The Alexandria City High School Class of 2022 graduated at EagleBank Arena on Saturday.

First ACHS class graduates

In-person ceremony took place at George Mason University

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

A sea of families, administrators and graduating seniors filled George Mason University’s EagleBank arena on Saturday to send off Alexandria City High School’s Class of 2022, the first class to graduate since the school’s name changed in July 2021.

The ceremony, which was called “Ushering in a New Era,” included a performance of the national anthem by students Erin Burns and Caroline Dav- enport, a speech from the city town crier, a gift of funding for the classes of 2023-2025 presented by Margaret Irvine, the Class of 2022 treasurer, and remarks from several students and school officials.

Alexandria City Public Schools Superintendent Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D., kicked off the ceremony by congratulating the seniors on their accomplishment and offering words of encouragement and comfort as they prepared for the future.

“All of you are working hard to achieve the ACPS vision of an equitable education that will take many of you to college, and to serve our country in the military, and to a new and exciting workforce that’s been shaped daily by the unprecedented pandemic,” Hutchings said. “At the same time, you have played an important role in the division’s mission of equity, helping to remove barriers, to provide an equitable education for all of our students regardless of their life’s circumstances. Titans of 2022, we celebrate your achievement today.”

Hutchings also called

Tending to the future

Nurse Aide Program offers career training for ACHS participants

BY KIM JACKSON

When the Class of 2022 graduated from the Alexandria City High School on Saturday, many of them did so with a plan for their future.

Michelle Andzie-Mensah is a graduating senior who also participated in the Nurse Aide Program, part of the Governor’s Health Sciences Academy. She and 15 other classmates chose and completed the Nurse Aide Pathway, during their junior and senior years.

“It just feels like I have always been thinking about what I want to do in my future, ever since the end of middle school. I have always been the kind of person that thinks ahead,” Andzie-Mensah said. “So, when it came to the point of me trying something out, that I felt I had the most interest in at that moment, I took the step

SEE NURSE AIDE | 9

SEE ACHS | 8

Port City Flavor

Elevate your next dining experience with restaurants that offer live music.

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Theatre Review

Prelude to a Kiss will melt away the quarantine blues.

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PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON

Two British Alexandria residents turned Queen Elizabeth II’s platinum jubilee into a neighborhood gathering. See page 12.
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APD arrests shooting suspect

The Alexandria Police Department made an arrest in connection with a fatal shooting that occurred on Monday, according to a news release.

Police responded to a service call at approximately 1:56 a.m. for a shots fired incident in the 1400 block of North Beauregard Street. They discovered a deceased male, later identified as Jonathan Cruz Villafuerte, 24, with a gunshot wound to his upper body.

The suspect, Enoc Cruz Villafuerte, 22, was arrested on the scene. He was charged with second degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, according to the release.

APD Public Information Officer Marcel Bassett confirmed that the two were brothers and that the investigation is still active.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact APD Detective Michael Whelan at 703-746-6228 or michael.whelan@alexandriava.gov.

‘Werewolf’ killer released from mental hospital

The man who brutally stabbed an Old Town store manager to death has been released from the mental health facility at which he was being held.

Pankaj Bhasin attacked Brad Jackson, 65, inside Window Universe on King Street in July 2018. Bhasin’s defense attorneys said that he drove from his home in New Jersey to Virginia in a psychotic state and killed Jackson because he thought he was a werewolf.

Prosecutors agreed to find Bhasin not guilty by reason of insanity in July 2019 and since then he has been held at the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute.

After three years Bhasin’s doctors declared him fit to leave the facility – under strict conditions. At the prosecutor’s objection, an Alexandria judge signed a conditional release.

The terms of Bhasin’s release include regular alcohol and drug testing, GPS monitoring, and Community and Services Board home visits. Bhasin will also be required to live with his parents.

ACHS seniors receive SFA awards

The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria awarded a record $1.2 million in scholarships this year to incoming college freshman and current college students that graduated from Alexandria City High School, according to a news release.

Two hundred and five students from the Class of 2022 were awarded a total of $600,000 in scholarships to support their higher education.

Brianna Jerez, who will be the first in her family to attend college, was awarded SFA’s largest scholarship, The Madelyn Anderson Memorial Scholarship. Jerez will be putting her $40,000 award toward a degree in criminal justice from Virginia Commonwealth University. Other scholarships included the Nancy Howard Scholarship for the Humanities, awarded to Samia Mers; the Technomics/Nancy Hylton Merit Scholarship, awarded to Helen Rodriguez; the Dream Team Arts Scholarship, awarded to Hamerati Fufa; the Amazon Corporate Partnership Scholarship, awarded to Brendan Smith; the 1971 Titans Scholarship, awarded to Bryan Wibowo; and the 21st Century Scholarship, awarded to Maham Malik.

Since 1986, SFA has awarded $18 million in scholarships to 5,200 graduates of Alexandria City High School.

SFA’s Board Chair, Priscilla Goodwin, thanked “the generosity of this community” to “make dreams come true.”
Taste of Del Ray winners announced

Following a weekend of eating and voting, the Taste of Del Ray festival announced winners in the 13th annual celebration of cuisine in the Del Ray neighborhood.

In the Judge’s Choice category, Bella Napoli’s Lobster Ravioli took first place, Matt & Tony’s All Day Kitchen + Bar’s Cornflake French Toast with Pecan Syrup took second, and Pork Barrel BBQ’s BBQ Nachos took third.

In the People’s Choice category, Spice Kraft Indian Bistro’s Avocado Banana and Beet Chaat took first place, Bella Napoli’s Lobster Ravioli took second, and Pork Barrel BBQ’s BBQ Nachos took third.

The event, hosted by the Del Ray Business Association, took a new form this year with festival attendees traveling to each restaurant over a three-day period. In past years, participating restaurants offered single-day tastings at one location.

Little Shop of Horrors receives award

Alexandria City High School’s “Little Shop of Horrors” won a regional high school theater award at the Kennedy Center on June 6. KD Bectel, Lyra Jaffe, Kate Schneider, and Tanween Syed received the Cappies Award for Props.

The Cappies is a high school theater review and awards program in which student critics vote on nominations and awards for plays and musicals. At the Cappies’ 22nd annual Gala, dozens of nominated schools were recognized for their excellence in performance and backstage work. Five schools were nominated in the Prop category with the ACHS crew coming out on top.

The cast and crew of “Little Shop of Horrors” received five nominations: Props, Ella Brumnooge for Sets, Stage Crew, Erin Burns for Best Female Vocalist and Stuart Conrad for Lead Actor in a Male Role in a Musical.

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

1-year-old Hildy is happy-go-lucky. This enthusiastic terrier-mix loves everything: playing, people, snuggling and life in general. Fully grown at 50 pounds, she’s the perfect companion to humans and other dogs, too. She’d love a home with an active lifestyle; long walks, hiking and tossing the ball.

**COVID Policy Revised - effective February 6, 2022. Please visit our website for details.**
CONGRATULATIONS
Alexandria City High School Class of 2022!

Alexandria City High School graduates have diverse postsecondary plans. We wish them luck in their future endeavors!

As of June 3, Alexandria City High School graduates are heading off to the following colleges and military institutions:

American Trade School; American University; Auburn University; Bard College; Boston College; Bowdoin College; Case Western Reserve University; Chatham University; Christopher Newport University; Clarkson University; Clemson University; Colby College; Colgate University; College of Charleston; Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art; Cornell University; Dartmouth College; Duke University; Duquesne University; Elon University; Fashion Institute of Technology; George Brown College, Toronto; George Mason University; George Washington University; Georgetown University; Hampden-Sydney College; Hampshire College; Hampton University; Ithaca College; James Madison University; John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Johnson & Wales University-Providence; Longwood University; Loyola Marymount University; Loyola University New Orleans; Lycoming College; Mary Baldwin University; Marymount University; Miami University, Oxford; Michigan State University; Morehouse College; Morgan State University; Mount Holyoke College; New York University; Northern Virginia Community College; North Carolina A & T State University; North Carolina State University at Raleigh; Northern Virginia Community College - Alexandria; Northern Virginia Community College - Annandale Campus; Old Dominion University; Pennsylvania State University-Penn State Main Campus; Princeton University; Purdue University-Main Campus; Queen's University; Radford University; Roanoke College; Rochester Institute of Technology; San Diego State University; Savannah College of Art & Design - SCAD; Seton Hall University; St Olaf College; St. Lawrence University; St. Paul’s School of Nursing; SUNY College at Oswego; Sweet Briar College; Texas State University; The Hague University of Applied Sciences; The New School; The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; The University of the South; Thomas Jefferson University; Trinity Washington University; Tufts University; Tulane University of Louisiana; University of California-Berkeley; University of California-Los Angeles; University of Colorado Boulder; University of Hawaii at Manoa; University of Mary Washington; University of Maryland-College Park; University of Minnesota-Twin Cities; University of Notre Dame; University of Oregon; University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus; University of South Carolina-Columbia; University of Virginia-Main Campus; University of Washington-Seattle Campus; University of Wisconsin-Madison; Vassar College; Virginia Commonwealth University; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Virginia State University; Wagner College; Wellesley College; West Virginia University; Whittier College; William & Mary; Worcester Polytechnic Institute; York College of Pennsylvania; U.S. Army; U.S. Navy; U.S. Air Force; U.S. Marine Corps.

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Chamber CEO Joe Haggerty, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilwoman Gaskins, 2022 Chamber Chair Angela Hartley of NIB, and Police Chief Hayes.

Chamber ALX holds Valor Awards

The Chamber of Commerce presented the 2022 Valor Awards on Wednesday to honor the city’s public safety personnel.

Presented by Inova Alexandria Hospital, the event included 42 honorees from the Alexandria Police Department, Alexandria Fire Department, Alexandria Sheriff’s Department and Department of Emergency Communications, all of which were nominated by their peers. A community valor award was also awarded to Old Town businesses for their vaccination clinics in 2021.

Notable attendees included Virginia Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Mayor Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, Councilors John Chapman and Alyia Gaskins, Police Chief Don Hayes, Sheriff Sean Casey and Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Duke.

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attention to the fact that this class is the first to graduate with the ACHS name. The school was previously named T.C. Williams High School after Thomas Chambliss Williams, a 30-year former ACPS superintendent who fought to keep schools separate and argued that Black and white students learned differently.

The namesake had received pushback for years, but pressure came to a head in 2020 after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. ACPS students spearheaded a movement to change the name of both T.C. Williams and Matthew Maury Elementary School, which was eventually approved in April 2021.

As a result, T.C. Williams became Alexandria City High School and Matthew Maury became Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School.

“Were so proud to stand here to watch you all receive the first ever diplomas from Alexandria City High School and to graduate here today as ACHS Titans,” Hutchings said. “This name is all made possible by your efforts and engagement in the award-winning The Identity Project. The Identity Project focused on coalescing the voices of the community, including yours, our students, with the aim of replacing names of schools reminiscent of a racist past, and renaming them to reflect a new era of inclusion.”

Also in attendance were several School Board members such as Chair Meagan Alderton, Vice Chair Jacinta Greene, and members Abdel Elnoubi, W. Christopher Harris and Michelle Rief. Mayor Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson and Councillors Sarah Bagley, John Chapman, Alyia Gaskins and Kirk McPike were also present.

ACHS Executive Principal Peter Balas awarded a posthumous diploma to senior Luis Mejia Hernandez, who recently died after being stabbed by a 16-year-old student during a large fight at Bradlee Shopping Center that involved 30 to 50 people. Hernandez’ uncle, Guillermo Romero, accepted the diploma on his behalf.

“The loss of Luis ten days ago is heartbreaking for his family, his friends, classmates, teachers and staff, and all of us who are part of this close-knit Titan community. Graduation is a milestone that all families look forward to, and we are shocked and saddened by this tragic loss,” Balas said.

“To the Hernandez family, please know that you are forever part of the Titan family. We are here for you now, and we always will be. We hold you in our hearts during this challenging time and we thank you for entrusting your son to us for his education.”

During the ceremony, Class of 2022 graduate Ana Reyes Araujo, spoke about her experience immigrating to the United States from Ecuador four years ago. She praised her classmates for their hard work to get to this point.

“I don’t care about your appearance, nationality, language, culture or religion. You matter now. And remember you always will,” Araujo said. “I’m proud of all of you here today. I want you to be bold. I want you to be successful in life. You all deserve it. We are a new generation. We are taking a special step for our lives.”

With a class of 809 graduating seniors, postsecondary plans vary. As of June 3, 562 students reported applying to a college or university; 22 plan to serve in the U.S. military; 30 plan to take gap years through various organizations; and 15 plan to attend trade schools to study technical, HVAC, dental assistant, electrical apprenticeship and automotive service trades.

The Class of 2022’s demographic is approximately 38% Hispanic, 28% white, 25% Black, 6% Asian, 3% multi and less than 1% American Indian/Alaska Native.

Following the speeches, students walked the stage to accept their diplomas, take photos and shake hands with officials. A sense of Titan pride permeated the air, which was further validated in Hutchings’ speech.

“As you all receive your diplomas today, you embark on a new pathway to the future – one that forges ahead with the strength and the spirit of a Titan because as some things change, being a Titan always remains,” Hutchings said.

“Remember, no matter where you go and what you do, you are a Titan, yesterday, today, forever a Titan.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com

Back to School

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VDH Virginia Department of Health | vdh.virginia.gov/backtoschool/
and I took the opportunity. And I feel like it paid out.”

The program works in partnership, offering dual enrollment with George Washington University for high school students.

“The Governor’s Academy is a partnership that we have at Alexandria City High School with the George Washington University, where we have these pathways that we offer students these opportunities to go into these certified programs. This guarantees them admission into the GW,” said Pam Hippolyte-Walter, a health and medical science teacher at Alexandria City High School and a coordinator for the Nurse Aide Program.

“I think it is a wonderful program. Being a registered nurse myself, I wish I had had that opportunity, going into high school,” Hippolyte-Walter said of the program, which allows students the chance to earn up to 12 credit hours for nursing school.

“We have got a dual enrollment person that actually works [along] with the students and they also have a high school counselor. So, the idea is they are taking the classes they need to graduate and a lot of the classes they are taking through the academy are elective courses,” Hippolyte-Walter said.

A large part of the program requires students to complete 50 hours of clinical work. Hippolyte-Walter said that work is done outside of school and with Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in Alexandria.

“With nursing homes, it’s like you are completely caring for someone, all around. It is not only feeding and making sure they are well dressed but it is also bathing them and just cleaning them up and things like that,” Andzie-Mensah said.

Woodbine Administrator Donna Shaw said she and her staff are proud of the C.N.A. graduates, and they believe the skills ACHS students have learned will open career possibilities for them.

“There is so much opportunity in the healthcare field and as a nurse myself, it thrills me to see these young women and men enter the field. Being a part of our local community means so much to me. We have been the clinical site for Alexandria High School for over 25 years and have seen so many of our local students go so far in their careers in healthcare,” Shaw, an RN, BSN and LNHA, said.

Joshua Walugembe said he was one of only two male students in the Nurse Aide Program. He said he came to the United States in 2019 with his family from Uganda.

“It was a great experience because the country I am from, like to get such an opportunity is, you can get it around the age of 25,” Walugembe said.

“Recently I took the written state board exams for nurse aide. So, I did pass it, so I am just waiting on taking the skills and if I do pass the skills, I will become a CNA, officially,” Walugembe said.

So far, of this year’s graduates, nine students, including Andzie-Mensah and Walugembe, have taken and passed the written exam and are waiting to take the practical part of the exam, according to Hippolyte-Walter. Others have registered but have not yet tested.

The Governor’s Academy also offers other areas of studies for students who choose them.

“In our high school, we have the Governor’s Health Sciences Academy and through our academy we have got the Nurse Aide program, we have Sports Medicine. We have an EMT program, we have a lab program. We were supposed to have a pharmacy program but that has not quite worked out in our favor as of yet,” Hippolyte-Walter said.

The Nurse Aide program has had up to 25 participants, according to Hippolyte-Walter. And because of the popularity, she expects the program to grow and expand with plans at the Minnie Howard campus.

“So, we are supposed to be getting a new campus with EMT getting their own bay, a bay area, where an ambulance can actually pull into, so students can actually see and feel like they are actually working with an emergency department or with a fire department. The nursing part, we are getting a brand new lab, where we can actually have two to three nursing stations, with patient rooms so we can actually feel more or give the students the feeling more, like they are actually in a health facility,”

See Nurse Aide
Metropolitan School of the Arts to present Royal Revue

Metropolitan School of the Arts is kicking off summer break with the Royal Revue, a spring dance production featuring popular fairy tale princesses and princes.

From June 16 to 19, more than 450 MSA students will perform the spring production with support from 200 volunteers. Directed by Sara Hart and choreographed by MSA and MSA alumni from Pace University, the show will depict a modern version of fairy tale royals with career updates and life lessons that mimic MSA student values.

The production will take place at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, located at 4915 E. Campus Dr. on the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. It will begin on June 16 and 17 at 6:30 p.m., and on June 18 and 19 at noon and 5 p.m. both days.

Tickets range from $21 to $23 per person. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org/tickets for more information.

Fusion holds annual STEAM fair

On a recent spring evening, students, staff and families gathered at Fusion Academy Alexandria for a school first: a movie premiere. Teachers chatted with parents and students roamed the halls as the anticipation built, awaiting the showing of an unusual documentary.

The school hosts an annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics Fair to highlight the variety of student achievement across the academic spectrum. While the fair has been virtual for the past two years, the event returned this spring with a modern video twist. Rather than having the works on display for people to wander through, this year featured a student-created documentary with a special focus on each project.

Each element of the documentary, from project ideas to editing the video, was student-led. Projects ranged from a replica of Captain America’s shield, an engineering project complete with fiberglass frame, to a small model of the ocean, with a mechanism to demonstrate how tsunamis form. Students explained their creations in the video, which was narrated and produced by others to be shown to parents.

The hush of the room was interrupted only by the sounds of laughter at the commentary and in awe of the creations.

“I couldn’t believe how creative and funny the kids were! The projects were awesome — there were robotics! — and the commentary was fantastic. I loved seeing their personality shine through,” an attendee said.

The audience left informed both about the scientific process and the educational activities in the classroom.

Alexandrians win National Merit Scholarships

The 2022 National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced winners of national merit scholarships, two of which are Alexandria students.

Alexandria City High School student Virginia Arnold won the University of South Carolina scholarship with a possible career in medicine, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology student Harold Margeta-Cacace won the Texas Tech University scholarship with a possible career in mathematics.

Arnold and Margeta-Cacace were among the high school juniors who entered the 2022 Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2020 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Then, last fall, more than 16,000 semifinalists were named on a state-representational basis in numbers proportional to each state’s percentage of the national total of graduating high school seniors. Those who had an outstanding academic record received an endorsement from a high school official and earned SAT or ACT scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance moved on to the finalist pool.

Additional recipients of the college-sponsored awards will be announced next month.
Out of the classroom
Education section

Grace Episcopal School held an assembly in which second graders met with Paralympic Gold Medalist Muffy Davis.

After suffering a skiing accident in the 1980s that left her paralyzed from the chest down, Davis went on to achieve her childhood dream of competing in the winter Olympics in which she won three gold medals.

Davis delivered a motivational speech, met with the students and allowed them to hold and try on one of her gold medals.

ILS students recognized for national Latin exam

Immanuel Lutheran School fifth through eighth grade students participated in the 2022 National Latin Exam, with 33 students receiving awards in recognition of their outstanding performance on the test.

Five ILS students earned gold summa cum laude, the highest recognition awarded. Nine students were awarded silver maxima cum laude, nine were awarded magna cum laude and ten earned cum laude.

Additionally, four recent ILS graduates studying Latin III in high school at Oakcrest School were recognized for their performances on this year’s NLE, earning three gold medals and one silver medal.

ILS students begin the formal study of Latin in third grade, with study continuing through eighth grade.

St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes fourth graders partnered with the Kids for Kids Program, a curriculum that fosters philanthropic disposition in children.

SSSAS students work with philanthropy program

For the last several weeks, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes fourth graders have been working with the Kids for Kids Program — an experiential curriculum that nurtures a philanthropic disposition and agency in children.

Through the program, students explored the rights of all children, developed perspective-taking skills around various challenges and learned about great local solutions to solve community problems. The values discussed in the program align with the school’s Social Responsibility and DEIB work, including community, equity, inclusion, empathy, altruism, dignity and empowerment.

The program culminated in the students collectively deciding how to allocate $1,000 to a local organization and drafting personal giving pledges, or declarations of their philanthropic intentions moving forward.

At the celebration in late May, the students voted for the donation to go to The Center for Alexandria’s Children.

Paralympic Gold Medalist Muffy Davis spoke to Grace Episcopal School second graders and allowed them to hold her medal.

The Center for Alexandria’s Children

Immanuel Lutheran School Congratulates our Class of 2022!
Fit for a queen

British-Alexandrians host Queen Elizabeth II’s platinum jubilee
BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

In honor of Queen Elizabeth II’s 70 years on the throne, Old Town Village transformed on Saturday into a spirited celebration consisting of British flags, deserts, tiaras, and of course, a cardboard cutout of the queen herself.

The neighborhood event included a parade and children’s party with arts and crafts, where both kids and adults were encouraged to dress “properly” in order to truly celebrate the occasion. Then, during the adult celebration, guests imbibed, tasted everything from the Victoria sponge cake to the coronation chicken – which was served during Queen Elizabeth II’s 1953 coronation – and took photos with the queen cutout.

Two British citizens and Old Town Village residents, Freda Woolridge and Paul Taylor, came up with the concept as a way to both celebrate the queen and bring together the townhouse community.

Taylor said the idea was inspired by the many street parties that occurred in celebration of the queen’s golden jubilee in 2002 and her coronation in 1952.

“So, we took the idea of having a street party. We thought, ‘Well, it would be nice to have one here. We’ve got a few Brits,’” Taylor said.

“We just thought it was a marvelous opportunity to celebrate the achievement of a wonderful human being,” Woolridge added.

Resident Betsy McCormack attended the event in a vibrant pink gown, jewelry and a sparkly tiara. While answering what brought her out that night, another partygoer walked by and complimented McCormack’s outfit.

“[What brought me out here] is being told that!” McCormack laughed. “I just thought this would be fun, you know? I don’t think I’ve ever worn this necklace before.”

Alexandria wasn’t the only place to celebrate the 96-year-old queen’s reign; an estimated one billion people around the world tuned in for the official “People’s Pageant” at Buckingham Palace on Sunday.

Queen Elizabeth II, who took the throne in February 1952, after her father, King George VI, passed away, is the first British monarch to reach a platinum jubilee, which marks 70 years on the throne.

“The queen has done a great job,” Woolridge said. “When she became queen, she made a commitment to her people, which included at the time a lot of countries around the tropics which form the Commonwealth, and she has kept that commitment. She’s been absolutely committed to her people.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com

NURSE AIDE

Hippolyte-Walter explained.

The nursing program is not new, as Woodbine Director of Nursing Florence Debra was a 1991 graduate of T.C. Williams High School who completed a precursor to the current program, and became an LPN, or licensed practical nurse.

“Being a product myself from Alexandria high school formerly called T.C. Williams high school I can only attest to how excellent the Alexandria High School Nursing program is. They have highly qualified clinical instructors who push you to excel in all areas,” Debra said.

While the students are gaining clinical and work experience, the program is promoting interest in the nursing field, which is facing a growing shortage of nurses.

Joshua Walugembe is planning to work as a certified nurse aide as soon as he can, and will be starting college in the spring semester of 2023.

Andzie-Mensah plans to attend college in the fall but is not sure if she will work or focus solely on her studies.

“Currently I am planning on attending a four-year college and I will be majoring in nursing. I plan on getting my bachelor’s of science and nursing and then after that I would get some experience for a couple of years and then try to become a nurse practitioner,” she said.

A two-year commitment in the program promises college credit and career focus for high school students.

“Overall, I think it was a great experience. I learned a lot. I saw a lot. I got to mess up and fix things and improve. It was a great learning experience,” Andzie-Mensah said.

-kimjacks@hotmail.com
Rockin’ Pneumonia is one of the many acts that has graced the Light Horse’s stage for a night of live music.

Easy on the ears

Local bars and restaurants offer free live music to enhance their culinary offerings

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

While some people like a quiet ambiance for their dining experience, others enjoy unobtrusive live background music with their evening repast. Still others seek out lively pubs or follow favorite local musicians to the restaurants and bars where they perform. Alexandria is fortunate to have numerous music venues within city limits that are known first and foremost as restaurants or bars. These gems also feature live music for those wishing to enjoy a euphonious evening along with their meal or drinks.

Here are some places where you might consider elevating
LIVE MUSIC
FROM | 13

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Blackwall Hitch holds Sunday Brunch every week, featuring the stylings of jazz musician Rodney Kelley and occasional guests.
PORT CITY FLAVOR

LIVE MUSIC FROM | 14

Cuisines, from pan-seared salmon to smoked wings to double-grilled cheeseburgers.

The Light Horse also features local pop-rock bands Thursday through Saturday night that play “up-tempo, party cover music,” according to booking agent Duncan Cameron.

“It’s all songs people know and [can] sing along to,” Cameron said. “We don’t do originals because people aren’t interested. They just want to come and sing along.”

The Light Horse consists of two floors open to the public, the first of which is a cocktail and dinner bar and the second of which is much larger and includes a small stage, dance floor and television.

Light Horse Owner John Jarecki said the restaurant has been holding live music since it opened in 2008. Currently, there are about 20 to 25 acts that rotate performing.

“We’ve vetted and worked with and have a great relationship with [them], so we’ve got a pretty good thing going,” Jarecki said.

Jarecki said that the free live music is what has kept people coming back throughout the years.

“They love it. It’s what has kept us going through some hard times,” Jarecki said. “They may not know the act, they may not know who it’s going to be, but they know that we always have quality in there and that it’s going to be a fun band.”

Bistro Sancerre

Bistro Sancerre, located at 1725 Duke St., might be popular for its French bistro fare and steaks, but as of a few months ago it can also add live music to the roster.

The motivation stemmed from a desire to incentivize patrons to stop by the restaurant, which is located slightly out of the way.

“We’re not right on that downtown part, like right by the water, so we added music to get people to come up to our side of town,” Thorpe said.

Now, Bistro Sancerre offers a rotating list of musicians on Thursday nights from 6 to 8 p.m., sometimes on the patio if weather permits. One of the regular artists is vocalist Dian Wilson, who specializes in rock, soul, R&B and jazz.

“The music is] usually contemporary jazz, or easy listening, Frank Sinatra kind of stuff,” Thorpe said.

According to Thorpe, the reception has been warm. Since the addition of the live music, Bistro Sancerre has seen a mixture of regulars as well as fans of the local performers.

“That worked out well,” Thorpe said. “It makes for a really nice night. Instead of just eating, the music makes for more of an overall experience.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com
It's summer, which means picnic season is in full swing. The Washington, D.C. area is full of places to steal away and have a picturesque outing in nature, and Alexandria is brimming with nature preserves and small picnic areas near the Potomac for an easy-access mini getaway.

Picnics can be elaborate or consist of a blanket, baguette and a bottle of wine. It's your choice and that's the beauty of dining al fresco. The blanket is a pretty important feature of any picnic. The options in choosing an appropriate blanket for your excursion are vast. Think of something that is soft, waterproof and can be rolled up and carried like a tote. Invest in a good blanket and you will always be ready for a one-day vacation.

Here are some other ideas for packing the perfect picnic. Start with a great container. A traditional picnic basket is always top of mind, but if you don't have one, a snazzy cooler or larger neoprene lunch bag will work just fine. You can slip some flat freezer packs in between your food items to keep cool during your time outdoors.

Enamel plates are easy to pack and are practical — you can load them up with baked beans and various salads, and they won't get soggy and collapse. They also look and feel cooler than plastic, and are way better for the environment than disposable dishes. If you don't have enamel plates, then a sturdy paper plate will do, but the best approach is to pack finger foods so you can avoid plates and utensils altogether.

Foods with built-in handles, like chicken drumsticks, fruit on skewers, and corn on the cob, are all inherently picnic friendly. Pinwheel sandwiches, frittata cut into small squares and cut-up veggies with easy dip are all items to consider for an easy to clean up gathering. If you want to finish with something sweet the choices are endless. Small, bite size truffles, mini brownies, cookies, pound cake that is sliced and individually wrapped or strawberries, banana chunks dipped in cream cheese fruit dip.

Easy clean up is a breeze with a package of moist towlettes or handi wipes. Use small dish towels for napkins as they are absorbent and can double as a place mat. Pack a small garbage bag or paper bag for all disposable items at the end of your picnic. You don't want to leave a mess for another visitor to have to clean up.

As far as beverages, a bottle of wine is always welcome, but canned wine is lighter to carry, and of course there's no need to remember to pack a corkscrew. Lighter canned hard seltzer might be just the thing for summer, but if you like something stronger, there are lots of cocktails you can batch ahead of time and bring along in large Nalgene bottles. Most boutique wine shops carry beverages to take to outdoor events like concerts, plays and picnics. Also, think of screw top bottles of wine and sparkling wine which don't require a corkscrew either.

We all know that connecting with the outdoors is good for our wellbeing and has restorative effects on our mood and disposition. Isn't that a perfect reason to pack a picnic and hit the trails for a mini adventure in nature?

The writer is the owner of Wine Gallery 108 in Old Town. She is a certified wine professional, a nutritionist in a previous career and an accomplished artist.

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Summer is here, and we’re all enjoying the sun. There are outdoor events, pool parties and lazy afternoons relaxing with friends. We all know that wine habits shift to whites and rosés this time of year, but I want to stand on a table and proselytize for sparkling wines.

Perhaps it is wise to establish why you should bother with my opinion. Everyone, I think, has had the experience of a droning sommelier talking past or over them. I’ve made a career out of – mostly – not being that guy. I remember my first mentor in this industry reminding me constantly to not get so worked up about spoiled grape juice or to first pair wine with people before trying to pair it with food. I learned a long time ago to measure my success more by how happy my guests were and whether they came back than by the number of certifications or awards I could accumulate. So, I’ve worked to find the best wine for every person I’ve served or, more recently, helped in the shop.

Anyway, back to sparkling wines. We all know that opening a bottle of great Champagne is the traditional way to celebrate a great victory. But what about the little triumphs? Finishing the dishes, sending the kids to camp, treating yourself to a concert under the stars or just getting through the day – these all deserve a bubbly reward. If, like almost everyone, Champagne just isn’t in the cards for that crazy Thursday when your greatest accomplishment was not screaming at anyone, then I have a wonderful secret to share. You have options that are within reach. Here come some elevator pitches.

Crémants are traditional method wines – meaning they’re made the same way as Champagne, but from grapes other than Pinot Noir or Chardonnay. They’re nearly always dry and come from all over France, Luxembourg and even Germany. If you’re looking for something that’s a bit more accessible, consider Crémant d’Alsace or Crémant de Bourgogne. Both are made by the traditional method and offer a range of styles from dry to off-dry, perfect for any occasion.

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Champagne is – from all over France, Luxembourg and even Germany that can approach Champagne prices, but mostly sit in the $18-$30 sweet spot. They’re nearly always dry, like Brut or Brut Nature, and are easier to enjoy than the serious stuff with its brioche and savory flavors.

Sekt from Germany and Austria, while a little more toward the top end of the price sweet spot, really over-delivers in terms of flavor and varietal character, being made from high acid varietals.

In addition to being the cool kid sparkling wines, Petillant Naturel wines from the Loire Valley can go a bit far in expressing “natural” character, but the best examples are fresh and taste exactly like a perfect summer day.

Cava, despite a reputation for being cheap and having neutral bubbles – I’m looking at you, Freixenet – is a downright ridiculous value. Delicious, refreshing, and truly flavorful Cava can be had for well under $30 if you go to the right place to get it, and that does not include the supermarket.

Finally, I’ll ask you to expand your idea of what to include in the category of “sparkling.” We’re in Virginia and, if you don’t know it, the Commonwealth has one of the richest traditions of apple growing in the Americas. There are loads of old orchards filled with heirloom naturalized apple varieties that can’t be found anywhere else. There are cider makers in Virginia taking full advantage of this and making truly world class and delicious dry and slightly off-dry ciders from them.

As far as recommendations for specific bottlings, I encourage you to find an independent, locally owned wine shop near you, go in, and tell them you want sparkling wine.

When they ask what occasion it’s for, tell them it’s to celebrate another day of (relative) sanity. Watch how happy that wine professional is to help you select the perfect bottle and know that you’re forging a new alliance with someone who lives in your community. I can also promise you that small shop has better wine than what you’ll find on the shelves of a national or regional chain supermarket. If you want to support the local economy and support small artisans around the world, then your local wine shop is one of the best places to do just that.

Now go get your bubbles!

The writer is manager/sommelier at Le Vintage.
An antidote to the quarantine blues
BY JORDAN WRIGHT

A nifty little romantic fantasy this way cometh from The Little Theatre of Alexandria. "Prelude to a Kiss" is the perfect antidote needed to brush away the quarantine blues. For those who remember the film starring Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan, this will be a fun and lively reprise.

The rom-com with a message penned by playwright/actor Craig Lewis tells the story of a young couple who meet and fall in love in a split second. Rita (Brianna Goode) is a bartender at The Tin Market. Her politics drift toward socialism. Sorta. She's an incurable insomniac and lifelong cynic. Peter (Smithchai Chutchainon) on the other hand is conservative yet freewheeling. Will it work out? Think James Carville and Mary Matalin.

Enter Rita's parents Dr. Boyle (Jon Radulovic) and his wife Marion (Christine Tankersley). Well-off and living in the tony suburbs of Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, they welcome Peter into their lives and after a steamy, whirlwind courtship – the production has an "intimacy choreographer" – the young couple wed.

At the wedding a stranger appears, an elderly man (Cliff Rieger) who kisses the bride and wishes her well. But the stranger's kiss transfers his soul to Rita's. I flashed back to the Disney film "Freaky Friday" that employs a similar conceit wherein the mother switches bodies with her daughter – and assumes her offspring's teenage, angsty experiences.

On their Jamaican honeymoon, Peter quickly notices that his wife has become both feisty and fearless and resolves to get to the bottom of her peculiar transformation. "It's as if she had switched channels," he observes. The "new" Rita tries to convince Peter that she is the same person and when they return from Jamaica, she reads the real Rita's old journals to mimic her behavior and attempt to regain Peter's love. How Peter bravely tries to restore Rita to her true self demonstrates the power of love.

There are some excellent performances, most especially by Radulovic who has a history of performing in some of D.C.'s leading theaters and shows his pro acting chops here; Rieger who delivers an impassioned soliloquy on Life and Death in Act II; Liz Leboo who came in at the last minute to replace Tankersley and whom I hope we'll see a lot more of; the shirtless, sexy and wonderfully intense Chutchainon who shines when he breaks the fourth wall in search of the truth; and Goode, who proves to be the perfect sultry and vulnerable complement to Peter.

With Casey Knisley as Taylor; Joey Pierce as Tom; Brendan Chaney as Uncle Fred; Deja Elliott as Aunt Dorothy; Amber Kelly-Herard as Waiter; and Kelly Trott as Leah.

Produced by Carol Strachan and Alan Wray; directed by Maggie Mumford; set design by Peter Mumford; lighting design by JK Lighting Design; sound design by David Correa; costume design by Mary Wallace; and intimacy choreographer, Ruben Vellekoop.

If you go:
Run dates: Through June 25.
Where: The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria, 22314.
For tickets and information: Call the box office at 703-683-0496 or visit www.TheLittleTheatre.com. Strict COVID-19 protocols are in place for all performances. Check the website for details.

Jordan Wright writes about food, spirits, travel, theatre and culture. Visit her website at www.whiskandquill.com or email her at Jordan@WhiskandQuill.com.

Smithchai Chutchainon (Peter), Joey Pierce (Tom), Cliff Rieger (Old Man) in the LTA production of 'Prelude to a Kiss.'
These five tips will increase style and function

BY FAMILY FEATURES

Whether you’ve purchased a new house or are just looking to invest in what is likely your largest asset, home improvements can make your living space more comfortable, functional and stylish.

Homebuyers are looking for practical home amenities that allow them to live, work and play – such as dedicated home offices, backyard retreats, home gyms and more – without having to worry about any potential future restrictions caused by the pandemic, according to a survey by Zolo of more than 3,300 new homeowners and potential first-time buyers in 2022.

Consider these popular upgrade ideas to create a space built for your family’s needs that can also increase resale value down the line.

**Home office**

At the height of the pandemic, many professionals found themselves working remotely – a trend that continued as restrictions were lifted. In fact, 46% of survey respondents listed a dedicated office space as a must-have when purchasing a new home. When creating this space, keep function and efficiency top of mind. Build your home office around a desk – either standing or traditional – then consider additions like an ergonomic chair and keyboard, soft light desk lamp, mood-boosting plants and a white board to stay organized. Don’t forget to add flairs of personality like artwork, knick-knacks or photos of loved ones to make it your own.

**Skylights**

By improving the overall look and functionality of dark spaces, such as home offices where natural light can improve creativity and productivity, an option like skylights can increase the value of a home, and 55% of new homebuyers rated skylights as desirable or essential, according to

SEE HOMES
research from the National Association of Home Builders. For rooms that need brightening, skylights can free up wall space for storage while adding abundant natural light and increasing ventilation. An option like Velux No Leak Solar-Powered Fresh Air Skylights help rid indoor air of bacteria, volatile organic compounds and carbon dioxide.

Over the long-term, high-quality skylights can also help reduce carbon emissions and home energy consumption, saving money on household bills, according to Urban Grade. Remote-controlled models can be opened to bring fresh air inside, and with light-filtering or room-darkening shades homeowners have maximum control over the exact amount of light they want. Plus, solar-powered shades come in more than 75 colors and patterns, allowing homeowners nearly endless customization options.

**Backyard retreat**
Perfect for hosting friends, dining al fresco or simply relaxing with the backdrop of nature, 48% of survey respondents cited a backyard retreat as a must-have home amenity. Start with a deck or patio, then customize your outdoor living space to meet your family’s wants and needs. Weather-proof furniture can add comfort while features like outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, fans and lighting can create a connection to your indoor areas that add both style and function.

**Walk-in pantry**
If you want to add a pantry in your kitchen, you’re not alone. Walk-in pantries found their way onto 48% of respondents’ lists of must-haves. To get started, consider your storage needs to determine the amount of space you’ll require and remember to vary shelving heights to maximize space. Open shelving can also be combined with additional counter space, cabinets, pull-out organizers and other features to help match the design to the rest of your kitchen.

**Home gym**
Another trend that rose in popularity amid the pandemic, home gyms can take on a variety of shapes and sizes, utilizing available space in the garage, basement, a spare bedroom or even the backyard. Providing more time to fit workouts into your schedule, home gyms can be customized with equipment most important for your lifestyle. From yoga mats, jump ropes and free weights to treadmills, ellipticals and benches and racks, your space, budget and goals can help in the creation or update of a dedicated, in-home workout space.

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**HOME OF THE WEEK**

Old Town Gem

Sited in Old Town’s South-east Quadrant and originally built around 1800, this home was thoughtfully renovated and enlarged with high-quality materials throughout. Reclaimed heart of pine floors, solid wood doors, Baldwin hardware, custom made kitchen cabinets and Viking appliances. This home is a must see offering two/three bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms. Shops, supermarkets, restaurants and schools are all within a few blocks.

The spacious living room features a gas fireplace and two sets of French doors that lead to the well landscaped two-level brick patio. A custom-made china cabinet is the centerpiece of the dining room. The main level also offers a powder room.

A skylight brightens the stairwell to the upper-level bedrooms. The large primary bedroom has a wonderful ensuite bathroom, multiple closets and two sets of French doors overlooking the patio. A convenient laundry area is located between the two bedrooms. The secondary bedroom also has an ensuite bathroom with a jacuzzi tub, storage and a walk-in closet.

The lower-level family room incorporates a full bathroom, cedar closet and additional storage. This space can easily function as an additional guestroom.

The charming cottage-like structure at the rear of the property contains a one car garage with excellent storage space and a studio on the upper level. The studio has a full bathroom and a kitchenette that is pre-plumbed for refrigerator, stove and dishwasher. Pre-plumbing is also in place for a washer/dryer on the garage level.
Celebration weekend

It’s wonderful to focus on happy occasions rather than tragedies. Fortunately, there was a lot to celebrate in Alexandria this past weekend, as is highlighted in three stories in this week’s Alexandria Times.

First, the inaugural graduation ceremony for Alexandria City High School was held on Saturday, see page 1 story, “First ACHS class graduates.” It was a long, contentious struggle to remove the name T.C. Williams from the façade of Alexandria’s only public high school, a move that we advocated for on these pages dating back to the mid-2010s, and this is the first class to graduate since the name was changed last July.

While the name change does not detract from the many thousands of students who graduated from T.C., there’s also no denying that it’s special to be the first class graduating from ACHS. Those 809 graduating seniors will long remember this day, and not just as a marker for one of the significant transitions in their lives.

We also celebrate the 16 students within ACHS who graduated from the Certified Nurse Aide Program, a collaboration between ACHS, Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center and George Washington University. The program is part of the Virginia’s Governor’s Health Sciences Academy, which promotes careers in the health sciences.

These graduates – 14 women and two men – have a head start on good-paying jobs in a high-demand field. We commend them for their hard work and their forward-thinking about career paths at a young age. We also thank Woodbine for its 25 years of serving as a training ground for these fledgling healthcare workers. That is true community partnership!

We also congratulate the Bishop Ireton Class of 2022, which graduated on Saturday at a ceremony held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Last, but not least, we’re glad Alexandrians joined in the celebration of the platinum 70th jubilee festivities of Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II. See page 12 story, “Fit for a queen.” Queen Elizabeth is 96 and reportedly in ill health, which makes this jubilee all the more poignant.

This most public of figures has served – the days of monarchs actually reigning were over by the time Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1952 – with decency. She’s been a figure of stability in a world that has undergone tremendous upheaval during the last 70 years. One doesn’t have to be a monarchist nor an anglophile to appreciate Elizabeth the person.

Perhaps we all feel that we understand her a bit better after watching the Netflix series “The Crown” or “The Queen,” a 2006 movie in which the actress Dame Helen Mirren won an academy award for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth. According to Wikipedia, Queen Elizabeth was so impressed by Mirren’s portrayal that she extended her an invitation to dinner at Buckingham Palace.

British Actor Sir Michael Caine, in his 1992 autobiography, “What’s it all about,” describes a dinner he attended in Los Angeles at which Queen Elizabeth was the guest of honor. After a while, the queen became bored by the guest seated next to her, leaned around him and asked Caine to tell her a joke. According to Caine, he bemusedly spent the rest of the evening swapping jokes with Queen Elizabeth.

Our heartiest congratulations all around: to the first graduating class of Alexandria City High School, to the graduates of the Certified Nurses Aid Program, to the Bishop Ireton Class of 2022 and to her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, on jobs well done.

City’s priorities are wrong

To the editor:

The recent announcement from the city, “Alexandria Police Department Makes Changes to Service,” cryptically titled to obscure the degradation of police services, is disturbing if not worse.

The main priorities of a municipal government are supposed to be public safety and health. Not so in Alexandria, demonstrably. Note the city’s strategic priorities for 2022, no mention of such. But plenty of mention of otherwise just causes that obscure the degradation of the already densest city in Virginia.

This is no criticism of the Alexandria Police Department, which is full of dedicated professionals. I attended the Alexandria Citizens Police Academy, something I highly recommend to everyone.

This is a criticism of City Council and city staff. I hear Alexandria’s police are one of the bottom in pay for the D.C. metro region, which has something like 13 jurisdictions. Reports are that morale is low in the police department.

Mike Brown, who was Chief of the California Highway Patrol and Safety Director at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, resigned abruptly. I wonder why?

I recall formerly seeing frequent reports of shots fired, carjackings, purse snatchings and more, which seemed to indicate an increase in crime. Haven’t seen any lately. Has the crime situation improved, or is the news being suppressed?

And don’t forget the stabbing death of a high school student recently. Our current situation was totally predictable and evitable from the mecca of misplaced priorities and mismanagement at 300 King St.

Hopefully the new city manager can fix this, but it will be an uphill battle for him.

-Brittany Hinkle, Alexandria
Alexandria needs a maritime museum

To the editor:

Katie Cannady was spotted in her letter in the May 19 Alexandria Times, “Put the fourth ship in a museum” on the need for a ship, and shipping, museum in Alexandria.

A world-recognized maritime archaeologist calls the Alexandria finds “epic.”

Beyond the ships are other finds, such as intact hardtack, a hard biscuit baked at a waterfront bakery for consumption at sea in the 1700 and 1800s.

Alexandria’s rich history begs such a museum. The genesis of the city was a 1600s tobacco wharf at the foot of Oronoco Street, which became a tobacco inspection station for products going to England.

Gen. Edward Braddock arrived there in 1755 with 23 ships and kicked the French and Indian War into high gear. That war planted the seeds for the American Revolution. Gunboat galleys were built in Alexandria and used in that war. An unconfirmed report is that a couple of Alexandria-built gun galleys that engaged the Royal Navy in 1776 are at Mallows Bay Marine Sanctuary.

In 1814, the Royal Navy seized Alexandria and threatened to level the town to ashes. The same ships sailed on and attacked Fort McHenry, giving us The Star Spangled Banner. In Windmill Hill Park, there was a rail spur of the United States Military Railroad, headquartered in Alexandria, which shipped railcars downriver on barges to supply the Army of the Potomac.

A historian told me that arguably that’s the first case of intermodal shipping. Battery Rodgers, abutting that park, was built in part to protect against Confederate ironclads attacking Washington. U.S. Navy ships positioned here for the same purpose. By the way, D.C. was sited where it is in part because of the Port of Alexandria and the services provided. Don’t forget the Alexandria Canal, connecting with the C&O Canal by an aqueduct across the Potomac.

Ships were built here, with shipping activity across the Atlantic and beyond.

Virginia Shipbuilding was at Jones Point. When you visit there, you’ll see the National Park Service has done a much better job of displaying the city’s nautical history than the city has.

And Alexandria is blessed with replica Continental Navy sloop Providence, John Paul Jones’ first command and the first American ship to land Marines on foreign soil.

In my time there I spoke with countless visitors, both from the area, from out of state and foreign. Many of them said they love the history and charm of Alexandria and were back on a return visit or would be coming back again.

Alexandria is especially blessed with this history and heritage, and the pendulum needs to shift from the current trend of “wannabeing” like the cookie cutter National Harbor and The Wharf. We should instead capitalize on the city’s real strengths.

-Hal Hardaway, formerly of Alexandria

City Hall Watch

Making Alexandria less affordable for all

BY BILL ROSSELLO

In its quest to make housing affordable in Alexandria, city hall may have been its own worst enemy. An astonishing 74% of residents are now challenged by housing affordability, according to data from the fiscal year 2023 budget that City Council approved a few weeks ago. Not just those in the lower income levels are struggling, but nearly three-quarters of everyone.

While market forces have been the major driver again recently, a consistent contributing factor over time has been city hall’s financial management. As in many recent years, residents will feel the pain as dramatic increases in property assessments and fees are driving tax bills way up, making Alexandria even less affordable for residents.

Officials explained this as a difficult budget year within the context of high inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic, but this year is no aberration. City budget data over the past decade betrays an ongoing trend of large increases in tax and fee burdens on residents. That burden for the average homeowner in Alexandria has increased from about $5,200 to more than $8,000 over that timeframe. This reflects an average annual increase of 4.4%, more than double the average 2.1% inflation rate over the same period.

So, how has this happened? For decades now, city councils have habitually deferred big-ticket capital projects over many years. Both are debt, which pays for most capital improvements. The cost of servicing the city’s debt, which pays for most capital improvements, has increased from about $5,200 to more than $8,000 over that timeframe. This reflects an average annual increase of 4.4%, more than double the average 2.1% inflation rate over the same period.

The tipping point on deferral has crept up dramatically, while felony indictments are way down. The quality and safety of our schools are declining. Many residents are flooded out every time we have a hard rain. The worst part of commuting is getting out of – or back into – our own city. And we keep getting threatened with destruction of our scarce natural parkland.

Interestingly, the ever-increasing financial burden on residents corresponds with an astounding 14% increase in Alexandria’s population – 19,501 net new residents – between the 2010 and 2020 census reports. That fact seems to contradict the claim from city officials that density would pay for itself. It has not.

Perhaps the only reasonable conclusion is that city councils of the last 12 years, and probably much longer, have been complicit in creating the problem they now characterize as an “affordable housing crisis.” Based on the city’s own financial data, it certainly seems that way.

The writer is a civic advocate, management consultant and long-time Alexandria resident.
Alexandria and the Star-Spangled Banner

Alexandria might have little to do with the creation of Flag Day, but do you know how our city connects to the writing of our national anthem? While accounts differ on the origin of the design of the American flag and the origin of Flag Day, the poem written by Francis Scott Key titled “The Defence of Fort M’Henry,” is acknowledged as the basis for our national anthem. And Alexandria had a part to play in the writing of that poem.

Accounts differ about the design of the first American flag as we now know it. While tradition held that it was first designed and sewn by Betsy Ross, current research favors the claim of Francis Hopkinson, a delegate to the Continental Congress from New Jersey, as the designer of our original flag.

Like the disagreement about the origin of our flag, there are competing stories about the origin of Flag Day. The Wisconsin educational Bertrand Cigrand petitioned Congress repeatedly to declare June 14 as Flag Day, starting in 1885. In 1889, Professor George Bloch, the principal of a free kindergarten in New York City, instituted the observance of Flag Day on June 14, a tradition followed by all public schools in New York from then on.

Thanks to the efforts of the Society of Colonial Dames, Pennsylvania was the first and still only state to observe Flag Day as a holiday, starting in 1937. While Woodrow Wilson, in 1916, and Calvin Coolidge, in 1927, issued presidential proclamations on Flag Day, Congress approved the national observance of the day in 1949 but did not establish it as a holiday.

Although Alexandria cannot lay claim to either the design of the U.S. flag or to the origin of Flag Day, it did contribute to the birth of our national anthem by delaying the British navy in 1814. The delay allowed Fort McHenry to reinforce its defenses and inspired Francis Scott Key to pen his poem. The five-day occupation of Alexandria, starting on August 29, 1814, in which city officials surrendered to the British forces in exchange for not destroying the city, delayed the British arrival in Baltimore and contributed to Fort McHenry’s ability to defend itself.

The American forces respected the cease-fire in Alexandria, but as the British ships sailed south to Belvoir Neck, the site of Fort Belvoir today, they fired artillery at the British from an elevated position. While the ensuing “Battle of White House Landing” – named after a nearby building, and not the United States’ President’s residence – did not sink a single British ship, the damage done to the British fleet forced the British to delay their arrival at Fort McHenry. Francis Scott Key’s lines “The rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air” reference shots from the very same ships that had left Alexandria more than a week earlier.

After being released by the British, Key checked into the Indian Queen Hotel in Baltimore, run by John Gadsby, the former owner of the Alexandria City Hotel, now known as Gadsby’s Tavern Museum. Key finished penning the four verses that now make up “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Indian Queen Hotel.

For more information on Alexandria and the War of 1812, please visit https://www.alexandriajava.gov/1812.

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

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**Weekly Poll**

**This Week**

What do your warm weather activities include in Alexandria?

- 44% Using the G.W. Parkway bike path.
- 35% None of the above.
- 9% More than one of the above.
- 6% Attending the Festival of Speed & Style.
- 5% Attending Alexandria Aces games.

**This Week**

Did you attend a celebration last weekend?

- A) Yes, I attended a graduation or graduation party.
- B) Yes, I attended a Queen Elizabeth II celebration.
- C) I attended more than one celebration.
- D) I celebrated by spending time outdoors.
- E) No.
Weekly Words

ACROSS

1. Place to insert a flash drive
2. In the thick of
3. Students' opponents in some basketball games
4. What CO2 emissions spoil
5. Close associate
6. Poet and painter Gibran
7. "OK, no more after this"
8. South American city named after the first month
9. To boot
10. To come
11. Jelly container
12. Even once
13. Most ideal states
14. Mouth-related
15. Heats in a kiln
16. Fauna counterpart
17. Widening in a machine shop
18. Widening in a machine shop
19. Pure gold's 24
20. Trade (rhyming industry in Myanmar)
21. What a very gentle person wouldn't do
22. Name hidden in "Trinidad"
23. Form of wrestling
24. Oohs and ___
25. Not remain impartial
26. Previous
27. Become less radiant
28. Become less radiant
29. Sleep it off, say
30. Substance found in hives and herbal stores
31. Question of bravery
32. Surname that sounds like a graceful bird
33. Tick off
34. To-go container?
35. Unleash a tirade
36. Undergrad linguistics degrees
37. Vehicles on snow
38. "You can talk to me"
39. Control access, informally
40. Artworks made of tiles
41. Rapid descent

DOWN

1. Bruins' Golden State sch.
2. Wooden strip
3. Most ideal
4. Coast line?
5. Previously recorded
6. Singer Bonnie
7. Basketball great Duncan
8. Opera solos
9. Word before "board" or "ring"
11. Colorful treatment at a salon
12. Bernardino
13. Story whose title character is barely seen?
14. Vibrant
15. Heats in a kiln
16. Fauna counterpart
17. Year
18. Year
19. Trade
20. Year
21. Element No.
22. Pieta
23. Take away
24. "Pipe down!"
25. Bengaluru's country
26. Genesis creator
27. Jekyll's jerkier counterpart
28. Payoff to a landlord
29. Southeast Asian language
30. State south of S.D.

Solutions from last week

MALOY ADAMS (82), of Alexandria, June 2, 2022
ROSS J. CAMERON (73), formerly of Alexandria, June 3, 2022
LAWRENCE C. GENE (92), of Alexandria, June 2, 2022
CAROL E. MAYER (83), of Alexandria, May 31, 2022
MARY M. MONZUK (69), of Alexandria, May 28, 2022
NELSON A. RAMIREZ (41), of Alexandria, June 4, 2022
NANCY GASCOIGNE RICHARDS (99), of Alexandria, May 25, 2022

JUMBO FREESTYLE 1 by Erik Agard, edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS

18. Widening in a machine shop
19. ___ brulee
20. Pure gold's 24
23. ___ trade
26. What a very gentle person wouldn't do
28. Name hidden in "Trinidad"
30. Agree
31. Perfectly
32. Perfectly
33. Exonerated Five
34. Form of wrestling
35. Form of wrestling
36. Not remain impartial
37. Previous
39. Become less radiant
40. Sleep it off, say
41. Substance found in hives and herbal stores
42. Question of bravery
43. Surname that sounds like a graceful bird
45. Tick off
47. To-go container?
48. Unleash a tirade
49. Simplifies
50. Fabric folds
51. Unpleasantly long
53. Ones at home in Stockholm
55. Lid for a camera
57. Person you'd love to date
58. Year
59. Year
60. Year
61. Year
62. Year
63. Year
64. Year
65. "What are you waiting for?!"
66. Previous
67. Sleep it off, say
68. Substance found in hives and herbal stores
69. Question of bravery
70. Surname that sounds like a graceful bird
71. Previous
72. Sleep it off, say
73. Substance found in hives and herbal stores
74. Question of bravery
75. Surname that sounds like a graceful bird
76. Tick off
77. To-go container?
78. Unleash a tirade
79. Simplifies
80. Fabric folds
81. Unpleasantly long
82. Ones at home in Stockholm
83. Lid for a camera
84. Person you'd love to date
85. Year
86. Substance found in hives and herbal stores
87. Question of bravery
88. Surname that sounds like a graceful bird
89. Tick off
90. To-go container?
91. Unleash a tirade
92. Simplifies
93. Fabric folds
94. Unpleasantly long
95. Ones at home in Stockholm
96. Lid for a camera
97. Person you'd love to date
98. Year
99. Year
100. Year

DOWN

1. Bruins' Golden State sch.
2. Wooden strip
3. Most ideal
4. Coast line?
5. Previously recorded
6. Singer Bonnie
7. Basketball great Duncan
8. Opera solos
9. Word before "board" or "ring"
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97. Person you'd love to date
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99. Year
100. Year
ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 2022

The items described below will be heard by the Planning Commission and the City Council on the dates and times listed below. NOTICE: Some of the items listed below may be placed on a Consent Calendar. A consent item will be approved at the beginning of the meeting without discussion unless someone asks that it be taken off the Consent Calendar and considered separately. The Planning Commission reserves the right to recess and continue the Public Hearing to a future date. For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/dockets.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022
7:00 PM, CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2022
6:00 PM, CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

The June 23, 2022 Alexandria Planning Commission Public Hearing and the July 5, 2022 Alexandria City Council Public Hearing are being held in the Council Chamber (301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314) and electronically. Members of the Planning Commission, City Council, and staff are participating in-person. The Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearings can be accessed by the public in the City Council Chamber, through the live broadcast on the government channel 70, streaming on the City’s website, and can be accessed via Zoom Webinar by the following links:

Planning Commission (Public Hearing Webinar):
The Zoom Webinar will open at 6:30 p.m. to allow individuals to join, while the Planning Commission hearing will begin at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Registration Link:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_G3x7zoQmTO-XLzMeDWbscQ
Zoom Audio Conference:
Dial in: 301-715-8592
Webinar ID: 921 0355 0868
Password: 670184

City Council (Public Hearing Webinar):

Registration Link:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_l6iOoomet8RланRE_KICG9A
Zoom Audio Conference:
Dial in: 301-715-8592
Webinar ID: 920 2398 1004
Password: 705725
If you use the Zoom Webinar application, please be sure you have updated the application to the latest version for the best results. If you are unable to access the Zoom Webinar, please use the Dial-In number to access the meeting.

Public comment will be received at the meetings. The public may submit comments in advance to Department of Planning & Zoning staff at PlanComm@alexandriava.gov for the Planning Commission Hearing; to the City Clerk at CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov for the City Council Hearing; or make public comments on the day of either hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation for the Planning Commission Hearing, contact Jackie Cato at jackie.cato@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711. For reasonable disability accommodation for the City Council Hearing, please call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council’s Office at 703.746.4550 (TTY/TDD 838-5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00005
Bonus Height
Initiation and Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend section 7-703(B) to allow bonus height to be utilized in zones with 45 foot height limits and prohibit the use of bonus height for single-family, two-family, or townhouse dwellings.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

Master Plan Amendment #2022-00002
Master Plan Amendment #2022-00001
Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00007
Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00006
Rezoning #2022-00004
Rezoning #2022-00003
Coordinated Development District Conceptual Design Plan #2021-00004
Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) CDD - 1300 North Royal Street
Initiation of and Public Hearing and consideration of requests for:
(A) an amendment to the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to amend the Old Town North Urban Design Standards and Guidelines to add the Old Town North –Urban Standards and Guidelines addendum for the PRGS site and adding the Design Excellence Pre-Requisites and Criteria for the PRGS site (B) an amendment to the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to change the Rec-
OBITUARIES

Nancy Gascoigne Richards

Preservationist and Antiquarian

Nancy Gascoigne Richards, of Alexandria, Virginia and Newcastle, Maine died on May 25, 2022, at the age of 99 of natural causes in her home in Alexandria. For decades she had been an activist and community leader in the cause of historic preservation, a natural outgrowth of her family’s antiques business. Richards was born on Dec. 14, 1922, in Brooklyn, New York and attended Rye Country Day School and the University of Maine. After World War II, she had a career in fashion photography working in New York City as office manager for Milton H. Greene and later for Otto Maya.

In 1951, she married and moved to Alexandria, where she renovated several historic properties as homes for her growing family. Drawing on her knowledge of antiques, Richards became a grass-roots activist for the cause of historic preservation, serving active roles in the Alexandria Association, the Old Town Civic Association and the Historic Alexandria Foundation.

In 1960, she was one of the Alexandria “housewives” who led the effort to “Save Our Safeway,” which preserved a walkable grocery store in Old Town. In 1964, she was the original Board Secretary of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association during its formation and acquisition of the Athenaeum in Alexandria as a chapter of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

During the height of the protracted struggles over urban renewal in Alexandria in the 1950’s and 1960’s, Richards was a constant advocate for the preservation of historic structures, protesting proposals for their demolition and scavenging the rubble of lost buildings for reusable doors, mantelpieces, moldings, flooring and 18th century bricks.

Bandana ‘round her hair, and children in tow, she haunted auctions houses and antique shops in search of hidden gems as a buyer for Maine Antiques in Newcastle, Maine. Her flair for combining antiques and the work of contemporary artists made her house in Old Town a featured venue for charitable house tours and fundraisers. On April 12, 1965, her house at 124 S. Fairfax St. was one of the first 25 awarded a plaque to create the Early Building Survey of the Historic Alexandria Foundation.

In 1970, the Richards moved to their family house in Annapolis, Maryland, where she continued her work in historic preservation as a member of the Board of Historic Annapolis, Inc., the Hammond Harwood House, the Chase-Lloyd House, and a charter member of the Londontown Foundation, providing expertise and leadership on the furnishing committees of all those museums.

The Richards’ moved back to Alexandria in 1984. She is predeceased by her husband of 62 years, John Thorpe Lawrence Richards, and survived by three daughters, Mary Tolley Bartlett, of Chevy Chase, Maryland; Margaret Gracie Coit, of Cape Elizabeth, Maine; Frederica Gore King Struse, of Annapolis, Maryland; and a son, John Thorpe Lawrence Richards, Jr., of Alexandria, together with eight surviving grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Alexandria at 11 a.m. on June 16, 2022.
Your style is unique, I’ve got you covered.

1912 Duffield Lane
Offered at $829,000

2316 Windsor Road
Under Contract

6028 Grove Drive
Under Contract

214 E. Del Ray Avenue
Under Contract

1900 Jamestown Road
Represented Buyer

6122 Edgewood Terrace
Represented Seller

1324 S. Glebe Road
Represented Seller

9319 Maybrook Place
Represented Buyer

303 Yale Drive
Represented Seller

1826 Duffield Lane
Represented Seller

2218 Windsor Road
Represented Seller

1787 Duffield Lane
Represented Seller

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