Latinos have best mortality rate, whites have worst statewide outcomes

BY THOMPS0N ESKEw

COVID-19 has been with us for so long now that it’s difficult to remember how suddenly the tsunami of fear, infection and then death crashed upon us in March 2020. In those early days before vaccinations, mask-wearing protocols or even adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, entire communities were caught off guard.

For more than 50 years, former Mayor Kerry Donley called the City of Alexandria home.

Former Mayor Kerry Donley dies at 66

Kerry was a great model as a strong political leader... He will be sorely missed.”
– Tim Lovain, former City Councilor

Kerry Donley, former Alexandria mayor and Living Legend, died on the evening of July 13 from an apparent heart attack. He was 66.

A longtime resident of the city, Donley was known for being an ardent and devoted community leader – he served multiple terms as Alexandria’s mayor and vice mayor – as well as a banker and a family man.

In the preceding hours before his death, Donley had been delivering Meals on Wheels to needy residents, and in the days and weeks prior to that he had gone on multiple long-distance bike rides. His sudden death came as a shock to many community members, who immediately began sharing memorials, condolences and love for Donley.

“I’m still, like a lot of people, not able to really comprehend something that no one saw coming,” David Speck, a former city councilor and close friend of Donley’s, said.

Speck has been working on writing a eulogy to explain just what it was that made Donley special. According to Speck, it came down to his sincere dedication to solving problems and hearing all sides.

“It was this sense of ‘Here’s a problem, here’s an issue, here’s something that is confusing us. How do we fix it?’ I said the mantra was ‘Call Kerry,’” Speck said. “He was so broadly involved in every aspect of the community that you really could see the effects of his leadership.”

Former City Councilor Tim Lovain remembered Donley as a steadfast public servant and committed father to five daughters.

“Kerry was a great model as a strong political leader, as a citizen dedicated to helping those in need and as a ‘girl dad,’” Lovain said. “He will be sorely missed.”

Born Feb. 1, 1956, in Sioux

Vol. 18, No. 29
Alexandria’s only independent hometown newspaper.

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Sports

The Alexandria Aces secured a spot in the upcoming league playoffs.

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Better with Age

Meet community helper and city fixture Pat Miller.

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COVID-19 Death Rate* by Ethnicity

*The death rate is based on COVID-19 data on cases and deaths as of July 18, 2022 taken from the Virginia Department of Health website. The Times calculated the rate from this data.
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Double murder suspect charged with burglary

Two men were shot to death the morning of July 16 after a botched residential burglary at 7:28 a.m. in the Assembly Alexandria apartment complex in the 100 to 200 blocks of Century Drive, according to a police report.

The victims, Adrian Dejesus Rivera Guzman, 48, and Juan Carlos Anaya Hernandez, 24, were innocent bystanders to the burglary when they were both shot in the head by suspect Francis Deonte Rose, 27.

The suspect is in custody on burglary charges and police said other charges are expected.

According to ALXnow, Alexandria police radio traffic at the time suggested that the burglary suspect was the ex-boyfriend of an apartment resident and was known to carry a gun.

This is not the first time Rose has been in trouble with the law, as he has previously been arrested in D.C. and Arlington County.

In D.C., he was charged with carrying a pistol without a license, bench warrant, possession of unregistered ammunition and possession of an unregistered firearm. In Arlington a year later, he was charged with intent to manufacture, sell or distribute cocaine and fentanyl as well as possession of a gun and ammunition by someone convicted of a felony within the past 10 years, according to ALXnow. Rose was released from jail in Arlington after these charges were dropped following a judge's decision to suppress evidence that the judge ruled had been illegally obtained, ALXnow reported.

The investigation is ongoing and anyone with related information should reach out to APD Detective Stephen Riley via phone at 703-746-6225, email at Stephen.Riley@alexandriava.gov or call the non-emergency line at 703-746-4444.

GW alumni to hold marker dedication

The George Washington High School Alumni Association will dedicate a Virginia Historical Marker on the front campus of the former high school, which is now George Washington Middle School, on Saturday at 11 a.m.

The marker will commemorate the history of the high school, which opened in 1935 and operated until 1971, and its historical significance to the City of Alexandria.

The four-year high school changed to a junior high school with grades 7–9 in 1979, and subsequently became a middle school with grades 6–8 in 1993.

In the event of heavy rain, the ceremony will be moved to Sunday at 11 a.m. Admission is free and more ceremony information can be obtained from Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net or 703-389-1505.

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Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana opened in Alexandria on Monday.

Pepe’s Pizza opens new location in Alexandria

Alexandria celebrated the opening of Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana’s second DMV location in Alexandria Commons Shopping Center with a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 18.

Attendees to the ribbon cutting ceremony included Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, City Councilor John Chapman and Chamber of Commerce CEO Joe Haggerty.

The business, widely known as “Pepe’s Pizza,” is the originator of New Haven-style pizza, characterized by a crispy and slightly charred crust. The new Alexandria restaurant is modeled after the original New Haven location, featuring a 104,000-pound brick oven and a “paddle area” where pizzaiolos – trained Italian pizza makers – create the pizzas on an oak wood table and use 16-foot-long paddles to place them in the oven.

The 97-year-old, family-owned and operated eatery was founded by Frank Pepe in 1925, after Pepe had immigrated to the United States in 1909 at the age of 16. The business opened its first DMV location in March at Bethesda’s Montgomery Mall.

“There’s a special energy and excitement in the DMV that aligns perfectly with our restaurant,” Sean Barry, general manager of Frank Pepe’s Alexandria, said. “The Bethesda community welcomed us with open arms and we are thrilled to soon debut in Alexandria.”

-hardy@alextimes.com

APD accepting Police Academy applications

The Alexandria Police Department is officially accepting applications for the 47th session of the Community Police Academy, according to a news release.

The Community Police Academy teaches residents about the ins and outs of policing, from administrative philosophies to guiding principles of the law and ethical conduct. According to the release, sessions will offer a combination of lectures and interactive activities, as well as cover subjects like patrol operations, gangs, crime prevention and crime scene investigations.

Beginning on Sept. 7, sessions will be held every Wednesday from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at APD’s headquarters. A graduation ceremony will take place on Nov. 9.

Participants who graduate from the program are asked to donate at least 10 hours of volunteer service to the city. Class size is limited to 15 participants, who must be at least 21 years old and commit to attending all seven sessions.

For more information on the application process, visit police-department/community-police-academy. The deadline to apply is Aug. 5.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

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City, Iowa, Donley spent his early childhood years in South Dakota before moving to Alexandria with his family when he was 7 years old. Aside from attending college at Marquette University, where he earned a political science major and English minor, Donley called Alexandria home for more than 50 years.

Early on Donley demonstrated an interest in politics, perhaps due in part to having parents that were senior staff members of former South Dakota Sen. George McGovern. John McCaslin, an author and old friend of Donley’s, recalled the first day he met Donley at his family home in 1972. Donley’s younger brother, Scott, had invited him over to swim in their pool, but McCaslin instead found himself in a peculiar situation.

“I was seated in the family’s rec room listening to Kerry recite verbatim Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. And when he was finished with that impressive recollection of American history he turned, and I kid you not, to JFK’s inaugural address,” McCaslin said. “I always regretted Kerry not seeking national office, but our Virginia district has few congressional seats to fill and he was foremost and forever loyal to those who held onto them. I have no doubt whatsoever he would have risen to the top.”

Although Donley never ran for national office, he left an indelible mark on the City of Alexandria. It’s the place where Donley and his wife, Eva, raised their daughters and where he’s made numerous contributions over the years, from his stints as a city councilor, vice mayor and mayor. Donley was Alexandria’s mayor during the Sept. 11 attacks and helped lead the city through that day and its aftermath. He also helped attract the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office headquarters to the city and served from 2005 to 2008 as athletic director at T.C. Williams High School, now called Alexandria City High School.

Former T.C. Williams Principal John Porter, whose tenure overlapped with Donley’s for one year at the school, remembered Donley as someone who showed authentic regard for those around him.

“Kerry was a good friend whom I got to know well due to his service in local government and the nonprofit community in our city,” Porter said. “In addition to his knowledge of the city and professionalism, he brought a sincere caring and concern for those with whom he worked and an uncanny ability to interact with students.”

Donley was first elected to City Council in 1988, garnering the most votes among candidates to become vice mayor in 1994. He was then elected mayor in 1996 and served two terms in that post before stepping down in 2003. Donley wasn’t done with politics yet, however, and ran again for City Council in 2009, for the second time receiving the most votes to become vice mayor, a post he held for one term. In 2015, Donley announced that he would chal-
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DONLEY

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challenge incumbent Mayor Bill Euille, and both men lost the Democratic primary to challenger Allison Silberberg.

Euille, who previously served with him on council, expressed shock at hearing the news of Donley's death and praised the former mayor's longtime commitment to the city.

“He was a very kind gentleman, caring and a strong leader. He will be missed. Kerry was a team player and ensured that Alexandria was significant and respected within the region,” Euille said. “He was instrumental in helping to negotiate a settlement for a new Woodrow Wilson Bridge, leading and advocating for the economic recovery after 9/11. I very much enjoyed working with him and serving as his vice mayor.”

Although Donley was a Democrat, he was respected by people on both sides of the political aisle. Republican Bill Cleveland served on council with Donley and was his vice mayor from 1991 to 1993. In an Alexandria Republican City Committee press release, Cleveland acknowledged that while the two often differed on policy, with Donley there was always a sense of courtesy.

“He was always respectful, thoughtful, and well-informed. He had outstanding leadership skills, truly worked to serve our community, and will be missed by all who knew him,” Cleveland said. “I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing and extend my sincere sympathies to his family and friends.”

Professionally, Donley worked as a banker for more than 40 years, starting in 1979 at Crestar Bank. He then was senior vice president of Virginia Commerce Bank until 2014, and most recently, senior vice president at John Marshall Bank.

Donley spearheaded the resolution for reconstruction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and directed efforts to fund Samuel Tucker Elementary School and Beatley Library, leading to his citywide reputation as a champion for economic development.

Donley also served on a plethora of nonprofit organizations such as the Democratic Party of Virginia, Virginia Municipal League, Center for Alexandria’s Children, Alexandria United Way, Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy and Carpenter’s Shelter, the latter of which he was instrumental in building up.

He received a lifetime achievement award from Volunteer Alexandria in 2016 and was named to Carpenter’s Shelter Wall of Honor in 2015.

In 2017, Donley was named an Alexandria Living Legend for his contributions and achievements.

Though Donley made a significant mark on Alexandria, Paul Smedberg, who served with Donley on council and as his representative on the Budget Financial Affairs Advisory Committee, called attention to the importance of Donley’s respect throughout the region as well.

“Donley was a man of many talents; he was a leader, a family man, a community servant, and a political figure. He was a very kind gentleman, caring, and a strong leader,” Smedberg said. “With Donley on council and as his representative on the Budget Financial Affairs Advisory Committee, I had a unique opportunity to work with him, and I think his contributions and achievements were significant. He was a man of integrity and honor, and he was always a safe and reliable voice in the city.”

“Donley spearheaded the effort to build the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge. He was a leader in the community, and his contributions were significant,” Smedberg said. “In addition to his work on the bridge, he was also a leader in the community, and his contributions were significant.”

Donley’s family expressed their gratitude for the outpouring of community support, remembering him as someone who made life “beautiful, easy and fun.”

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“He’d get up early, go down for an hour or so, and was quite happy with the solitude of sitting there with his rod and usually catching something, and then quite proud to show off what he caught,” Speck said, laughing.

Donley’s family expressed their gratitude for the outpouring of community support, remembering him as someone who made life “beautiful, easy and fun.”

“To us he was more than just a husband, father and grandpa, but also a teacher, moral compass, jokester, the biggest cheerleader, and, as he affectionately referred to himself, ‘the MAN,’” the family said in a statement.

They expressed a commitment to live by the message Donley wrote in a recent Fa-
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ther’s Day letter: “Your job going forward is to use your talents and your values to contribute to society, to instill in your children these same talents and values, and to live your lives recognizing that the world around you will be better because of you.”

Donley is survived by his wife, Eva Shamblin, five daughters, Kristin, Kaitlin, Colleen, Cara and Kelsey, and five grandchildren.

A visitation will be held at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home on Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m., and again from 5 to 7 p.m. with a prayer service at 6:30 p.m. A funeral mass at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church is set for 11 a.m. on July 25 with a private interment to follow. Everly-Wheatley is located at 1500 W. Braddock Road, and Blessed Sacrament Church is at 1427 W. Braddock Road.

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COVID-19 FROM | 1

devices, it was front-line – and often low-wage – workers who contracted the new coronavirus in staggeringly high numbers.

In the May 21, 2020 Alexandria Times, we ran the story “COVID-19 hits Chirilagua hard” about how the city’s Latino population came down with COVID-19 at a disproportionate rate: Hispanic/Latinos accounted for 59% of the city’s cases in those first two months of the pandemic.

Yet even then, an interesting corollary to the case data was emerging: Latinos had dramatically better outcomes per case of COVID-19 than either whites or Blacks. Despite accounting for more than half of Alexandria’s diagnosed COVID-19 cases as of May 21, 2020, Latinos accounted for only 16% of the city’s deaths at that point in time.

More than two years later, this trend of significantly better outcomes per case for Latinos still holds true. Better COVID-19 outcomes for Latinos can be partially explained by the fact that they’ve received the COVID-19 vaccine at a much higher rate than either Blacks or whites in both Alexandria and Virginia as a whole.

But the vaccine wasn’t yet available in May 2020 when this trend first appeared. In searching for another way to compare medical outcomes across these three groups, we examined maternal mortality numbers and found that there, too, Hispanic/Latino maternal mortality numbers are lower than those of either Blacks or whites.

In an effort to explain these mortality trends of ethnic groups from COVID-19,

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COVID-19

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we spoke with Natalie Talis, population health manager for the Alexandria Health Department; Dr. Vivek Sinha, chief medical officer of Bellevue Medical Partners; and Dr. Basim Khan, executive director of Neighborhood Health in Alexandria. Dr. Rina Bansal, president of Alexandria Inova Hospital, did not respond to requests for comment prior to the Times’ print deadline.

COVID-19 data

Latinos in Alexandria and statewide have by far the lowest death rate per COVID-19 cases of the three main ethnic groups of whites, Latinos and Blacks, while Blacks have the worst outcome per case in Alexandria. Perhaps the most shocking data point is that whites have the worst outcome per COVID-19 case statewide of Virginia’s three major ethnic groups.

In Alexandria, Blacks have a death rate of .82% per case of COVID-19, with 61 total deaths out of 7,427 cumulative cases of COVID-19 through July 18, 2022, according to the Virginia Department of Health website. The Black death rate per COVID-19 case is more than double that of Latinos in Alexandria, as Latinos have a death rate of .39% per case of COVID-19, with 30 deaths out of 7,712 cumulative cases.

The white death rate per case of COVID-19 in Alexandria is between that of Blacks and Latinos, at .66%, with 85 deaths out of 12,873 cumulative cases, according to data found on the Virginia Department of Health website. The white death rate per case in Alexandria is 110% higher than that of Latinos, while the Black death rate per case is 169% higher than that of Latinos in Alexandria.

According to Talis, it is difficult to discern trends from the raw numbers provided by the Virginia Health Department.

Talis said that the most important factors the Alexandria Health Department looks for when determining causalities between racial and ethnic groups include age, underlying health factors and other factors that might be relevant to the time at which the data was collected.

“She is impacted and why will also help us address some of those other chronic conditions and concerns that continue to exist here.”

The role of vaccines

A second finding derived from Virginia Department of Health data is that the rate of vaccination – defined here as at least one dose of a vaccine – is strongly correlated with significantly better COVID-19 health outcomes in Alexandria and statewide.

In Alexandria, white residents have the lowest vaccination rate, at 71.1% of the eligible population, with the Black rate only slightly higher at 74.2%. Conversely, Latinos in Alexandria are almost fully vaccinated, with a 95.1% rate of inoculation against COVID-19.

Statewide, whites have a slightly higher vaccination rate than Blacks, at 67.4% to 65.2%, while the Latino vaccination rate statewide is 85.5%.

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COVID-19

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Across Virginia, Latinos, the ethnic group with a vaccination rate more than 25% higher than that of whites or Blacks, have a COVID-19 death rate per case that’s between one half and two-thirds lower than either group, according to Times calculations based on Virginia Department of Health data.

Sinha emphasized the role of preventative care in improved medical outcomes.

“Primary healthcare ... the frontline people, the people you go to first, is based on a trust relationship,” Sinha said. “... There are different socioeconomic classes, and we know that people who have an established physician, a primary care doctor who focuses on preventative health, just tend to do better in general with all sorts of conditions.”

According to Sinha, efforts have been made to provide care to those without ongoing access to healthcare.

“COVID really brought to light the differences that we see in access to healthcare. We have some of the best healthcare in the country, it’s just an access problem that we have. It’s not the same across the board,” Sinha said. “There’s been a tremendous amount of outreach and focus on ethnic minorities.”

Sinha referenced the political polarization surrounding outreach programs that emphasized ethnic minorities. These programs appear to have been extraordinarily successful in minimizing severe COVID-19 outbreaks in Virginia.

“I have never seen politics and healthcare so intertwined [as they are now]. ... Decisions should be made by medical personnel,” Sinha said.

Further evidence of the efficacy of vaccines in minimizing deaths from COVID-19 can be garnered from data surrounding gender, vaccinations and COVID-19.

In Alexandria, 90.6% of women have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and women have less than a half percent death rate per case, 44%, with 87 deaths out of 19,866 cases. City men are vaccinated at an 84.6% rate, and have a death rate per case of .63, with 108 deaths out of 17,186 cases.

As with ethnic groups, the statewide vaccination rate is lower and the death rate higher for both men and women, though again, women statewide in Virginia are vaccinated at higher rates than men, 85.5% to 78%, and have a lower death rate per case, 97% as opposed to 1.26%.

Khan said one explanation for women’s better outcomes is that they tend to take advantage of healthcare opportunities more than men generally.

“One reason why women might have a higher vaccination rate is because we’ve noticed that they tend to engage in healthcare more than men do. When you engage in healthcare, it’s more likely that you have conversations with healthcare providers. You have the opportunity because you are already seeking out healthcare. It’s more likely that you have a primary care doctor who you trust and have known for some time, who will be able to advise you on vaccinations,” Khan said.

Khan also spoke to the politicization of vaccinations and outlying factors that have not been reported.

“Since we’ve had vaccines available, that has entered into the mix as a variable as well,” Khan said. “... Whether it is really because of age or underlying condition, or whether there is some biological underpinning aside from the vaccination question, is unclear.”

Beyond COVID-19

In an effort to find another health metric to compare to the COVID-19 trends, we looked at maternal mortality rates for Latino, Black and white women for 2019, the last year when data would not have been impacted by the pandemic. We were unable to find state or local breakdowns with ethnic data, but national data is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

The CDC reported that Black women had an average maternal mortality rate of roughly 44 per 100,000 live births in 2019. This rate is far worse than those of white and Latino women, with white women having a maternal mortality rate of 17.9.

Latinas again had it by far the best health outcome, with a maternal mortality rate of 12.6. Latino women had better outcomes than either Blacks or whites in every age category for which there was statistically valid data, according to the CDC.

Khan emphasized the importance of prenatal care in maternal mortality outcomes.

“One thing that I would want to talk about on this is potentially access to early prenatal care. I think that is a very important factor, and it is something that we’ve been trying to do; to expand access to prenatal care so that patients are able to get it early and so that they have a trusting relationship throughout their pregnancy, to help support them through the process and through the underlying delivery,” Khan said.

While prenatal care is not the only factor, Khan emphasized its importance.

“It is a part that we as an organization focus on and try to make sure everyone in our community has access to,” Khan said.

Khan also cited underlying social and economic factors as potential factors.

“They play a big role. There’s been a lot of talk about trust in the healthcare system, and underlying experiences with racism and discrimination. If that is impacting how someone engages with the healthcare system, I think that can be a challenge. There is also the issue of underlying comorbidities,” Khan said.

This trend of better health outcomes for Latinos than either whites or Blacks from COVID-19 was consistent both before and after the availability of COVID-19 vaccines. It also held true when looking at an entirely different health metric, that of maternal mortality.

Khan and Sinha emphasized the need for people to avail themselves of medical care in their communities, something that Latinos appear to have done in large numbers both in Alexandria and Virginia as a whole during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The writer is a rising senior at Christopher Newport University majoring in English with a minor in political science. Denise Dunbar also contributed to this story.

Obituary

Llewellyn B. Bigelow, MD

(June 4, 1936 – July 12, 2022)

Lew Bigelow died at home on the evening of July 12 due to heart failure. He was 86. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Deborah Ellis Bigelow, daughters Anna and Isabel, son-in-law Luis Castro, and granddaughter Lucia, as well as many other family members and friends. He was a resident of Old Town, Alexandria since 1966. A psychiatrist, Lew did clinical brain research at the National Institutes of Mental Health at St. Elizabeths Hospital and then at the Bethesda headquarters. After retiring, he continued to work with colleagues on projects up until the day he died. Lew also had many clients in private practice over decades. A memorial will be held at a later date. Donations in his memory to the National Alliance on Mental Illness or the Alexandria Seaport Foundation are welcome.
Aces head into playoffs

Team secures 10-4 win over Giants, second place standing in league
BY LIANA HARDY

The Alexandria Aces defeated the Gaithersburg Giants 10-4 at the city’s Frank Mann Field on Saturday, ending their three-game losing streak and helping them clinch a spot in the upcoming league playoffs.

The victory has put the Aces back on a winning path for the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League Championship Series that will be held July 29 to 31, where they will compete against six other teams located in the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland metropolitan areas. The Aces now hold second place with a 20-10 record, trailing only last year’s champion Bethesda Big Train, which stands at 24-8 and has won the majority of league championships.

Saturday’s game was an important one for the team, according to Assistant Coach Jennifer Hammond, with the Aces bouncing back from their three previous losses to continue one of their best seasons in the organization’s history.

“I am thrilled because we started getting the big hits again and we started coming up with the rallies that we needed the last few games,” Hammond said. “It’s been a little bit of a challenge, but the guys are grinding and they know that this is the time of year that we really have to dig deep.”

The summer collegiate team, which recruits players from college baseball teams all around the country and even outside of the United States, attracted a crowd of about 40 fans at the game, many of whom were families with little league players. Young children and parents wearing their “Prime Time Aces” shirts, representing Alexandria’s little league team, crowded the stands and weathered the heat to cheer on the college players.

Several young girls and teenagers also sported their “DC Girls Baseball” shirts in honor of “Girls and Women in Baseball Day,” a sponsorship event hosted by the Aces for Saturday’s game. The event highlighted the few all-girls baseball programs in the area, and honored Assistant Coach Hammond, the only female coach in Cal Ripken League history.

After tying 1-1 in the first two innings, the Aces secured a 5-2 lead over the Giants by the end of the fourth inning. The Aces then scored five runs in the seventh inning with two doubles and a triple. Seventh-inning runs by outfielder Mike Eze and infielders Adam Tellier and Connor Offshack, along with hits from infielders Brendan Harrity and Eddie Hacopian, boosted the Aces’ lead to 10-4, which the Aces pitchers upheld by shutting out the Giants during the last two innings.

Eze, a rising junior who plays for Georgetown University during the school year, credited the team’s pitchers for his successful outfield performance and praised the batters for a series of hits later in the game.

“The pitchers were really throwing strikes today, helping us out as defenders, getting balls hit right to us,” Eze said. “And our hitters did really well on scrapping runs.”

Head Coach Chris Berset hopes the momentum from Saturday’s win will continue to energize the players as they enter the playoffs and help them “all come together.”

“We’re going to try and make a push for it,” Berset said. “I told these guys we develop early and then at the end of the season, we’re here to win this thing. It’s going to take a collective group effort, but we got the guys to do it.”

Except for returners Adam Tellier and Connor Offshack, the Aces team is made up of all new players from last year. Several players hail from nearby areas in Northern Virginia, but others come from colleges across the country, with four players coming from outside of the United States: two from Canada’s University of the Fraser Valley and two from Jiangning Community College in China. With only two returning players in a team of 34 members, it can be hard for the all-new roster to jump into playing five to six games a week, according to Tellier, a rising junior at Ball State University.

“We have a whole-different team. We play a different style of baseball than we really did last year, but we’ve been able to put it together and really kind of come together as a team and have been able to get a pretty good amount of wins, and hopefully spur us into the playoffs,” Tellier said.

Some Aces teammates are also former opponents in their college leagues, according to Tellier’s father Mark Tellier, who traveled from Michigan to watch Saturday’s game, which makes building team chemistry a crucial first step of the season.

“You’ve got to be able to build a family in days rather than weeks or months to be able to be as successful as they are,” Tellier said. “For Adam specifically, he’s actually playing with competitors in his own league back at normal college. There’s guys from Western Michigan on the same team, so they had to get over that little hurdle: being competitors, now teammates.”

While away from their regul-
ACS FROM | 13

ular college teams, many Aces members stay with host families during the summer. Finding temporary homes for the players is always a challenge, according to majority owner Frank Fannon, but many Alexandria families with children playing little league or interested in baseball have stepped up to host players.

Adam Tellier, who is spending his second summer with an Alexandria host family, said that being away from home for so long can be difficult, but his host families have welcomed him into Alexandria as both a player and a mentor for the “little Aces.”

“Being away from home all summer, it gets a little lonely, but it is what it is, just grind it out,” Tellier said. “It’s been cool to live in a different place and kind of experience a little [of] different things.”

The impact of the players on their younger mentees does not go unnoticed at each of the Aces games, according to Coach Berset, who pointed out the team’s two little league helpers dutifully collecting gear in the dugout and the many young fans studying the team roster and running to look for foul balls by the stands.

“It’s unbelievable, because these little guys are looking up to players from Vanderbilt, seeing all these guys. And you can see their eyes get a little bit bigger,” said Berset, who also co-owns and is general manager of Prime Time Baseball, a baseball academy and elite travel baseball team. According to Berset, some Alexandria little league players go off to play college baseball, with the community impact “coming full circle.”

The Aces also work to inspire their young female fans, many of whom still pursue playing baseball despite the push for girls to switch to softball, according to Assistant Coach Hammond. Hammond said that Saturday’s “Girls and Women in Baseball Day” was a way for the Aces to motivate girls to stick with the sport.

“I think for our girls that want to play baseball despite the push from college coaches, the Aces provide a platform for them to see that they’re embraced and that there’s a place for them,” Hammond said. “We try to remind them that we have some programs where they can come out, play the game that they love, not be the only girl, find some sisterhood there, and continue to be in an environment that, once upon a time, was not necessarily so welcoming.”

The Alexandria Aces’ last home game of the regular season is Saturday at noon on Frank Mann Field. The team will hold its first home playoff game on July 25.

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Aces Assistant Coach Jennifer Hammond, the only female coach in the Cal Ripken league, Hammond understands the challenges women face in the heavily male-dominated sport. She hopes that her position and work on the team will push the league, as well as other collegiate and major baseball leagues, to include more female coaches and staff on the field.

“I look forward to the day when it’s not a novelty, when it’s normal,” Hammond said. “I won’t lie and say that it doesn’t cross my mind sometimes, it is a little bit of a different world sometimes, but I will say our players are phenomenally respectful. Coach Berset has set a great tone. And I think it’s just like any job, you go into it and you earn your place, you earn your respect.”

The Alexandria Aces’ last home game of the regular season is Saturday at noon on Frank Mann Field. The team will hold its first home playoff game on July 25.
Pat Miller fosters a sense of community in Alexandria
BY KASSIDY MCDONALD

There are always a few special people in a community who do the most to help others. Pat Miller is one of those people. Her name is one that you have likely heard, or maybe you’ve driven by the Pat Miller Neighborhood Square in Del Ray. If her name sounds familiar, you probably know all about her contributions to the arts in this city, but what you may not know is that she does much more to help Alexandrians, specifically the women of Alexandria.

From the Midwest
Miller grew up in Iowa on a farm that mainly harvested grain, corn and wheat. Her family also owned pigs and goats.

She was the middle child of five siblings. As a child, Miller was always surrounded by children of all different ages to play with, which she said helped her further down the line in life.

Due to the small size of her Ralston, Iowa town, Miller constantly interacted with children who were in lower and higher grades. There were only seven children in her class, with three to four grades in one classroom. Miller said she loved growing up there, and that she and her siblings always had a blast.

Miller said that her mother, who ran a small cafe in their town, was also a significant influence.

“[My mom] was one of those people that would not take no for an answer. She knew everybody in town and helped everybody when they needed it. And she instilled that in me. And I thank the Good Lord she did. Because that, to me, is one of the most important things,” Miller said.

After high school, Miller went on to attend the University of Northern Iowa, where she majored in mathematics.

“I love math. I just love it. It’s just so precise. And sometimes, you kind of go, why is it this way? Why is two and two, four? Why can’t it be three? But it is a very precise thing. And it’s fun to play with, at least I think so,” Miller said.

“And I did want to go into teaching, but then I realized that wasn’t where I belong.”

Right after graduation, Miller worked as a waitress. A friend of hers worked for a
local TV and radio station, so Miller fell into a job there. That job, she said, led her to a career in politics. She worked for the governor of Iowa on two of his campaigns and then worked for his office.

Miller then managed various campaigns in Iowa and other parts of the Midwest. Those experiences earned her a job at Bailey, Deardourff & Associates, a political media firm, and brought Miller and her husband to Washington, D.C., according to her Alexandria Living Legends induction profile.

Once in D.C., Miller and her husband divorced and she immediately moved to Alexandria, where her friend, Elise Reeder, resided.

“I moved over to Alexandria, because a friend of mine lived here. She said, 'This is a place where you need to be.' Bammo, she was so right. It turns out that it was home,” Miller said.

Miller’s mom instilled in her a deep desire to help people, and from then on she knew she wanted to help the people of Alexandria.

The birth of Art on the Avenue
When Miller arrived in 1995, the city was holding a block party in Del Ray that Miller said “fizzled.”

Miller was inspired by a street art fair she attended in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which was held along the waterfront. Fairgoers really enjoyed themselves, and Miller believed that with the help of others, she could pull off something similar in Del Ray.

The first year they decided to put on Art on the Avenue, Miller said they originally only had 13 artists sign up for the fair.

“But then before we opened, we wound up pushing 70 [artists]. And so yeah, within a week, we got like, 60. We just pushed and pushed and pushed and got it. And it's just been successful ever since,” Miller said.

Today, fairgoers are usually greeted by 300-plus artists. This upcoming October will be the 27th year the festival will be held in Del Ray. According to the festival’s website, 50,000 visitors enjoy the fair each year and shop for local art, try different food vendors and listen to musicians.

The multicultural art festival is home to jewelers, silversmiths, beadiers, woodworkers, pottery makers, soap crafters, glass makers, painters, sculptors and fabric artists. There are musicians who play Irish, folk, rock-n-roll and country music. Food vendors serve hot dogs, BBQ, Indian, Mexican, pizza, crab cakes, chocolate bananas and even homemade cider donuts, according to the website.

Kids’ activities have also been a big part of the festival; stuffing your own scarecrow, painting a pumpkin, lotus flower designing and weaving screen art are some of the kid-friendly activities listed on the site.

On the 25th anniversary of Art on the Avenue, the city dedicated Pat Miller Neighborhood Square in honor of Miller’s dedication to Art on the Avenue.
dedicated Pat Miller Neighborhood Square to thank Miller and recognize her accomplishments.

Pat Miller Neighborhood Square is located in the heart of Del Ray at the intersection of Mount Vernon and Oxford Avenues. The square hosts the Del Ray Christmas Tree during the holidays, as well as a weekly farmers’ market.

Art on the Avenue has been featured on WETA Neighborhoods and in the Washington Post and Washingtonian magazine. It has played an integral role in transforming Del Ray into what it is today.

Miller has also volunteered on the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, which she has chaired since 2006, due to her passion for encouraging art in the city.

Art on the Avenue is one of Miller’s most successful accomplishments in the city, but her ways of helping the community don’t stop at the arts.

Helping women

When asked to name her most important accomplishment, Miller was hesitant to give an answer because she loves helping people.

Miller helped found a nonprofit called Alexandria Celebrates Women, which, according to its website, has the mission of acknowledging the history of the city’s heroines while celebrating the empowerment of the city’s modern women.

The nonprofit has held walking tours in the city to showcase historic places and has organized a pinwheel garden in the month of May to raise awareness for child abuse. Additionally, Miller, along with Gayle Converse, contribute a monthly column to the Alexandria Times chronicling the accomplishments of women in the Port City.

“I think that the one thing that really hits my heart is women that are mistreated,”

AHA is a nonprofit “village” serving adults ages 55+ with practical and social support. Our members want to live safely and independently in their home and in the Alexandria community they love. AHA volunteers provide rides, errands, light maintenance, tech support, organizational help, gardening and lots more to help them do just that. We invite you to join our group of volunteers. It only takes a few hours each month and we work around your schedule.

www.AtHomeInAlexandria.org | 703.231.0824
aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org

Pat Miller has volunteered a lot of her time to promoting the arts and helping women in Alexandria.
Miller said. Giving them a voice as well as making their opportunities as equal as she can is an apparent source of inspiration for Miller.

Miller helped plan a health fair to aid Alexandria women on Oct. 8, which will be held during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. She is working on the fair alongside several other organizations, including Nueva Vida, the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the Alexandria Health Department.

The fair’s main purpose is to provide the opportunity for uninsured women to get mammograms. Miller is hoping with the help of the other organizations that it will be big enough to stretch into other areas of healthcare, like having the COVID-19 vaccine available.

Miller had previously tried to get mobile mammography vans to come to events, but was having trouble finding them. This problem led her to the idea of holding a health fair.

“Trying to find a van has been almost impossible. So what we said was, you know, well, we’ll work through the process. So it’s a pretty involved process, because mammograms, you know, identifying the women that need them, and then women that need follow up and stuff like that. How do they pay for it? I mean, that’s the critical, critical thing,” Miller said.

Miller also said it is important for women who don’t have health insurance and may not have access to these services to be able to see whether or not they have problems, or if problems could occur down the line.

“What we’re trying to do
by doing the health fair is to find those women that have not gotten into the process. So that’s what we’re hopeful to do.”

Miller said that if a woman comes to the fair and figures out she has a blood problem, for example, there will be a professional there that can speak with her and help her decide what is best for her moving forward.

Oftentimes, she said, women rarely think about themselves. “We find that women, they want their kids and their husband to be taken care of. They don’t look at themselves. And so that’s what we’re trying to do is to say, ‘Hey, look at yourself.’ Come on. You know, put yourself first for [a] change.”

City commitment

Through Art on the Avenue and Alexandria Celebrates Women, Miller has made a sizable impact on the City of Alexandria.

The love she has for Alexandria is apparent through all of her work, as she continues to strive to make the city a better place.

Miller said that what makes Alexandria so special to her is the people.

“The people are amazing. And, you know, they help their government to work and they make things happen. To me, that is absolutely the best thing,” Miller said.

City residents also motivate her to do what she does.

“Everybody out there has some wonderful ideas, and they don’t know how to implement,” she said. “And so if I can help somebody do something that they want to do, to me, that’s golden. That’s what it’s all about.”

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Attention on aging

Northern Virginia Aging Network releases its 2023 General Assembly priorities
BY MICHAEL SCHUSTER

The Northern Virginia Aging Network consists of staff representatives from the five Northern Virginia Agencies on Aging board members from the local Commissions on Aging, and representatives of allied organizations. The NVAN members voted to address these legislative and budget items with the Virginia General Assembly in 2023.

Evictions
Now that the pandemic eviction protections are gone, tenants will have less ability to prevent themselves from being evicted. Evictions have an additional impact on older renters – they live on fixed incomes and are at greater risk of physical and mental harm when they lose their homes. Under current Virginia law, landlords only have to give a five-day notice of non-payment of rent before going to court. Extending the time to 14 days balances the needs of the landlord to obtain rent payments and of the tenant to avoid homelessness. Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker was the chief co-patron on this legislation (HB 803) in the previous General Assembly session, but it did not pass. Extending this period would not be a panacea for renters, but rather provide them more time to make alternative housing arrangements.

Virtual meetings
Under Virginia’s Freedom of Information Act, public bodies, both advisory and decision-making, must conduct public meetings in person. However, under Bennett-Parker’s successful legislation (HB 444), advisory commissions can hold up to two virtual meetings a year. However, we believe this does not go far enough. Virtual meetings – like those through Zoom – promote public participation and transparency. We have found that the Commission on Aging has higher attendance from both the commission members and the public when we meet virtually. This proposal would only apply to non-decision-making bodies like the Commission on Aging – not commissions or boards like the Planning and Zoning Commission or elected bodies like the School Board.

Mandating training
Unlike a growing number of other states, Virginia has...
not required guardians and conservators to undergo any training on their legal and fiduciary obligations in serving vulnerable adults. In 2021, the Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission produced a comprehensive report on “Improving Virginia’s Adult Guardian and Conservator System.” Among the report’s many reform proposals is a recommendation to require any individual named as guardian or conservator to undergo state-provided training within four months of their court appointment. The training would provide information on their responsibilities and duties, and how to complete annual guardianship and conservatorship accounts.

**Sick leave for care workers**

Direct care workers are the backbone of the long-term care system. Their pay is low – 20% of care workers live in poverty and more than 40% of them rely on some form of public assistance – and when they become sick, they are forced to work because they generally do not have paid sick leave. Virginia’s failure to address the need for paid sick leave puts both direct care workers and their clients at risk because they must frequently work while sick to support themselves. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have paid sick leave laws.

**Funding options for assisted living**

The largest public program for long-term care in Virginia – Medicaid – does not cover assisted living, which is expensive. Monthly costs range from around $4,000 to more than $10,000, depending on the facility and the needs of the individual. Some state Medicaid programs do cover assisted living. Virginia should as well. The Joint Commission on Health Care this year will study the affordability of assisted living. The Joint Commission is chaired by State Sen. George L. Barker.

**Nursing home staffing standards**

Although under federal law, nursing homes must have a registered nurse eight hours per day, a licensed nurse 24 hours per day and “sufficient staff” to meet resident needs, there is no standard to measure what defines sufficient. The Virginia regulations are similarly vague. A majority of states have gone beyond these vague requirements and have established more specific standards. Spurred by the numerous cases of COVID-19 in Virginia nursing homes, the Joint Commission on Health Care in 2021 conducted a study of nursing home staffing. It found, among other things, that 21% of nursing homes do not provide adequate staffing for direct care, disproportionately affecting low-income nursing home residents.

For more information about NVAN, the legislative breakfast on Sept. 30 with our state representatives, which is open to the public, and its other activities, visit https://www.nova-region.org/353/Northern-Virginia-Aging-Network.

The writer is an NVAN member and chair of the Alexandria City Commission on Aging.
How to create a healthy outdoor living space

BY BRANDPOINT

Amid a pandemic and a potential recession, Americans went on a near-record homebuying spree over the last couple of years. Many were first-time homebuyers and, according to Realtor.com, more buyers searched for homes out of state in 2021 than the previous year.

If you’re a first-time homebuyer or buying a home in a new city, you know what an exciting and overwhelming experience it can be. Knowing which home maintenance projects are the most important can make things a lot easier.

Whether you’re a first-time homeowner who may not have had a yard before, or are moving to a new home in a different climate, it can be tough to know how to care for your new lawn. Here are six maintenance tasks homeowners can follow to help learn the basics of lawn care and start creating a healthy outdoor living space.

1. Aeration and overseeding

To ensure a healthy, thicker lawn, you’ll need to aerate your lawn. And if you have cool season grass, try to overseed at the same time. While this is an often-overlooked step in lawn care, it can help prevent weeds during the warmer months. In many areas of the country, homeowners should aerate and overseed in late summer heading into the fall – August through October – to reap the rewards the following spring.

2. Controlling weeds

Weeds can be a huge nuisance for homeowners, and fighting them off early is critical. Before you begin your war on weeds, find out what type of weeds are on your lawn and learn the best ways to control them. If removing weeds leads to more complicated projects, consider hiring a professional to help.

3. Fertilization

Many homeowners dream of a green lawn, but your lawn needs nutrients to look its best. The best way to give your lawn the nutrients it needs for healthy growth is through fertilization. But with several complicated names and a range of fertilizing options, it can feel like a lot to take on. To ensure your outdoor living space gets the proper care, consult an expert to determine what best suits your lawn and soil conditions.

4. Mowing

While it’s nice to have a routine of mowing your lawn once a week, you need to watch how your lawn grows

LEARNING LAWN CARE basics can help increase the longevity of your outdoor space.
to determine how often it needs a trim. During hot, dry periods, your lawn may only need mowing once every two or three weeks. During cool, damp periods, your grass may grow quicker and need mowing twice a week. Remember, lawns grow at different rates depending on the season, weather, region and species. No two lawns are the same. Learn how yours grows so you don’t under- or over-mow it.

5. Insect control

Many common lawn-damaging insects can rapidly overtake your grass and other plants, so it’s best to be vigilant when examining your outdoor living space. They can cause significant damage, making your outdoor living space much harder to manage. New homeowners should educate themselves about their area’s various insects so they can better care for their lawns. This knowledge can save you significant time and money in the long run.

6. Watering

As a general rule of thumb, it’s time to give your lawn a drink when it starts to take on a dull hue. Most lawns need an inch of water per week. To achieve optimal results, you’ll want to perform long, infrequent watering one or two times per week. Remember to always be respectful of water restrictions if they are present in your community.

Whether your new house will be your home for the next few years or your forever home, living happily ever after is far more possible when you consider hiring a professional to help. If you have questions about lawn care or could use an extra set of hands to achieve the results you’re looking for, consult a lawn care professional.

Watering your lawn is important, but remember to be mindful about community water restrictions.

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**HOME OF THE WEEK**

**Left:** Classic Fords Landing townhouse with a sophisticated arched doorway, fanlight and mature landscaping welcomes you.

**Middle:** The spacious dining room features a stunning Schonbek crystal chandelier that enhances the elegant entertaining space.

**Right:** Natural light fills the inviting living room, highlighting the hardwood floors, gas fireplace and custom built-ins.

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**Spectacular home in waterfront community**

Ideally located in the sought-after Old Town community of Fords Landing, this 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath, brick townhome offers a most livable floor plan. Generous light-filled rooms with high ceilings, detailed moldings, hardwood floors and a gas fireplace are just a few special features. The marble entry welcomes you and a study with custom built-ins is a perfect home office. The main level living room features an inviting fireplace and an elegant dining room with wainscoting and crystal chandelier extends the entertaining space. The gourmet kitchen offers Jenn-Air double ovens, gas cooking, granite counters and an adjoining breakfast room with doors to the wide balcony.

The third level’s primary suite features a soaring vaulted ceiling, customized walk-in closet, seating area and a sizable bath with double vanities. Two additional en-suite bedrooms provide spacious accommodations for guests. An attached two-car garage completes this property.
Our View  __________
Challenging assumptions

An old journalism adage says when you assume, you “make an ass of u and me.” Assumptions are relatives of stereotypes, which are first cousins of bigotry.

One of the most common assumptions currently in vogue is to lump “communities of color” together — as if Blacks and Latinos in particular are the same — while making sweeping claims about all aspects of American life. And yet, our page one story in this week’s Times, “COVID-19 data trends surprise” shows that, in this particular case, this assumption is demonstrably false.

In analyzing cases and deaths from COVID-19 using data from the Virginia Department of Health website, it’s clear that in both the City of Alexandria and Virginia as a whole, it’s Blacks and whites who have demonstrated similar patterns toward COVID-19 vaccinations and who have similar mortality rates per case.

Meanwhile, it’s Latinos who have availed themselves of healthcare in the form of vaccines that have been made readily available to them in this city and elsewhere in Virginia, and who have vastly better outcomes per COVID-19 case than either Blacks or whites.

Statewide, whites have the worst mortality rate per COVID-19 case of the three ethnic groups, despite a slightly higher vaccination rate throughout Virginia than Blacks.

The medical experts that we consulted for this story talked in general terms about various factors, from co-morbidities to utilizing preventative care to trust to age differences between the groups. We also have several takeaways from analyzing this data.

- There appears to be a lack of trust in the medical system on the part of both Blacks and whites that led to lower vaccination rates, though the primary reason why for each group is likely different. Many Blacks are still wary after being immorally used as guinea pigs for government medical experiments in the 1930s and 40s. Among whites, distrust of government mandates is strong in a sizable minority, both in Alexandria and statewide, and refusal to get the COVID-19 vaccine is manifestation of this distrust.

- We think access to healthcare played a key role, both in vaccination rates and with treatment. Because Latinos live more in urban areas of Virginia, such as Alexandria, efforts like those of Neighborhood Health and the Alexandria Health Department to set up walk-up vaccination clinics — where residence and legal status were not checked — were extraordinarily successful. Conversely, whites in rural areas of Virginia lack access to the same quantity and quality of healthcare as that available to residents of urban areas, regardless of their ethnicity.

- We think the younger average age of Latinos in Alexandria and Virginia played a significant role in their better outcomes per COVID-19 case. The data clearly shows that people over age 50, and particularly over age 70, fare much worse with COVID-19. And yet, this is not the entire explanation for better overall Latino health outcomes. When we examined nationwide maternal mortality rates, we found that Latino outcomes were better than those of whites and Blacks in each age group.

- We think the vaccination rate data for Latinos is likely overstated, particularly Alexandria’s 95% rate. This is likely because of undocumented residents who are also not counted in the city’s overall Latino population. For example, if 100 residents who aren’t counted in the overall number of residents get vaccinated and are counted in the vaccination tally, the overall vaccination rate goes up. In ad-

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

Standing water at the foot of King Street following last weekend’s heavy rainfall.

Your Views  __________

Academic excellence is the best kind of vision

To the editor:

Alexandria City Public Schools Board Chair Meagan Alderton assured your readers of her intent to work with “vision, integrity and passion” in accomplishing the mission outlined in the 2025 Strategic Plan: Equity for All in her column, “True to our vision amid change,” in the July 14, 2022 Alexandria Times.

Yet Alderton and outgoing Superintendent Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D. must bear some responsibility for ACPS Standards of Learning pass rates: 57%, 40% and 44% in reading, math and science, respectively, for the 2020-21 school year. Our neighboring school districts exceeded the average of these three must-pass test scores by almost 50% during the same school year.

Alderton is clearly committed to her vision and strategic goals. But is there a better way to demonstrate a commitment to equity than a viable plan to lift our children’s test scores so they can compete after graduation?

-Keith Anderson, Alexandria

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

To the editor:

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results,” Albert Einstein allegedly said. Regardless of the author, it’s worth pondering before buying into the latest affordable housing policy remedy espoused by urban planners: If you increase density or, more precisely, eliminate zoning restrictions inhibiting developers from increasing density, there will be more affordable housing.

Where is the evidence, the proof that this has worked in the past? New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles and Seattle consistently place in the top 10 for both highest density and least affordable housing markets. A variety of tools currently in vogue with Alexandria officials, like co-living, accessory dwelling units and elimination of zoning restrictions have little or no impact on housing affordability.

So, what’s different? Are Alexandria’s officials simply smarter?

Before you can solve a problem, you need to define the problem you are really trying to solve, then select the best available tool. I would submit increasing density is not primarily about creating affordable housing. If that were the case, the Carlyle/Eisenhower corridor, Landmark/VanDorn, Braddock Metro, Potomac Yards and the Old Town Waterfront, all subjected to increased density, should have some of the most affordable housing stock in the city.

Yet they rank among the least affordable areas in the city even if measured by a 30% AMI threshold. How is this possible? How will initiatives like “bonus height density” get different results, even if the city cajoles developers to include some affordable units?

The truth is this is not primarily about affordable housing. It’s about solving a finance problem, specifically, profitability and tax revenue. Are you really surprised?

Developers and local governments are not strange bedfellows – they have mutual financial interests. Increased density equates to increased profitability for developers and increased tax revenue for local governments.

It’s simple economics: a parcel that is restricted by zoning to one single-family home regardless of price point will not generate as much profit or revenue as multiple vertical units even at a slightly lower per unit price point. The measurements most often used are revenue per acre or revenue per parcel – increasing density at the parcel level yields the greatest return.

Unfortunately, zoning changes immediately increase the value of property. Need proof? Look at San Francisco or New York City. When property values soar, it squeezes developer profitability. If an affordable unit requirement is added, more margin is squeezed out. This is why we see developers seek, and cities often grant, density variances such as Alexandria’s soon-to-be-enshrined bonus density zoning amendment. It’s simply more profitable and the quid pro quo for the city is an increase in tax revenue. Affordable housing is not the primary goal.

Alexandria’s debt, aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance and capital improvement expenditures, public services and manpower stresses require significant new sources of revenue. Geographically constricted to 15 square miles, coupled with the inability to attract large businesses like neighboring Arlington, Fairfax County and Falls Church do, there really is only one other source for the kind of revenue the city needs to meet obligations and remain viable into the future: increase density.

The push to increase density for the sake of increasing revenue is never publicly popular. Other cities with similar land constraints experienced similar resistance from established single family neighborhoods, citing issues like inadequate infrastructure and too much traffic. The validity of these concerns is often irresistible.

However, the financial lure too frequently outweighs the negatives, which are framed as “minor or short term inconveniences.” Rationalizations include using some of the gained tax revenue to mitigate many of the concerns. A cottage pro-development industry has emerged to help cities develop strategies for overcoming public opposition. The first strategy is to avoid discussing the financial incentives.

Strategies should focus on the need to accommodate population growth, attract business, ensure a vibrant and diverse labor market and increase affordable housing stock. Using progressive, forward-looking messaging labeling opponents as short-sighted, resistant to change, out of touch, or worse, and keeps the primary financial objective out of the conversation or relegated to the margins.

Our public officials are neither insane nor guilty of expecting different results. They know exactly what to expect and are banking on it.

-Roy Byrd,
Alexandria

Not my grandmother’s party

To the editor:

My grandmother is spinning in her grave.

G’mom, as she was known to all family and friends – the name created by a grandchild who couldn’t say “grandmother” – was a lifelong Republican. As the child of immigrants, she was quite aware of the distinctions of social class, and during her heyday in the 1940s through the 60s, she made every effort to advance the family up society’s ladder.

She was a proactive woman, and was constantly involved in, and was frequently leading, any number of community activities. She was an ambulance driver during WWII. She was a medal-winning war-bonds salesperson; nobody said “no” to her. She was the president of her synagogue, and she was on all kinds of community-improvement organizations. Nobody ever accused her of being a warm and loving grandma – she was too busy doing things for other people – but her chicken soup endures in all of our memories.

Her Republicanism was a product of its times: she believed in personal responsibility and individual freedom, but as the child of immigrants she knew that society and government had the responsibility to help people, and especially, to protect women from harm. She respected people who were different from her and listened to other people’s opinions, and she hated bullies and intolerance. She valued learning and knowledge and institutions and ethics, and she believed in good government.

My Republican grandmother is spinning in her grave.

-Stephen Leeds,
Alexandria
GW High School: Now a state landmark

On Saturday, the George Washington High School Alumni Association will unveil a Virginia Historical Marker, recognizing the school’s importance to both state and national history. The school opened in 1935 and was the only Alexandria public high school for white students for 20 years. The city’s African American students attended Parker-Gray School.

George Washington High School had an all-white student body until 1965, when the Alexandria public school system finished integration began in 1959 after a court ordered that nine African American students would be allowed to attend city schools with whites. GW remained a high school until 1971, when it was converted into the middle school it remains today.

George Washington High School’s famous former students include Willard Scott, who recently passed away, two of the Mamas and Papas – John Phillips and Ellen Cohen, also known as “Mama Cass” Elliott. Perhaps GW High School’s most famous student was Jim Morrison of the Doors. Two other alumni were astronaut Guy Gardner and military hero Francis Hammond, who lost his life during the Korean War and for whom a naval ship and another high school were named.

Besides its famous students, George Washington High School’s field was the site of two events of historical significance. On Aug. 24, 1960, then-Sen. John F. Kennedy kicked off his tour of southern states in Alexandria at the field after gaining the Democratic presidential nomination. Kennedy went on to lose Virginia but win the presidency.

In August 1965, Joe Namath played the first game of his professional career on the field in an exhibition game between the New York Jets and the Houston Oilers. Houston won the game 21-16. Less than four years later, Namath led the Jets to a stunning upset of the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III. The field also is home to a time capsule, buried in 1949 by President Harry Truman and others to celebrate Alexandria’s 200th birthday. It is to be opened in 2049 when the city turns 300.

The new plaque reads:

Out of the Attic is provided by The Office of Historic Alexandria.
**JULY 21**

**JULY OLD TOWN ART WALK – MAKE, MUSIC + MOCKTAILS** Join AR Workshop of Alexandria for their third art walk of the season. Take a self-guided tour of Old Town and explore the fine art and studio crafts found in art galleries and boutique shops. Register online for this free event.

**Time:** 5 to 8 p.m.  
**Location:** 1212 King St.  
**Information:** [https://www.arworkshop.com/event/?loc=alexandria&event=317907](https://www.arworkshop.com/event/?loc=alexandria&event=317907)

**JULY 22**

**SAVORY SOIREE: LA DOLCE VITA - GARDEN DINNER AND CONCERT** Co-presented by Musical Movements for Change and Classical Movements, this event will feature an evening of Neapolitan love songs, Italian favorites and a three-course Italian dinner.

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Location:** 711 Princess St.  
**Information:** [http://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/](http://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/)

**FRIYAY WINE TASTING** Join one of Northern Virginia’s only urban micro-wineries for a fun night of wine tasting starting at $7.

**Time:** 3 to 6 p.m.  
**Location:** 8733-B Cooper Rd.  
**Information:** [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friyay-wine-tasting-tickets-291997732077?aff=relpanelorg](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friyay-wine-tasting-tickets-291997732077?aff=relpanelorg)

**JULY 23**

**IMPROV COMEDY SHOW: THE AUXILIARY** The Auxiliary Improv is hosting an improv comedy show at the Lyceum at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:15; show starts at 7:30; Show is 18+ recommended.

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** 201 S. Washington St.  
**Information:** [https://www.facebook.com/AuxiliaryImprov/](https://www.facebook.com/AuxiliaryImprov/)

**KIDS PIZZA MAKING CLASSES** Join Chef Edgar at Lena’s Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap for a guided pizza making class from start to finish. Attendees will also get a chef’s hat and pizza stickers to take home.

**Time:** 10 to 11 a.m.  
**Location:** 401 East Braddock Rd.  
**Information:** [https://www.lenaswoodfire.com/kids-pizza-making-class](https://www.lenaswoodfire.com/kids-pizza-making-class)

**JULY 24**

**CRAFTERNOONS WITH SMIVA** Join Shop Made In VA for an afternoon of crafting. Various materials will be available for use or bring your own craft supplies.

**Time:** Noon to 3 p.m.  
**Location:** 1121 King St.  
**Information:** [https://www.shopmadeinva.com/classes](https://www.shopmadeinva.com/classes)

**JULY 31**

**POTOMAC WATERSHED PUZZLE PROJECT** Through this interactive family workshop, participants will learn more about the Potomac River, its resources and how it impacts our ecosystem. Potomac Riverkeeper Network Members Morgan Bench and Kristina Hagman will lead the event, which involves putting together a puzzle and reflecting on what it means to be part of a watershed.

**Time:** 1 to 3 p.m.  
**Location:** 201 Prince St.  
**Information:** [https://visitalexandria.com/events/potomac-watershed-puzzle-project-family-workshop/](https://visitalexandria.com/events/potomac-watershed-puzzle-project-family-workshop/)

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Dish Wireless proposes to collocate wireless communications antennas at a top height of 164 feet on the penthouse of a 146-ft building with an overall height of 170 ft at the approx. vicinity of 1225 Martha Custis Dr. Alexandria, City of Alexandria, VA 22302. 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. Bennett Thomas, b.thomas2@trileaf.com, 1051 Winderley Place, Suite 201, Maitland, FL 32751, 407-660-7840.

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In accordance with Section 11-500 of the Zoning Ordinance, the above listed request may be approved administratively by the Director of Planning & Zoning. If you have any comments regarding the proposal above, please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the planner listed no later than August 11, 2022.
Not Just Real Estate.

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