I had made the requisite promises and received a welcoming handshake along with the following words: "Welcome to the Alexandria Police Department, Officer Porter."

I have always remembered those promises. While I am human and have certainly often failed, I have done my best to live up to them. Thank you, Chief Samarra, for providing a young man with a simple, time-tested paradigm for a successful career.

-Bryan Porter,
Commonwealth's Attorney
for Alexandria

The opinions expressed in letters and columns are those of the writers only and do not reflect the views, nor receive the endorsement, of the Alexandria Times.

My View | Allison Silberberg

Stay strong

Like all of you, I have been thinking about the unfolding events of recent weeks. There are times that challenge one's soul – and challenge families, communities, nations and the world. We are living through such a time. A month ago, we were living our lives normally. Now, our lives have changed radically.

In a way, we are all now unofficial first responders because we can save lives if we take actions to ensure the safety of ourselves and our neighbors. If we all heed the advice of medical professionals to stay home, wash our hands frequently

and practice social distancing, our community and our country will have a better chance to stem the tide of the virus.

We are missing gatherings with friends and family to celebrate milestones, catch up over a bite, be at school with friends or see colleagues at work. The list of such moments is endless. My heart goes out to our high school seniors who have been looking forward to graduation celebrations. I hope we can find alternative ways to acknowledge their accomplishments. All things, large and small, we took for granted – things that in time will return to us. Our lives will return.

Understandably, there is fear about what may be. While we cannot know what difficulties we will face, we know from history that humanity will prevail, that there have been pandemics through the centuries and that eventually science caught up to the contagion. We will get through this together. We must stay strong.

The virus has brought pain and challenges to our community, our nation and the

world. Economic losses are incalculable. Many of us have suddenly lost our jobs. Small and large businesses have been challenged as never before, and many business owners are being forced to make heart-wrenching decisions.

The ripple effect is massive. Our local businesses and restaurants need our support

as they struggle to remain viable. Many now offer drive up or delivery options. Our nonprofits are hurting at a time when we need them most. Many houses of worship have shifted to holding services online. We are in uncharted territory.

It can all feel overwhelming. Government will provide crucial assistance, and there are things we can do.

This is a time to be patient with ourselves and with each other. We can be there for each other, to reach out and check on friends and neighbors, especially our seniors and most vulnerable. We can help each other by bringing some groceries to a neighbor with children or to an elderly friend by leaving the items at their door.

Our community has rallied beautifully, including efforts through Volunteer Alexandria, neighborhoods and online teams. It is heartening to see the outpouring of love. We need to remember that people of all ages are separated from their families, and we can call to ease their isolation. Each of us can be susceptible to mental health challenges. If you feel you need help, please reach out to medical professionals.

Now that our schools will be closed through the end of the term, online learning is the new norm for Alexandria's children. Our teachers and



**ALLISON
SILBERBERG**

SEE SILBERBERG

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Poor Robert's Ruminations

with Rob Whittle

On science and food

All of the medical news recently got me thinking scientific, particularly about the Explorers Club. Have you ever been to an Explorers Club meeting? I attended one at the estimable Cosmos Club.

Walking through the dining room to get to the ballroom, I swear that some of the patrons, well, most of them, looked like caricatures out of a New Yorker cartoon with dark rumpled suits, and ladies bejeweled with gems surely inherited from some viscount, sipping away at their sherry and consommé. I kid you not – there were cobwebs strung from one old gent's elbow.

When we were seated at our table, I won't say our dinner mates were stuck up, but have you ever tried to converse with a marble statue? I got in my cups just a tad and let my dinner partner know that, hey, I'm kind of interested in joining this club. What's a fellow got to do to get in? She looked as though a mangy cat had perched on her dinner plate.

She: You have to have discovered something.

Me: Yeah? What did you discover?

She: A heretofore unknown bacterium.

Me: Cool. Hey, I discovered some arrowheads in my back yard. That do it?

She: No.

Me: I saw a new kind of jellyfish at the beach last summer.

With a smirk, she returned to marble statuedom.

I take solace in Groucho Marx' famous proclamation that he wouldn't join any club that would have him as a member.

In Alexandria there are an abundance of clubs. You either need money or heart to join. If you have both, perhaps you would consider a loan to Poor Robert?

But seriously, there's the Boys and Girls Club and Belle Haven Country Club. There are Rotarians, Lions, Knights, Masons and Elks. There are religious clubs, aka churches. There are tennis, Spanish, French, computer, wine and cooking clubs.

Speaking of cooking, I have entered my second phase of learning how to cook, albeit 30 years removed from phase I. Usually, I

rely on Signor Balducci on Franklin Street for my gourmet meals, but starting Christmas Eve last year, when I served cassoulet and continued with beef bourguignon and chicken parm in subsequent feasts, I have put to good use my \$14,000 investment in a Dutch oven. Just kidding – got it on sale for \$240. But who knew a pot could cost so much?

My one culinary disaster has been making the deceptively simple pimienta cheese. I inadvertently tripled the cream cheese portion which resulted in a concoction that looked and tasted like Cream of Wheat.

Back in phase I, we'd just bought a food processor so, naturally, I acquired the Food Processor Cookbook. I determined that I would make

the Italian Country Dinner found in chapter 3. We invited a couple for Friday night dinner before beginning preparations for the meal, which is rather like putting the cart before the horse since I'd never before cooked anything substantive.

After trips to three different supermarkets to procure various exotic ingredients, I began my labors on Thursday evening. By midnight I had gotten through the hors d'oeuvres and entrée. My legs and back were aching. I had no idea cooking was such hard work. I had determined to wait until Friday afternoon to make the dessert: Chocolate Tortoni.

I knocked off work early and returned my attention to the recipe. For the Chocolate Tortoni, the first instruction made me gasp in horror: "make Macaroons." Of course, I could've bought macaroons, but even though the clock was ticking up to the dinner hour, I was determined that the Italian Country Dinner would be authentic. So, I made macaroons.

I don't remember much about the dinner that night except that the flank steak was on the tough side. I do remember the macaroons and Chocolate Tortoni, which I've made many times since. But I no longer "make Macaroons" – I buy them.

Rob Whittle is CEO of Williams Whittle Advertising and is the author of two historical novels, "Pointer's War" and "Pointer and the Russian."



**ROB
WHITTLE**

A back-door tax increase

“However, if increases in these fees go to fund other government operations, that is nothing more than a back-door tax increase that may go unnoticed by many taxpayers.”

– Allen Tiedemann

To the editor:

An article in the Washington Post on Feb. 19, 2020 states that Alexandria City Manager Mark Jinks proposed a two-cent increase in the property tax rate. The article further stated that “Jinks says he also wants to increase storm sewer fees by 4.5 percent and the refuse and recycling fees by 11.9 percent, yielding revenue that would help pay for government operations.”

Did Jinks mean that the fees would be increased to help pay for other general government operations or government operations related to storm sewer and refuse and recycling government operations only? If the city starts increasing clearly definable fees to support

other government operations, then all transparency into what these individual fees are actually costing the taxpayers will be lost.

Property tax increases receive the most publicity and cause the most concern among taxpayers, while increasing fees receives less publicity since one would think that increases in storm sewer and refuse and recycling fees are related to increases in the actual costs to provide those services.

However, if increases in these fees go to fund other government operations, that is nothing more than a back-door tax increase that may go unnoticed by many taxpayers.

–Allen Tiedemann,
Alexandria

Thank you for a great day

To the editor:

On behalf of The Ballyshaners, thank you to all of the parade participants and attendees who made the 39th Annual Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade a marvelous event on March 7. We enjoy bringing the parade to our city. This year was our largest parade, full of bands, dance schools, local businesses, civic and cultural groups.

The event could not have happened without the support of our donors and especially our sponsors. They are: Diageo/Guinness; Murphy's Grand Irish Pub; Daniel O'Connell's Restaurant and Bar; Landini Brothers Restaurant; Burke & Herbert Bank; Long and Foster Realtors; McLaughlin-Ryder Investments; and Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota. We also are

grateful for our partner, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, host of the Fun Dog Show.

Most important to the day's efforts are the Alexandria Police Department under the leadership of Sgt. Daniel Briel, and the city staff who coordinated all of the departments that make the event possible. They include Kim Merritt, Anne O'Dell, Corey Beidleman and Matt Wise among many others.

We look forward to next year's parade and encourage interested individuals to join us in that planning. In the meantime, keep an eye out for the Annual Irish Festival happening in August. Details to follow on www.ballyshaners.org.

–Kimberley Moore,
chairman, The Ballyshaners

Karig and the PY Metro: Two peas in a pod

To the editor:

Karig Estates and the Potomac Yard Metro have some of the same unfortunate themes coursing through their tortured history. In both projects the city has been unresponsive to residents wanting to protect the few natural and unspoiled acres left in Alexandria. In both cases, the belief of city leaders that more development will result in a net gain dominated the decision making.

In the case of Karig, the city spent \$314,494 of taxpayer money on an outside law firm to defend a lawsuit filed by neighbors to protect the streams and forest on the property. Neither the property owner nor the developer joined with the city in defending the lawsuit.

The city alone defended the developer's right to clear cut much of the wooded property and build on a steeply sloped hillside. The lawsuit was filed when nearby residents and environmentalists became infuriated by city leaders' refusal to adjust the setback from Seminary Road, although they had the discretion to do so.

Exercising that discretion would at least have moved the fourth home out of the ravine and spared dozens of mature trees. City leaders also refused to alter plans to run a new sewer line through a spring at the back end of the property. To pump the sewage back up to Seminary Road would be more costly, so it was off the table.

This is the same mindset that for many years delayed action on the sewage flowing into the Potomac River. Why? Because it was expensive. For years the Karig property was identified as worthy of preservation. But when the time came to preserve, city leaders looked the other way.

In Potomac Yard, the city chose to build a Metro station – which could have been built further inland – on top of an upland marsh and tidal wetland, filling in some wetlands with 20 feet of dirt.

Because the wetlands, mature cottonwoods and wildlife inhabiting this area do not pay taxes or vote in elections, they all lost. But in actuality, we lost.

Years ago, the city established a beautiful park, Potomac Greens, with

18 acres of trails and boardwalks in the forested wetlands. This site is now ground zero for construction of this Metro station.

Posted along the trails are interpretive signs explaining the value of wetlands. The more we experience flooding, the more valuable the wetlands are. Perhaps our city leaders should read those signs.

With Karig and the Potomac Yard Metro, city leaders prioritized development over natural landscapes, the very problem afflicting much of the world. I find it ironic that Alexandria labels itself an “Eco City.” Labels and Environmental Action Plans mean little if the will is lacking to make tough choices to preserve our environment.

As a 35-year resident of Alexandria, I have heard the promises of past mayors and city councilors, which touted development of dense urban communities as the salvation for our schools through tax revenue. Think back to the promises of tax dollars from Cameron Station, Carlyle where the PTO building sits amidst a bundle of huge buildings and Eisenhower Valley.

Now we hear the same about Potomac Yard and the “once in a generation” opportunity to build a Metro station and cram dozens of huge buildings all the way to Crystal City. Really? What would prevent the city and WMATA from collaborating on a Metro station in the future – away from tidal and fresh-water wetlands?

If planet Earth is to remain healthy, people must change. I fear my child and her children will be left with the mess we have made. Economic disruption and dangerous weather events causing flooding on a scale not yet seen will result from climate change.

Climate change, and specifically flooding, are exacerbated by overdevelopment and destruction of wetlands and forests. Climate change will be responsible for the extinction of plants and animals on a vast scale and will likely lead to a poorer quality of life. For future generations, change will be the only option. I only hope it will not be too late.

–Jeremy Flachs,
Alexandria

OUT OF THE ATTIC

#HistoricALX2U

The Historic Alexandria museums are temporarily closed, but that doesn't have to stop the sharing of the amazing stories of our city and its history. We are pleased to introduce you to #HistoricALX2U

Do you miss visiting your favorite Historic Alexandria sites? Are you looking for some fun historic activities to share with your kids at home? Let Historic Alexandria staff bring history to you online. Each weekday we will share new stories and content – everything from virtual tours of the sites and museums to fun and educational activities:

- On #MakeItMonday enjoy hands-on activities, recipes and coloring sheets for the whole family;



COURTESY PHOTO

- Take virtual tours of our museums and sites on #TourTuesday;
- Learn more about Alexandria's rich archaeological heritage on #Waterfront-

Wednesday;

- #ThrowbackThursday dives deep into the historic files;

- Separate historic fact from fiction on #FactCheck-Friday.

Follow the Historic Alexandria Facebook page or explore our center of learning website at alexandriava.gov/Historic. To add more to your learning, many Historic Alexandria sites have their own channels on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

We look forward to serving our community in new ways by sharing our past virtually to inspire the future.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.

SILBERBERG

FROM | 23

parents have shown great creativity in lesson planning and activities. In cooperation with ACPS, RunningBrooke is providing a clever set of exercises and videos to keep children physically active and pumped for learning. All children who need food are receiving it daily through the emergency plans that were put in place by ACPS and the city after the blizzard of 2016.

We give heartfelt gratitude to those who are not able to stay home: our public

“We will make it through this pandemic, but it will be a stark reminder of what is precious and what is fleeting. Our community's children are learning from us, and we must not fail them.”

– Allison Silberberg

safety team as well as those in medicine. Their tireless efforts and risks to their own safety are immeasurable. And let's not forget to thank those working at gro-

cery stores.

We will make it through this pandemic, but it will be a stark reminder of what is precious and what is fleeting. Our community's children

are learning from us, and we must not fail them. Let's show them our resilience. We are blessed to live in a city of kindness, compassion and resilience. This is our time to be strong.

I hope we will all remain safe, and I look forward to the day when we resume the normal course of our lives and see each other at our favorite venues and events and when we see playgrounds full of children, parks full of crowds and Nats stadium full of fans.

The writer was mayor of Alexandria from 2016-2019.

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Have you been impacted by COVID-19 and if so, how?

41% I've been significantly impacted.

27% I've been slightly impacted.

23% Everything in my life has turned upside down.

9% There's been no impact. My life is the same.

This Week

Take the poll at alextimes.com

COVID-19 cases are rapidly escalating in the DMV. Has it reached you yet?

1) I have tested positive for COVID-19.

2) I have tested negative for COVID-19.

3) Someone in my family has COVID-19.

4) I personally know someone who has COVID-19.

5) COVID-19 hasn't personally touched me yet.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Cellco Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes the existing location modification of a wireless communications antenna at a top height of 26 feet on an existing gas station carport with an overall height of 20 feet at the approx. vicinity of 2320 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, City of Alexandria, Virginia, 22301. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may

be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Trileaf Corp, Arron, a.rhea@trileaf.com, 8600 LaSalle Road, Suite 301, Towson, MD 21286, 410-853-7128.

LEGAL NOTICE



ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL APRIL 2020

In accordance with Virginia State Code Section 15.2-2006, the following is the second publication of notice of a request for a vacation of public right-of-way.

A request for a vacation of public right-of-way at 2 East Mason Avenue has been filed with the City of Alexandria by Elizabeth and Jesse Jardim. The request is scheduled to be considered at public hearings before the Planning Commission on April 7, 2020 at 7:00 PM and City Council on April 18, 2020 at 9:30 AM. Both meetings will be held in City Hall at 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. For further information contact the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703-746-4666 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/dockets.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Graciela Moreno@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3808, Virginia Relay 711.

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RETAIL LICENSE APPLICATION—PART 2 (POSTING AND PUBLISHING)

PUBLISHING NOTICE

Please publish the following item in the legal notice section of your newspaper. Please refer to the instructions provided on page 3.

[Full name(s) of owner(s):] Old Town Mini Mart LLC

If general partnership, enter partners' names or name of partnership. If LP, LLP, LLC or corporation, enter name as recorded with the State Corporation Commission. If association or tax-exempt private club, enter name. Only if a sole proprietor, enter first, middle and last name.

Trading as: Old Town Mini Mart LLC

(trade name)

822 King St Alexandria VA 22314-3017

(exact street address where business will trade)

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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.



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SAMARRA

FROM | 9

that of the community.”

Kerry Donley, who served as mayor from 1996 to 2003 while Samarra was police chief, cited his colleague’s leadership.

“Chief Samarra was a true professional. He came to Alexandria at a time of turmoil in the Police Department and he quickly took charge and restored order to the ranks and inspired confidence in the APD leadership,” Donley said. “He saw the city through trying times like 9/11, and his steady leadership helped Alexandria rise to the challenge. I will always remember him as a police chief who put the safety of the public first each and every day on the job.”

Samarra was police chief during the first three years of Bill Euille’s tenure as mayor.

“He was very dedicated and committed to make APD the best it could be, and was very much respected by the rank and file and the community,” Euille said. “He was also a leader in bringing diversity to command ranks. He was always accessible and willing to meet with citizens and business leaders, when asked. I will always remember him for his defining mustache and big cheery smile.”

David Speck, who served on Alexandria’s city council during most of Samarra’s time as police chief, fondly recalled his former colleague.

“I both valued and enjoyed my time working with Charlie. He was a good cop in the best sense of the word – fair, professional, comforting when needed and strong when that was required. The foundation of excellence that he established has a lot to do with the respected department we have today,” Speck said. “But what I really enjoyed was his sense of humor – he was actually a very funny guy with a dry wit – a commodity in short supply sometimes, but always ap-



PHOTO/LOUISE KRAFFT

Chief Samarra at the 2005 Valor Awards.

preciated. This city was lucky to have him.”

Phil Sunderland, who worked with the former chief first as city attorney and then as Alexandria’s city manager, remembered Samarra’s innovation.

“Charlie was an exceptional leader of people, a smart and savvy manager of the department and a genuine innovator in the area of law enforcement principles, policies and practices. On a personal level, he was, quite simply, a wonderful individual,” Sunderland said. “If I were to characterize Charlie’s most significant and meaningful achievement while the Alexandria chief of police, it would be that under his leadership, the police department earned what every police organization in the country strives to obtain: the respect and trust of the entire community it serves.”

The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police & Foundation said in a release about Samarra’s death: “Charlie was a beloved figure in the region’s public safety community. He will be missed by many, but his legacy will live on.”

After Samarra retired as police chief in 2006, the Virginia General Assembly issued a proclamation when it next met in early 2007 that said, in part: “... the General Assembly hereby commend Chief Charles E. Samarra for his longtime and distinguished service to the citizens of the City of Alexandria and the Commonwealth ...”

Charles Edward Samarra was born on Aug. 14, 1945 in Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania. He “grew up in a work-

ing-class suburb of Pittsburgh, the son of a glass worker and a secretary who knew, from the time he ‘could barely walk,’ that he wanted to be a police officer,” according to the May 28, 1990 Washington Post.

Samarra graduated from Har-Brack High School in 1963. He majored in English for two years at Roberts Wesleyan College in North Chili, New York, before marrying classmate Mary Dunkle and moving to D.C. to take a job as a police officer, according to the July 25, 2006 Connection Newspapers. Samarra joined the D.C. police force in 1967, after earning his undergraduate degree in police administration from American University, according to the Washington Post.

Starting as a foot patrolman, Samarra rose through the ranks in D.C. to become assistant chief of police in charge of the Investigations Bureau. During his 23-year career as a D.C. police officer Samarra held high-ranking jobs in several departments, including Internal Affairs, Homicide Branch, Planning and Development, Special Operations and the Investigations Bureau.

Though he worked in D.C. and Alexandria, Samarra was a resident of Marbury, Maryland. He is survived by his wife, Mary; their son, Chad; and a brother, Glen Samarra of Rochester, New York.

Viewing and services will be held privately due to social-distancing protocols suggested by the CDC and local health authorities. A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date.

-Denise Dunbar contributed to this article.

HEALTHCARE

FROM | 7

Several local physicians have put out notices to their patients alerting them not to come in if they’re feeling sick and sharing details about care they can provide virtually.

“What we’re seeing is healthcare in general has to switch over to a little bit of a telemedicine or telehealth component right now,” Sinha said. “Because we’re finding that, if there’s a situation where we don’t have to examine the patient, where we really need to just talk to the patient, ask questions, see how they’re doing on certain medications, allow the patient to ask questions, we’re realizing that it’s actually safer to do that virtually, rather than seeing them face to face.”

As physicians continue to shift to telemedicine, train their staff, build their stock of PPE and adapt to information that seems to be shifting in real time, many agree the pandemic will likely get worse before it gets better.

“There’s such a massive influx of need and the surge that people talk about is what

we’re seeing,” Sinha said. “The concern is that we’re going to see the surge much, much more, and that’s what we’re really, really concerned about. It’s bursting at the seams right now, but it has the potential to get significantly worse.”

Bansal said she remains confident that Alexandria is equipped to deal with the outbreak as it escalates.

“This really is bringing our entire team together, and I think it’s times like these that tell you if you have a good team or not, and I am truly glad to have an amazing team,” Bansal said. “Alexandria’s a tremendous community. I’ve gotten so many emails, calls, from various groups and areas of people wanting to help. Keep yourself safe, social distancing, hand hygiene and having those around you do the same. The less people getting sick, the better we will be able to serve our community.”

The Inova website has regular updates about how the hospital is dealing with COVID-19. Visit inova.org/covid19 for more information.

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