Community reacts to death at Bradlee

ACPS implements policy changes, police arrest suspect
BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

After a fatal stabbing incident on May 24 at Bradlee Shopping Center that left an Alexandria City High School student dead, parents, leaders and community members are scrambling to figure out how to best promote student safety.

In pursuit of this goal and an ongoing investigation, Alexandria City Public Schools implemented a modified return to school schedule that began on Tuesday and will run through Friday.

Peter Balas, ACHS executive principal, sent an email to families over the weekend detailing the modifications, which include a focus on "social, emotional and academic learning to help fulfill critical in-person graduation requirements and provide students with the social-emotional support they need."

While certain groups of students are meeting in person these last four days of the school year, such as seniors who need to complete graduation requirements or students in a specialized instructional program, the rest are participating in asynchronous virtual learning.

"My heart goes out to all Titan students, staff and families as we traverse this incredibly painful time together," Balas said. "This year has been far from normal. And it is important that we do not try to normalize it. We must band together to support each other.

REMEMBER AND HONOR

Community reacts to death at Bradlee

Explore 50 years of the Mt. Vernon Trail

Two Alexandria activists helped build iconic path
BY KIM DAVIS

Last weekend our country marked Memorial Day to honor the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Unofficially, it also heralded the beginning of the summer season.

Warmer temperatures inspire joggers, bicyclists, families gathering for picnics and dog walkers to venture to a treasured path along Virginia's Potomac River shoreline known as the Mount Vernon Trail. The 18-mile trail winds between the river and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, stretching northeast from Arlington south to George Washington's home at Mount Vernon.

Seasoned residents of Alexandria often go about our daily lives taking for granted the rich history and natural beauty that surrounds us, particularly along this tiny strip of land. We drive to and from work and run errands on the Parkway, while taking business calls or conferencing with spouses about daily routines. We are only vaguely aware that someone had the foresight to preserve and protect the scenic grandeur and history of this area for future generations.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Mount Vernon Trail, a paltry number by our area's historic standards, but one that merits celebration, not
Christine Roland Garner

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The 13th annual Taste of Del Ray is set to take place this weekend, from June 3 to 5.

The event will kick off tonight with a VIP reception, followed by three days of “Taste Along the Avenue,” where each participating restaurant will offer participants up to three select “tastes” for $5 each.

Participating restaurants include Smallcakes, Spice Kraft, Junction Bakery & Bistro, Del Ray Pizzeria, Stomping Ground, Evening Star Cafe, Matt and Tony’s All-Day Kitchen and Bar, Taqueria Poblano, Lena’s Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap, Hops N Shine, Northside 10, Cheesetique, Bella Napoli and Pork Barrel BBQ.

The event will also include a People’s Choice Award, in which registrants receive an online ballot for the award and vote for their favorite. Online voting closes at 8:30 p.m. on June 5 and winners will be announced on June 6.

Participants are encouraged to tag their food photos #visitdelray on Facebook and Instagram.

Taste of Del Ray to return

The Fort Ward Museum will hold its annual Civil War Camp Day on June 18, according to a news release.

The event, which takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include a lesson on soldier and civilian life during the Civil War and a regimental band concert.

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It will feature military and civilian reenactors in camp settings in and around the historic fort. Special interpretations include a U.S. Army Quartermaster tent, a Union company surgeon, a display of Civil War camp dioramas and a soldier in the reconstructed Officers’ Hut portraying the daily routine and living quarters of an officer in the Defense of Washington.

The 8th Greene Machine Regiment Band will also perform a concert of Civil War music on the museum lawn.

For more information, call 703-746-4848 or visit fortward.org.

Fort Ward to hold Civil War Camp Day

The Alexandria Masters Soccer League is looking for players to join the league!

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You can’t protect your teen from everything but you will sleep better at night, knowing that they’re safe from meningitis.

www.vahealthy.org/meningitis
The City of Alexandria is commemorating the 78th anniversary of D-Day with two events over the weekend.

Held tonight at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, the first event will offer a behind-the-scenes look at D-Day. Starting at 7 p.m. Dr. Kim Bernard Holien will present “Patton and Rommel: The Missing Generals of D-Day,” in which she describes why two important figures in D-Day were not present at Normandy. Tickets can be purchased online at alexandriava.gov/Shop. The in-person lecture costs $15 and the virtual lecture costs $10.

Then, on June 4, the city will hold a free commemorative event featuring World War II reenactors with displays, a 1940s jazz band, swing dancing, the U.S. Army Fife and Drum Corps, a French market and a ceremony featuring special guests and city leaders.

For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/Historic.

- Stadtler@alextimes.com

Our Gorgeous Glenda

20-month-old Glenda is one of the friendliest pets you’ll meet. She likes to get up close and sit on your lap for a visit. Glenda loves being with people, and she’s also great at entertaining herself, playing with a variety of toys, from ping pong balls and pipe cleaners to stuffed mice. Easy-going and cheerful, Glenda is hoping for a new home this summer.

Meet Glenda!
AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt-By-Appointment
703-746-4774

Diann Carlson
Realtor®
TTR Sotheby’s International Realty
dcarlson@ttrsi.com

“Because everyone needs a home.”

City celebrates D-Day anniversary

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For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/Historic.

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City to host Pride Month event

For the fifth year in a row, the City of Alexandria will kick off Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Pride Month with a celebratory event.

On June 4, attendees can stop by the Charles Houston Recreation Center parking lot and collect swag, enjoy music and food, create art, pose for pictures and learn about LGBTQ+ inclusive services in the city. Free and confidential HIV testing is also available.

Mayor Justin Wilson will read a proclamation at 1:30 p.m. and the drag queen story hour will begin at 2 p.m.

For more information about the event or available resources, visit alexandriava.gov/LGBTQ.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

With over 40 years of experience and over 4,000 real estate transactions, Heather Corey is a seasoned professional who maintains an enthusiastic passion for her calling. She has been named TTR Sotheby’s Top Individual Producer for the firm’s Alexandria office for the past six years. When working with Heather, you receive expertise that reaches down the block, and around the world.
BRADLEE

FROM | 1

other now, next week, and into the future.”

Some parents have supported this change, while others have not. Marcus Lindsey, whose daughter is a student at Minnie Howard, works occasionally as a substitute on campus. He questioned what exactly went into the district’s decision to backtrack from its initial plan to return all students to school this week, expressing frustration over another stint of virtual learning for many students as a result of the incident.

“Right now, my daughter is sitting upstairs doing virtual classes again. Why is this? Do they not feel safe?” Lindsey said. “It’s a tragedy, it’s a singular tragedy, and it does impact the entire community, but I go back to, ‘Why aren’t we back in school?’”

Lindsey also called for stricter citywide policy changes, claiming that the culture of discipline is too relaxed.

“The big piece for me is, ‘Who is responsible for this?’ There is a child that’s dead, and it was during school hours,” Lindsey said. “… Our system has led from behind on a lot of things, but nobody was held to account and responsible for this. Now we’ve got murder.”

The incident involved 30 to 50 students who started a fight which exploded into a melee in the McDonald’s parking lot of the Bradlee Shopping Center. ACHS senior Luis Mejia Hernandez, 18, was stabbed during the fight and died after being transported to a nearby hospital for treatment. The Alexandria Police Department announced on Wednesday that they have arrested a juvenile suspect, a 16-year-old male, and charged him with murdering Mejia Hernandez.

A video of the incident has been circulating on social media and shows a large crowd of students fighting in the parking lot. In the video, a student suffering from a stab wound briefly stands up before falling back down.

Some community members have blamed the Alexandria Police Department for not doing more earlier and breaking up the fight effectively, but others contend that the police scanner’s timeline shows APD’s rapid response as events unfolded.

The police scanner audio reveals that a Bradlee merchant made a call at 11:29 a.m. to complain about “disorderly conduct” and several kids making noise in the parking lot. At 12:03 p.m., an officer reported that two patrol cars drove through the area and didn’t see anything. At 12:25 p.m., an officer called for backup to help with an altercation and then called again for additional units and medics. At 12:27, a stabbing was reported for the first time.

ACPS revealed additional security measures in response to the melee. For the remainder of the school year, APD support officers will patrol the King Street and Minnie Howard campuses. Student ID cards will be required to access all campuses, staggered dismissals will be in place to lessen the number of students leaving at one time, and athletic competitions will take place at away fields or non-ACHS fields in the city.

Additionally, ACPS is making amendments to its “Lunch & Learn” program, during which students don’t have to eat in the cafeteria. APD responded to the incident at 12:26 p.m., during ACPS’ lunch period.

The amended policy, like the old policy, forbids students from leaving campus during lunch. It appears the prior policy was not enforced on May 24 when the incident occurred at Bradlee. It is not clear whether it has previously been enforced with regularity.

In a statement to the Times, Balas clarified the current lunchtime policy.

“The current expectation at lunchtime allows students to eat outdoors on school grounds and travel between campuses via ACPS buses,” Balas told the Times. “They are not authorized to go anywhere else or leave campus during the school day.”

The King Street campus’ “Lunch & Learn” program will now be divided into two 35-minute sessions, effectively halving the number of students eating lunch at one time. Students will have access to certain locations on campus, with a four-minute transition period in between the two sessions. They will continue to be allowed to eat outdoors but not be allowed to leave campus.

The Minnie Howard campus will continue its current structure, where class blocks swap after the designated 30-minute time block. Both campuses will have area and hallway supervision with an increase on the number of students eating lunch at one time.
Finding certainty in the uncertainty

BY JACOBSON TRUEX, CFP

The financial markets hate uncertainty. After record returns for the 18 months prior, the past six months in the markets have been tumultuous. Market declines briefly dipped the S&P 500 index into bear market territory on May 20 for the first time since March 2020. Despite the sharp fall, exacerbated by challenged market liquidity, I expect resilient fundamentals to keep recession risk relatively anchored in the near term. Consequently, I believe the opportunity cost of exiting the market may be greater than the risk of a deeper drawdown from current levels.

These precipitous drops were caused by multiple variables compounding against each other to create a perfect storm. The markets began reacting negatively in late November when the Omicron variant gave us more fear of restrictions. After a volatile December and a small Santa rally, January was dominated by worse than expected inflation numbers and rising interest rates as a response. We also started to feel the supply chain crisis that resulted from global lockdowns. The confluence of higher inflation, higher interest rates, supply chain shocks and mixed earnings reports resulted in elevated volatility and uncertainty.

That heightened volatility marched on with Russian troops making their way through Ukraine. While geopolitical actions historically have had short-lasting impacts on the U.S. markets, war exacerbated supply chain issues, commodity prices and uncertainty. In credit to the Ukrainian resilience, the war has lasted much longer than expected and continues to weigh on the market outlook.

While everyone has been trying to digest supply chains, earnings and war in eastern Europe, inflation has yet to cool. There have been some signs the worst may be behind us, but the end is not in sight. In the 80s, Fed Chairman Paul Volcker effectively created two recessions to curb inflation. Uncertainty regarding the Federal Reserve’s ability to “softly land” inflation to normal levels is my biggest concern facing the markets. Volatility should remain elevated over the next couple of months as the markets try to dissect all news with tightened liquidity in the markets.

I remain bullish for the second half of 2022. Fundamentals are strong in many areas of the economy and financial markets while company valuations have dropped below historical averages. Warren Buffett famously said in his Berkshire Hathaway Chairman’s Letter in 1986, “Be fearful when others are greedy, and greedy when others are fearful.” In a year dominated by negative headlines, I am urging all clients to be disciplined and patient in the face of uncertainty. For those who can afford to invest more, now may be prudent. For our clients worried about the recent volatility, dollar cost averaging is a way to reduce the impact of volatility on an investment.

As one is weighing their investment situation, I encourage clients to ask themselves three questions: 1) Is this current market situation transitory? 2) Are you well-diversified? 3) Do you have any short-term liquidity needs? The answer to the first question is always yes. As for the second question, we encourage our clients to be well-diversified, but some rebalancing may be prudent. As for short-term needs, one should carefully consider when and what to trim. I recommend consulting a professional for advice. If you are lucky enough to have excess cash, it could make sense to invest it while markets are depressed.

I understand how difficult it can be to stay invested or invest more during periods of uncertainty. However, as Buffett reminded us in his October 2008 op-ed: “What is likely, however, is that the market will move higher, perhaps substantially so, well before either sentiment or the economy turns up. So if you wait for the robins, spring will be over.”

The writer joined McLaughlin Ryder Investments in January 2020 following five years of professional experience focused on financial management and business consulting. He currently holds his Series 7, 63, and 65 licenses and is a certified financial planner professional.

BRADLEE FROM | 6 adults on supervision duty.

Some community members have criticized the “Lunch & Learn” policy for being too lenient and a possible contributing factor to the May 24 incident, but others claim the issue is more nuanced.

School Board member Abdel Elnoubi, who has previously been outspoken about social-emotional learning and security support staffing, called for a detailed examination of current district policies once the police investigation concludes.

“I think it’s too early to jump to conclusions. In the meantime [we should] continue to take precautionary measures as [has] been the case since the incident,” Elnoubi said. “I personally think that once the investigation concludes, the Board should look into any relevant policies that may need to be re-evaluated or better enforced.”

Melynda Dovel Wilcox, who served as Alexandria PTA Council president from 2008 to 2009 and again from 2013 to 2014, said in an emailed statement that no one individual or party is to blame for what happened. Instead of pointing fingers, she said, community members and leaders should remain flexible and open to change while figuring out next steps.

“As much as I grieve for students who have lost a classmate, I also grieve for our teachers at [Alexandria City High School] who continue to work under very challenging conditions because they love what they do and genuinely care for the students,” Wilcox said in the statement. “I am hoping the coming school year will bring some normalcy for them and for students. And I hope that those who make a sport out of criticizing our schools will just think twice before posting that comment on social media that dannigrates our administrators, our teachers and our elected School Board members. We can all do better.”

Elnoubi advocated for more conversations in the near future to prevent similar events from occurring down the line.

“We need to come together as a community and a society to address the root causes of violence,” he said. “There are socio-economic factors that are bigger and beyond the reach of the School Board or City Council, but we should use every available tool as policy makers.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com
Railways — an inexpensive path

Alexandria and Mount Vernon

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the G.W. Parkway, Alexandria

Park Service, which maintains

many Alexandrians.

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many Alexandrians.

According to the National

Park Service, which maintains

the G.W. Parkway, Alexandria

city officials began advocating for a “national road” to Mount Vernon in the late 1800s to boost local commerce. At

that time, D.C.-area resi

dents traveled by steamboat to see George Washington’s

renowned Mount Vernon family estate to learn more about

American history and demo

cratic values. In 1887, a group of Alexandrians formed the

Mount Vernon Avenue Associa
tion to promote the idea of a proposed Memorial Highway from the national capital to

Mount Vernon.

Despite broad consensus for the project, a confluence of events caused delays and roadblocks along the way. Con

struction of the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Railways — an inexpensive

commuter streetcar system — hampered initial efforts. A few

years later, a group of prominent Alexandria business-

men proposed construction of a bridge to connect Alex-

andria and Washington, D.C., reviving interest in creating a

road to Mount Vernon. Initial suggestions for the roadway

included a grandioso, monu-

mental avenue lined with

Beau Arts memorials, tombs

and roadside attractions which failed to gain support.

In 1902, a comprehensive

plan for the development of a monumental park system

for the greater Washington area, known as the McMil-

lan Plan, spearheaded by U.S.

Senator James McMillan, included a series of parkways,

designed to allow travelers in

carriages, the predominant

form of transportation at the
time, to discover history while

enjoying nature’s beauty. The plan envisioned a road

along the Virginia side of the

Potomac River.

The Commission’s vision

focused on preserving the

natural beauty surrounding

the Potomac River to provide

an oasis in the nation’s cap-

ital to protect eagles’ nests,

fish, wildlife and areas of rec-

reation. At the time, groups

testified that existing roads to

Mount Vernon were littered

with unsightly billboards,
tourist traps, gas stations and

fast-food dives. Following a

series of critical maneuvers to

fund the highway bill through

Congress, the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway was autho-

rized in 1928.

The eventual plan favored a protected area along the

Potomac River’s edge. The

author of this idea is not clear,

but famed architect Frederick

Law Olmsted, Jr., a key player

in the McMillan Plan, is cred-

ited with this suggestion.

The authorization by Con-

gress to envelop this area was

but a starting point. It would

take another 45 years for the

trail we know today to be exe-

cuted. A few short dirt paths

were in place before 1970 in

busier areas, but none were

suitable for the long bike

rides for which many in the

area yearned. The National

Park Service had been seek-
ing money for a trail to Grav-

delly Point as far back as 1967,

but it was not until 1971 when

local civic groups led by two

Alexandria women — Ellen

Pickering and Barbara Lynch

— fiercely lobbied in favor of

a full trail along the parkway

that the Park Service began
to understand the scope of

the problem.

With no trail in place, bik-
e rs were forced to ride on the

heavily trafficked George

Washington Memorial Park-

way, a dangerous option at

best. A rally to address the

problem was held On May

15, 1971, on a cordoned-off

section of Rock Creek Park-

way in Washington. Speak-
ers called for better and safer

access for bicyclists. Pickering

and Lynch used this occasion
to build a case for the Mount

Vernon Trail. The pair began
gathering signatures for a

petition to build a bike trail,
gathering more than 700 sig-
natures. The petition was

sent to an assistant director

at the National Park Service,

Jack Fish, who agreed to meet

with them.

Unfortunately, he told

them there was no money for a

trail and no precedent for one

on park land. He did agree,

however, to provide the right-
of-way and gravel if Pickering

and Lynch could provide vol-

unteers to build a path.

“We made the petition so

large the Park Service had

trouble finding room to file

it in their office,” Lynch said.

Lynch, who is “over 90” and

still resides in Old Town, was

in her mid-40s at the time

with four young children ages

four, six, eight and 10, who can

bear witness to their mother’s

work to establish a trail. Sev-

eral recently attended a 50th

anniversary celebration of the

trail. Lynch’s children, she

said, marveled when they first

saw people on the trail saying,

“Look, mom, people are using

our trail.”

According to the Friends

of the Mount Vernon Trail, a

nonprofit volunteer organiza-
tion dedicated to improving

the trail, “Pickering and Lynch organized 40 volun-
teers, the Park Service pro-
vided some shovels, and every

Saturday that winter they

spread gravel.” Volunteers

included families, children,

Boy Scouts and students; pass-

ing drivers even sometimes


The Mount Vernon Trail attracts about one million users annually, making it one of the region’s most popular recreational trails.


Barbara Lynch, who along with the late Ellen Pickering, another Alexandria environmental activist, led the effort to build the bike path along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Lynch is pictured at an April event celebrating the trail’s 50 years.
PARKWAY FROM 8

stopped to help.

After months of work in the bitter cold with 400 recruits, 4,200 tons of gravel, 5,300 hours of labor, and $27,000, 4.5 miles of a new six-foot-wide gravel bike trail connected Belle Haven Park to Memorial Bridge. On April 15, 1972, the Mount Vernon Trail was born.

“It was a mammoth and unprecedented undertaking by two dedicated individuals who would not take no for an answer and would stop at nothing to make the trail a reality,” FOMVT Executive Director Judd Isbell said. “In the words of Pickering at the time, ‘We were just women who said, ‘Why don’t we?’ And we did.’”

Lynch recently said, “The time was right. People were starting to exercise outdoors, dirt paths were there waiting to be completed and G.W. Parkway Service Superintendent Dave Ritchie closed the paths on weekends so volunteers could build the trail with no red tape.”

Lynch said she and Pickering were also good friends whose children played together.

“I admired Ellen,” Lynch said. “She had great integrity, was very bright and was an early environmentalist. We were also fortunate to have the support of Mayor [Charles] Beatty and a great City Council.”

Pickering went on to join the Alexandria City Council and “battled developers eager to festoon Alexandria’s historic waterfront with offices and apartment buildings,” according to her 2008 Washington Post obituary.

Pickering opposed a plan to convert the former torpedo merchants’ port, a national defense facility and, more recently, a tempting morsel for the jaws of development.

The controversy prompted the federal government to sue the city over ownership of the waterfront. The suit was settled in 1981, and Alexandria and the National Park Service joined forces out of the courtroom to produce a comprehensive waterfront plan.

Pickering went on to tell The Post in 1984 that she had “not one single, tiny regret” about the lawsuit she helped prompt. Otherwise, she said, “there wouldn’t be any Oronoco Bay Park, no Founder’s Park, no Pommander Walk Park, the foot of King Street would not have been recaptured, it was all private property.”

Congressman Don Beyer said in remarks at the recent FOMVT 50th anniversary celebration, “In reading the history of the Trail what’s clear is it was the idea, vision and perseverance of citizen volunteers like you that made it a reality. We owe a major debt of gratitude to Alexandrians Ellen Pickering and Barbara Lynch who obtained the original 700 signatures to present to the Park Service. They wouldn’t take ‘no’ for an answer.”

The trail has since served as a magnet for outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy the fruits of Lynch and Pickering’s labors, including unrivaled scenic views of Washington and the opportunity to connect with regional trails including the Potomac Heritage, Custis, Rock Creek, Four Mile Run and Woodrow Wilson Bridge trails. Foot and bike traffic safely navigate sections at National Airport and the 14th Street and Memorial Bridges.

Attracting about a million users annually, it is one of the region’s, and the nation’s, most popular recreational trails. Jason Rhoads, who lives in the Mount Vernon area, has been biking the trail for six years.

“Besides its scenic beauty, I can cover long distances on this path with other active people,” Rhoads said. “I always see a mix of cultures enjoying the park. So many great people sharing outdoor activities and enjoying nature.”

Charles Patrick of Alexandria said the walk to Dyke Marsh Marina is among his favorites as he particularly enjoys watching the boats. He also enjoys catch and release fishing, typically largemouth bass. Dyke Marsh is one of the largest remaining freshwater tidal wetlands in the Washington area. Containing 485 acres of tidal marsh, floodplain and swamp forest, it can be explored by boat or on foot. Its Haul Road Trail follows an old mining road through each type of habitat. The trail is three-quarters of a mile long, flat and paved with a combination of pea gravel and boardwalk. Boats may be rented at Belle Haven Marina.

To request a ranger program at Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, call 703-235-1550.

Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail hold regular activities for the public as well as monthly organizing meetings and volunteer opportunities, including cleanup, trail edging and invasive plant removal. All are welcome to volunteer, attend events and get involved in projects. If you have ideas to benefit the trail or would like to get more involved, please contact the FOMVT at https://mountvernontrail.org/.

If you haven’t been on the Mount Vernon Trail in a while, you might want to give it a whirl and celebrate not only the advent of summer, but the gifts of those who saved this sacred space for our enjoyment.

-kturpin@gmail.com

A cyclist couple enjoy the festivities at the April event that commemorated the bike path’s 50th anniversary. Speakers included Rep. Don Beyer (VA-8).
The city of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department and the veterans’ organization, the “Friends of Rocky Versace,” hosted a Memorial Day program at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial at 11 a.m. on Monday. This coming July will mark 20 years since the Alexandria Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Rocky Versace Plaza were dedicated. The memorial received its major funding through a gift of $175,000 by the late businessman Michael Heisley. Heisley was born in Alexandria and growing up was good friends with Rocky Versace. Versace was killed while he was a prisoner of war in Vietnam and received the Medal of Honor posthumously. Then City Councilor David Speck shepherded the memorial project for two years until its completion in 2002. The memorial plaza was designed and sculpted by architect Antonio Tobias “Toby” Mendez.

Alexandria Aces to kick off season next week

Organization looks to build off of successful 2021 campaign
BY BOOTS GIBLIN

Get ready: the Alexandria Aces’ 2022-2023 season will begin next week, on June 7, at Frank Mann Field.

After advancing to the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League Championship Series last year and falling to perennial powerhouse Bethesda Big Train, the Aces will look to build off of what was their best season in the organization’s history, with a 22-15 record. The Aces are also adapting to the challenge of preparing for their first season with no COVID-19 restrictions since 2019.

As a nonprofit organization, the Aces benefit from being sponsored by Alexandria small businesses. The pandemic had a two-year stranglehold on these businesses – mostly restaurants – putting the Aces’ management in a difficult position they were eventually able to work through.

Aidan Lansburgh, the team’s general manager, touched on the difficulty he and the rest of the management team faced during the 2021 season.

“While it was great to experience the on-the-field success the team had last year, which definitely garnered a lot of support and attention from the community, the business side of things posed problems. In years previous, we had been fortunate to receive support from local businesses that were heavily restaurants in Alexandria,” Lansburgh said. “As we all know … the restaurant business suffered so much through the COVID times, they weren’t able to support us like normal, and we had to pivot to other ways to find sponsorships and donations.”

While the period may have been a scramble, Lansburgh said the management team was able to pivot to other sources of financial help.

“We moved to going door-to-door of local businesses in the Del Ray area, as well as reaching out to previous donors, and we were lucky to receive really large and generous donations,” Lansburgh said. “We have continued the door-to-door approach as businesses are still feeling the effects.”

As the business side was built up, so was the performance of the team on the diamond.

“Our transition was certainly difficult, but we were able to do things successfully which has put us in a good spot for ourselves in the future to build off of, similarly to where the team is now on the field, they have really built a great foundation, and are only looking to improve,” Lansburgh said. “The Aces, an organization that as a whole, is on the rise.”

Chris Berset, in his fourth year as Aces head coach, didn’t shy away from saying that this year’s team will have the same expectations considering it will be a very talented group on paper.

“We had a great team last year, but this is a new year, and yes, we are developing these guys,” Bereset said.

The Aces roster is comprised of the highest level of collegiate baseball players, all attending Division I schools. Two Alexandria natives, Ryan Osinski and Reese Crochet, will also be playing for the Aces this summer.

Returning players include Adam Tellier, from Ball State University, and Connor Offsack, from Elon University.

Berset was very complimentary of the incoming team and its level of talent.

“We will have the positional players we need, and we definitely have some talented arms for pitching, but staying consistent with our pitching as well as staying healthy will be a key, as we had to work through a lot of positional injuries last year that required a lot of stepping up from other players at difficult parts of the season,” Berset said. “If we can find the right combinations with what we have with our arms, and helping those guys find where they fit in the rotation, we could have a great year.”

Berset has coached noteworthy players like Chris Alleyne, an outfielder from Maryland, who is in contention for Big Ten conference player of the year, others who have played in all levels of professional baseball, and for prestigious programs like Vanderbilt and Davidson. He said he receives a large amount of satisfaction from seeing his players develop.

“I put a lot of trust in the other college coaches I know, having known their expertise when recruiting kids for our program, and to see these guys gel with each other and play well individually, and play winning ball it’s really nice to see,” Bereset said.

The combination of continued growth each year under the tutelage of Bereset, an experienced college coach, and post-COVID-19 improvements on the business side, aid the Aces’ chances at on-field success this summer.

They still have areas for improvement, such as building more sponsorships and enhancing the process by which players who are here for the summer secure housing. But the Alexandria Aces are looking to build something special as they take on the Olney Cropdusters on June 7 to launch their 2022 season.
Signs of spring
BY CECILIA MCCORMACK

lush green leaves open
with life
ready for the joy
of spring yet to come

subtle yet brilliantly
bold
in their confidence of yellow,
pink
gold
flowers,
they stand
proud and tall
the truest sign of
spring

the light breeze turning
and tousling up
feelings of pure
happiness that
is surely spring

For those who don’t know what to do with a book
BY COLE EVELYN

Grab a book
Fall in love with the pages
Observe the pictures
Pay attention to the words
Look at the title
Find something you want to find
Look into the author’s history
And finally most importantly
Enjoy your book

Spring
BY ALLEN AKIYAMA

The pansies come back, and
rain comes down

And the return of the tulips
makes it hard to frown

Everyone comes with short
sleeves and pants
And the allergies come back
from the plants

The soccer and baseball are
started or resumed
And in spring love and
happiness are fused

Everyone is happy and
delighted
They make the season look so
excited
The new leaves on the trees
are bright and green
For this is the bright and
loving season of spring

If I owned the world I would
Get rid of money, just give
everyone a normal sized house
Help cure cancer and Covid 19
Stop making animal skin chairs and rugs

If I owned the world I would
Stop making plastic junk
Reach Mars
Make a 33rd season of The Simpsons
I would do all this if I owned
the world

Spring is here
BY ROBERT EASTON

It’s that time of year
When the geese fly home
Baby foxes everywhere
SPRING IS HERE!
It’s that time of year
When my birthday rolls around
The birds are chirping,
The bees are buzzing
Yes I know it’s not Summer
But WHO CARES
It’s that time of year
It’s that time of year
When the sun comes out
The cats are meowing and
rolling around
All the dogs are barking with
their tongues hanging out
It’s that time of year...

Spring is here
BY DESMOND DOYLE

If I owned the world I would
Stop cutting down trees
Help cure cancer and Covid 19
Stop making animal skin chairs and rugs

If I owned the world I would
Stop making plastic junk
Reach Mars
Make a 33rd season of The Simpsons
I would do all this if I owned
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Spring is here
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rolling around
All the dogs are barking with
their tongues hanging out
It’s that time of year...

When SPRING IS HERE
SEE KIDS
Spring
BY COOPER JOHNSON

Rain is pouring down
Pitter patter says the rain
Rain rain go away
Cherry trees budding
Bullfrogs croaking in a pond

Rain is pouring down
Pitter patter says the rain
Rain rain go away
Cherry trees budding
Bullfrogs croaking in a pond

April pranks all day
He talks to me and tricks me
April fools he said
Easter hunts begin
Easter’s family fun time
Big Easter egg hunts

Tulips are blooming
Baseball bats cracking
Soccer players scoring goals
Golf balls hitting flags
St. Patrick’s Day fun
Leprechauns shining
some shoes
Wearing green
all day

The writers are fifth grade students at Grace Episcopal School.
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A concert by the Four Bitchin’ Babes is equal parts folk festival, stand-up comedy revue and sleepover with your best friends. Their albums include “Gabby Road” – on the cover the Babes are photographed in a crosswalk talking on cell phones while carrying shopping bags – “Hormonal Imbalance,” “Diva Nation” and “Mid Life Vices.” The group was created by Christine Lavin, who decided back in 1990 that it would be fun to tour with a group of talented singer-songwriter friends.

At least 11 women – Lavin, Sally Fingerett, Megan McDonough, Patty Larkin, Debi Smith, Deirdre Flint, Julie Gold, Camille West, Nancy Moran, Marcy Marxer and Suzzy Roche – have served as permanent Babes during the ensuing 32 years. Fingeret is the only member who has been with the group the entire time, while Smith, a Northern Virginia native, has been a Babe since 1994. The Four Bitchin’ Babes recorded their first album, “Buy Me, Bring Me, Take Me, Don’t Mess My Hair,” during a 1990 concert at The Birchmere. Their upcoming concert at The Birchmere on June 11 is their last scheduled tour date and billed as possibly their final performance.

Times Publisher Denise Dunbar spoke with Smith last week about what it means to be a Babe, her outside career and the decision to wind down the Babes.

**Denise Dunbar: How did the Four Bitchin’ Babes begin?**

**Debi Smith:** The Four Bitchin’ Babes is sort of Christine Lavin’s brainchild, because she was touring a lot and she had the idea, and I think she might even have dreamed that she was out on the road with a bunch of her girlfriends.

**DD: How did you become a Babe?**

**DS:** Christine was putting on a songwriter’s retreat [on Martha’s Vineyard] and they saw me there, and then they had me substitute for Christine when she was sick once, and they decided that I was a good fit. So, then I was the next Babe. That was 1993 but I officially came in in 1994. And then it has had revolving chairs ever since. We’ve had Nancy Moran, we’ve had Suzzy Roche of the Roches and Deirdre Flint is a current member. Christine’s come back in. Megon’s come in and out. ... Sometimes we need a sub and we call in some people that we’re buddies with. Camille West is another one. We kind of settle into a groove for a while and then somebody’s got to go do something or have a baby or something.

**What is the concept behind the Four Bitchin’ Babes?**

We’ve always been a group that sort of responds to whatever women of our age are going through. We’ve sort of taken our fans with us, because they can relate to so many of the things that we sing about. And as we get older, the things we sing about change. ... The things that are affecting us aren’t just our age group. We just cover a lot of topics that people can understand. At a certain point ... that was a conscious decision to appeal to women more. ... It really went well to do that.

**Your use of humor is great. I chuckled all day after you sent me the ‘Gabby Road’ album cover.**

I know, that’s a good one, isn’t it? That was so much fun to shoot. And the one before it, ‘Beyond Bitchin’” where we have a takeoff on The Beatles’ cover with half the faces. Oh my gosh. ... And Deirdre sings, ‘The Boob Fairy (Never Came for Me).’ ... And Christine has the classic, ‘Good Thing He Can’t Read My Mind’ and ‘Bald Headed Men.’

**Did it take a while to come up with the right mix of individual, group and humor?**

I think it’s really more about picking the right Babe. Picking the right person to be a Babe, because they get us...
immediately, and we get them immediately. And so, every thing kind of falls into place. It’s funny because when I saw the Babes before I was in it, when they asked me to be in it, I went, ‘Oh, I guess I do have songs like that.’

I’ve seen the Babes before, and your concerts leave people feeling good. We want people to go out feeling energized, better than when they came. We want to have a positive charge we’re putting out there. I think that’s always been part of our appeal. … I had someone say to me (after a show), ‘I feel like I’ve just been to a really good therapy session.’

Does one of you take the lead on material and planning?

At first, it was Christine more. And then when Christine left, I think it shifted to everybody and then it more to Sally and I because we had a specific sort of goal in mind and we were the most regular babes at that point. … At that time, we decided to run it a little more as a business. So, the last few albums we co-produced.

Tell me more about your background. Where are you from?

I grew up here, in Falls Church … in Fairfax County Public Schools. And I was always a singer when I was younger. Even in elementary school. I didn’t really start playing the guitar, a little bit in high school and more in college. I was in a folk trio in college that was pretty popular on campus, The College of Wooster in Ohio. When I got out of college – I was a psychology major – and took my guitar with me, I was busking in San Francisco and then overseas. … I noticed I was having a lot of success. I was blocking traffic. And I thought, ‘Maybe I’ve got something going on here.’

When I came back, I started performing at bars in the area. … And then my sister came home from college, Megan, and I found out she could sing. So, we started singing together. … Merle Watson wound up recording our first two albums. Doc sat in on them. … We had actual LPs out. The Smith Sisters. At a certain point I had my child, Lee, and Megan decided to try something else for a while. And then I met Al Petteway and started playing with him for a while. At that point in time is when I met the Babes.

Did you play The Birchmere as The Smith Sisters before you joined the Babes?

Yes, our first album, our debut concert, was at The Birchmere. That was very exciting. Your first album is so memorable. Back then, you get your big box of LPs in the mail. … Our debut concert was in 1983. I’ve been around a while.

What’s it like to play The Birchmere?

We’re so blessed to have The Birchmere. It’s an amazing club when you compare it to a lot of other venues. There’s just a familiarity to it that’s just so open and friendly and comfortable.

Did you meet your husband, Michael [Jaworek, vice president/promoter of The Birchmere] from playing there?

No, I met Michael before [he was at] The Birchmere. I met him first, before I was in The Smith Sisters, I was in an all-women Irish group called ‘The Hags,’ and Michael came out. He was actually at the University of Maryland as the promoter there. … We got married in ’86.

Is this The Babes’ last tour, or possibly last tour?

We are winding it down. I think COVID kind of slowed us all down a bit and we may do a gig off in the future. We’re not saying no gigs never, ever again. But we’re not actively touring after this. For myself personally, I’ve been doing this a long time.
And I guess I’m kind of enjoying being home. I just released a solo CD during COVID ['Then and Now']. And I’m writing a book with my mom that’s based on her writing since 1947. I’m ready to record more albums. I learned that over COVID. I learned how to record and put instruments down. So, I’ve got plenty of things I can do still in music, just not necessarily touring.

**Have you performed since COVID-19?**

We just did two dates in Ohio. We actually recorded a PBS TV show, which is called 'Songs at the Center.' We did a show in Columbus, which is Sally’s hometown. And we’re doing a show in my hometown. We had some other gigs that we just didn’t reschedule. … We said, ‘We’ll keep these two and see where we are when these shows roll around. We kind of looked at each other and went, ‘You know, I think it’s OK to stop right now.’

**Has Christine’s vision for the Babes, to have fun on the road with girlfriends, come true?**

It’s like a traveling pajama party. It’s so much fun. Are there moments when we’ve got to work through some stuff? Yes, of course. But we always do. I love these girls. I love them. They’re my dearest friends.

**What else do you want readers to know?**

Just come. We want to see you. We love our audiences. Our audiences are amazing. They’re warm. We love to see our people, anybody that wants to come out there and hang out. We’re looking forward to it. It’ll be fun.

-ddunbar@alextimes.com

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**LIFE LESSON #7**

YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY FRIENDS.

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**BABES FROM | 16**

The Four Bitchin’ Babes at their most recent concert in Columbus, Ohio. From **Left to Right:** Debi Smith, Sally Fingerett, Deirdre Flint, Christine Lavin.
The past 14 dog years, two human years, have been tough on nearly everyone but the unwavering support of essential companions – dogs – has helped make it a little bit easier.

Pet parents owe a lot to their furry friends for always being there and helping them get through the hard times – whether they’re putting smiles on faces by jumping on the couch for snuggles or wandering through virtual meetings.

For these essential supporters, here are some tips to help celebrate and show thanks for your companion.

Spend time outdoors
Warmer temperatures provide the perfect opportunity for outdoor activities with furry friends. Try hiking in new places to give your dog a different experience than the usual walk around the block. New sights and smells can also be an enrichment activity and healthy exercise for your pup.

Buy a special treat
Everyone deserves to treat themselves, and pets are no exception. Check local restaurants with patios for a special dog-friendly meal or snack. At home, stock up on their favorite snacks and remember to show them love with extra petting, scratches and snuggles for always being by your side.

Socialize
Take a trip to a local dog park and give them time to play with others. Getting the chance to socialize with other dogs and play in new areas off-leash can show them you care and provide fun playtime.

Go shopping for a new toy
Take the guesswork out of purchasing your dog’s favorite new toy by bringing them along to a pet-friendly store. Many stores allow pets to walk the aisles with you and you can purchase the toy that grabs your dog’s interest right then and there.

Show your support for dogs in need
The PEDIGREE brand’s Essential Support Dogs program celebrates all dogs as essential supporters and provides assistance for dogs in need across the country. You can aid pups in need while recognizing your own beloved companion with a dog tag that supports PEDIGREE Foundation’s shelter and rescue partners, which are working to help dogs in need and end pet homelessness.
Have you dreamed of transforming your bathroom into a spa? The latest trends in home renovation focus on spa-like luxury: turning a bathroom into a soothing oasis where you can discard the cares of the day and pamper yourself.

But, most consumers can get lost trying to combine spa-like luxury with everyday functional needs. On top of that, a total bathroom makeover can be costly and time consuming. Instead of tearing up your whole bathroom, consider these easy, cost-effective DIY options to make your space more inviting and more functional.

Use design principles

Professional designers consider pattern, color and lighting as major elements to set the mood of any room. If your bathroom is more stressful than soothing, step back and consider the space in terms of these elements:

* Color palette: If you have a patterned shower curtain, towels, wallpaper and tiles, you've created too much stimuli for the eye. Instead, select calming colors to design your space around, such as shades of blue, green or neutrals like white or light gray. And if you prefer a more standout look, pick just one statement color.

* Featured accessories: A new shower curtain, towel and a fresh coat of paint adds a feeling of cleanliness that does wonders for the look of your room.

* Lighting: While you want bright lights around the mirror for freshening up, find ways to reduce light with a dimmer switch or alternative lighting for relaxing.

Upgrade your hardware

An easy DIY upgrade of your faucet or shower head can change your everyday bathroom experience. Pro tip: when you're ready to select these pieces, look for faucets and shower heads that incorporate technology for more functionality in the bathroom. The In2ition® Two-in-One Shower from Delta Faucet combines its shower head and hand shower in one so you can use both together or separately in a variety of spray patterns, perfect for a relaxing shower one moment, and washing

PHOTO/BRANDPOINT

If you have a patterned shower curtain, towels, wallpaper and tiles, select calming colors to design your space around, such as shades of blue, green or neutrals.

SEE HOMES | 20
your dog the next.

"Anyone can install this shower head easily, even if you’ve never done any DIY before," Kelsey Kinniry, Delta Faucet associate brand manager, said. "And it will instantly make a huge difference in your daily shower experience."

The In2ition combined shower head and hand shower provides maximum flexibility and coverage, creating a more relaxing shower experience, while also making washing children or pets easier.

The Touch-Clean Spray Holes make it easy to wipe away calcium and lime build-up. While other faucets gather unsightly mineral buildup over time, soft rubber spray holes allow residue to simply be wiped away for an instantly refreshed look - with no need for soaking or aid of chemical cleaners.

Best yet, the In2ition Two-in-One installs easily in minutes - just screw on the new shower head to your existing shower arm, making it homeowner and renter friendly.

Select a few luxury touches

Transform your bathroom into a spa and stick to your budget with a few special touches. Any details that are easy on the eyes and make the room feel special will add value.

Try some of these ideas:
* Extra-plush towels or bath mats
* Fragrance diffuser with a calming scent, like lavender
* Towel warmer or heated towel rack
* Plants that thrive in a moist environment, such as orchids
* Bundle of fresh eucalyptus attached to the shower head

With these tips, you can help your bathroom become the relaxing, soothing oasis you’ve always dreamed of having.

Price improvement at Parisian style, renovated residence in the highly sought-after Alexandria House. Featuring an oversized balcony, this completely renovated 2BR/2BA sunny unit has it all - including one garage parking space. Dine outside on the balcony or plant your herb garden; there is plenty of outdoor space here. A 24 hour concierge, secure entry and a gym make it perfect for a lock and leave residence in the heart of Old Town Alexandria. The building has a rooftop pool and a newly remodeled party room. This unit features a renovated kitchen and two upgraded bathrooms. Watch the fireworks from your rooftop deck and pool and enjoy panoramic views of Alexandria and Washington, D.C. The condo fee of $1,146.14/month includes all utilities except cable and internet. Trader Joe’s, Harris Teeter, the Mt. Vernon Trail and restaurants are just steps away from your front door!
A CUT ABOVE THE REST by Drew Schmenner, edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS
1 Plastic wrap brand
6 Some batteries
9 One might seize dope
13 "Toodlees!"
17 Grapefruit cousin
18 ***Tailgated on campus, say (Note this answer’s first two letters)
20 "Same here!"
21 Began airing
22 ***Above-average pupil (First two letters)
23 ***Celeb’s image problem (Last two letters)
24 **Declare
26 "Old" city in a Tex-Mex brand name
27 ***Dominican people now called the Kalinago (Last two letters)
28 "Old-fashioned" way to make money
29 TV star Leakes
30 Three letters in "lullaby"
31 Water source
32 *Tip for a waiter?
33 Carpet cleaner, for short
34 Took a short trip
35 Cuttlefish’s pouch, e.g.
36 Slow-cooked meal
37 Four-leaf clover, for the clover plant
38 Two-word confession
39 Deteriorates
40 ___ pickle (stuck)
41 "Top Chef" garments
42 Perform onstage
43 Not just like?
44 Carry, for short
45 Took a short trip
46 ___ your foot down
47 Pixies
48 **Take a knee, maybe
49 Pixar clownfish
50 CNN doctor Sanjay
51 Energy
52 Club ___ resort
53 Energy
54 Swarm around
55 Part of BDSM
56 Okra parts
57 Rock ___ boat
58 Part of Wikipedia’s URL
59 Drink that “platter” surrounds, aptly
60 Beyond dry
61 Whole bunch
62 Gum or a paper clip, to MacGyver
63 Lifesaving skill, briefly
64 Greek H
65 Energy
66 Mobile device with a Super Retina display
67 Angola’s capital
68 Oscar winner Meryl
69 Juicy’s ___ (wine designation)
70 Soda container
71 *Observation about observation
72 ***Tailgated on campus, say (Note this answer’s first two letters)
73 Site for film lovers
74 Where to go after leaving home?
75 Captain who fought Khan
76 Books that let you follow Rte. 66
77 Blue-green
78 Understood by few
79 Dream sleep initials
80 It’s hot in the tropics
81 Neighbor of China
82 Madam’s counterpart
83 "That was good!"
84 1977 Paul Davis hit with the words “When I look in your eyes”
85 Grand ___ (wine designation)
86 ___ party (sleepover)
87 Lineups of songs to perform
88 "Old" city in a Tex-Mex brand name
89 Piece of a certain metal gate
90 Ingredient for bread
91 Starbucks size above Tall
92 ***"Conan" channel, once (Last two letters)
93 *Jumping-in line
94 ***Credit card fig. (Last two letters)
95 Subway system
96 Sound booster
97 Tough H.S. courses
98 Precise type of clock
99 Chances to hit
100 Bold and shameless
101 TV star Leakes
102 Repetitive learning method
103 Swear to
104 **Get down on one knee
105 Beginning
106 Okra parts
107 "Garfield" dog
108 Homes for many fish
109 Corner computer key
110 Begin
111 Book after Psalms ... or, read as one, two or three parts (as indicated by the stars), this puzzle’s theme
112 Homes
113 ArboREAL snake
114 Card game
115 Pomegranate tidbit
116 Heavenly signs?
117 City west of Tesla
118 Slow-cooked meal
119 Holler
120 "Old" city in a Tex-Mex brand name
121 "Old-fashioned" way to make money
122 ***Above-average pupil (First two letters)
123 ***Celeb’s image problem (Last two letters)
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125 "Old-fashioned" way to make money
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134 Carpet cleaner, for short
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140 ___ pickle (stuck)
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142 ***"Conan" channel, once (Last two letters)
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144 "Old-fashioned" way to make money
145 Took a short trip
146 ___ your foot down
147 Pixies
148 **Take a knee, maybe
149 Pixar clownfish
150 CNN doctor Sanjay
151 Energy
152 Club ___ resort
153 Energy
154 Swarm around
155 Part of BDSM
156 Okra parts
157 Rock ___ boat
158 Part of BDSM
159 Vladimir who helped overthrow a 13-Down
160 End of Wikipedia’s URL
161 Whole bunch
162 Gum or a paper clip, to MacGyver
163 Lifesaving skill, briefly
164 Greek H
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201 TV star Leakes
202 Repetitive learning method
203 Swear to
204 **Get down on one knee
205 Beginning
206 Okra parts
207 "Garfield" dog
208 Homes for many fish
209 Corner computer key
210 Faux ___ Sneaky

Solutions from last week

EMILY FERN  (89), of Alexandria, May 24, 2022
YASMIN GROEHN  (19), of Alexandria, May 24, 2022
ROBERT HOHMAN  (81), of Alexandria, May 23, 2022
CHRISTOPHER BOURJAILY  (19), of Alexandria, May 24, 2022
KATHERINE ROBERTS  (85), of Alexandria, May 20, 2022
KARLA SIMS, formerly of Alexandria, April 19, 2022
Our View

Ready for summer

The recent school tragedies – both the local stabbing death of an Alexandria City High School student and school massacre in Uvalde, Texas – have left Alexandrians and our nation shaken.

Our city has endured violence by and to school aged children this entire school year, from numerous brawls in city schools to the alleged sexual assault in the Minnie Howard campus last October to the fatal shooting of a teenager – whose identity has not been released – last month during an alleged car-jacking attempt to last week’s heartbreak.

That’s a lot of tragedy and sadness and fear to process in a short time period. There’s a lot for the Alexandria City Public Schools task force on school safety to consider. We think everything should be on the table for this task force, and ultimately our elected School Board and City Council, to contemplate.

Should both ACHS campuses be locked down? What kind of security presence, and how many personnel, is adequate in ACPS? Should two grades be located in each building and transport between the two campuses eliminated?

Should we reconsider the one mega high school approach, which, from where we sit, isn’t working so well, and plan for another, and possibly two more separate high schools in Alexandria? There are few cities our size with only one public high school. Maybe they’ve figured out something we haven’t.

ACPS issued changed guidelines late last week surrounding lunch, presence on campus and transport between the main and Minnie Howard campus.

However, given that there were only four days left in the school year, and that most high school students are learning virtually this week, this can only be viewed as a short-term fix. The four-day solution is likely not the complete answer for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond.

Finger-pointing is counterproductive in the aftermath of mistakes and tragedies large and small, but accountability is vital to preventing repeats. There’s a fine line between the two, and real accountability is often obscured by spin, while finger-pointing is used for ideological and political gain.

Simply put, school policies that seemingly allowed for up to 50 students to be at Bradlee shopping center during the school day must be not only permanently changed, but effectively enforced. And students who commit violent crimes must be punished.

We are sliding, as a city and a nation, into a culture of criminality. Businesses are closing because shoplifting is rampant and perpetrators are not sought, and not prosecuted in the rare instances when they are apprehended. Residents are told to lock their cars while filling up their gas tanks because of the very real threat of being car-jacked.

Our children are not safe in our public schools. There is no other reasonable conclusion to draw after events not only of this year, but the past several years.

Yes, assault rifles need to be banned. But thankfully, those weapons were wholly unrelated to the problems in Alexandria described above.

There are no easy answers to the problems described above. Ideological rigidity is going to make it extremely difficult to make real progress in safeguarding our city, and particularly our public schools, from violence.

We all need to take a step back from our firmly held beliefs and consider alternatives. And we really, really need a summer break.

Opinion

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

- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week

On May 22, Alexandria hosted the Third Annual Old Town Festival of Speed & Style, presented by Burke & Herbert Bank. The festival featured more than 100 rare and exotic supercars and motorcycles from around the world, including this 1961 Corvette convertible, with an estimated 15,000 in attendance. This year’s festival proceeds went to ALIVE! and the Campagna Center.

Your Views

Alexandria has public transportation

To the editor:

MetroRail was possibly at one time the best subway system in the United States, but the failed maintenance, service disruptions and diminished service have made it unreliable and much less useful. Although more than half the railcar fleet is out of service and certification has lapsed for many train operators, Metro claimed that six years under chief executive officer Paul Wiedefeld have been a success.

If Mark C. Williams, in his May 26 letter in the Alexandria Times, “We have no public transportation,” had stuck to the facts, he would have presented an opinion worth reading. Instead, he damaged his credibility by asserting repeatedly that “there is no longer any” public transportation “in the region” and telling readers that we need to “have, and drive, a car.”

Metro’s rail operations do not even deserve to be called service, but the fact is that Metrobus and Dash, to which Williams also referred, have improved service in the past year. The 28A Metrobus, which used to run every half hour, now is scheduled to run every 12 minutes most of the day. The 29 Metrobuses between Alexandria and Fairfax City and between Alexandria and Vienna used to run every half hour between them; now they run every 20 minutes between them. The restructured Dash system has several lines that now run every 15 minutes. This bus service is not totally reliable, but it’s pretty good, and it is public transportation.

MetroRail is an embarrassment. Metrobus and Dash have room for improvement. I use them all. I don’t drive any more. And I’m not buying a car.

-Steve Dunham,
Alexandria
The most wonderful time of the year
BY JOHN PORTER

For those of us in education, celebrating the successes of our graduates is the most wonderful time of the year, even as we acknowledge what needs to be done to continue to support and assist those who will be returning to our classrooms during the next academic session. The joy of students graduating and moving forward with their education and careers is so extremely rewarding for us but more importantly for those taking these next big steps in their lives.

On May 15, I had the privilege of being on the stage as Alexandria’s representative to the board, as Northern Virginia Community College conducted its 56th Commencement Exercises. The first students to complete their studies at NOVA, the Class of 1967, included a dozen graduates in the secretarial science and drafting fields.

By contrast, the Class of 2022 totaled more than 3,500 students eligible for graduation with approximately 1,500 participating in the ceremony which was held at the Eagle Bank Arena at George Mason University. It is estimated that more than 5,300 family members and friends attended to honor and support the new NOVA Nighthawk graduates.

Prior to the conferring of degrees and certificates by President Anne Kress, Ph.D., the graduates were encouraged to stand when various categories of graduates were announced – those who worked while attending school, those who were supporting a child or family while attending, those serving in the military and those who speak more than one language, to name a few. The graduates responded with a loud and arena-rocking “I am NOVA” as they stood to acknowledge these specific aspects of their journey and their fellow students.

Understanding that graduation speakers are an important part of the program but also someone who should be able to relate to the students, NOVA drew from its proud ranks of NOVA alumni, selecting Afra Syed, a cybersecurity graduate currently working in the defense contracting field. Syed both inspired the graduates with the story of her journey and encouraged them to continue their efforts to achieve success in whatever fields they have chosen and where life takes them.

The highlight of any graduation is the announcing of names and the conferring of degrees and certificates. As Kress formally acknowledged the class as graduates and as the procession of students came to the stage to receive the results of their hard work, I could not help but think about other graduates across the region, around the state and across the country. I must admit, my mind also wandered back to the graduation ceremonies I participated in during my career in the Alexandria City Public Schools and the wishes I had for those graduating to have an enjoyable and productive life in whatever paths they chose to pursue.

The NOVA Class of 2022 is well prepared for the next steps in their journey. The top majors for the class are business administration, IT, computer science, cybersecurity and general studies, a transfer degree. The work NOVA has done in researching workforce needs supports these as areas of high employment demand in the region and country. The education these students have received at our own community college, coupled with opportunities for continued support, is unsurpassed and will serve them well in the future.

NOVA continues to do extraordinary things for its students and our region. The opportunity to provide the knowledge and skills needed for this generation of students to excel in university classrooms and today's workforce speaks to the success of the staff, supporters and, most importantly, the students.

Congratulations, Class of 2022!

The writer is the former principal of T.C. Williams High School, now called Alexandria City High School, a role he held from 1984 to 2006. He currently serves as Alexandria’s representative to the Northern Virginia Community College Board.

The mystery of Chinquapin Pool
BY MARK EATON

Alexandria’s urban legends are fascinating. They include the various answers to this question: How, in 1985, was the Chinquapin Recreation Center opened next to the city’s only public high school with a pool that was not configured for swimming competitions?

The result was decades of bus and car rides for high school students, coaches and swim and dive supporters to meet at other facilities with competition-length pools – for example, the Mount Vernon Recreation Center. In competitive swimming, thousandths of a second separate world record holders from the rest. Stainless steel pools are favored for Olympic and other elite competitions because they can be built to precise tolerances. Alexandria also lost the rental income that a 25-yard pool could have generated from private school and club swimming events.

I looked into why the Chinquapin pool was built and found that the pool was configured to meet requirements by swimming meet organizers. Please send your tips, comments and theories. I am looking for clues to the story of Chinquapin pool.

The writer is a former lawyer, member of the Alexandria School Board from 1997 to 2006, and English teacher from 2007 to 2021 at T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. He can be reached at aboutalexandria@gmail.com. Subscriptions to his newsletter are available free at https://aboutalexandria.substack.com/.
Alexandria’s Sister City Caen

With the celebration of the 78th Anniversary of D-Day this week, we highlight Alexandria’s sister city Caen, Normandy, France. Readers might be familiar with Caen’s World War II history. It took 18 years to rebuild the city from the approximately 75% destruction it suffered during the war.

Today, the capital of Normandy has an approximate population of 100,000 residents within the city limits and approximately another 50,000 in the surrounding areas. Founded in 1432, the Université de Caen Normandie plays a prominent role in the city’s culture, with a student body of 28,000. Visitors and residents can enjoy strolling down the Rue Saint Pierre to browse shops or eat in restaurants on or near the Rue du Vaugueux.

Caen is known for its stone, Pierre de Caen. A limestone known as particularly suitable for carving, Pierre de Caen is probably most famous for its use in Westminster Cathedral. Château de Caen, built by William of Norman in 1060, also features the famed stone. Six years after its completion, William conquered England and became known as William the Conqueror. Today, the castle houses three museums and a garden devoted to the cultivation of plants grown in the Middle Ages.

History fans also can’t miss the Church of Saint Pierre, which was the site of French King Henry IV’s conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1593, ending the French religious wars. Historians of 20th-century history will find the Caen Memorial Museum, which focuses on World War II history and the Cold War more to their liking.

On June 6, 1944, more than 160,000 Allied troops invaded Normandy, France, gaining a significant foothold in continental Europe. The Battle for Caen took place from June 6 to August 6, 1944, and more than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed during the invasion. Their sacrifice directly led to the Allied victory over Hitler and the Axis Powers.

The City of Alexandria has shared a Sister City relationship with the city of Caen since 1991. Today, Caen and Alexandria enjoy cultural, educational and economic cooperation. Throughout the year, ACSCC also organizes exchange programs, lectures, children’s programs and additional events to promote our French-American relationship. Historic Alexandria features a lecture on the roles of the absent Generals, Patton and Rommel, on June 2, by historian Kim Bernard Holien, Ph.D. We also invite you to Market Square on Saturday for a full program commemorating the invasion of Normandy from 3 to 6 p.m.

Out of the Attic is provided by The Office of Historic Alexandria. A special thanks to Sister Cities exchange intern Anais Poplin for her help with this column.

Weekly Poll

Take the poll at alextimes.com

Last Week
Are you happy with the zoning changes staff has made to address resident concerns about bonus density?

62% No, I’m alarmed that most of Mt. Vernon Avenue can be built.
16% Yes, it’s a great relief that the Old and Historic District is exempt.
16% Let’s wait and see what council approves.
6% I’m not sure.

This Week
What do your warm weather activities include in Alexandria?

A) Attending the Festival of Speed & Style.
B) Attending Alexandria Aces games.
C) Using the G.W. Parkway bike path.
D) More than one of the above.
E) None of the above.
GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES IN THE AGE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON AND NOW

At this virtual symposium, attendees will learn how George Washington and his contemporaries shaped the natural world to achieve beauty through gardening and how these historic methods remain relevant in today’s world. Lectures highlight the gardens and landscapes of Mount Vernon, Middleton Place, Lafayette’s La Grange and gardens and landscapes of the world. Lectures will also highlight how these historic methods of beauty through gardening and the natural world to achieve beauty through gardening and how these historic methods remain relevant in today’s world.

GOAT CUDDLING AT LOST BOY

Stop by Lost Boy Cider for an hour-long session of goat cuddles with cider and doughnuts, featuring the herd from Walnut Creek Farm. Veterinarian owner of the farm, Dr. Maureen Noffsinger, will be on-hand to answer all goat-related questions. Tickets include one craft cider, doughnuts and unlimited snuggling. Proof of vaccination required.

Time: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Location: 317 Hooffs Run Drive
Information: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cider-doughnuts-and-goat-cuddling-at-lost-boy-tickets-318072031007

OBITUARIES

Clarence Webb

Clarence Wayber Webb, of Marion, Ohio, passed away on April 20, 2022, at age 88. He was born Aug. 27, 1933. A funeral service will be held on June 3, 2022, at Vaughan-Guynn-McGrady Funeral Chapel, 1035 North Main Street, Hillsville, Virginia 24343. Visitation is at 10 a.m., with services at 11 a.m. Burial service to immediately follow at the Isaac Webb Cemetery. A full obit with guestbook is available online by visiting www.vaughanguynnandmcgrady.com.

Karla Sims

Born Karla Drewry to beloved parents Raymond and Caroline, Karla passed away peacefully on April 19, 2022 surrounded by her children and husband.

Karla grew up in Alexandria surrounded by the love of all her family. Later in life she married Steve Sims and they moved to Georgia where they lived very happily for 27 years. She is survived by her husband Steve, children Matthew, Caroline, Jennifer and Danielle, 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, brothers Ray, Timmy and numerous other family members.

There will be a celebration of life on June 25, 2022, at Airlie in Warrenton, Virginia.
ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 2022

The item described below will be heard by the City Council on the
date and time listed below.
NOTICE: The item listed below may be
placed on a Consent Calendar.
The City Clerk will be available to
explain this request and answer
questions.

BAR #2022-00004 OHAD
Request for demolition/encapsulation
at approx. vicinity of 520 King Street,
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Applicant: Trileaf Development, LLC
P.O. Box 1118 Alexandria, VA 22306

For further information, contact Jackie Cato at
jackie.cato@alexandriava.gov or
703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Cellco Partnership and its
controlled affiliates doing business as
Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless)
proposes to collocate wireless
communications antennas at
centerline heights of 77 feet and
80 feet on a 82-foot building at the
approx. vicinity of 520 King Street,
Alexandria, City of Alexandria,
VA 22314. Public comments
regarding potential effects from this
site on historic properties may be
submitted within 30 days from the
date of this publication to:
Trileaf Corp, Kayla Lauer,
k.lauer@trileaf.com, 8600 LaSalle Road, Suite 301,
Towson, MD 21286, 410-853-7128.

LEGAL NOTICE

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JUNE 2022

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date of this publication to:
Trileaf Corp, Kayla Lauer,
k.lauer@trileaf.com, 8600 LaSalle Road, Suite 301,
Towson, MD 21286, 410-853-7128.
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She was thorough, efficient and guided us through the whole process. She was always available when we had questions and made the selling process painless!"

- WHITNEY, SELLER CLIENT

“Mason was an excellent agent to work with. She was thorough, efficient and guided us through the whole process. She was always available when we had questions and made the selling process painless!”

- WHITNEY, SELLER CLIENT