

Pay increased for city employees

Adjustments fall well below what first responders seek

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

City Council unanimously approved a set of mid-year pay adjustments during Tuesday's legislative meeting, including a 1.5% pay increase for all city employees.

Originally proposed as part of the FY2021 budget prior to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, all city employees will receive a 1.5% increase in pay, while captains and lieutenants in the police department and sheriff's office will receive targeted step increases.

Deputy fire chiefs and chief deputy sheriffs will

also move up to the executive pay scale. Due to an amendment from Mayor Justin Wilson, all full-time city employees will receive a \$3,000 bonus, in line with the bonus that city-funded deputy sheriffs will be receiving. As proposed by City Manager Mark Jinks, all of this comes with the promise that council will prioritize further compensation increases in the FY2023 budget.

Council's approval comes after months of public statements from the city's fire and police unions calling for pay increases for employees who lag far behind their regional counterparts in compensation. Alexandria's lower salaries have

SEE **INCREASE**

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PHOTO/IAFF LOCAL 2141

The Alexandria Fire Department had to dismantle its rescue squad and make those firefighters into utility players to assist with other calls as a result of staffing shortages.

The legend of the burning bride

The spooky story of Laura Schafer still haunts Alexandria

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Autumn is not only the season for brisk weather, mahogany and burnt orange color combinations and pumpkin bread with apple cider – it's also the time of year when Alexandria's spookiest

ghost tales emerge from the shadows to take center stage.

Rooted in fact and interlaced with embellishments over time, the legend of Laura Schafer, or the burning bride as she has come to be known, is one story that has gripped residents for more than 150 years.

Historical documents reveal that a man named

Charles Tenneson and his beloved, Laura, were engaged to be married after the Civil War ended. In June 1868, however, tragedy struck.

One summer evening, Laura tucked her grandmother into bed on the second floor of their home at 107 N. Fairfax St.

At this point in the story, the line between fact and fic-

tion already begins to blur, with some saying the evening in question took place the night before the couple's wedding. They believe the family had just arrived home from the wedding rehearsal and that Laura was therefore still wearing her wedding dress when she put her

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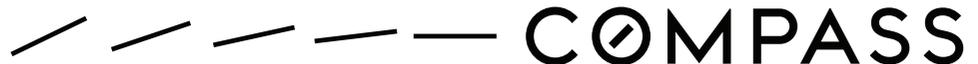


Fall Energy Saving Checklist

- Turn off lights when not needed.
- Use LED bulbs to reduce electricity usage.
- Unplug unused electronics.
- Run appliances during ‘off’ hours.
- Check your air ducts for leaks.
- Insulate water heater with a tank wrap.
- Install programmable thermostats.
- Flip ceiling fan direction to circulate down.
- Close off unused rooms and vents.
- Move furniture away from vents.
- Change forced air system filters.
- Insulate windows with heavy curtains.
- Use a humidifier to make dry air feel warmer.
- Ensure outdoor dryer vent is sealed properly.
- Keep oven door open after use.
- Caulk around windows and doors.



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WEEKLY BRIEFING

Halloween in Del Ray



COURTESY PHOTO

Zombies, superheroes and haunted hounds walked down Mount Vernon Avenue on Sunday to celebrate the return of the Del Ray Halloween Parade after a pandemic-induced last cancellation of the annual event last year. Although the parade was back this year, certain elements had to change. The costume contest was held virtually and candy bags were absent in order to make the event safer.

Early voting up in Alexandria

Early in-person voting is up in Alexandria over recent non-presidential election years, according to Alexandria Registrar Angie Maniglia-Turner. As of 3:10 p.m. on Saturday, 7,943 city residents had cast in-person ballots in the Virginia general election.

According to Turner, 6,914 residents had cast early in-person ballots as of 5 p.m.

on Oct. 22. Voting at both the Old Town and Beatley Library locations was brisk on Saturday, as another 1,029 Alexandrians had cast ballots as of mid-afternoon.

Turner said an additional 11,676 ballots had been mailed to people who requested to vote absentee by mail. There was no data available on how many of those ballots have been returned.

Statewide candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general, along with all seats in the Virginia House of Delegates are on the ballot, along with Alexandria's local election, including candidates for mayor, City Council, School Board, commonwealth's attorney and sheriff.

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Miracle League celebrates 10 years

The Miracle League of Alexandria, a baseball team for people with disabilities, celebrated its 10-year anniversary on Saturday.

The event took place at the Kelley Cares Miracle League Field and included special

guests like Mayor Justin Wilson and Dr. Angela Austin, owner of Alexandria Children's Dentistry.

Following a ceremony, attendees enjoyed cupcakes and adult participants played a game in front of spectators ranging from parents and

Miracle of Alexandria board members to Alexandria City High School National Honor Society volunteers.

The Miracle League will return in April 2022 for its spring season.

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BRIDE FROM | 1
 grandmother to bed.

“It was said to have been very elegant and beautiful – 15 yards of silk fabric for the train alone,” Wellington Watts, owner of Alexandria

Colonial Tours, said. Watts finds the story so captivating, in fact, that it has earned a spot on his Old Town Ghost & Graveyard Tour, in which guides don 18th century costumes while recounting local folklore and

urban legends. Others counter that the wedding dress detail is simply an elaborate – and perhaps inevitable – byproduct of these legends getting passed down over hundreds of years.

“That’s a story some of the guides will tell,” Eric Roper, owner of Dolci & Gelati, which is located in the building where Laura once lived, said. “She actually wasn’t ... but they’ll embellish it a little bit, say it was her wedding day and she had her wedding dress on.”

While Laura’s exact attire on that fateful night remains unknown, what happened next is as certain as it is distressing.

After putting her grandmother to bed, Laura inadvertently cracked the kerosene oil lamp she’d been carrying. The glass bulb shattered and kerosene spilled onto her dress, which caught fire instantaneously.

According to the June 29, 1868 edition of the Alexandria Gazette, Laura’s brother-in-law William Phillips witnessed nearly the entire scene and provided his account of events.

“She immediately threw the lamp from her to the hearth, and [ran] down stairs, screaming piteously for help,” the Gazette reported. “Mr. Phillips, who was sitting at the front door steps, hearing her cries, rushed into the house, and saw her rapidly descending the stairs, enveloped in flames that extended far above her head.”

Laura made it down the stairs to William, who then suffocated the all-consuming flames with his coat, but at that point it was too late.

The family subsequently enlisted a man referred to by the Gazette as Dr. Lewis in hopes of preserving Laura’s life, to no avail.

“... nearly the whole surface of her body was severely burned, and in some places to the consistency of a



PHOTO/OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

Laura Schafer, also known as the burning bride, died in 1868 after her dress caught fire. Some believe her ghost continues to haunt the building to this day.

crisp, and on the following morning, shortly after eleven o’clock, she was relieved of her sufferings,” the newspaper reported.

Instead of celebrating the marriage between two young lovers that Sunday, Laura’s family is said to have held her funeral in the parlor on the first floor, which is precisely where Dolci & Gelati is currently located.

The fate of Laura’s fiancé was just as dire. According to the Gazette, a few hours after Laura’s death, Charles, who was presumed to be a Confederate soldier, raised a glass of alcohol to his friend and said, “Here’s to you and I; God save us.” Shortly after, he raised a small revolver to his head and pulled the trigger.

The story of the burning bride is indeed tragic, but the countless ghost tales it’s generated over the years are what have ensured its longevity.

Before Dolci & Gelati, 107 N. Fairfax St. was a real estate

office. According to Watts, one of the real estate agents on the first floor heard something rustling around in the room that once belonged to Laura. Supposedly, the agent walked upstairs to investigate but could not open the door, behind which there was the distinct smell of smoke. Suddenly, the door burst open and a bout of intense heat rushed past the agent, Watts said.

“She then hears a woman screaming in pain, careening down the stairs and crashing into the hardwood floor,” Watts said. “She didn’t see a soul, at least not a living one, and it is said that was the ghost of Laura Schafer still reliving the horror of the night before her wedding.”

Another previous business owner in the building, Candida Krebs of Candi’s Candies, reported strange occurrences as well.

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Contactless payments can be made by credit card or eCheck on the City’s website at alexandriava.gov/Payments. Real estate tax payments can also be mailed to: City of Alexandria, PO Box 34750, Alexandria, VA 22334-0750.

Payments can be made in person at the Treasury Division, City Hall, Room 1510 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contactless payments can be made in the drop box on the Royal Street side of City Hall 24 hours a day. Payments in the drop box by midnight on November 15, 2021, will be considered on time.

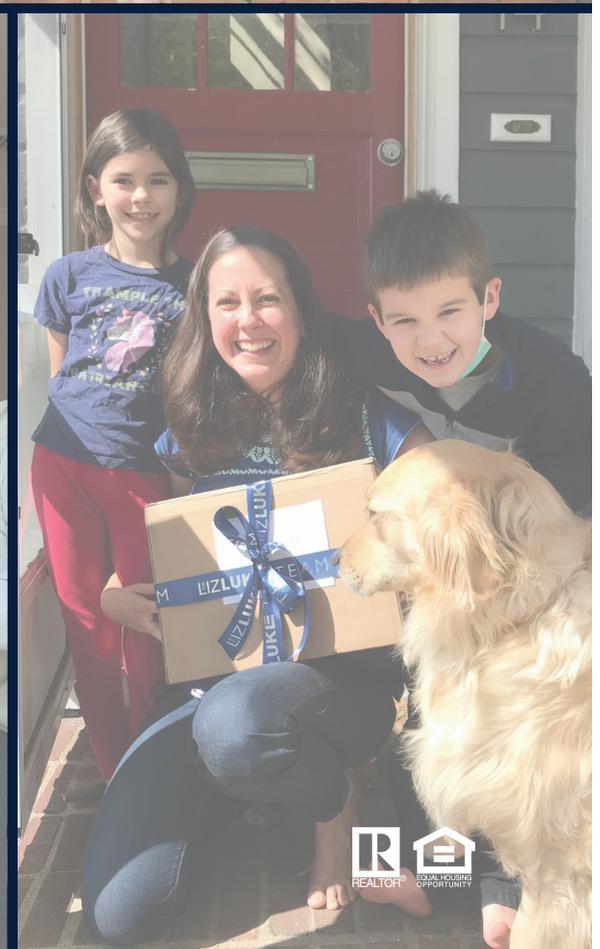
Additional real estate tax information is available on the City’s website at alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax. Under Additional Resources, the Real Estate Tax History and Payments link provides detailed tax balances and payments.

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email payments@alexandriava.gov. For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email realestate@alexandriava.gov. For refuse fee questions, please call the Solid Waste Division at 703.746.4410. For stormwater utility fee questions, please call the Stormwater Management Division at 703.746.6499, or email stormwater@alexandriava.gov.

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Kreb did not know anything about the building's history before opening her

candy store in 2007. As Kreb recollected in Michael Pope's "Ghosts of Alexandria," however, she would soon become privy.

From faint smells of smoke in the distance that led nowhere to the sound of deep voices telling her to leave, Kreb experienced her fair

share of frights in the old Schafer house. One particularly notable instance that is shared not only in "Ghosts of Alexandria" but also in whispers throughout town is the "basement story."

Kreb was alone in the basement about a year after opening the business when she said she froze abruptly upon feeling the "unmistakable presence" that someone else was in the room.

"This was not Laura. This was definitely a male. I could feel him there with me; it was spooky," Kreb said in the book.

Pope speculated that per-

haps the presence belonged to the ghost of Charles Tenneson, or that maybe it was someone – or something – else entirely.

"In any event, the story of what happened to Laura Schafer is one of the most famous ghost stories in Alexandria, maybe because it has all the elements of a classic tale: love, loss, tragedy and redemption. Or then again, maybe it's because the story remains alive today because strange things keep happening at the Schafer House," Pope wrote.

According to Roper, today patrons often stop by Dolci & Gelati to both enjoy the gelato and explore the rich history and folklore entangling the space. Roper did not share any recent haunted happenings that may or may not have graced his shop, but he did pay homage to the infamous tale by first opening its doors on Oct. 31. This Halloween will mark the shop's six-year anniversary.

A dynamic tale from beginning to end, the story contains a delicate sentimentality that Watts said resonates with residents and visitors alike.

"A woman's about to get married and enjoy the happiness of the rest of her life, and then tragedy strikes," Watts said. "It's just heart-breaking. So people can relate to that and there's still sympathy felt for the woman who had everything, all the happiness she was looking for, I hate to say it, go literally up in flames."

Watts also pointed to the fact that in general, for whatever reason, people do gravitate toward a good haunting.

"This truly melancholy [affair] was the subject of general conversation yesterday and to-day," the Gazette wrote of the event at the time, as it would be the following days, months and hundreds of years down the road.

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INCREASE FROM | 1
resulted in crisis-level staffing shortages and created hiring challenges in both departments. The mid-year pay adjustments approved on Tuesday fall well below what local unions have been calling for, including a 10% sala-

ry increase and \$3,000 bonus for all first responders.

Members of local police and fire unions said they will continue to call on City Council to prioritize these pay adjustments during the FY2023 budget process because the current situation is untenable. Overworked police officers and firefighters in understaffed departments have led to serious concerns about first responders' abilities to provide services that, in some cases, mean the difference between life and death.

"Right now, the way it is with that firehouse on Duke Street, I might not get a paramedic if my wife has a medical emergency," Josh Turner, a captain in the Alexandria Fire Department's rescue squad and president of the IAFF Local 2141 union, said. "... The other night, someone right at the end of my street got in a pretty serious car accident, and they had to wait for a rescue company from Arlington to come and help. Luckily, that person's fine, but it's kind of that roll of the dice."

Competition for compensation

The retention and hiring challenges in both departments stem from compensation that lags behind that of other jurisdictions.

According to the city's 2020 benchmark study, which compares local city employee salaries with those in other nearby localities, a firefighter class I earns, at minimum, \$49,294 per year and at maximum \$87,326. In Northern Virginia, the average firefighter class I earns, at minimum, \$56,282 and, at maximum \$89,040.

According to Jeremy McClayton, an organizer with International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2141, one firefighter who has been with the city for four years, is an engine driver and is certified in water rescue, would earn more in Fairfax County's re-

cruit school than what they are currently paid in Alexandria. For firefighters who have only been in the city for a few years, moving to another department that will pay better right off the bat is extremely tempting.

However, for lieutenants and captains who have been with the department for 20 years or so, leaving Alexandria for another department would mean having to work back up the ranks – and pay scale – in another jurisdiction. With retirement set at 30 years and an 18-year journey to reach the top of the pay scale, most higher-ranking members of AFD are "held hostage" to the pay structure in Alexandria, according to Turner. Even in the city's pay scale, increases are not guaranteed each year.

"Three years ago, a 28-year member of the department who was retiring early, on his last day he was joking and he said, 'The crazy realization was that last year, I topped out finally,'" Turner said. "That's 10 years where he didn't move up at all."

Turner said part of the consideration is also the number of hours worked. Whereas most firefighters in Northern Virginia work about 42 hours per week, in Alexandria, they work closer to 56 hours per week. The Arlington and Fairfax fire departments also work long hours, although Arlington is in process of reducing work hours for its firefighters.

According to IAFF, working at this level can increase the risk of heart and lung disease, and cause sleep deprivation, depression and anxiety. Extremely long hours also raise the probability of contracting cancer in a job that already has a higher rate of cancer than the general public.

According to IAFF, per hour, the starting salary for a firefighter with advanced



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life support certifications is 36% below the average starting salary of neighboring jurisdictions, but that doesn't take into account the amount of hours worked. According to the city, given the 56-hour work week over the course of a 25-year career, every Alexandria firefighter gets an extra 8.25 years of work.

"A lot [of members] will flat out say, 'When I work here, I'm tired because I'm working a 56-hour work week,'" Turner said. "Then, because we're so short staffed, a lot of those folks are being held over more. So, they'll go to work for 24 hours, 7 a.m. they'll think they're going home and someone from the staffing office will call and say, 'Hey, sorry you're held over for another 12 or, in some cases, another 24 [hours].'"

In some cases, because of how AFD's schedule works, those employees might then have to return the very next day for another 24-hour shift.

"A lot of us are reaching our breaking point. As a labor leader, you worry about their mental health, their family's well-being and health," Turner said. "I had a member come to me in tears one morning because she had been held over again as a paramedic and basically, she said to me, 'My husband is going to lose his job if I have to call him and tell him he has to watch the kids again. I can't get home [for] my scheduled day.'"

For Marcus Downey, vice president of the police's ACOP/IUPA Local 5 union and an Alexandria Police Department patrol lieutenant, the issues around compensation are not new. Downey said compensation is a "decades old issue" that preceded his 15 years in the department.

Out of the starting salaries for 22 law enforcement agencies in Northern Virgin-



PHOTO/MISSY SCHROTT

The Alexandria Police Department ranks 21 out of 22 Northern Virginia law enforcement agencies when it comes to starting salaries.

ia, including local sheriff's departments, APD placed 21st at \$50,839, according to the city website. Downey said the union's push for a 10% increase would bring them close to the city's stated goal of staying in the middle of the pack when it comes to compensation.

"I think a lot of people hear that and go, 'Good god, that's a lot of money.' Well, anything short of that doesn't even get you in the middle of that list," Downey said. "You could do 5%, and on its face, that's a lot of money to the average person. ... But if you do just that or anything short of 10%, you'll never get into that top 10 list and so you're not going to have people apply here."

According to City Manager Mark Jinks, whether the city will move forward with a 10% increase or not depends on the results of this year's benchmark compensation study, which is due to arrive in mid-November, around the same time council will start its budget process.

"It depends, but if we found out that from a total annual salary point of view [salaries were] 10% low from being in the middle ... then that would [indicate] this is a high priority," Jinks said. "In effect, if it were only slightly below, then anything above that slight amount to get us to [the middle] would basically be less of a priority."

Staffing shortages

Compensation is the core issue, but without the allure of competitive salaries, AFD and APD have struggled to retain and recruit staff as well. The end result is two departments with overworked staff that are struggling to keep up an effective level of service for their community.

According to Turner, the fire department has an incoming class of 25 people, but it is attempting to make up for a shortfall of close to 70 firefighters. At the same time, APD is short 10 officers and 13 "overhires," positions designated by the city to fill in gaps when officers are out on leave, Downey said.

Jinks pointed out that the fire department has more budgeted positions now than it did when he became city manager in 2015: 302 in 2021 compared to 276. For Jinks, the issue comes down to the fire department's own calculations.

As of Aug. 12, 2021, AFD's rescue squad is no longer running its own dedicated operations, which included everything from vehicular rescue with the "jaws of life" to water rescue and even tunnel rescue, something that Turner said will become more vital as the city embarks on its large scale RiverRenew tunnel project. The squad's staff now serve as utility players elsewhere in the department. In essence, this means that the rescue



COURTESY PHOTO

Police and fire unions are calling for a 10% pay increase for first responders to remain competitive with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions.

squad could still respond to a situation, but only if they are not already out on another call.

Turner recalled a storm that occurred in recent weeks that left two people stranded in their car by the Braddock Road Metro station.

"Our water rescue was not available. They were on a different unit on a fire alarm call in a different area of the city," Turner said. "That's the dice you're rolling. If that unit had been staffed, they would have been able to respond."

Turner said he supported City Council's efforts to strengthen the city stormwater infrastructure but that with the city experiencing more intense flooding than ever before, rescue and safety resources should also be a priority.

"I'm glad that the city is fixing these issues, but the piece of it is when it takes five to 10 to 20 years to fix some of these issues and have some of these projects come to completion, during that time, that would be the time that I would think you'd make sure that your response services are the most robust they can be," Turner said.

Additionally, AFD had to take advanced life support off of the medical unit housed in the Duke Street fire station and replace it with an ambulance with basic life support

providers. The difference in service is significant, according to Turner.

BLS providers can administer CPR and advanced first aid and treat injuries, but they don't handle many of the emergencies the department responds to. They are also not trained to the level of paramedics, who can hand out medication and perform cardiac monitor airway maneuvers and other lifesaving measures.

According to Turner, ambulances staffed with BLS staff instead of ALS staff could get a call and arrive on the scene without staff who are legally allowed to perform the necessary services. Those staff would attempt to help but would then be put in the position of having to break the law to help a resident in need.

Downey said APD's staffing issues started in earnest back in the first quarter of 2021. While Downey said that Arlington and Fairfax are dealing with similar issues, the pace at which Alexandria is losing police officers is what concerns him the most.

"For every one officer we hire, we lose three. You just can't operate like that," Downey said. "... Right now, we have less people on the street than we have previ-

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ously as a department said we should have on the street to provide a quality level of service to the community.”

Historically, the department has always hit above its minimum staffing levels, which has allowed it to send out special details, including bike officers and radar units. Now, APD is struggling to even provide officers at special events since there are not enough officers to run calls for service, according to Downey.

Typically, if there is a staffing gap, the department would call up an off-duty officer and ask if they wanted to come in and work overtime.

“Our officers are so exhausted because they’re working shifts that are understaffed that you can’t even pay them time and a half to come in and work, whereas typically, especially because they’re underpaid,

they would jump at that chance,” Downey said.

Communication breakdown

Despite the pay adjustments council passed on Tuesday, both the fire and police unions have questioned the city and city manager’s transparency in its attempts to address the issue of compensation. The public back and forth that ensued represents political and financial gamesmanship by Jinks in the eyes of union leaders, but according to Jinks is an aggressive collective bargaining tactic by the unions.

Union representatives have argued that Jinks’ proposal for the 1.5% increase was based on the 2019 benchmark compensation study when it should have been based on the 2020 study. Downey said that in order to even access the 2020 study, which is typically made available to public safety agencies every year, he had to

submit a Freedom of Information Act request.

Jinks acknowledged that the increase is based off of the 2019 study, arguing that the entire proposal is an attempt to fulfill the promise laid out in the original pre-COVID-19 FY2021 budget.

“As we close the book on the year, given our revenue numbers were better, our expenditures were good, I felt that we were in a financial position to be able to take action. What I thought would be a good way to start would be with the pay proposals that were in the FY21 budget that got cancelled because of COVID,” Jinks said.

According to Jinks, these pay adjustments are not the total solution to the first responders’ woes, which is why he specifically directed council to prioritize compensation in the FY2023 budget.

“I’m saying we have to go further. I just don’t know how much further,” Jinks said.

Turner and Downey both argued that the city does in fact need to go further and that it can’t continue to rely on small, steady increases in pay for firefighters and police officers, as it has done in the past.

“I think one of the things we have to realize in this community is that we can’t just keep putting small-time fixes on a big-time problem,” Turner said. “You can’t put out a fire if you’ve got a bunch of holes in your fire-hose.”

In response to the unions’ criticism of his proposal and methodology, Jinks said the public campaign that the unions have waged is simply a collective bargaining tactic aimed at swaying public sentiment.

“In collective bargaining, sometimes unions seek to gain public support by basically painting management in a very negative light and using rhetoric and connect-

ing the dots in a different way than I might connect them. I think that’s part of what you’re seeing,” Jinks said.

Council passed a collective bargaining ordinance in April, and while the ordinance gives Downey some hope that these kinds of communication breakdowns can be avoided in the future, he found Jinks’ comments “offensive ... because that insinuates we just started doing this four months ago when collective bargaining became a thing.”

“What they’re bringing to try to do to rectify this – even though it’s, frankly, way short and almost insulting – is simply because we’ve taken this to the public,” Downey said. “We shouldn’t have to do that, and I don’t want to. I would much rather focus on other things, but what they have shown is an unwillingness to do it without pressure.”

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- ✓ Think the rise in local **crime** (assaults, thefts, fentanyl, human trafficking, etc.) must be addressed by rejecting efforts to ‘defund’ police programs? Want to **support police** in their efforts to protect and serve us all?
- ✓ Oppose City Council’s decision to overrule the wishes of parents, students, and the School Board by eliminating funding for **School Resource Officers (SROs)**, who mentor and protect students, and discourage bullying, violence, and gang activity? Want to restore SROs to schools?
- ✓ Believe that our schools should attain **academic excellence**, while challenging and assisting students of all races, backgrounds, and ability levels? Oppose **housing co-location** on school grounds?
- ✓ Want parents, not schools, to **teach values** and morals?
- ✓ Oppose the city’s obvious ‘war on cars’ plan to reduce the number of both: **traffic lanes** on heavily-traveled roads; and the **parking spaces** in residential and commercial areas?
- ✓ Believe that **high-rise buildings** should be subject to regular, third-party safety inspections? Want limits on **population density**?

- ✓ Believe that Alexandria City’s decade of one-party rule isn’t providing **political diversity** or transparency in project planning? Think city surveys should be unbiased? Want elected representation by neighborhood wards?
- ✓ Support immediate increased **infrastructure** capacity for stormwater and local fire and rescue services, particularly in areas with more density, growth, and flooding?
- ✓ Want the Virginia House of Delegates to listen to constituents, ensure election integrity with **voter photo IDs**, and stop imposing an elitist agenda on the people?



Justin “JD” Maddox
Delegate District 45



Annetta Catchings
Mayor



Kyle Rooney (Write-In)
Delegate District 46



Darryl Nirenberg
City Council

Minister Matthew Ian Gillette dies at 39

Founder of Restore Alexandria served as Del Ray community leader

BY DENISE DUNBAR

Matthew Ian Gillette, a pillar of Alexandria's Del Ray community who was known for his work with Casa Chirilagua and the National Community Church, died suddenly of a heart-related issue at his home on Oct. 19. He was 39.

Gillette's many ministries in Alexandria stemmed from his abiding Christian faith. His LinkedIn self-description reads, "Hello! My name is Matthew Gillette. I am a 30 something follower of Jesus. I love my wife, our neighbors, and our city. ... My beautiful wife Abby and I live in Alexandria, VA. Where I am a neighbor, friend, missionary, ordained minister, social activist, community curator, and hopeful social entrepreneur."

Gillette was founder and executive director of Restore Alexandria, a faith-based nonprofit working to build better neighborhoods; a com-

munity connector; and an ordained minister who had served as director of small groups and missions for National Community Church. His volunteer work included Casa Chirilagua, Hunger Free Alexandria, the board of the Del Ray Business Association, president of the Cora Kelly PTA, co-founder of Arlandria Eggstravaganza and chair of the Alexandria Multicultural Festival.

Gillette's life of service to others touched a wide range of people in Alexandria, from immigrants in Arlandria to powerful elected officials. All who commented on Gillette's passing stressed the depth and breadth of his involvement in Del Ray and Arlandria, and of the enormous void that his passing leaves.

"Matthew joined the [Cora Kelly PTA] a few years back, providing valuable leadership and guidance that helped save it from disappearing altogether and helping shape it into the thriving PTA it is today. He got involved despite not having any children at Cora Kelly. He simply saw



COURTESY PHOTO

Matthew Gillette, an ordained minister, was founder of Restore Alexandria, a local faith-based nonprofit, as well as an active member of the Del Ray community.

a need in his community and jumped in to help," a statement posted to the Cora Kelly PTA Facebook page read.

"I was fortunate to see and talk to Matt almost daily while he walked

our neighborhood. We talked about everything, but most importantly the love we shared for Jesus Christ and helping the underserved in our community," School Board member Jacinta Greene posted on Facebook. "There are very few people on this Earth like Matt – humble, kind, God-fearing, community focused, action oriented with a heart for service."

Gayle Reuter, who served for several years on the Del Ray Business Association board with Gillette, remembered the quiet example Gillette set.

"He lived what he believed as far as his faith, helping others, being kind. In this day and age, everywhere you look on all sides, people are looking for the negative, or the bad in something, and there was Matthew, out there preaching the good. And doing it so quietly. ... Even in his passing, he's having an important and critical effect on people's lives," Reuter said.

Friends said that through those many involvements, Gillette's great-

SEE GILLETTE

| 12

4 PILLARS OF PERFORMANCE

✓ Infrastructure

- Prioritize flood prevention, mitigation, and restoration.
- Restore road diet traffic patterns where appropriate.

✓ Education

- Involve organizations as well as our faith-based community to assist with youth outreach and tutoring.
- Focus on academics while offering more workforce development, raise SOL scores and provide more online classes to our kids.
- Support school choice.

✓ Safety

- Restore SROs to schools for student safety and mentoring, and prohibit co-location of housing on school grounds.
- Support salary increases for our first responders, and fund body cameras for police.

✓ Representation

- Support efforts to elect officials by neighborhood wards and give the residents a direct link to their council member.
- Ensure that "stakeholder group input" prioritizes Alexandria residents.

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ANNETTA CATCHINGS

Alexandria Mayor



GILLETTE FROM | 11
 est gift was that of simply be-

ing present for others.
 “Matt, I can honestly say
 without exaggeration that

I’ve never met anyone as
 kind, caring and selfless as
 you. You influenced me more

than you know. I remember
 the first time you showed
 up at PPF and you cleaned
 the fridge, and that memory
 alone sums up so much of
 who I knew you to be,” Jen-
 ny Lynn Hislop wrote on Gil-
 lette’s Facebook page.

“This was one of the rare,
 beautiful people. This was
 one of those I have searched
 the planet for. This is one of
 those few humans I want-
 ed to learn from – to follow
 – to somehow have some
 of the goodness rub off on
 me,” Paul Sparks of Parish
 Collective said on Facebook.
 “... He was a neighborhood
 character – a rare jewel who
 loved without agenda. I think
 Matthew made it his highest
 intention to love those who
 were different from him. He
 was a neighborhood pastor
 and connector in the truest
 sense of the word.”

“That was an important
 part of his ministry, simply
 being in and part of the com-
 munity,” Reuter said.

Matthew Ian Gillette was
 born on June 20, 1982, and
 grew up in Manassas, Virgini-
 a. He attended Longwood
 University.

Gillette is survived by his
 wife of 14 years, Abby, and
 daughter Elizabeth, known
 as “baby E.” He is also sur-
 vived by his mother, Diane
 Gillette; sister Cheryl (Mi-
 cheal Thompson) of Manas-
 sas, Virginia; brother Brian
 (Christine Gillette); and five
 nieces and nephews: Ashley
 Thompson, Abigail Gillette,
 Samantha Gillette, Austin
 Thompson and Robert Gil-
 lette. He was predeceased by
 his father, Rodney Gillette.

A viewing will be held to-
 day from noon to 2:30 p.m. at
 Cunningham Turch Funeral
 Home at 811 Cameron St. A
 celebration of Gillette’s life
 will be held on Nov. 6 at 3
 p.m. at First Baptist Church
 of Alexandria at 2932 King
 St. Both events are open to
 family and friends.

-ddunbar@alextimes.com

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Tying the Knot



PHOTO/BROOKE JOHNSON

Whether it is the fragrance, color or style, find what will help flowers augment your vision for the wedding and focus on that.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

Collaborate with your florist to find the blooms that best match your style

BY BROOKE JOHNSON

Weddings are a declaration. A wedding is built around the couple expressing a heartfelt commitment to one another, and flowers mirror this bond in a tangible form for a fleeting time.

SEE **FLORIST**

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Tying the Knot

FLORIST

FROM | 13

Couples in Alexandria have their pick of talented

florists. The diversity of the flower market is dizzying. It's helpful to take a step back and consider your shopping

options in general before focusing on specifics.

A thoughtful florist weaves a motif through their arrangements that highlights the venue, augments the wedding party's attire and reflects the couple's personalities.

When looking for a florist, reminisce on your childhood and let your imagination guide your choices. Just make sure to bring your florist along for the ride. Be wary

of designers that don't have time to listen or want to push you into a style you and your partner might not be crazy about.

Some of your vision has a creative cost, not a material cost. The sooner you include your florist in your plans for establishing that vision, the more likely they are to find a spare moment to dedicate to a creative solution.

Is fragrance important to you? Is less more for your wedding? This is an art, so there are few objectively right and wrong answers. There's nothing right about ginger and wrong about roses if you have a preference for one and not the other.

Love is love, and taste is taste.

Pricing, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Theoretically, the longer and straighter the stem, the fuller the flower, the more attractive the color, the fresher from the farm, the higher the price.

If you're curious, ask your designer if you can accompany them to the wholesaler. Be prepared to spend at least half of your day literally walking through the floral rainbow of options. There is no better place to explore what's on offer. A visit lets you see in person the quality differences that affect pricing. The outing gives you a taste of what's available in that season.

Once you're done brainstorming your options as a team, you can prioritize. Come back down to earth and sort out what really speaks to you and what you can live without.

Throughout this process, keep your florist in the loop. We might have seasonal sources that offer you a luxury choice at a fraction of the cost, and we can suggest substitutions or exotic blooms.

Expect your first consultation to be free, but don't expect sample arrangements gratis. Make sure your florist knows if they've hit the mark at the sample consultation. The sample consultation is the best time to change your mind or make your style preferences known before it's too late. Your designer needs several weeks to order your blooms.

The average wedding cost in D.C. in 2019 was \$40,600, according to the Motley Fool. Virginia and Maryland enjoyed lower total costs at \$33,300 and \$33,800, respectively. When you're drawing up your budget, it's wise to allocate 10% to flowers. Frugal? Save money by cleaning up. Reuse the wedding party's bouquets as centerpieces in your home. Try to avoid planning your wedding over Mother's Day or Valentine's Day, or even consider a mid-week ceremony.

If you're very particular about color, achieve the look you want through your choices in fabric and glassware. Consider a dried or white version of your favorite flower that can be spray painted to come close to what you want. Dyes can ruin attire, so be careful not to stain your clothes.

Treat promises regarding longevity, availability of specific blooms and color specificity with extreme skepticism. Agricultural products are literally at the mercy of the weather.

And if you're a last-minute person, flexibility is key. Don't expect things to match if you've given your designer less than a month's notice.

The writer is a member of Del Ray Artisans and the founding floral designer of Blooms of Paradise. Visit www.bloomsofparadise.com for more information.



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Tying the Knot

2022: Year of the wedding

Pandemic-impacted schedules and prices make quality planning even more vital

BY MARILYN PATTERSON

It's that time of year again, and, no, I don't mean autumn. It's engagement season!

According to Wedding Wire, 40% of proposals happen annually from November through February, and 2022 is already shaping up to be a big year for weddings. It is projected that nearly 2.5 million weddings will happen in 2022, according to The Wedding Report, a market research firm. That is the largest number of weddings in a single year since 1984.

If you think a wedding may be in your future, here are some pro tips to help you thoughtfully prepare for what's ahead with wedding planning in a pandemic-informed world.

Scheduling a date

The pandemic-induced reduction of weddings from 2020 and 2021 forced couples to seek dates in 2022. While 2022 gives you an additional bonus Saturday, the most popular weekend dates are filling quickly for many wedding venues and vendors.

Pro tip: Increase your options by considering a non-traditional wedding day and/or month, such as weekdays, winter months or Fridays and Sundays. As you identify the perfect venue, you may also find that your wedding vendors can be more flexible and offer more for your money on a slower day and month.

Sticker shock

Beautiful weddings rely heavily on the unique products and services that are provided by the creatives in our communities. Everything from fashion to florals, stationery to culinary delights and entertainment to transportation are curated to bring your dreams to life. The economic realities of supply and demand and the impact of supply chain deficiencies are destined to send shock waves to your budget. Brace yourself.

Pro tip: Before you spend the first



FILE PHOTO

With venue schedules filling up in 2022, consider wedding dates other than Saturday, such as weekdays, Fridays or Sundays.

dollar, be crystal clear on your priorities for your wedding experience. Guest count has the biggest effect on costs. Invest in at least one consultation session with a seasoned professional wedding planner to gain some time-tested advice.

Why D.I.Y.?

Wedding planning can be a stressful time, especially if you attempt to take on creative and logistical tasks that you have limited experience in dealing with on your own. Inevitably attempting to do it yourself will require more time, skill and patience than you might have anticipated. Subsequently, you'll spend more money than expected. For many, this is the most important day of your life. Is it worth risking relationships and reputation with DIY projects and ill-equipped project "leaders?"



MARILYN PATTERSON

Pro tip: For elements of the wedding that are important and you value, hire a professional if you can't control the outcome. Contractually, you can hold them accountable for the desired results. Peace of mind has value, so curate your vendor partners carefully.

Wedding professionals really want to help you create the dream day that you envision and will work hard to go

above and beyond expectations. The pandemic initially stopped all categories of event professionals from exercising their livelihood. So, as they're back in business, help them help you by continuing to practice safe protocols.

Following years of declining wedding numbers, Shane McMurray, founder of The Wedding Report, said, "The surge is really coming on next year." We're ready, are you?

The wedding aisle is about to get crowded, but with thoughtful planning, your special day can still be remembered as the best uniquely-you experience ever.

The writer is the chief experience organizer at Joyous Events LLC, an event management and production company headquartered in Old Town. She also serves as the executive director and producer of First Night Alexandria.

Tying the Knot

How to budget during wedding season

With weddings on the horizon, don't break the bank in the "new normal"

BY BRANDPOINT

Weddings are back with a vengeance and with that comes spending time and money for gifts, travel and maybe even being a part of the wedding party.

According to a recent Zelle consumer behavior report, 52% of people are likely to attend a large gathering in 2021 or 2022. Yes, weddings will be a lot for the bride and groom, but what about the wedding crew and guests who are

filling up their schedules with celebrations? How do you make sure to respect the happy couple and your wallet?

Here is a checklist of what to do and how to not get too caught up in celebrating that you put yourself into debt for the newly invigorated wedding season.

Prioritize your event schedule.

Many postponed weddings are now back on, which means that your social calendar is way busier than it used to be – no more virtual bachelorette parties in your pajamas. However, don't feel pressured to do it all. Pace yourself and prioritize which weddings and social events you can attend based on your comfort level and funds.

Look at locations, dates and times and be mindful of how you will be spending your money. Get this all on a calendar so you can keep track of critical dates and ensure they don't sneak up on you.

Create a wedding spending budget.

If you are part of a string of bachelorette duties and events, that can take a toll on your wallet. Estimate how much you will be spending for that wedding, and if it



FILE PHOTO

Create a wedding spending budget to determine how much you are willing to spend for each event in your event schedule.

doesn't meet your budget, have a conversation about what you are comfortable with and work together with your crew.

Be honest with the bride or groom and let them know that you are committed to helping them celebrate and honor their occasion, but that you need to be mindful of your finances. Ask them what the most important events are.

Give the newlyweds the gift of money.

Through a pandemic and all the difficulties people have faced in the last year, physical gifts and registries have become less of a focus for couples. According to another Zelle study, 76% of people across all generations prefer to receive mon-

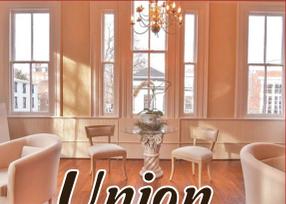
“It's been a challenging year, and the great news is that people are starting to gather together again to commemorate new beginnings safely. Try to take a deep breath, go through your checklist and enjoy this moment.”

ey rather than a physical gift.

To lighten the load for you and the bride and groom, send them money via a P2P service with a special congratulatory note in the memo line.

Remember to celebrate.

It's been a challenging year, and the great news is that people are starting to gather together again to commemorate new beginnings safely. Try to take a deep breath, go through your checklist and enjoy this moment.



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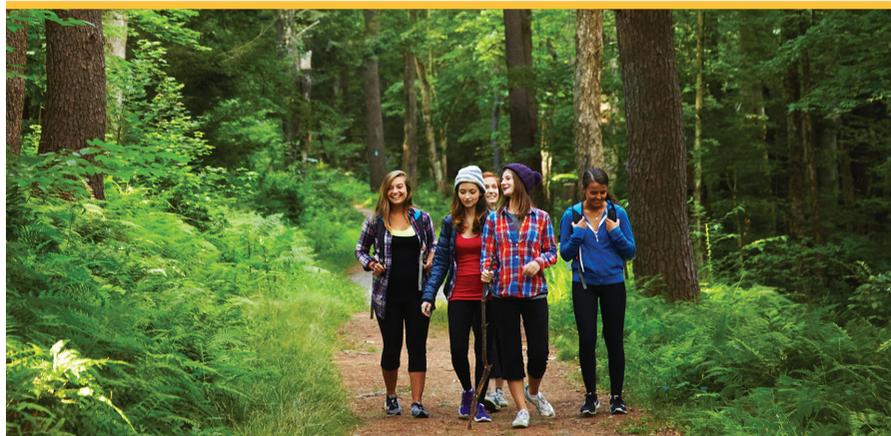
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HEALTH & WELLNESS

The basics of booster shots

Latest step in the COVID-19 vaccine process increases protection

BY DR. VIVEK SINHA



DR. VIVEK
SINHA

It was approximately one year ago that the world was looking for a tool to protect people from COVID-19. Thanks to the tireless work of thousands of scientists and experts, the world was given not one, but multiple effective vaccines for COVID-19.

Prior to the vaccine rollout, there were tens of thousands of people enrolled in clinical trials to ensure the vaccines were safe. Since the vaccine rollout, hundreds of millions more Americans have been vaccinated successfully showing that the vaccine is not only safe, but it is also effective. While no vaccine can be 100% effective in 100% of the people 100% of the time, the current COVID-19 vaccines offer excellent protection and help fully vaccinated individuals decrease the risk of dying from COVID-19.

Now that we are almost 12 months from the initial Emergency Use Authorization for a COVID-19 vaccine, the questions of waning immunity and the benefits of booster vaccines are being discussed.

At the time of this article being written, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has given the recom-

mendation that certain individuals who have previously completed the two-vaccine regimen with either the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine more than six months ago are eligible for a booster dose. Specifically, this applies to people 65 years of age and older, and anyone over the age of 18 who either lives in a long-term care setting, has any underlying medical conditions or works in a high-risk setting.

The CDC also advised that adults over 18 who have previously received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine more than two months ago can receive a booster dose.

After much study, the CDC further advised that people who receive a booster dose may “mix and match” the brand of vaccine. This has been deemed safe and effective and it will also give more people access to more doses.

One question that I often field is, “Why do we need



FILE PHOTO

Immunity does not last forever, and booster vaccines can help increase immune response and protection from disease.

booster vaccines in the first place?” In order to answer this very important question, we must know the science behind how vaccines work in the first place.

When we are exposed to a disease – for this example, let’s use polio – the body’s immune system kicks into gear. The body’s defenses look at the disease and quickly build up soldier cells that fight off the infection. Once the infection is defeated, the body keeps a few of those specific soldier cells in case the infection comes back. These soldier cells that remain behind are now considered a part of the person’s

immunity against polio.

The problem with building immunity for polio by getting the actual disease is that polio maims or kills many of the people it infects. So even if the person did not die from polio, they could be left severely paralyzed.

This is where vaccines come into play. The purpose of vaccines is to stimulate the body’s immune system without exposing them to the actual disease. Often the immune response in this method of building immunity is more predictable and more robust, thereby giving stronger immunity to the individual.

For many disease processes we know that often multiple doses must be given in order to build up adequate immunity in the individual. One common example is the tetanus vaccine, which is given multiple times in childhood. Multiple doses are needed to provide complete immunity. Once complete immunity has been achieved, we know that it, unfortunately, does not last forever. This is where booster doses come into play.

Boosters are often given months to years after the initial vaccine series. As we

Achieve small wins toward your nutrition goals

Swapping out recipes and increasing vitamin intake can make a big difference

BY BRANDPOINT

Face it, the past year has been tough. It's been all too easy to lose track of your wellness goals, especially around nutrition. The good news is, you can get back on track by working toward "small wins" – simple steps that improve your nutrition – and celebrate each one to inspire further improvements. In a recent online survey, 80% said that their perception of health and wellness has changed over the past year. The survey, conducted by Pollfish for Simply Good Foods, also found that 59% were trying to eat a better diet.

"Nutrition is key to achieving overall wellness," Colette Heimowitz, New York Times bestselling author and vice president of Nutrition Communication and Education at Atkins, said. "Making small changes today can reap big gains down the road, improving your wellbeing for years to come."

What small wins can help



FILE PHOTO

Working toward small wins in your nutrition is an easier way to achieve your goals than radical diet changes.

improve your nutrition?

You're more likely to stick with changes to your diet and nutrition routine if they're

not too hard to achieve. Aim for simple ways to increase protein and healthy fats while reducing carbs and

sugar. Here are some ideas to get you started.

SEE **NUTRITION**

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“Making small changes today can reap big gains down the road, improving your wellbeing for years to come.”

– Colette Heimowitz

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SpeakEasy



NUTRITION FROM | 20

1. Make easy recipe swaps, like trading mashed potatoes for whipped cauliflower. Steam or boil cauliflower florets for 10 to 15 minutes, making sure to check with a fork for softness, then let them sit in a colander or strainer for a while to drain

excess water. Mash or use a food processor to blend the cauliflower with your choice of butter, sauteed garlic or other seasonings.

2. Enjoy sweet treats with less sugar and more protein, like the new Atkins chocolate creme protein wafer crisp bar. They're light and crispy wafers with a chocolatey

crème filling and chocolate coating that contain 10 grams of protein, 6 grams of fiber and only 1 gram of sugar, making them perfect for an afternoon pick-me-up.

3. Increase your vitamin intake by using seasonal produce and nutrient-rich

proteins to boost the vitamin content of your dishes. Grate veggies like carrots into ground meat dishes and casseroles for extra vitamin A, C and B6, plus other nutrients. Vitamin D is also harder to get enough of during colder months, when you spend

less time in the sun. Foods rich in vitamin D include tuna, salmon, cheese and egg yolks.

4. Find recipes that support your nutrition goals. Below is one great option for a veggie-ful, zesty soup to warm you up on cold days.

Roasted red pepper soup

Total time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

1 small onion
12 ounces roasted bell peppers
2 medium stalks celery
2 cloves garlic
1/4 cup parmesan cheese (grated)

2 (14.5-ounce) cans chicken broth, bouillon or consommé
7 fluid ounces water
2/3 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat.

Dice celery and white onion. Mince garlic and add all three to pan, cook and stir occasionally about 8 minutes or until softened.

Add diced roasted peppers, water and broth. Bring to boil; lower heat and simmer 5 minutes.

Puree soup in batches in blender or food processor until smooth.

Return soup to saucepan; stir in cream. Heat gently.

Add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese before serving.

Optional: Serve with drizzle of sour cream.

BOOSTERS FROM | 19

have come to learn more about COVID-19 and how our immune system reacts to both the disease process and the vaccines, we are learning that booster doses help increase our immune response and strengthen our protection against the disease as well as decrease our chance of getting very sick if we do catch the virus.

The CDC is the guiding body that the medical community follows in giving vaccines. A unified approach is

important when dealing with such a large public health issue. The information coming out can often be daunting and difficult to interpret, so talk to your doctor. He or she will discuss your personal situation and help you decide what you can do to keep yourself healthy this winter season.

Stay informed. Get vaccinated. Stay safe.

The writer is the chief medical officer of Belleview Medical Partners, an office and house call practice based in Old Town.

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How to manage heart failure

Keeping a handle on H.F. is about more than just eating a heart-healthy diet

BY BRANDPOINT

Managing a chronic condition like heart failure can be challenging, especially as our society adapts to a new sense of normalcy. The good

news is that people with H.F. can still participate in many of the activities they love and lead fulfilling lives when following a treatment plan.

H.F. generally means that the heart can't pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. It changes the structure of the heart, so it does not work as well. This can eventually lead to serious health complications or even hospitalization. An H.F. hospitalization is a sign that the condition is worsening, and many patients have to return to the hospital repeatedly throughout their lives.

Luckily, there are ways people with H.F. can help take control of their lives and manage their condition as they establish new routines.

Communicate regularly with your health care provider.

Checking in with your health care provider is an important way to stay on top of your condition and maintain a treatment plan that works for you, which may include evaluating medication options, such as Entresto, a medicine prescribed by most cardiologists to treat adults with long-lasting, or chronic, H.F.

Monitor your symptoms for changes.

H.F. symptoms increase the risk of death and hospitalization, but they often go unnoticed. When the heart isn't pumping normally, some parts of the body may not get the blood they need to function properly. For this reason, people with H.F. may experience symptoms like shortness of breath, fatigue and swelling – often in the legs, ankles, feet and abdomen – making it difficult to do everyday tasks such as walking or climbing stairs.

If you've been diagnosed with H.F., consider using a symptom tracker to keep an eye out for changes in your

symptoms and contact your health care provider immediately if they are worsening.

Incorporate physical activity into your routine.

Whether you are continuing working from home or going back into the office, talk to your health care provider about incorporating physical activity into your daily routine. Stay active at home by engaging in everyday activities like vacuuming the house or raking the yard.

Try taking a walk during the day. Two thousand steps add up to approximately one mile of walking, and every step helps. You can also be active during your downtime, like when you're watching television. Start by stretching during commercial breaks and keep your muscles moving while seated by rolling your shoulders or squeezing a ball.

Maintain a heart-healthy diet.

For people with H.F., a key element of a healthy diet is monitoring how much salt you consume. Too much salt can cause the body to retain water, which can create an added burden on the heart. It's easy to cook low-salt recipes with foods from the pantry – just remember to check the label on frozen and canned foods, since many can be high in sodium.

Even if you're not adding salt to your food, sodium has a way of sneaking into your diet. Takeout food, processed foods and even "low-calorie" meals may contain too much salt, so these should be avoided. When cooking at home, try using spices and herbs to add flavor to your foods, instead of salt.



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Times Living

'The Velvet Underground' chronicles avant-garde band's place in 60s culture

BY ANDREW DUNBAR

"Rubin was one of those elite filmmakers. Really knew Bob Dylan, really knew Andy [Warhol]. One day she came into The Factory and announced there was a band downtown that they should really come and see." – John Cale

"The Velvet Underground" premiered on Apple TV+ on Oct. 15 and marks the first major documentary on the groundbreaking New York band. Stylish and well-edited by director Todd Haynes and his team, Haynes chooses to replicate the spirit of the abstract art that flourished in the latter half of the 1960s in New York as he tells the story of this ingenious band.

Haynes goes to great lengths to show how The Velvet Underground, while wholly unique, were not alone in the avant-garde art scene, but part of a larger movement producing new ideas and experimental music in a rapidly changing America. Although it should go without saying, the soundtrack is remarkable, featuring the band's most prominent tracks as well as deep cuts, alternate takes, live recordings and some of frontman Lou



IMAGE/POLYGRAM ENTERTAINMENT

Reed's inspirations.

The film boasts a level of immersion a step above most music documentaries by doing away with historians' and scholars' outside perspectives, focusing instead on archival footage of the group at work and play and restricting interviews to band members and close friends. This creates a level of intimacy between the viewer and each band member as the film takes its time to familiarize the audience with the lives of the Velvets, particularly the group's most prominent contributors, Lou Reed and John Cale.

As previously mentioned, the film connects The Velvet Underground to the pocket of New York in which they dwelled, offering a cultural panorama of the avant-gar-

de scene. Andy Warhol's Factory – a frequent haunt of the Velvets – and its colorful inhabitants are particularly well-documented, as they would serve as songwriting inspiration for Reed on tracks such as "Femme Fatale," "Candy Says" and his later solo hit, "Walk on the Wild Side." Despite straying from the band at times throughout his film, Haynes manages to never lose direction.

If it possesses one primary flaw, it's that the documentary doesn't spend enough time on the tracks themselves. While providing excellent narratives on the lives of the members and the culture around them, more time could have been devoted to offering analysis and background on the dense, dynamic songs that com-

prised the group's four albums. Though the band's formation and first two records are well-documented, little time is spent on their masterful self-titled 1969 album, simply referred to by fans as "The Grey Album," or their final record with Reed at the helm, 1970's "Loaded," which featured some of their most recognizable songs such as "Sweet Jane" and "Oh! Sweet Nuthin'."

"The Velvet Underground" also offers fans an intimate glimpse into the tortured psyche of Reed, the band's primary writer and singer. The film sheds new light on the origins of his documented drug use and temper. Family members, bandmates and friends provide testimony on his difficult childhood, depression and sexuality, all of which Reed made unapologetically apparent in the bleak poetry of his lyrics.

It also offers perspective from the two living band members, violist John Cale and drummer Maureen Tucker, who describe knowing and working with Reed as both extraordinary and infuriating. Well-versed Velvet fans will be familiar with the clash between Reed and Cale for the top

spot and the drastic change it brought to their sound when Lou finally ousted Cale after their chaotic second album, "White Light/White Heat."

While Cale shares his experiences dealing with Reed's volatile personality, Reed isn't here to tell his side of the story. In fact, Reed's absence in the film is palpable and remains an uncontrollable flaw that accompanies any VU documentary. His vinegary, enigmatic personality is well portrayed in the sparing media captured of him in his lifetime, but Haynes was limited to just a few audio and film recordings of the standoffish rockstar.

"The Velvet Underground" isn't merely a band doc; it's also a preservation of a remarkable time in our nation's past when artists, and musicians in particular, commanded culture and challenged the status quo. Haynes' film serves as a love letter not only to the Velvet Underground, but to all experimental art that breaks boundaries and inspires.

The writer is a student at Providence College majoring in English with a music minor.

HOMIES

Prune, trim and prepare your garden for winter. | Page 24

REAL TALK

Set a strong foundation with a well-kept basement. | Page 26

HOMES

A guide to pre-winter gardening prep

Prune and trim at the right time to prepare your garden for next year

BY KIM DAVIS

The leaves are beginning to turn beautiful shades of orange and the temperatures are getting cooler – a sure sign winter is on the way. Many gardeners have been busy planting grass seeds to replenish their lawns and attend to other needs since late August. For those who haven't got-

ten around to focusing on how to prepare for the winter solstice, do not despair. There is still time to undertake important steps before the first frost in mid-November.

Now is a good time, for example, to divide and transplant perennials like hostas and liriopse. Dividing before the first frost will provide plants with time to establish their root system and ensure more resilient and strong plants in the spring. Cut by slicing through hos-

tas with a straight spade or by removing them from the ground and cutting on a firm surface. The fewer the roots severed the more resilient the plants will be in the spring. This is also a good time to enrich the soil with compost and to give plants a good watering. This eliminates air pockets and ensures the root system is moist.

Many budding gardeners are perplexed about when to prune hydrangeas. Panicle hydrangeas can be pruned

in late fall once the plant is dormant and has lost its leaves. Though pruning is not required, it encourages stronger stems, better blooms and an attractive shape. Some recommend they be pruned about one-third their total height each year, but I have cut mine back further as they grew higher than I preferred.

For gardeners who want to try something out of the ordinary, dahlias are a great option, as they produce large, exquisite flowers that

attract pollinator bees and provide wonderful cuttings for the home. Their rhizomes or root structure may be removed for planting the following spring after a frost blackens their leaves. After extracting them from the ground, they should dry indoors for a few days.

The rhizome roots can then be packed in Styrofoam peanuts, dry peat moss or shredded newspaper and stored in a dark, relatively humid spot at 40 to 50 degrees until spring. This may seem like a lot of work, but it is well worth the effort.

If you enjoy watching birds in the garden, they will reward you with their presence when provided with sustenance to protect them from the cold days of winter. Many birds rely on seed-heads, such as cornflowers or rudbeckia, for food, so restrain from deadheading these perennials. A mix of nuts and seeds abundant at local bird stores are also helpful in supplementing their diet, and birdbaths provide a source of water when temperatures are above freezing.

Trees also need protec-

SEE **PREP**

| 25



COURTESY PHOTO

Providing birds with sustenance during the winter will ensure they return to your garden.



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HOMES

PREP

FROM | 24

tion during the winter months. Josh Darkow, an arborist with Bartlett Trees in Springfield, recommends against over-pruning during this time.

“Pruning involves removing tissue and opening wounds which can prove damaging,” Darkow said. “It stimulates a tree or shrub to attempt to grow. Any new growth produced in the fall is likely to die as it has not had time to harden off or become woody.”

To further protect trees Darkow suggests adding no more than two to four inches of mulch around the tree, but a few inches away from the base. This helps the tree retain needed moisture. Old layers of mulch should be raked to break up the mulch.

A hard evergreen pruning can oc-

cur in late winter and early spring, so trees are not stressed and don't appear stubby too long while they establish new growth through the warmer months.

“Yearly pruning of evergreens can be done any time of year and should be considered once to twice a year,” Darkow said.

Boxwoods and holly shrubs can be sheared several times a year and should be periodically thinned to open up air circulation and light within the plant's center, promoting healthy interior growth. Darkow recommends surgical pruning of these plants is best done by a professional who is well versed on which cuts to make.

And finally, if gardeners are overcome with non-native invasive plants that cause ecological harm such as bamboo, English ivy or hout-

tuynia, rather than attempting to eradicate them with toxic chemicals such as Roundup, try experimenting with an organic option, Darkow noted.

Many gardeners concerned about the environment make their own weed killer by mixing simple ingredients. Use a formula of one gallon of vinegar with one cup of salt and a tablespoon of dish soap. Pour the mixture into a spray bottle and spray directly onto the leaves. This will help burn up the plants' energy, eventually killing them. Steer clear of other plantings and be prepared to do ongoing applications until the problem is resolved.



COURTESY PHOTO

Taking the time to understand when certain plants should be trimmed, pruned or transplanted ahead of winter will ensure the success of plantings in the following year.

The writer is a member of the Hunting Creek Garden Club and formerly served as both president and vice president of the club.

HOME OF THE WEEK

Urban Sophistication in Robinson Landing



PHOTOS BY SEAN SHANAHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Left: This modern townhome features an elevator with access to four levels of living space.

Middle: Located on the main level, the living room includes a fireplace and connects to the dining room and kitchen.

Right: The roof deck is well-suited to enjoy either a get-together with friends or the quiet cup of coffee.

Finally, an Old Town home that checks every box: an elevator serving all four levels; a sunny corner unit; 3,100 square feet of space; a two-car garage; roof-top deck; sophisticated finishes; a prime location and a lifestyle that only the waterfront community of Robinson Land-

ing can provide.

The main level is home to an open floor plan featuring a living room with a fireplace, dining room and kitchen with Silestone countertops, center island and wi-fi enabled appliances and access to a convenient balcony. Retreat to the primary bedroom suite

with a spa-inspired bathroom, sitting area and two custom walk-in closets for some quiet relaxation.

The upper-level family room has access to the roof-top deck and plenty of room for hosting friends or simply enjoying a quiet cup of coffee. Also included are two additional bed-

rooms and bathrooms, an office with a specialized closet and a sizable bedroom-level laundry room.

Located in the waterfront community of Robinson Landing, the home also offers the best in Old Town living. The owner's lounge, library, meeting room, gym and yoga stu-

dio all have water views. The same building houses the concierge desk, pet spa and bike storage with a bike workshop. Dine at the waterfront restaurants, stroll along the boardwalk, breathe relax and begin enjoying life.

AT A GLANCE

Address: 17 Bakers Walk
Alexandria, VA 22314

Neighborhood: Robinson Landing

Price: \$2,945,000

Square footage: 3,100

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 3.5

Year built: 2020

Contact:

Heather Corey | 703.989.1183

hcorey@ttrsir.com

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REAL
TALK

Basement 101: Building a solid foundation

Combat leakage and flooding with home remediation measures

BY MAUREEN CLYNE

While many buyers are naturally drawn to a home's new appliances and open floor plans, I also focus on the foundation to make sure the homes my clients purchase withstand the test of time.

Chronic water leakage compromises the integrity of concrete foundations. However, not every puddle is cause for alarm, and it pays to pause a moment and ask: Where is the water coming from? What kind of damage is there? Can it be remediated and if so, what would it cost?

Some things home buyers and current homeowners can check for include: discoloration of foundation walls with blackish spots and/or white powder; bowing or leaning in of foundation walls; horizontal and vertical cracks in the wall, especially at the mortar seams between bricks

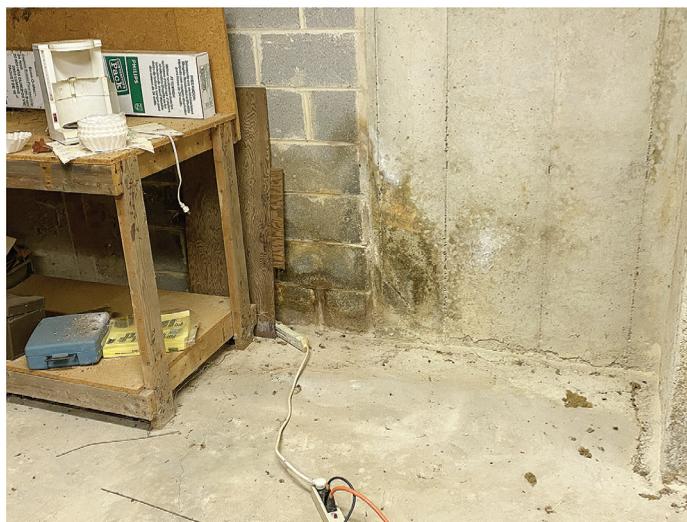


MAUREEN
CLYNE

or cinderblocks and an overly musty or pungent odor.

Heavy rains and flash floods are not the only source of water in basements. Faulty or incorrectly installed drainage systems and grading can also cause leaks. Very often, these are relatively easy fixes.

Make sure the grading slopes down and away from the house. If it angles in, water can seep through the wall and windows. Check drainage from gutters, the sump pump and HVAC. Make sure the pipes extend and empty several feet out from and slope away from the house. So often I see drain



SIGNS OF WATER DAMAGE INCLUDE DRIED UP PUDDLES ON THE FLOOR, BROWN/BLACK DISCOLORATION AND THE WHITE POWDER ON THE WALL THAT INDICATES SEEPAGE THROUGH THE FOUNDATION.

pipes and gutter spouts emptying right up against the wall, which almost guarantees water will leak into the basement.

You can also remove plants from touching exterior walls or check basement windows and doors for misalignment, rotting wood and failed flashing.

Keep any drains outside

the basement door clear of debris. You may also want to consider replacing the drain with a larger one to increase the drainage volume during heavy rains. Consider installing a water proofing system with a water barrier, French drain and sump pump.

Your home inspector will check for all these things and flag any additional signs of interior leaks or foundation issues. After the inspection, if you or the inspector have concerns, ask your agent to negotiate a basement inspection with a licensed basement specialist before the home inspection contingency expires.

Now, about those sewers. Many homes in Old Town and Del Ray were built long before things like sewer back-flow valves and sump pumps were required by code. And all of them empty into a 19th century sewer system that was not designed for 21st century density, water usage and changing weather patterns.

For current and soon-

to-be homeowners, the City of Alexandria has two programs that offer assistance to homeowners. While the city is working to improve and replace Alexandria's aging sewer system, it pays for homeowners to be proactive before the next rainy season starts.

The city's sewer backflow prevention program reimburses homeowners for up to 50% of the cost of installing a sewer backflow device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The program is open to all City of Alexandria homeowners. A sewer backflow valve prevents sewer water from the city sewer lines from backing up into a home's plumbing. Meanwhile, the Flood Mitigation Pilot Grant Program will provide up to 50% of the total cost of flood remediation measures and associated costs, up to a maximum amount of \$5,000.

Home buyers should not hesitate to ask sellers what, if anything, they've done for moisture and water remediation. Realtors tend not to gush about purring sump pumps, but in my opinion, they are 10 times more valuable than the latest smart refrigerator. Protecting your basement from water intrusion keeps the foundation safe, prevents the build-up of mildew and mold, and is a worthwhile investment.

The writer is a licensed realtor with Coldwell Banker Realty, located at 310 King St. Contact her with questions by email at maureen.clyne@cbmove.com. Jenn Saracini of Basement Detective shared her expertise for this article. She can be reached at www.basementdetective.com.



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OCTOBER 28

POEMS AND STORIES OF

EDGAR ALLEN POE Enjoy the Guillotine Theatre's spooky presentation of "Poe outside the Vault" at Ivy Hill Cemetery this weekend. Actors will read from the works of famed poet Edgar Allan Poe, known for his inclination toward the dark and mysterious. Seating is limited at the sell-out event.

Time: 7 to 8 p.m.

Location: 2823 King St.

Information: <http://www.georgetowntheatre.org/current.html>

OCTOBER 31

"BOO BAGS" This Halloween, Hooray for Books! is distributing free "boo bags" to trick-or-treaters filled with book-related swag. Stop by early before supplies run out!

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: 1555 King St.

Information: <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/event/%e2%80%9cboo-bags%e2%80%9d-at-hooray-for-books!/18320/>

TRICK OR TREAT Stop by the Carlyle House on All Hallows' Eve in your best costumes for some trick or treating. One of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings, the historic mansion will hand out candy in individual bags until it runs out. In case of inclement weather, call the museum for status updates.

Time: 4 to 6 p.m.

Location: 121 N Fairfax St.

Information: <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/event/trick-or-treat/18327/>

NOVEMBER 5

THE 2021 GEORGE WASHINGTON SYMPOSIUM Over the course of this two-day symposium, Mount Vernon staff and historians will discuss the achievements, failures and tragedies that shaped George Washington. The event also includes a tour of the mansion and viewing of historic documents and objects. Tickets cost \$225 for the public and \$200 for members and donors.

Time: All day

Location: 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway

Information: <https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/becoming-george-washington-the-2021-george-washington-symposium/>

WAIT UNTIL DARK Don't miss your last chance to see "Wait Until Dark" at the Little Theatre of Alexandria. The show - which takes place on Wednesdays and Sundays - follows the thrilling story of Suzy, a blind woman who finds herself in the middle of a group of ex-convicts plotting a sinisterly deceptive scheme. All patrons are required to wear a mask during the performance.

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: 600 Wolfe St.

Information: <http://thelittletheatre.com>

UNDER THE SAME ROOF Learn about the enslaved and free African Americans who built, lived and worked in the Lee-Fendall House as domestic servants both before and after the Civil War. Tickets are \$10 per person. Face masks are required inside the museum.

Time: 2 to 3:15 p.m.

Location: 711 Princess Street

Information: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

Location: 614 Oronoco St.

Information: <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/event/under-the-same-roof%3a-enslaved-and-free-workers-at-the-lee-fendall/6621/>

NOVEMBER 9

HORNS OF PLENTY: MUSIC FOR HORN QUARTET A

quartet of horn musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra will perform beloved staples of chamber repertoire in unexpected arrangements. They include Abel Pereira, Markus Osterlund, James Nickel and Robert Rearden. The event is part of Classical Movements' Sounds of Hope & Harmony series of outdoor, socially distanced concerts.

Time: 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Location: 711 Princess Street

Information: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

NOVEMBER 11

ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL

The 15th annual Alexandria Film Festival will be a hybrid event this year, with some

virtual and some in-person events. It will feature a partnership with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra of six original films presented with an in-person "live to picture" performance of the orchestra. Tickets are \$12 per showcase or \$75 per All-Festival pass.

Time: Varies

Location: Varies

Information: <https://alexfilmfest.com/>

NOVEMBER 13

CIVIL WAR TOURS AT FORT WARD

The Fort Ward Museum will offer soldier-led tours of historic Fort Ward in recognition of Veteran's Day. Through these two 90-minute tours, participants will learn about Civil War veterans' organizations, the history of Fort Ward, army life in the Civil War Defenses of Washington and the design and construction of Civil War forts.

Time: 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Location: 4301 W. Braddock Road

Information: <https://apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=38158>

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Our View

Times election assessments

The Alexandria Times normally makes endorsements for mayor, City Council and School Board. The benefit of endorsements is we select the group of candidates that our staff believes would collectively best serve the residents of Alexandria. We generally strive for diversity of opinion as well as that of ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The disadvantage of endorsements is we don't provide an opinion on those we don't endorse.

Therefore, we have decided this year to provide assessments rather than endorsements, because we believe that all 25 candidates – two for mayor, nine for City Council and 14 for School Board – deserve to be considered on these pages. We also think the candidates should be considered as individuals and not as members of political parties, both because local elections are nominally non-partisan in Virginia, with no party designations appearing on the ballots for either School Board or mayor/council, and because schools, flooding and development shouldn't be partisan topics.

The stance of this newspaper on an array of issues is well-known to careful readers. Broadly speaking, we are pro small business, pro environmental protection and pro livability. Our stances on specific issues are informed by those general principles. Some of the candidates below more closely mirror our perspective than others, but all 25 have strengths and weaknesses that voters should consider as they cast their ballots.

The candidates are listed alphabetically by category, beginning with mayor, then City Council, followed by School Board.

Mayor

Annetta Catchings – Catchings has campaigned as a problem-solver whose many years of experience as a flight attendant have given her necessary skills to assess situations and resolve conflicts. She pledges to actively seek advice from residents and to heed their concerns on issues ranging from flooding to road diets to safety in schools. Catchings, like

incumbent Mayor Justin Wilson, favors having school resource officers in Alexandria City Public Schools.

While some supporters view Catchings' lack of prior political experience as a positive, detractors would say it – along with her brief tenure as an Alexandria resident – are negatives too significant to overlook when casting ballots.

Justin Wilson – Wilson's mastery of the details of public policy is legendary in Alexandria. There are few people who can match his depth of knowledge on a single issue, let alone the array of complicated topics that come up in a city of well over 150,000 residents. Wilson also dutifully engages on social media, via email and in person with residents from all political perspectives. Wilson unapologetically supports an urbanist vision for Alexandria: projects that increase Alexandria's density and thus our residential tax base, along with a multi-modal approach to transportation with a focus on making it easier to bike and walk, and expanding public transit accessibility.

While Wilson engages constantly with residents, it's difficult to think of a single instance where those conversations have changed his mind. Wilson's detractors would also say that his knowledge of the weeds of policy does not necessarily translate into wisdom in his policy choices.

City Council

Canek Aguirre – The first Latino to serve on Alexandria's City Council, Aguirre is well plugged into the city's Hispanic community. He clearly sees it as his mission to serve this community, though as a result he often seems uninterested in issues of concern to the rest of the city. A passionate advocate for progressive policies, his critics say that Aguirre can sometimes come across as dismissive of perspectives with which he disagrees.

Sarah Bagley – Bagley's chief issues are affordable housing and gun safety. She also advocates for higher pay for Alexandria's first responders. Despite her stated desire to increase

the compensation of Alexandria's police, Bagley, along with incumbents Aguirre and John Chapman, said at a forum moderated by the Seminary Ridge Civic Association that she would not vote to return school resource officers to Alexandria City Public Schools.

John Chapman – Chapman has the second-longest tenure on council after retiring Councilor Del Pepper. Chapman has emerged as a swing vote on several contentious issues: He sided with the majority earlier this year to remove SROs from ACPS in a 4-3 vote. Then, after the recent surge in violence in city's schools, he reversed course and voted with the majority in another 4-3 decision to temporarily return the SROs. To supporters, those votes showed leadership. Detractors claim Chapman tells people he agrees with them on issues but often later does not back up those words with his votes.

Alyia Gaskins – Gaskins has campaigned on a theme of community engagement, saying she aims to listen to what residents want and give them a say in decisions. She has emphasized her background in public health – she holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Pittsburgh – as a differentiator in her campaign. Non-incumbents are somewhat blank slates, especially younger candidates like Gaskins, as there's less information on which to assess their future performance on council, but Gaskins seems both capable and someone who would be an independent voice.

Amy Jackson – Incumbent Amy Jackson is council's most authoritative voice on school issues, as she's the only person on the dais who has both worked as an educator and has children in ACPS. Jackson is not shy about voicing her opinions, from her opposition to the road diet on Seminary Road and to the recently opened slaughterhouse, to her support for SROs in public schools. Jackson uses public input to inform her decisions more than any other current member of council, yet has also voted in support of most development projects

during her three years on council.

Florence King – King is deeply rooted in Alexandria, as evidenced by her 30 years of living in and giving back to the city. She was rewarded for her many years of volunteer work, especially helping low-income residents with financial literacy, by being named a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2018. Her campaign has emphasized keeping Alexandria affordable for both low-income and middle-class residents, although she has at times talked dismissively of some of the city's newer residents and transplants. King is one of six non-incumbents running for council and is one of three Black candidates on the ballot.

Kirk McPike – McPike has campaigned on improving the city's affordable housing situation and on what he called the disconnect between the city's residents and its elected leaders. McPike, who is chief of staff to a U.S. congressman, has emphasized the need to leverage outside money from Richmond and Washington to help solve the city's problems. McPike raised most of his funds for this campaign from outside the City of Alexandria, which detractors see as outside money influencing our local election.

Darryl Nirenberg – Nirenberg is running on what he calls a "common-sense" approach to Alexandria's problems. Rather than push an ideological agenda, Nirenberg says our government should fix the city's storm drains, keep schools and the community safe and get traffic moving. A lawyer, Nirenberg worked on Capitol Hill for several years early in his career, including for conservative Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), an opponent of many civil rights causes, and liberal Sen. Jacob Javits (R-NY), before moving to a private law practice, where he has spent 25 years.

Glenda Gail Parker – Parker is singularly focused on environmental issues and making Alexandria a more walkable city. Supporters love the government budget analyst's environmental advocacy while detractors

Our View

ELECTION

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point to Parker's seven failed prior bids for elected office, including multiple unsuccessful campaigns for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and Virginia House of Delegates.

School Board – District A

Willie Bailey – The affable lifelong Alexandrian, who is a veteran, Fairfax County firefighter, former Alexandria city councilor and Alexandria Living Legend, supports SROs in schools, fair pay for teachers and closing the achievement gap. On council, Bailey frequently related personal experiences, which informed his votes, though his mastery of policy details often lagged behind that of his fellow councilors.

Ish Boyle – A former Marine, cybersecurity specialist and father of two ACPS students, Boyle supports SROs in schools and more resources for mental health services. Boyle is an outspoken critic of ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D.

Jacinta Greene – One of only three incumbents running for the nine-seat School Board, the marketing consultant has identified the achievement gap between the performance of white and minority students as the key issue facing ACPS.

D. Ohlandt – An educator and parent of three ACPS students, Ohlandt advocates for differentiated and individualized education for all students. She has emphasized the need for ACPS and particularly Hutchings to improve communications with parents and students.

Michelle Rief – This incumbent engaged with parents who were frustrated by Hutchings' handling of ACPS, particularly the district's slow reopening from COVID-19, more than any other School Board member. Rief nonetheless supports Hutchings and his objectives for ACPS.

School Board – District B

Deborah Ash – The retired State Department employee and ACPS grandparent advocates education over equity and greater choice for parents, including which school to attend. Ash, who opposes vaccine mandates, has criticized Hutchings for sending his child to private school.

Ashley Simpson Baird – An educator and ACPS parent, Baird said

ACPS' biggest challenge is addressing unfinished learning from the pandemic and providing attendant social and emotional support. Baird supports SROs in schools but believes they should be part of a larger plan to ensure safety and support.

Kelly Carmichael Booz – The educator, ACPS parent and former School Board member supports the temporary return of SROs to schools until other security and mental health professionals can be hired and trained. She called the need for improved communication “a critical area for growth” for Hutchings.

Tammy Ignacio – A former teacher and administrator, Ignacio is a mother of three ACPS graduates. She said the district's chief long-term problems involve capacity, facilities maintenance and infrastructure. She favors SROs in schools if school leaders want them.

PreeAnn Johnson – The former ACPS teacher and principal has 36 years of experience in the district and understands all facets of the system. She supports SROs in schools, calling the program a “great success,” and advocates building law enforcement partnerships at all levels.

Bridget Shea Westfall – The social worker and ACPS parent seeks to improve decision-making transparency in the district. She favors more community feedback to the School Board, is critical of Hutchings' handling of reopening schools and supports SROs as part of a collaborative approach to security.

School Board – District C

Meagan Alderton – The teacher and School Board chair favors increased compensation for educators and SROs in schools. She argued passionately at a School Board meeting earlier this year that a pool at the new Minnie Howard campus is an issue of racial equity.

Abdel Elnoubi – The ACPS parent and PTA president cited recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, facility overcrowding and a growing opportunity gap as key problems facing ACPS. Elnoubi favors police outside patrolling the perimeter of school buildings rather than inside.

W. Christopher Harris – The ACPS graduate and parent does not believe police belong in schools. He emphasizes meeting the individualized needs of students, parents and staff.

Your Views

Westfall for School Board

To the editor:

The City of Alexandria is an amazing place to live, and I'm proud to call it home. But the dirty little secret nobody wants to admit publicly is that our public schools, despite the incredible efforts of our many amazing educators and staff, are our Achilles heel.

We all know about the most common conversation in our city: whether to send your kids to Alexandria City Public Schools, move or pay for private school. This past year, as a life-long, public-school advocate, I made the heart-wrenching decision to follow ACPS leadership and numerous elected PTA leaders in Alexandria and leave ACPS.

Last year nearly 500 children, equivalent to an entire elementary school, left ACPS – the first decline in enrollment in about 15 years. Was it ACPS' innovatively challenged and seemingly unfocused COVID-19 response on re-opening schools? Was it our horrific Standards of Learning scores? Or was it the fact that political ideology trumped the superin-

tendent and school leadership and defunded the police in schools?

Next week we have a City Council and School Board election. We need people who are ready and willing to lead and put the education and safety of our children first. Politics cannot supersede the education and safety of our children. We are a great city. We deserve public schools that are a reason for people to move to and stay in Alexandria.

In District B, I'm particularly proud to support Bridget Westfall. She is a strong leader who will work with ACPS leadership when they are right and boldly help them get to the right place when the system needs help. She has proven to be a leader over and over again this past year with her advocacy to get schools reopened, for outdoor lunches and for vaccinations and testing.

I hope you will join me in supporting Bridget.

-Chris Yianilos,
Alexandria

Vote for Willie Bailey

To the editor:

I write to express my support for, and request your consideration of, Willie Bailey's candidacy for the Alexandria School Board in District A. I have known Willie since his teen years when I was T.C. Williams principal and I have been privileged to watch him grow as a person, professional firefighter and community leader. His amazing commitment to our city is only surpassed by his intense desire to help our kids as they navigate their way to adulthood.

Willie's commitment to children is well-known from his days as a single dad to his more recent work in helping to fill gaps for those in need in our community. He is known for his backpack, winter coat and toy drives, but most are not aware of all that he does behind the scenes to help struggling families.

He provides gift cards to families in need of food and connects families to local services, both of which are examples of his caring nature and desire to help others. While having been recognized as a Living Legend for his ser-

vice to the community, the motivation to help others is what drives him.

In my discussions with Willie as he has moved forward with his candidacy for School Board, he has spoken intently about his belief that he can do much more to assist children in ACPS. Having known him for many years, I know that, if elected, he will. He is a man of his word and his desire to help others is an integral part of his life. For Willie, it has always been about the kids, and I assure you his motivation in running for this position continues to be to help children in our community.

Willie also has a unique ability to work with others to achieve goals and create opportunities. His military service and years of hard work as a firefighter, speak to his professionalism, commitment to the tasks at hand and the respect afforded him by others.

I strongly encourage you to support Willie Bailey for School Board. He will represent District A and our entire community with distinction.

-John Porter,
Alexandria

McAuliffe taken out of context

To the editor:

Glenn Youngkin's education advertisement took Terry McAuliffe's comment out of context. McAuliffe said, "I'm not going to let parents come into schools and actually take books out and make their own decisions," adding, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." Omitting the first sentence changes the meaning. Those who take comments out of context or regurgitate a partisan advertisement are complicit in degrading dialogue.

What do those who are citing this comment want? In Alexandria, parents have a say in what is taught in public schools through an elected School Board. And, no, the FBI is not coming after parents for what they advocate schools should teach children.

Individual parents should not dictate curriculum – that is a community decision. Curriculum generally reflects the views of the community even when it is biased or incorrect. Virginia history texts taught that slaves were generally

well-treated and minimized slavery as a cause of the Civil War. Most but the most recalcitrant apologist recognizes that was absurd.

My father told me this was a sugar-coated version of history. Parents will sometimes disagree with what topics schools should either include or omit from their curriculums, but one of the benefits of an education outside the home is the exposure to different ideas.

Times change and what at one time was accepted as truth sometimes is revealed as incorrect. Limiting education to only things we all agree on or including endless alternatives, however, would make education meaningless or impossible.

Most of us know Earth orbits the sun. We certainly do not want to teach that the Holocaust did not occur or the flat-world view is a viable explanation to the structure of our solar system just because a few parents believe those things.

-Philip Brinkman,
Alexandria

Vote for Bennett-Parker

To the editor:

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker likes to knock on doors, but not just for votes. She knocks on doors to ask residents their opinion on issues facing our community. This is the type of engagement Elizabeth brought to City Council as vice mayor. It is this type of engagement she has delivered during her campaign for House of Delegates this year.

And Elizabeth has a proven record of delivering meaningful change for the residents of the 45th House district.

Elizabeth voted for the largest single investment in early childhood education in the city's history. She worked to increase the supply of affordable housing, declare a climate emergency, take concrete actions to cut carbon emissions and amend Alexandria's human rights code to include gender identity as a protected class. She will take her experience championing these issues at the local level to Richmond.

Earlier this year, Elizabeth worked with unions representing city employees, firefighters and police to craft an ordinance that made Alexandria the first community in the Commonwealth in 40 years to have collective bargaining. Because of her efforts, public employees will be at the table to ensure they have

“... Elizabeth has a proven record of delivering meaningful change for the residents of the 45th House district.”

fair wages and working conditions.

Republicans running for statewide offices and the House of Delegates, including Elizabeth's opponent, will take these rights away from workers. Republicans will also reinstate discriminatory laws against immigrants and LGBTQ individuals, cut millions from Virginia's schools and eliminate access to reproductive health care.

Please join me in voting for Elizabeth and Democrats up and down the ticket so we can keep moving Virginia forward.

-Colleen Gehrig,
Alexandria

Aguirre, Chapman must go

To the editor:

No doubt, City Councilor Canek Aguirre has done noble things in his life to help vulnerable people, mostly Hispanic immigrants. But his performance at the recent City Council meeting dominated by the school resource officer issue was anything but noble. Ironically during National Bullying Prevention Month, recognized by schools everywhere, Aguirre proceeded to bully ACPS' three key leaders: School Board Chair Meagan Alderton, Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D. and Alexandria City High School Principal Peter Balas.

In doing so, Aguirre showed that he does not understand that City Council's only role with regard to ACPS is to set the top line budget number annually in May. Rather, he treated the leaders of a peer organization led by independently elected officials as if they personally report to him, demonstrating his lack of understanding of local government and his seemingly boundless hubris.

After the three ACPS officials made highly reasoned cases for restoring SROs in the wake of a series of violent student-related incidents and weapons violations, including the shooting of a student at Bradlee Shopping Center, Aguirre proceeded to debate, castigate and otherwise condescend to the ACPS officials. On top of that, his arguments fell flat.

Once the "interrogation," as Mayor Justin Wilson called it, mercifully ended, Aguirre admitted to his attempted overreach of power: "I'm frustrated because we're sitting here and the four of us [he and fellow anti-SRO Councilors John Chapman, Mo Seifeldein and Elizabeth Bennett-Parker] were trying to craft ideas for the school system to think about other ways of how we could address some of this, when honestly, it should have been the School Board doing this."

But the School Board had already addressed the issue, overwhelmingly voting to retain SROs. Aguirre's behavior reflected that of a callow activist, not a mature, professional representative of all city residents.

Aguirre was not the only one to embarrass City Council. Chapman, while operating with a smoother

“Mature, responsible elected officials respect the limits of their power, and in an at-large capacity, know that their role is to take the pulse of the community and govern accordingly.”

patina, as he is known to do, joined in the fray and later proclaimed that community preferences don't matter: "A large majority feels comfortable with the [SRO] status quo. We know as leaders that the status quo cannot stay as it is today."

In other words, no matter what the majority desires, Chapman and his colleagues as "leaders" know better. Council decisions over the past three years on issues including infrastructure, development and transportation have proven that notion demonstrably false. Then, to top off council's night of shame, he retweeted someone advocating for the dissolution of elected School Boards.

Perhaps Aguirre and Chapman need to go back to "elected officials' school" to learn that School Board policy is made by – wait for it – school boards. Mature, responsible elected officials respect the limits of their power, and in an at-large capacity, know that their role is to take the pulse of the community and govern accordingly.

Aguirre and Chapman were not elected because they know better than the people they represent. Perhaps the electorate will know better than to vote for them again in next week's election.

-Bill Rossello,
Alexandria

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The Alexandria Dukes, part two

The number of people who remember the Alexandria Dukes is getting smaller. The number of still-loyal fans is even smaller, which is why the story of the Alexandria Dukes is worth sharing. Their time in Alexandria was short-lived, in part a victim of a change of mayoral administration and in part a victim of implied promises that didn't come to pass. At the same time, the six seasons that the Alexandria Dukes, and as the Alexandria Mariners in 1979, played in Four Mile Run Park led to memorable moments on the field, one which has rarely been replicated.

The most important event in the Alexandria Baseball Club's history occurred on April 30, 1979, when switch-hitting third baseman Garry Pellant hit two grand slams in the seventh inning as a member of the Alexandria Mariners against the Salem Pirates, one from each side of the plate.

As Pellant recalled in a 2020 Baseball America article, the first home run was right-handed, against left-handed relief pitcher Jose Calderon. Calderon tried to throw a fastball past Pellant, but Pellant hit it over the left-field fence. Alexandria scored seven more runs in that inning when Pellant came up again with two outs. By now, right-hander Luis Jiminez was on the mound, and Pellant remembers the second grand slam coming off a "bad breaking ball."

At the time, spectators thought that Pellant was the first to hit two grand slams in the same inning from different sides of the plate. Later research showed that it had been done once in 1961 in Triple-A by Toronto Maple Leafs outfielder Ellis Burton. But due in part to the efforts of Alexandria public address announcer Robert Siegrist, Pellant's feat arrived on the national radar when it was featured in Paul Harvey's syndicated radio show.



COURTESY PHOTO

Gordon Thomas (left) and John Briar (right). Briar is holding the jersey of former Dukes manager John Lipon.

The bat used for both home runs was sent to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Pellant's playing career lasted only four more years, but he is still in baseball to this day as a scout.

Despite the on-field success of Pellant and the Carolina League championship-winning team of 1982, the Alexandria Baseball Club, Inc. – the umbrella organization behind the Dukes – found circumstances beyond its control that made keeping the team in Alexandria unsustainable. Despite the efforts of the board, especially Chair Charles Shepherdson, Sr., and President Eugene Thomas, the public bought fewer than half of the shares put up for sale.

The problems with Four Mile Run Park as the club's home field never were resolved, and the switch in mayoral admin-

istrations from Frank Mann to Charles Beatley in 1979 meant that the club lost one of its key advocates for building a new stadium. The team's subsequent move to Prince William County in 1984 in hindsight seems inevitable.

Despite their short time in Alexandria, the club can still count on a small but loyal group of fans, including Gordon Thomas and John Briar, pictured here. They've held on to their memories and the actual uniforms of Alexandria managers Michael Toomey, who managed the Dukes for the 1980 and 81 seasons, and John Lipon, who managed the team when it was affiliated with the Pirates in 1982 and 1983.

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Have you taken advantage of the King Street closure City Council recently made permanent?

51% Yes, frequently.

27% No.

13% Not yet, but I plan to.

9% King Street is closed?

This Week

Does political diversity on governing bodies matter to you?

A) Yes, it matters a lot.

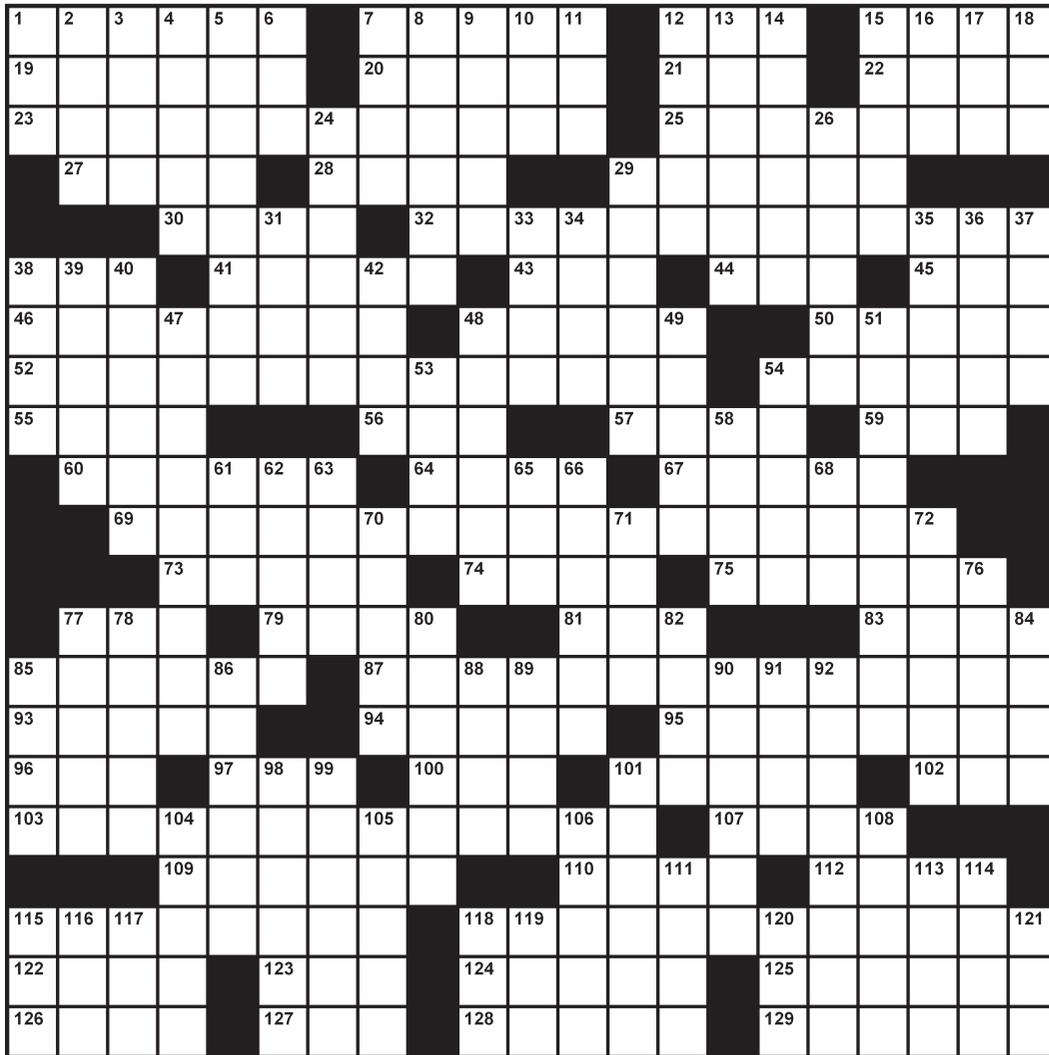
B) Yes, but not as much as other types of diversity.

C) No, a like-minded council is my preference.

D) There are Republicans still living in Alexandria?

Take the poll at alextimes.com

Weekly Words



BEWITCHED by Garrett Chalfin and Andrew Kingsley, edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS

- 1 Story full of plot holes?
- 7 Become apparent
- 12 Flower pollinator
- 15 Arches National Park's state
- 19 Evoke, as emotion
- 20 Kicked off
- 21 Sport with wheelies, for short
- 22 Small iPod model, once
- 23 To assemble the witches, Hecate takes out her wand and makes ...
- 25 Is cheeky
- 27 Borscht ingredient
- 28 Capital of Norway
- 29 Part of FBI
- 30 Shipped out
- 32 Everyone has arrived by dawn, so the witches huddle together and commence their ...
- 38 Ballpark figure?
- 41 What poll workers count
- 43 British ref. work
- 44 Finale
- 45 Letters next to 4G
- 46 Wizard
- 48 English, e.g.
- 50 Chips in chips
- 52 Hoping to make mischief, the witches start ...
- 54 Repeated part of a song
- 55 NFL analyst Tony
- 56 Moo ___ pork

- 57 Wine valley
- 59 "Singin' in the Rain" dance style
- 60 Ebb
- 64 Length x width, for a rectangle
- 67 With 49-Down, Beatles drummer
- 69 After mixing the ingredients, the witches ominously announce ...
- 73 Sweetly, on a score
- 74 Meh
- 75 List on eBay, say
- 77 Letter after chi
- 79 Spring warming
- 81 Apple's mobile software
- 83 Sheep sounds
- 85 Dudes
- 87 Having summoned their desired phantom, the witches cry ...
- 93 Fencing swords
- 94 "And a one, two, three ... go!"
- 95 By birth
- 96 Mind reader's "gift" (Abbr.)
- 97 Fish in a garden pond
- 100 Morticia, to Pugsley
- 101 Animal that rhymes with "later"
- 102 Jazz combo instrument
- 103 Tired of standing but not quite done, the coven ...
- 107 Blues singer James
- 109 Group of artists
- 110 Get high?

- 112 1978 hit with a letter-inspired dance
- 115 Weapon that a DC superhero throws
- 118 While resting, the witches reflect on all they learned at their ...
- 122 Bad smell
- 123 Rapper ___ Nas X
- 124 Rare belly button
- 125 Paper towel brand
- 126 Stockpot addition
- 127 Asexual, informally
- 128 Landforms with steep sides
- 129 Buffet, e.g.

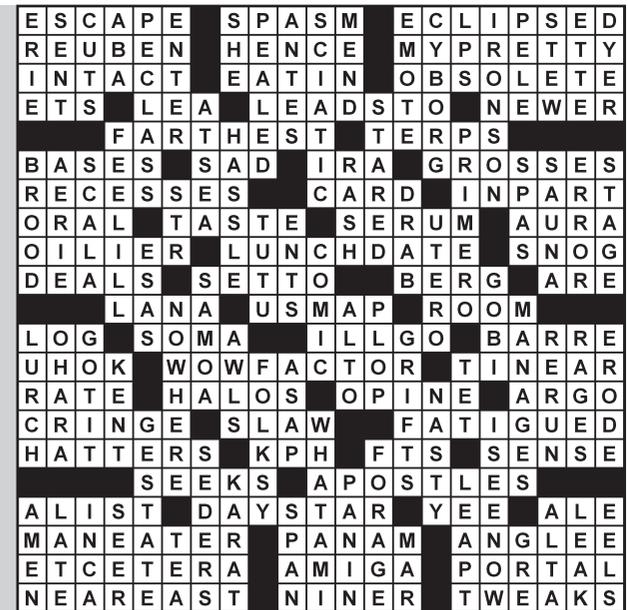
DOWN

- 1 PC alternative
- 2 United ___ Emirates
- 3 One of two, for some vaccines
- 4 Ancient strings
- 5 "That's so true!"
- 6 Platt of "Dear Evan Hansen"
- 7 Basics
- 8 Kingdoms
- 9 Domed home
- 10 "Blueberries for ___" (kid lit classic)
- 11 Half of nine?
- 12 It's not for big shots
- 13 Come out
- 14 Nonresident doctor
- 15 Full-length, as a movie

DEATH NOTICES

- RAYMOND BILLEAUD** (57), of Alexandria, Oct 4, 2021
- SHARON COFFMAN** (78), of Alexandria, Oct. 20, 2021
- ROBERT DELELLE** (72), of Alexandria, Oct. 20, 2021
- STEPHEN GILMARTIN** (87), formerly of Alexandria, Oct. 22, 2021
- MATTHEW IAN GILLETTE** (39), of Alexandria, Oct. 19, 2021
- SHEILA LEE** (72), of Alexandria, Oct. 12, 2021
- JAMES "BUFF" MACDONAL** (71), of Alexandria, Oct. 23, 2021

Solutions from last week



- 16 T, in a sorority name
- 17 "Möbius Strip II" insect
- 18 Help make the bed?
- 24 Already acquired
- 26 Obeyed the doctor, perhaps
- 29 Competes for, at an auction
- 31 Spam musubi wrapping
- 33 It's casted and usually has lines
- 34 Certain tide
- 35 Prefix with "sonic" and "sound"
- 36 Really enjoyed
- 37 "___ is more"
- 38 KGB's land
- 39 Engine
- 40 3 and 2, but not 1
- 42 Work units
- 47 Animal that rhymes with "after a while"
- 48 Cranks (out)
- 49 See 67-Across
- 51 In no way
- 53 Tom yum's cuisine
- 54 "Will you let us?"
- 58 Berth place
- 61 Panic! at the Disco genre
- 62 Shoulder muscles, in gym-speak
- 63 Impress with acid
- 65 Nwodim of "SNL"
- 66 Helpful pass from Sue Bird
- 68 U.S. soldiers
- 70 Popular toffee bar
- 71 It's made for walking
- 72 Angry looks
- 76 "Reach!" author Ali
- 77 Coke alternative
- 78 Went out?
- 80 Caprice
- 82 Islamic sect
- 84 River of Hades
- 85 ATM annoyances
- 86 Request
- 88 Situated on
- 89 Word after "free" or "quality"
- 90 Inputs
- 91 Twerp
- 92 Go from bash to bash
- 98 "How fancy!"
- 99 Like a hungry chef
- 101 Singer Estefan
- 104 Halloween-appropriate hiccups "cure"
- 105 Viewpoint
- 106 Exams with logic games (Abbr.)
- 108 Love, in France
- 111 Iowa State's city
- 113 Cup alternative
- 114 Skiing spot near Salt Lake City
- 115 Float up and down
- 116 Ruckus
- 117 Massive amount
- 118 Dot-___ bubble
- 119 Shade
- 120 "The Amazing Race" channel
- 121 Name hidden in "Daisy Duck"

James B. MacDonald

James B. MacDonald, 71, passed away on Oct. 23, 2021 at his home in Alexandria. Known as Buff to family and friends, he is survived by his wife of 42 years, Susan Hussey MacDonald, and his son, James B. MacDonald IV (Mac), 27. He was predeceased by his parents, James and Jewell, and a brother, John.

Having grown up in North Carolina, Buff retained a lifelong love of his home state, following his beloved Tar Heels with great passion. He graduated from University of North Carolina in 1973, and played on the Tar Heels freshman basketball team under the legendary coach Dean Smith. Buff seemingly knew every good restaurant and BBQ joint in the state, even after being an Alexandrian for decades.

During the 1970s, he shared his great love for music and his huge collection of songs at the legendary "Chinese Disco" in downtown Washington as the primary DJ on Saturday nights.

"I would love nothing more than to travel back in time and see him in all his glory spinning records in the basement of a Chinese restaurant, loving life and becoming the urban legend that still exists today," Mac, Buff's son, said.



Susan and James "Buff" MacDonald.

COURTESY PHOTO

After a long and successful career in pharmaceutical sales, Buff retired with Susan to their Alexandria home. He was an avid golfer, sporting a single-digit handicap. He was an active member of the board of Belle Haven Country Club, and with his outgoing personality, recruited and nurtured many a new member to the club. He was also an active member of Old Presbyterian Meeting House where

he was a deacon.

He had a wide range of friends, including pals from his Carolina days and countless golf buddies. They remember him as kind, generous, funny and a bit quirky.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Old Presbyterian Meeting House, at opmh.org, and First Tee, at firstteedc.org. Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home will be taking care of funeral arrangements.

LEGAL NOTICE



ALEXANDRIA PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The following requests have been received for administrative review and approval. For information on the following applications or to comment, visit the City's website at www.alexandriava.gov/planning or call 703.746.4666.

Special Use Permit #2021-00100
1501 Mount Vernon Avenue
Administrative Special Use Permit request for a New Use of a restaurant with outdoor dining; zone: CL/Commercial Low.
Proposed Business Name: Matt & Tony's

Applicant: Mitten Hospitality LLC c/o Matt Sloan
PLANNER: Patrick Silva – Patrick.Silva@alexandriava.gov
In accordance with section 11-500 of the zoning ordinance, the above listed request may be approved administratively by the Director of Planning & Zoning. If you have any comments regarding the proposal above, please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the planner listed no later than November 18, 2021.

MILITARY ITEMS WANTED

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The Alexandria Times encourages all residents to get the COVID vaccine when available.



Classifieds

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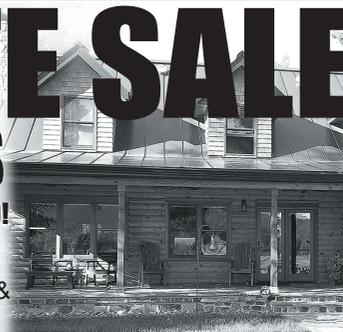


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