Kay-Wyatt settles into new role

“I want to make sure that our students have experienced some growth... I think there’s a lot to be said about what growth looks like for individual students, so that is my goal.”

– Melanie Kay-Wyatt, ACPS interim superintendent

Interim superintendent shares upcoming plans for ACPS
BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Melanie Kay-Wyatt began her new position as interim superintendent at Alexandria City Public Schools one month ago, a role she’s been preparing for since the School Board appointed her in July. In many ways, though, she’s been honing the necessary skills for much longer.

Since joining ACPS last summer as executive director of human resources, she has been promoted to acting chief and then chief of human resources. Previously, she worked as principal and assistant principal at Fredericksburg City Public Schools, as a special education teacher at FCPS and Culpeper County Schools and in human resources at Spotsylvania Public Schools.

“People always think when you're in human resources that that's all you do, but in schools when you're working in human resources, you're closely tied to other departments like instruction and budgets,” Kay-Wyatt said. “So that was great work because I have the background with schooling in the sense of education and curriculum.”

Kay-Wyatt, who replaces former Superintendent Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D., sat down with the Times to discuss what she hopes to bring to her new position, some of the issues facing ACPS and her ideas for the 2022-2023 school year. Several of her goals include working toward school safety, pandemic recovery, and

Community reacts to Gov. Youngkin’s transgender policy

Opponents to the newly proposed policies argue that politics should not be forced upon children in educational settings.

Proposed rules set to take effect this month
BY KASSIDY MCDONALD

The Alexandria community is reacting to Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s announcement of updated model policies for transgender students, which were released last month. Known by the Virginia Department of Education as the Privacy, Dignity and Respect policies, the proposal has sparked debate not just in Alexandria City Public Schools, but all across Virginia regarding the protection of transgender students in a classroom environment.

Under the official new guidelines, “For any athletic program or activity that is separated by sex, the appropriate participation of students shall be determined by sex; Students shall use bathrooms that correspond to his or her sex; Overnight travel accommodations, locker rooms and other intimate spaces used for school-related activities and events shall be based on sex; For any school program, event, or activity, including extracurricular activities that are separated by sex, the appropriate participation of students shall

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Resident Spotlight
Masuda Mohamadi teaches yoga in Old Town.
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Pets
How to ring in spooky season with your pup.
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Tying the Knot
Alexandria residents Jeremy and Sarah Simmons got married in Hawaii during a multi-day celebration. Read their full wedding story on page 11.

SEE KAY-WYATT

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Potomac Yard Metro delayed until 2023

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority recently announced that it would be extending the closure of six stations south of Reagan National Airport due to unexpected structural site conditions. The opening of the Potomac Yard Station will now be delayed until 2023.

Free shuttle bus service will continue to be available to customers through the extension, following the same pattern that is currently being used. Metroway - Potomac Yard line will continue to be free, and parking fees at Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn and Huntington stations will continue to be waived, according to a news release.

Construction crews discovered underlying soil issues that affected the structural stability of the ground beneath the tracks which prompted them to stop, create a remediation plan and implement the proposed remediation plan, according to the release. Due to the unexpected delays, the shutdown will be extended for two additional weeks, causing the timeline of opening for the new Potomac Yard Station to be pushed back until next year.

Mayor Justin Wilson expressed disappointment in the continued delays, as the station was originally scheduled to open in April 2022.

“The numerous delays to the Potomac Yard construction project are unacceptable. This critically important project requires more intentional oversight by WMATA. Our residents and businesses deserve better from our partners. This latest setback must be met with urgency and significant actions by WMATA and its contractor to recover from the time and money lost. The City of Alexandria has provided specific operational actions to WMATA that we believe will more effectively manage the contractor’s efforts to complete this project in an expedited and efficient manner. The City is also demanding that the financial impacts of the numerous delays be assessed and adjusted by WMATA to the benefit of our community. We will continue working with our partners to ensure transit riders have accessible alternatives during this continued shutdown. We cannot continue to repeat these failures,” Wilson said.

For more information, visit https://www.wmata.com

ACS presents ‘Out of the Deep’

The Alexandria Choral Society’s first concert of the 2022-2023 season, called “Out of the Deep,” will take place on Oct. 15 at 7 p.m., at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Rd., according to a news release.

Under Brian J. Isaac, the nonprofit’s artistic director since 2017, ACS has featured works by Christopher Hoh, Jonathan Kolm, Lori Laitman and Tawnie Olson.

The Oct. 15 performance conveys a message of “reconciliation and hope in the life everlasting.” Two pieces of music will be featured. First, composer Eleanor Daley sets “expressive melodic lines” to the 1934 poem by Clare Harner, “Immortality.”

The other piece features John Rutter’s “Requiem.” Rutter incorporates personal selection of texts, taken from both Requiem Mass and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. It is “arch-like meditation on the themes of life and death,” Isaac said.

Tickets are available at www.AlexandriaChoralSociety.org. ACS follows a “Pay What You Can” model and the suggested ticket price is $30. Season tickets are also available for purchase. Masks are required at this performance.

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“Because everyone needs a home.”
Wine Gallery 108 holds reopening

Wine Gallery 108, a boutique wine shop in Old Town, celebrated its grand re-opening and five-year anniversary on Oct. 1, where guests stopped by to see the new home and explore the shop’s new additions. Originally located on North Patrick Street, Wine Gallery 108 moved to a larger location at 108 N. Saint Asaph St. The grand opening featured a blowout wine tasting, food, beer, chocolates and raffles. There was also a VIP tasting and ribbon cutting event that included owner Lisa Katic and Alexandria Chamber of Commerce President Joe Haggerty.

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Spitfire Club unveils headquarters

The Spitfire Club, a local nonprofit organization, officially opened its headquarters at Volunteer Alexandria’s office in Del Ray last week. Both organizations will now occupy the second floor of 2202 Mt. Vernon Ave., with Volunteer Alexandria having been in the space since July. The Spitfire Club, which aims to enhance literary and social emotional skills through book clubs, has never had a headquarters before. The grand opening event included live music, book giveaways and a ribbon cutting ceremony led by City Councilors, School Board members and representatives from Volunteer Alexandria and the Spitfire Club.

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open communication and student growth.

To accomplish this, she plans to implement the advice Hutchings imparted before his resignation from the district at the end of August.

"[He said] to be true to myself and passion. He's always like, 'You know who you are as a leader, so just follow your heart and your passion, and be you,'" Kay-Wyatt said.

A primary goal of Kay-Wyatt's is to prioritize school safety, which over the past few years has become a contentious topic of conversation among community members due to ACPS' removal – and subsequent reinstatement – of school resource officers on the high school and middle school campuses.

Certain safety measures are visible to the public, such as the SROs and the recent requirement that each student carry an identification card. But Kay-Wyatt explained that other measures are kept internally confidential in order to avoid compromising the safety of school communities.

"When we talk about safety, people ... think you have all of these things that you can see and touch and make available to the public, that 'If I walk by or drive by, I'm going to see what you've done to put safety in place,'" Kay-Wyatt said. "And the whole point of creating a safe space doesn't mean you're going to be able to identify that there's extra this or extra that out there; it's just that children have that feeling of being safe because of things we have put in place – seen and unseen."

She asserted that safety has always been a priority in the district; it's just become a more common topic of conversation due to current events. And talking about it, she said, helps the community feel safer and more confident that school safety is in fact a significant area of focus.

When asked about how she plans to maintain open communication with the public, Kay-Wyatt said she makes visits to community forums and events as often as she can. When she is unable to attend, a representative will speak on ACPS' behalf to answer questions.

She also pointed to an email address, ask@acps.k12.va.us, to which parents can submit questions and receive individualized responses. The email is useful for those who may have a personal question they do not want to ask in public, or for those who feel their answers have been misinterpreted or not adequately addressed.

"Oftentimes we need to make sure that we understand [their] question," Kay-Wyatt said. "... Sometimes just having that question sent with an explanation will really help us get the right answer to the person that's asking."

Kay-Wyatt joins the district at the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic, which left a great deal of learning loss in its wake after students were relegated to mostly virtual learning for the past few years. ACPS' 2021-2022 Standards of Learning performance scores lagged behind the state of Virginia's, with students achieving a lower than 50% proficiency in the math and science categories. Though the district improved in the reading category, it was likely due in part to the state introducing new reading tests last year that required lower proficiency benchmarks because of the pandemic.

Making up for the learning loss will take time, Kay-Wyatt noted, as the pandemic was not a one-and-done event.

"Those several years where our students had to experience trauma and loss, and I'm not talking about [just] learning loss ... there was so much that our students and families had to endure that we're not going to make that up overnight," Kay-Wyatt said.

Recovery has required an emphasis on social emotional support first and foremost, she said. ACPS is just now reaching a point where it can sufficiently address the academic learning loss as well.

According to Kay-Wyatt, it's important to acknowledge that students might be at different levels than one another, and to treat every child on a case-by-case basis.

"We've talked about giving grace over the past couple of years, but I think right now it's just about being patient, being diligent in making sure that we understand our students' needs, and finding ways to address it," Kay-Wyatt said.

Kay-Wyatt's contract extends through June 30, 2023, or until the district hires a permanent superintendent. She said the community will "just have to wait and see" if she ends up pursuing the permanent position.

Right now, she's more concerned with what's directly in front of her. This includes tackling ongoing issues facing the district, from staffing shortages to school safety, and ensuring that the beginning of the 2022-23 school year continues to run smoothly. Kay-Wyatt said her focus is on the daily operations, management and instructional practices that will keep the community safe and engaged in classroom instruction.

Whether the end of Kay-Wyatt's reign as superintendent is next summer or several years down the line, her mission looks the same: to make sure staff knows they are valued and to help students grow, however that appears for each child.

"[I want to make] sure that our students have experienced some growth, whatever that growth looks like for them. If it's a student with specialized instruction, that they're growing in whatever their goals are; if it's an advanced student, they’re growing in their coursework,” Kay-Wyatt said. “... I think there's a lot to be said about what growth looks like for individual students, so that is my goal."
Policies

be determined by sex; [School Division] personnel shall refer to each student using only the pronouns appropriate to the sex appearing in the student’s official record — that is, male pronouns for a student whose legal sex is male, and female pronouns for a student whose legal sex is female;” where ‘sex’ refers to biological sex and not gender identity.

The guiding principles of these model policies state that parents have the right to make decisions with respect to their children; schools shall respect parents’ values and beliefs; schools shall defer to parents to make the best decisions with respect to their children; schools shall keep parents informed about their children’s well-being; schools shall serve the needs of all students; schools shall partner with parents; and schools shall respect all students.

The policies indicate that transgender students will have to use the bathrooms based on their assigned sex at birth, use athletic facilities based on their assigned sex at birth and join athletic teams based on their assigned sex at birth, rather than the gender with which they identify. This means these students will only be referred in the classroom by their legal names that appear on their birth certificates. The newly proposed policies force educators to reveal gender identities to parents, or to “come out” about their gender identity when they may not be ready.

Supporters of the new policies argue it would grant parents the right to have control over their children’s education and classroom experiences. Opponents to the newly proposed policies argue that politics should not be forced upon children in educational settings like schools.

On Sept. 27 and 28, students and faculty at more than 100 Virginia participated in walkouts to protest the new model policies. The walkouts were organized by the Pride Liberation Project, which according to their website is the only student-led organization advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights in Virginia. Entirely led by high school students in Virginia, The Pride Liberation Project “works to create empowering schools and communities for all LGBTQIA+ students in Fairfax County and Virginia.”

Arlington County Public Schools, which included multiple middle schools and high schools, and Fairfax County Public Schools, participated in walkout protests on Sept. 27. Alexandria City Public Schools did not have a student-led walkout, according to Julia Burgos, ACPS’ chief of school and community relations.

“ACPS did not have any student walkouts at our schools on Tues., Sept. 27, in response to Governor Youngkin’s model policies affecting transgender students in Virginia school divisions. Students, staff and families were informed of our school division’s response to these policies via the joint message sent from the School Board chair and the superintendent on Sept. 19, 2022,” Burgos said in an official statement.

In response to the model policies that were released on Sept. 17, the ACPS community received a statement from School Board chair Meagan Alderton and Interim Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt. The letter detailed that the school system heard concerns from many parents, students and families, so ACPS felt it necessary to reach out and ensure that the district is working to protect its transgender students.

“We want to assure you that ACPS will continue its commitment to both implement and develop gender affirming policies for all ACPS students,” the official letter reads. “As a School Board and division, we are concerned with these ‘model policies’ that do not align with our mission, vision and core values to support all students and staff, in particular that we provide a welcoming environment for everyone in our school community.”

The letter goes on to state that the “model policies” seek to undermine this vital work and set the clock back on the gains we have accomplished as a school division to place racial equity at the heart of our work … We will continue to review and develop all policies with an equity lens.”

ACPS parents took to Twitter to express their appreciation for ACPS’ pushback. One user stated, “As an Alexandria resident I am glad the school board pushed back on Youngkin,” while another wrote, “Alexandria to Youngkin: Nope.” Several School Board members like Ashley Simpson Baird and Kelly Carmicheal Booz also changed their Twitter profile pictures to an image of a transgender button that says “ACPS PROTECTS TRANS KIDS.”

“There is much work to do in the 2022-23 school year, and the Alexandria City School Board and the leadership and staff of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) are focused on our students’ social-emotional and academic learning. These ‘model policies’ are a distraction to the real work at hand to educate our students and our need to focus on unfinished learning. We have expressed our concern to the ACPS community that the “model policies” issued by Gov. Youngkin and his team do not align with our mission, vision and core values. In keeping with our 2025 Strategic Equity for All Plan, we are committed to support all students and staff, in particular our core value of ensuring that we provide a welcoming environment for everyone in our school community,” Alderton said in a statement to the Times.

Student representatives for ACPS could not be reached for comment.

Though not yet in place due to a 30-day public comment period, the policies are set to take effect on Oct. 27.
Masuda Mohamadi is an accomplished business owner, yoga instructor and now an author. She has helped students for over two decades find balance and stability in their lives through practicing yoga, specifically Kundalini yoga, which involves breathing, chanting and singing accompanied by repetitive poses.

Though Mohamadi has been an Alexandria resident since 2006, she was born in Afghanistan and lived there until she was six years old. In 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and she fled the country with her family. Her family resided in the city of Kabul, but escaped to the mountains by hiding in the back of a moving van. Once at the outskirts of the city, Mohamadi’s uncles and other villagers guided them on a trek through the mountains that lasted two-and-a-half days. Mohamadi was accompanied by 14 people total on the journey and arrived safely in Pakistan.

The family was in Pakistan for about four months before arriving in the United States. Mohamadi’s father was able to obtain tourist visas so they could go to New York.

“Immigration looked at us and it was obvious we were not tourists, and we were not on vacation. They detained us for a while and then realized we were refugees, there was a war, my father would have been killed and probably all of us would have been killed if we had stayed behind, so they let us stay here,” Mohamadi said.

“My father knew one person in D.C. and he called him, he was a colleague and they had worked together in Afghanistan … and this man was just so amazing. He rented two apartments for us, he supported us for many months, he helped get a down payment on our house to rent and he also got an interview for my dad to work at the World Bank.”

The man, Jagdish N Srivastva, was what she called the family’s “angel.” Mohamadi explained how his crucial support enabled the family to rebuild their lives after fleeing Afghanistan. From D.C., the family moved to Arlington, Vienna and Springfield before Mohamadi came to Alexandria in 2006.

“Vienna was a very white neighborhood and white school. So it was a difficult time to fit in or belong. It definitely felt like you’re the foreigner or immigrant family. Fortunately it is so different now and it’s so multicultural … but back then it was much harder to assimilate or integrate,” Mohamadi said about her time adjusting to school in the United States.

Mohamadi went on to earn her undergraduate degree in philosophy from George Mason University. Her first job out of college was at Hemlock Overlook Center for Outdoor Education, which is jointly operated by George Mason University and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. She also earned her...
MOHAMADI

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master's in creative writing from George Mason. When she was 29 years old, she returned to Afghanistan with her father to teach English to people in ministries and to see the life she left behind in Afghanistan so long ago. She detailed her time in Kabul in an article for The Washington Post, which shaped the woman she is today and the love she has for her culture. Her article also details the struggles of losing her father who died in a plane crash in February 2003 while traveling on government business. From this loss has come struggles with fear and grief, something that Mohamadi has tried to help heal with yoga and understanding the chakras, or energy points in the body.

Mohamadi first discovered Kundalini yoga in the mountains of West Virginia. She was leading a program for the Mountain Institute, and there was a speaker, Irene McKinney, who at the time was West Virginia's poet laureate. She taught a class about poetry and writing for the program.

“She walked in and she was like ‘Oh the energy is all wrong here.’ And back then I was like ‘I don’t know what that means.’ And she started doing these breathing exercises with us and these rhythmic fast movements, and then she had us chanting. It was so weird. But at the end I felt amazing, I just felt so energized and good,” Mohamadi said. “I asked her what it was and she told me Kundalini yoga.”

What Mohamadi enjoys most about the specific practice is the way it affects a person not only physically, but emotionally as well. She trained to become a teacher and began teaching at multiple different locations.

“It gave me a focus and clarity about so many things in my life,” Mohamadi explained.

Mohamadi soon grew tired of bouncing around from studio to studio and began looking for her own space that was both “welcoming and inviting.” She found a 1,400 square foot studio and opened her own practice in 2008. She had no previous business experience, and opening during the recession was a scary thought for a first time business owner.

Community was one of the most important aspects Mohamadi considered when creating her business. She said that in the studio, they had a small round table in the middle of the reception area that had tea and cookies, so after classes people would sit and chat with each other and form relationships.

“Community is so important for me. I feel like when people feel safe and welcomed somewhere they really open up. And safety is a big issue in my life, when you go through war and you’re displaced like

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that, you’re very sensitive to that ... change and growth really happens when you can be in a space where you are like "Okay I’m safe here and I’m really going to open up," Mohamadi said.

When Mohamadi moved the studio to a 4,500 square foot space in 2013, she wanted to keep that same aspect of community. She placed an even bigger round table with tea and cookies in the reception area to encourage students to create bonds with one another and to keep the heart of the studio alive.

Mohamadi’s studio was created with the goal of offering a sense of community for people at all levels in their yoga journey. Radiance Yoga offers more than 60 in-person and online classes in Flow, Gentle, Hatha, Kundalini, Restorative, Yin Yoga, Yoga Nidra and Core Strength and Stretch, according to its website.

Mohamadi said there is a class for everyone, whether the goal is to expand on physical or mental abilities or just feel good after a class. There are more than 20 teachers who welcome students of every level, making Radiance Yoga different from many other studios who don’t offer as many gentle, stretching, spiritual or beginner yoga opportunities for new students.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mohamadi said Radiance Yoga faced the challenge of not being able to hold in-person classes in the studio space. They began Zoom classes and pre-recorded classes that were posted online so that their clientele could still access yoga classes when they really needed them most during the pandemic.

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SEE MOHAMADI
Mohamadi said, “But the universe had a different plan because my first book ended up being on the chakras.”

Her book “Unlock the Power of Your Chakras: An Immersive Experience through Exercises, Yoga Sets & Meditations”, which was released on Aug. 8, equipped her with the necessary skills down the road when she’s ready to write her family memoir – something that has been emotional for her due to her father’s death. It took Mohamadi a couple of years to write her first book, she said, but the process proved to be enjoyable.

“This book was full of research and excitement – where the memoir is more sad and there is a lot of emotions that come up. I feel like because I did a lot more research on this book, I have a lot more tools and resources to deal with the strong emotions as they come up to be able to write the memoir,” Mohamadi said.

The most rewarding parts of owning her business have been the relationships Mohamadi created along the way. She now considers the people she works with her family. Mohamadi has enjoyed seeing her students create relationships with herself and the other teachers at the studio, as well as form friendships with each other that extend outside of class time.

Last year, Mohamadi led a yoga retreat in Portugal and is looking forward to holding more retreats in Greece and Morocco. Traveling is one of her passions, and she’s looking forward to more opportunities for retreats with Radiance Yoga in the future.

“Something magical happens on these retreats where people are really able to nurture themselves and take the time to connect more deeply with their bodies. Also, you’re in a different land so you’re curious and your mind is open, and you’re learning and connecting about different cultures,” Mohamadi said. “I just think it’s such a gift you’re able to give yourself and I love sharing that with people.”

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Sarah and Jeremy Simmons got married in Hawaii during a weeklong celebration with friends and family.

Love in paradise

Alexandria couple holds destination wedding in Hawaii

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Sarah and Jeremy Simmons are explorers. The Old Town couple, who moved to Alexandria last year, spends much of their free time hiking and trying out new corners of the city. They’re also avid globetrotters, having visited a large number of countries both together and separately. Recently, they honored this wanderlust by getting married in Hawaii during a weeklong celebration with close knit friends and family.

But their mutual sense of adventure also laid the groundwork early on for what would become a cornerstone of their relationship, and it began at a small coffee shop in North Carolina.

Back in February 2017, they were both students at High Point

SEE SIMMONS
University; Sarah was a sophomore studying political science and Jeremy was a senior studying strategic communications. Their paths first crossed at a Valentine’s Day fraternity party, where after talking for a bit, they quickly realized that each enjoyed the other’s company.

The two decided to meet at a local coffee shop shortly after the Valentine’s Day party, where they discovered a shared love for traveling. At the time, Jeremy had been preparing for an upcoming trip to Spain to study abroad, while Sarah was getting ready to head to Italy, also for a study abroad trip.

Although that coffee date took place more than five years ago, Jeremy said he vividly remembers many tidbits from their first several hours together, such as Sarah describing her experience working in Florida for then presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s campaign.

“I think it was probably the best first date I’ve ever had,” Jeremy said. “It went for over three hours, so it was a pretty solid first date.”

Both Jeremy and Sarah left the encounter feeling separately excited, and would go on to spend more time together either on campus or after classes.

However, Jeremy was not privy to the fact that two of Sarah’s friends were also present on that date.

“They followed us to make sure that it was going well, that kind of thing. They gave up maybe an hour in, knew it was going well,” Sarah laughed.

During those early months, the fledgling couple bonded over sharing new experiences. They embarked on many hiking adventures, a fitting activity since they lived in North Carolina, and taught one another about their respective fields.

When Sarah was campaigning, for instance, Jeremy would often tag along to get a feel for her day-to-day work. In doing so, he learned about the campaign trail – with which he was previously unfamiliar –

Jeremy proposed to Sarah at Rehoboth Beach in Delaware.
They were on the same page regarding life goals, but not wanting to wait several years for the pandemic to subside to plan a wedding, Jeremy decided that April 2021 was the right time to get engaged.

On Easter of that year, Jeremy proposed at Rehoboth Beach in Delaware, an event that he said didn’t go as flawlessly as desired.

“But she said yes, so obviously it went very well,” Jeremy clarified, smiling.

Jeremy had corralled his family to assist with the proposal, a hefty task that included both of his parents present and one of his sisters flying in from Colorado. The goal was for Sarah to remain in the dark until the beachside proposal, but there were a couple close calls.

In her excitement, Jeremy’s mother—who he described as “not very good at keeping secrets”—almost inadvertently spilled the surprise at several different points. Sarah eventually caught on, but only right before the actual proposal.

“I would walk into a room and she would just be whispering and then be all nervous about it,” Sarah said. “It was perfect, though.”

When it came time for the big moment, a photographer hid along the beach out of Sarah’s line of sight. Jeremy brought her to the water and told her to look at the ocean, at which point she turned around to see Jeremy on one knee.

The next few months were something of a whirlwind. One month after the proposal, Sarah and Jeremy moved from Washington, D.C.—where they had been living at the time—to Old Town. It was a plan that had been brewing for a while, Sarah said, because of how drawn they were to the city’s appeal.

The couple also leapt into wedding planning mode, partly because they already had a vision but mostly because they were just eager to get started.

“We tried to truly just soak in being engaged at first, but we were just so excited to start the planning process,” Sarah said. “We had an idea already of the vision and what we wanted it to be like, so having that idea already set in stone, we just immediately started thinking about a guest list, looking and venues, and ended up jumping in pretty quickly.”

During the early planning stages, Sarah and Jeremy were on the fence about whether to have their wedding in Charleston.
lottesville, Va. or Hawaii. The pair knew they wanted it to be an intimate and multi-day affair, and even though Charlottesville would have been closer, they kept returning to the idea of a tropical backdrop surrounded by close friends and family.

“We wanted it] almost feeling like they’re on vacation, but simultaneously celebrating our wedding, [with] that warm, tropical romantic feel,” Sarah said.

With the location pinned down, planning the rest of the wedding week – from activities like turtle watching to a sunset sail – fell into place easily. Sarah and Jeremy intentionally scheduled the event to take place over several days so they could fully absorb all that Hawaii has to offer as well as spend more time with each guest.

“We were going to wish it went on longer, but it was all over so quickly,” Jeremy said.

Most guests arrived on Sunday, with the wedding set for a Thursday. This enabled them to meet each other beforehand, and many ended up exploring the island together. They would get lunch or go snorkeling or watch sea turtles, and some are still friends today, Jeremy said.

“It was so fun seeing all our friends from the different pieces of our lives, and getting along so well,” Sarah said.

One of the couple’s mutually favorite aspects to the wedding was their venue. Located at Paliku Gardens on Kualoa Ranch, a 4,000-acre private nature reserve in O’ahu, the venue overlooked mountains, water and an island known as “Chinaman’s Hat.”

Beyond the picturesque landscape, Sarah and Jeremy also selected the location because it’s where Jurassic Park, one of their favorite movies, was filmed. Jeremy emphasized that while the wedding was not in fact Jurassic Park-themed, he did walk down the aisle to the film’s instrumental theme song.

“We weren’t sure if guests would recognize it, but they did,” Sarah said.

“And they all loved it. They thought it was super cool,” Jeremy chimed in.

To cap off the week, the couple hosted a sunset sail that took place the day after the wedding as a way to thank everyone for attending. A double rainbow appeared while on the sailing trip, which Sarah and Jeremy concurred was a nice bow that tied together a successful celebration.

“Everybody loved that. I think that was a great culmination of what the whole week was, and then ending on a beautiful Hawaiian sunset – it was something everybody really enjoyed and appreciated,” Jeremy said.

That was more than a month ago now. Sarah and Jeremy have been married since Aug. 11, and the strangest adjustment hasn’t been referring to each other as husband and wife – it’s hearing other people say it.

But other than that, they said married life looks largely the same as it did beforehand. The couple still makes time for exploring their new city, hiking and traveling. Since moving, they’ve made several trips to Charlottesville to visit the wineries and mountains.

They also still share the same ritual of enjoying coffee together in the morning, whether that be brewing it at home or venturing to a local shop for a cup. The activity has been a constant since their college days.

“I mean, our first date was at a coffee shop. Just continuing that [sense of] ‘This is where it started’ and enjoying that moment together has been great,” Jeremy said. “It’s not going to change.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com
Congratulations! You’re planning your wedding – one of the most special days of your life. Now, take a deep breath. I know it can feel intimidating, but planning a wedding doesn’t have to be stressful. As a wedding planner and coordinator, I’ve seen couples take all different kinds of approaches to planning their big day, and I’m here to share some secrets for making the process a little less overwhelming.

1. Start with a realistic budget in mind. Popular wedding sites will tell you that the average wedding is $30,000, which is true. That doesn’t mean that you can’t plan a $30,000 wedding, but it does mean that you’ll want to do some research on your particular area with your specific guest count in consideration before you set your budget. The DMV area can be pricey, so pick the categories that you want to stretch and splurge on, and keep yourself on budget for the categories that don’t mean as much to you.

2. Prioritize vendors and don’t do too much at one time. Of course, your venue is the first priority, but what should you do next? Find catering, as this will be the biggest portion of your budget. Next, look at photographers. Once that is booked, check out DJs. Work on your décor plan and then lock in your florist. It’s not necessary to book all vendors simultaneously, which could prove to be very overwhelming. Feel free to ask booked vendors you already trust for referrals. They will never send you to someone that won’t do a good job; we don’t collect referral fees, we just like connecting our clients with people we know are amazing.

3. Be honest with your opinions when discussing your wedding with vendors. Didn’t like the chicken at your catering tasting? Let them know so they can give you alternative suggestions. Did the florist pick some flowers that you don’t love for your proposal? Tell them and they’ll switch it out. Didn’t like your hair and makeup trial? Give them feedback and sign up for a second trial if it doesn’t feel right to you. Your vendors are only good at providing exactly what you want if you let us know exactly what you want.

4. Don’t let the timeline stress you out. If you have a planner, they will successfully guide you through creating a successful timeline, and if you don’t, don’t worry. Use online resources, and talk with your

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photographer, DJ and catering coordinator to make sure everything that is needed makes it into the timeline. They are there to help and to provide feedback that will only make their job easier.

5. Make the day personal to you, and don’t add things that don’t mean anything to you or your partner. Photo booths are great for lots of couples, but do you love them? Favors can be cute, but do you have an idea that is special for the two of you? Don’t do something only because it’s a trend – add it to your beautiful day if it’s meaningful and magical to you.

6. Be realistic with DIY projects. Planning a wedding can be time-consuming, and I constantly see brides overcommit to what they can handle projectwise on their own. No one wants to be up until 2 a.m. every night the week of their wedding, hand painting table numbers and making centerpieces. List out projects and the time you expect it’ll take to complete, and then make sure you have the time to make that happen. Don’t forget to review the costs of your DIY projects too – I have seen many DIY project budgets end up being just as or more expensive as renting, buying or having a vendor provide the service for you.

7. Focus on creating memories. What is going to stand out to you 10 years from now? What are your friends going to remember and bring up to you a year or two after the wedding? It probably won’t be the color of your napkins, or the types of chairs you choose for the reception. Work with your vendors to create a fun experience, and you can’t go wrong.

8. Remember that it’s just one day, and your marriage is really what’s important. Knowing that this is just the start to your journey – not the end – can make the little things that might go wrong along the way seem much less important and impactful to your overall process. No wedding planning process is complete without a few hiccups, but prioritizing the life you and your fiancé are starting after the wedding day will make those bumps in the road seem a lot less important!

The writer is the owner of Colorfully Yours Weddings & Events, a wedding planning company in Alexandria.
How to ring in spooky season with your pup

BY GINA HARDTER

This fall, we're all looking for fun activities to do — and why not consider something that's equally fun for your canine companions? Whether you are looking to travel or for something in your own backyard, here are five fun autumn activities for you and your pup.

Go on an adventure
Now that the weather has cooled off a bit, it's the perfect time to get out and about with your dog. Consider a fall hike to take in the leaves or visit an apple orchard to go apple-picking — just make sure your pup doesn't eat too many honeycrisps!

Find a photo op
Fall is a great time to take some spectacular photos with your dog. Check out a pet-friendly pumpkin patch and snap a photo of them posing amongst the gourds or wait until the spooky season sets in and get a pic of their Halloween — or Howl-O-Ween — finery.

Create fall accessories
Autumn is all about the clothes, and your pet can look just as snazzy as you do. Consider crafting a fall-themed bandana from some stylish spare cloth and markers or embroidery. You can even decorate a collar with your own fall artwork, but make sure it fits properly and you include your dog’s tags on it when you’re done.

Bonus: If your jack-o-lantern skills are expert level, you could even carve your pumpkin to complement your

Autumnal adventures
Make yummy fall treats
Fall is the season of pumpkins, and that goes for your pet too. Most dogs love pumpkin flavoring, and you can bake your own pumpkin dog treats or even make some pumpkin ice cream for them to enjoy all autumn long. Just make sure you are using sugar-free pumpkin puree, not pumpkin pie filling, as the spices and sugar in pie filling can upset your pup’s sensitive tummy.

Play in the leaves
Northern Virginia is covered in leaves this time of year, and a good roll in the leaves can be just what the veterinarian ordered — as long as your dog does it safely. Make sure there are no wild animals nesting in the leaf pile, unaware of the canine surprise to come, or any large sticks or other items that could hurt your pup. And if you see any signs of mold or damp, keep your pooch away; that can be as toxic to pets as it is to humans.

Bonus: Check out Paws in the Park
Alexandria’s biggest pet event returns to Oronoco Bay Park, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 16. Hosted by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and featuring adoptable animals from across the community, as well as music, food and drink, artisans and so much more, Paws in the Park promises to be a fun day for the whole family — including well-behaved, leashed pets. Read more at PawsintheParkVA.com.

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The writer is director of marketing and communications for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization supporting Alexandria and beyond. More information is available at AlexandriaAnimals.org.
Five tips for home maintenance

BY BRANDPOINT

While home maintenance may seem pricey, being proactive about home upkeep can save more money by preventing expensive repair or replacement costs in the future – not to mention safeguarding against damage to your home. The hard part is knowing how often and what type of maintenance to do, and where to start.

According to State Farm, fall is the perfect time to take care of many home maintenance jobs, whether by yourself or by hiring professionals.

Fall is a great time to take care of many home maintenance jobs, whether by yourself or by hiring professionals.

1. Check your smoke detectors

According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, 96% of homes are now installed with smoke detectors. However, nearly 20% of them have non-working smoke alarms. The NIST estimates that if every home had working smoke alarms, deaths from U.S. residential fires could drop 36%. So why aren’t these smoke detectors working? The answer is commonly missing or dead batteries. Smoke detector batteries need to be replaced at least annually, not just when they chirp. Smoke detector batteries need to be replaced at least annually, not just when they chirp.

2. Trim your trees

A lesser known fact home-owners may not know is that you’re responsible for the damage if a tree on your property falls on a neighbor’s house. If a dead branch damages your home, it can result in a homeowner’s insurance claim, meaning you have to pay the deductible. For peace of mind, trim the trees on your property every fall. If you prefer hiring a professional, contact your local insurance agent and they can help you find an arborist with community roots.

3. Check washing machine hoses

Did you know a washing machine hose holds 70 pounds of pressure? If it fails, it can spray 650 gallons of water per hour into your home. So if you’re away for the weekend and a hose bursts, you may open the door to the equivalent of a 20-foot by 40-foot in-ground pool’s worth of water, which can damage floors, drywall and personal items. Hose maintenance is easy: Inspect the hot and cold washing machine supply lines monthly, looking for blisters, worn tubing, cracks or loose connections. It’s best to replace supply hoses every 3 to 5 years.

4. Conduct a generator safety check

A portable generator is handy equipment for when the power goes out, and regular maintenance will ensure that it works when you need it. First, always unplug and turn off all power to the generator. Examine the AC wiring and alternator to clear dirt and debris. Inspect the air intake system and replace the

Smoke detector batteries need to be replaced at least annually, not just when they chirp.
Change air filters regularly. Set a reminder every few months to replace filters. Dirty filters can impede airflow and make the HVAC system work harder, decreasing efficiency and increasing energy costs.

Schedule regular maintenance checks, such as in the spring and fall, from your local HVAC professional. Some HVAC companies and local utilities have service programs where you pay a monthly or annual fee and they will conduct semi-annual maintenance checks. Pros will check the thermostat, clean or replace filters, lubricate moving parts, check refrigerant levels, inspect the condenser and coils and investigate unusual noises.

Take care of your home, so your home can shelter you and your family. These regular maintenance tasks will help reduce the likelihood of unpleasant surprises – and costs – to help give you peace of mind.

For peace of mind, trim the trees on your property every fall.

MAINTENANCE FROM | 19

air filter. Oil in your generator needs to be changed every 25 hours of running, or one year unused. When you’re ready to use the generator, take it outside to a well-ventilated area before starting up. Generators produce carbon monoxide from the exhaust and can cause serious injury or death if used indoors, in a garage – including with open doors – or even on a porch.

5. Maintain your HVAC

One of the most critical items to maintain is your heating, ventilation and air conditioning, or HVAC system. Regular maintenance helps keep the system in working order, extending the life of the system and saving on energy costs. According to HomeAdvisor, replacing an HVAC system costs from $5,000 to $10,000. To save money and extend the life of your system:

Change air filters regularly. Set a reminder every few months to replace filters. Dirty filters can impede airflow and make the HVAC system work harder, decreasing efficiency and increasing energy costs.

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AT A GLANCE

Address:
531 S Lee St.,
Alexandria, 22314

Neighborhood: Old Town

Price: $1,660,000

Square feet: 1,975

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 3 full

Year built: 1800

Contact:
Heather Corey
TTR Sotheby’s International Realty, Old Town
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703-989-1183
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HOMES ADVERTORIAL

River views in Old Town

If only every home in Old Town could be like this one – it’s located on THE block with river views overlooking Lee Street Park, plus it’s on the street where we all love to spend Halloween. After taking in the views, one can’t help but notice the home’s charming, gated front yard entry. Step on the front patio, sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee or a chat with a neighbor as they walk by. Entering the home’s front door leads to a large foyer with arched openings into both the living and dining rooms. At 20 feet wide, this home immediately feels spacious, light and airy. The main level also includes a sunny family room, kitchen and convenient full bath. Two doors lead to the private rear yard with a professionally designed hard-scape and landscape, a stone fountain, access to the storage cellar and convenient access to a rear alley. Upstairs, wake up to the sun rising over the Potomac from the primary bedroom suite. Three more guest rooms and two full baths complete the upper levels. There is also street parking available. The home is directly across the street from Lee Street Park, which has plenty of room for playing – with basketball, volleyball and playgrounds – and relaxing. It is one block to the river, dog park and bike path, two blocks to grocery store, and five blocks to King Street with its shops, restaurants and farmers’ market. It is located about one mile to King Street Metro, two miles to National Harbor, about three miles to Reagan National Airport, four miles to Amazon’s HQ2 and just six-and-a-half miles to Washington, D.C. This home offers a great lifestyle opportunity in Old Town’s coveted South East quadrant.

HOMES

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Potomac River views from every level. Middle: Enjoy picturesque sunrises from the primary bedroom. Right: Front and rear gardens are perfect for relaxing or entertaining.

FILE PHOTO
When the Irish singer-songwriter Sinead O'Connor went missing in May 2016 after she vanished while on a bike ride in Wilmette, Ill. and then was found safe a day later, my reaction was relief O'Connor was OK – and surprise to learn she had been living in a Chicago suburb, staying with a friend. So that’s what happened to Sinead O’Connor?

Despite the inclination of some in the public and the media to make light of O’Connor’s controversial and mercurial behavior, this was no joke, as she has dealt with mental health struggles and has publicly talked of suicidal thoughts. Thankfully, O’Connor was unharmed, and she slipped back into the world – continuing to record and tour from time to time, but no longer anywhere near the white-hot center of popular culture as she was in the 1990s.

Now comes the insightful, respectful and thorough Showtime documentary “Nothing Compares” from the Belfast-born director Kathryn Ferguson. It’s an invaluable look at a complicated and often misunderstood artist who is more than the usual talking points of “Nothing Compares 2 U” and “ripped up a picture of the Pope on ‘Saturday Night Live.’”

The documentary opens with Kris Kristofferson introducing O’Connor at Bob Dylan’s 50th anniversary concert at Madison Square Garden in 1992, just a week after the infamous “SNL” incident.

“I’m real proud to introduce this next artist, whose name has become synonymous with courage and integrity,” Kristofferson says. “Ladies and gentlemen, Sinead O’Connor.”

Cut to footage of O’Connor walking onto the stage as a smattering of applause is drowned out by a cascade of boos. This was at a Bob Dylan concert – a celebration of an artist who had become legend in large part because of his protest songs. If Sinead O’Connor was being boozed there ... well.

Ferguson weaves together archival footage and some re-creations with an extended interview with O’Connor, 55, whose insights are delivered via voice-over. “There was no therapy when I was growing up,” she says, “so the reason I got into music was therapy. [So] it was such a shock to me to become a pop star; it’s not what I wanted. I just wanted to scream.”

As a young girl, O’Connor suffered horrific physical, emotional and verbal abuse at the hands of her mother. Sinead was shuttled from school to school, and eventually started singing with bands in and around County Dublin as a teenager, with her remarkably strong and distinctive voice attracting the attention of the music industry. “Nothing Compares” focuses primarily on the period from 1987 to 1993, when O’Connor became an international superstar. By the time O’Connor was 21, she had released the acclaimed and popular “The Lion and the Cobra,” and she followed that with “I Do Not Want What I Haven’t Got” in 1990, which featured O’Connor’s signature sound and the basis for one of the most famous music videos of all time: her cover of Prince’s “Nothing Compares 2 U.” The song actually isn’t heard in the documentary, as Prince’s estate wouldn’t allow it.

Prior to the recording of “The Lion and the Cobra,” the record company wanted to glam up O’Connor; she responded by keeping her head shaved. O’Connor also claims the label’s execs pressured her to have an abortion, as her pregnancy would get in the way of her promoting her material. She had the baby, giving birth to her son Jake. “I just knew I didn’t want any man telling me who I could be or what I could be, or what to sound like,” O’Connor says.

Even as O’Connor’s star was ascending, she spoke out on myriad issues, polarizing colleagues and the public alike. Madonna and Frank Sinatra were among her critics. Against the backdrop of the Persian Gulf War, she refused to do a performance in New Jersey unless they agreed not to play the national anthem; in 1991, she boycotted the Grammys.

Then came the moment that will always be in the first paragraph of O’Connor’s life story: Oct. 3, 1992, when she performed Bob Marley’s “War” before ripping up the photo of the pope and proclaiming “Fight the real enemy!” in a bold and stunning statement in the wake of revelations about the church protecting abusive priests. Nine years later, John Paul II would offer an apology to victims of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy. The reaction was swift and overwhelmingly negative. O’Connor’s career never fully recovered.

Cut to present day, as O’Connor says, “I was always being made out to be crazy by the media. I don’t blame anybody for thinking I was crazy or for hating me for it ... I regret that people treated me like s--, and I regret that I was so wounded already that that really, really hurt me and killed me ... they broke my heart and they killed me, but I didn’t die.” The documentary ends with the O’Connor of today singing her 1994 song, “Thank You For Hearing Me.”

Her voice continues to soar with the angels.
We can reduce poverty!

BY HEATHER PEELER

Do you hear the good news? A few weeks ago, the Census Bureau reported that child poverty is at a historic low. In Virginia, child poverty fell from 15.7% in 2016 to 9.3% in 2020. Although we don’t have specific data for Alexandria, it’s likely that many Alexandria families are part of this trend.

How did so many families manage to move out of poverty? According to Child Trends, a national research organization, there are three main drivers: the federal child tax credit, pandemic stimulus payments and expanded eligibility for federal benefits programs. Direct cash assistance coupled with the social safety net is a winning formula.

Thanks to a grant from Economic Opportunity Funders in 2021, ACT provided outreach grants to five community organizations to inform residents about the federal child tax credit and the earned income tax credit. These organizations sent text messages, met with residents at barber shops, collaborated with local houses of worship and so much more to spread the word so that Alexandrians would benefit from these remarkable programs. (Read more about these outreach efforts at https://www.actforalexandria.org/initiatives/t/child-tax-credit/)

This news is very encouraging. When we give families direct assistance and the freedom to spend money on things they need, they improve their lives in significant ways.

These successful poverty-reducing efforts bode well for an innovative program the City of Alexandria is launching this fall. Alexandria’s Recurring Income for Success and Equity is a pilot program that will provide direct cash assistance to households at 50% or below the area’s median income, $71,150 annually for a family of four. Fueled by the American Rescue Plan Act, ARISE is one way that the City of Alexandria is addressing the longstanding national and institutional problem of the racial income gap.

One hundred and seventy households will be randomly selected to participate. Over a 24-month period, participants will receive $500 a month that they can use to support their families without restrictions. Based on similar initiatives around the country, we anticipate that money will be used to purchase necessities such as food, rent, childcare, healthcare costs and transportation.

ARISE will provide a sense of stability and help low-income families navigate life in a region with a very high cost of living. Data from a similar effort in Stockton, California showed that participants improved their overall health, well-being, they were less stressed and able to meet basic needs. Moreover, nearly 40% of families improved their economic situation and secured better paying jobs. They purchased reliable transportation, obtained credentialing and took time off work to interview for new opportunities. The city is taking a rigorous approach to assessing the impact of ARISE. We are optimistic that we will see the same results here in Alexandria.

Applications to participate will be available in a few weeks. Visit (https://www.alexandriava.gov/ARISE) for more information.

One of the most promising takeaways from the drop in poverty is that it challenges the notion of why people are poor. The myth of working your way out of poverty with a minimum wage job is not a reality for many low-wage workers. It sheds new understanding: poverty is not a personal failure, but a systemic failure that requires a systemic response.

The data from guaranteed income pilots around the country determine how monthly cash disbursements, with no strings attached, impact quality of life. In Stockton, California showed that participants improved their overall health, well-being, they were less stressed and able to meet basic needs. Moreover, nearly 40% of families improved their economic situation and secured better paying jobs. They purchased reliable transportation, obtained credentialing and took time off work to interview for new opportunities. The city is taking a rigorous approach to assessing the impact of ARISE. We are optimistic that we will see the same results here in Alexandria.

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Your Views

Let’s be loud about climate change

To the editor:
Recently our local government sent out an email announcing the creation of an office on climate change. When I read the first couple of sentences, my reaction was that it is "exactly what’s needed." But then I continued to read. I was disappointed to find that the city was congratulating itself on always having understood the threats presented by climate change. The email cited the proclamation of Alexandria as an "Eco City" in 2008. I was living here in 2008, and the actions of the city government in that year and the ones that followed in no way suggested that we were an Eco City.

Successive City Councils habitually rezoned city properties for higher densities. Our resident population grew and so did the number of commuters crowding into the city to work in newly constructed office buildings. We paid a price in lost trees and permeable surfaces. In simpler terms, paved surfaces and buildings do not absorb water. Trees deflect heat. Those decisions, some well over a decade old now, haunt us today. The frequent warnings from the weather service about flooding streets are just an example. Even recent council decisions, such as the newly approved Heritage project for lower income residents, do not give me hope. Some parts of this multi-building complex are seven stories high. Let’s pray we never have a power outage that strands residents on the upper floors. That happened to many low income tenants in high rise buildings in New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy. We’ve been spared any direct hurricane hits in recent years, but we can not expect this to continue infinitely.

Andrew Macdonald wrote about stream restoration last week, so I’ll just mention it as a problem we must face. There’s also the new delay in construction of the Potomac Yard Metro that’s directly attributable to a City Council choice to infill a wetland and build there. Metro’s management did not make that decision, our city government chose the wetland over several other options that were not as destructive to the natural environment.

Despite everything I’ve cited, the new climate office can be a force for good. The Times and other newspapers covering Alexandria need to make the climate office a regular stop on every visit to city hall. Representatives from this office should appear often at council's non-public hearing sessions to explain the existential threat of climate change and tell us what actions our city is doing about it. Most of our current councilors are serving their first term. They can still demonstrate that they understand climate change and that they care.

-Katy Cannady, Alexandria

About Alexandria

The development test

BY MARK EATON

Infrastructure decisions in Alexandria, particularly those related to new development, are topics of continuing and vigorous debate. A former City Councilor defined a test of a proposed development this way: When council makes a land use decision — consequential or less so — we should always ask ourselves one simple question: 20 years from now, when we’re not around to explain/defend this decision, will someone drive by and say, "Jeez, what kind of idiot approved that?"

Here are three other development decisions, or sets of decisions, with significant long-term impacts that are now increasingly clear:

• The location of the Department of Defense’s Base Realignment and Closure building — looming over I-395 and Seminary Road — will probably be seen as a mistake for which the city and federal governments share responsibility. The BRAC building should have been built in the Eisenhower corridor to take advantage of the Metrorail station. WMATA’s ridership data shows that only five stations in the 91-station system have average daily ridership lower than Eisenhower Avenue’s 1,482 riders per day.

There were competing proposals for the BRAC building, including a site in the Eisenhower corridor. City officials ultimately decided not to favor one proposal over another which foreclosed discussions when the federal government, effectively the developer in this case, located the building where it is today. The pandemic-driven reduction in physically present office work may mean that the BRAC building faces an unexpected future.

• Alexandria could have, and probably should have, promoted denser development around other Metro stations, particularly Huntington, Van Dorn and Braddock Road. City leaders were concerned, then as now, about increasing density and its effects — the sense that we are being paved over and the incontrovertible fact that local travel is increasingly arduous. The essence of the decisions at that time was to reject the Arlington model of large multi-projects around the Crystal City, Courthouse and Ballston Metro stations in favor of a lower density approach.

However, developers have to develop. Reduced commercial development means reduced tax revenues. Now, the question remains whether Alexandria would have been more able to control density elsewhere in the city if more development had been permitted around the city’s Metro stations.

• A third development decision from the 1980s came as a result of grassroots action, complete with Alexandria’s essential public policy medium, yard signs. The community decision to protest the proposed then-Redskins, now Commanders, stadium in Potomac Yard was intuitively correct. The team is now prospecting/angling for a stadium site in other Northern Virginia areas after a consistently unsatisfactory fan experience in Maryland, years of miserable football and a toxic and indefensible work environment for franchise employees.

So, the development test results indicate a failing grade for BRAC, a potential passing grade for Potomac Yard, as all the results are not in, and a grading-on-the-curve incomplete for development around the Metro stations.

Next up for the development test? The four million square foot West End Alexandria project at the former Landmark Mall site.

MARK EATON

The writer is a former lawyer, member of the Alexandria School Board from 1997 to 2006, and English teacher from 2007 to 2021 at T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. He can be reached at aboutalexandria@gmail.com and subscriptions to his newsletter are available free at https://aboutalexandria.substack.com/.

PEELER

FROM | 22
also dispels the myth that poor people make poor decisions. In fact, when low-income people have the freedom and agency to make decisions about spending, they make decisions that advance the health and economic wellbeing of their families. Their lives improve and our overall community improves.

You can get involved! Visit www.volunteeralexandria.org and sign-up to be an ARISE outreach or application volunteer.

As a community, we have a choice about how we collectively move forward. Direct cash assistance programs and tax credits are proven to effectively support families and help people advance on the economic ladder. These investments enable all our neighbors to thrive.

The writer is president and CEO of ACT for Alexandria.

CORRECTION
This article was scheduled to run in the 9/29 issue. Due to a technical issue, another article ran in its place. The Times regrets the error.
Robert Prettyman and Friendship Firehouse’s hose carriage

National Fire Prevention Week is observed from Oct. 9 to 16, in memory of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the first National Fire Prevention Week, which was observed in 1922.

On Feb. 25, 1858, the Alexandria Gazette wrote, “Mr. R. F. Prettyman has just finished at his factory on Pitt Street, a new hose carriage for the Friendship Fire Company of this City which for the beauty of design and substantial workmanship cannot be surpassed in the country.” Prettyman’s hose carriage, newly restored to look as it did in the late 1850s, is on display at the Friendship Firehouse Museum at 107 S. Alfred St. The museum will be open Oct. 15 to culminate Fire Prevention Week, which celebrates its 100th anniversary Oct. 9 to 15.

Carriage maker Robert F. Prettyman was a member of Alexandria’s Friendship Fire Company. Born in 1821, Prettyman joined his father’s business in 1842. Robert’s father was also a member of Friendship Fire Company. Prettyman lived and worked on Pitt Street, between King and Cameron, making coaches and carriages, selling used coaches and carriages and doing repairs. With Friendship Fire Company, Prettyman attained the rank of engineer, the most prestigious position in the company. His job was to maintain the engines and make sure they stayed in good working order. In 1858, he was also Friendship’s president and was a delegate to the city’s Fireman’s Convention.

Though a member of the Friendship Fire Company, Prettyman also built a hose carriage for the city’s Sun Fire Company. He built Sun’s carriage in 1857, a year before building the Friendship carriage. An article in the Alexandria Gazette noted that, “for beauty of design, neatness of finish and substantial work, is not to be excelled at any factory in the United States.” When Prettyman delivered the new carriage, the Sun Fire Company marched it through several of the city’s streets before taking it to their fire house.

Prettyman was active elsewhere in the community as well. He was an officer in the Mount Vernon Guards and a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows fraternal and service organization. He was one of the managers of the annual Birth Night Ball celebrating George Washington’s birthday. An active member of the Whig party, he was a delegate to the Whig national convention held in Philadelphia in 1848, though he declined to run for office himself – City Council – in 1853.

Friendship Fire Company, established in 1774, was the oldest of five volunteer fire companies in Alexandria. Like all fire companies, they sought the best and most innovative equipment available to fight fires. In the mid-19th century, hose carriages, like the ones built by Prettyman, were a technological advancement. Long hoses replaced bucket brigades as more efficient ways to supply a steady stream of water from wells and cisterns.

The hose carriage was also ornately painted and decorated. The Alexandria Gazette article notes, “The ornaments are all plated work, except two portraits. The one on the right being Benjamin Thomas, late President of the Company (1855) and the other on the left, James W. Keene, a member of the Company killed at the fire on King Street (Dowell Store), November 17, 1855.

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week
How do you plan to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month?
61% Something else.
32% By supporting local Latinx-owned businesses.
3% By attending a fiesta or community celebration.
3% By attending a dance or coffee workshop.

This Week
Do you agree with Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s proposed transgender student policies?
A) Yes.
B) No.
C) I’m not sure.
D) I don’t care either way.
**Weekly Words**

**ACROSS**
1. Real humdingers
8. Sauna stuff
17. Seasonal purchase that counts down the days until Christmas
20. Actor Reeves
21. Antiestablishment movement
22. Gets on an airplane
23. One might be in a cast
24. Research specialties
25. Automatic garage door device
27. “Les Miserables” star Hathaway
28. Melissa Joan ____, Glass of public radio
30. Howard or Alcorn State, e.g. (Abbr.)
32. Middle Eastern country home to the world’s oldest dam
33. Like bargain bin items
35. Snail’s trail
36. Ship’s navigational route
38. “___: The Origins of Our Discontents” (2020 bestseller)
44. Word after “floppy” or “compact”
45. Primatologists’ subjects
47. Extend across
48. Common dog biscuit shape
49. Ruby, e.g.
50. Worked (up)
52. Mint Mobile and T-Mobile
54. Stop motion game?
56. “That’s a ___ to process”
58. “That’s a ___ to process”
60. Fuel additive brand
63. Triage places (Abbr.)
64. Esoteric
65. Mariner’s guiding light
68. Things ___ as they seem
70. Things ___ as they seem
72. Whirling “Looney Toons” character
74. “You wanna fight?!”
77. “Awesome, great to hear”
78. Gift for a calligrapher
80. Add while cooking

**DOWN**
1. Policy for “Dreamers” (Abbr.)
2. A durian has a pungent one
3. Egg cell
4. “Bohemian Rhapsody”
5. “Kisses, my love!”
6. Not off the chain!
7. High-minded individuals?
8. Stack of unsolicited manuscripts
9. As a team
10. Phone number
12. “That’s too nice!”
13. Seashore
14. Unusual specimen
15. Certain speedway racers
16. Places where the past can be present?
18. Initiates aptly found in “ObamaCare”
19. Some family secrets
20. Pond carp
22. Aggressively bold
23. Walked into
25. Undying
27. Cellphone surface
29. Walked into
31. Howard or Alcorn State, e.g. (Abbr.)
33. Like bargain bin items
35. Snail’s trail
36. Ship’s navigational route
38. “___: The Origins of Our Discontents” (2020 bestseller)
43. “You wanna fight?!”
44. Specifics, in slang
46. Mastermind piece
48. In search of stimulation
49. Sound from an empty stomach
51. Country that’s the world’s second-largest producer of olive oil
53. “Eh, same here?”
55. Sleeping bag fastener
56. Did some road repair work
57. “Yeah, yeah, the joke’s on us”
58. As an athlete
59. Sound from an empty stomach
60. Add while cooking
62. Hunts for food
63. Chew on this!
64. “That’s pretty cool!”
66. “That’s fantastic to hear!”
67. No-goodniks
69. Standardized test
70. Rodent catcher
71. Period before television
72. No-goodniks
73. “You wanna fight?!”
75. Getting by
76. Rodent catcher
77. Developmental sites?
78. Developmental sites?
79. “It’s all my fault”
80. Hardly a perfect person
83. Wander the web
84. Lively Carnival dances
85. Stretch at work?
86. Bat Appreciation month (Abbr.)
87. Like bargain bin items
88. “Yeah, yeah, the joke’s on us”
89. Parking meter insert
91. Bat Appreciation month (Abbr.)
92. Mario Kart character with a mushroomlike head
94. “Yes, monsieur”
95. “SNL” segment?
96. Qatar ruler
97. Meshes well
98. Developmental sites?
99. “Thanks so much for the help”
100. West African staple crop
101. Yellow Monopoly bill

**Solutions from last week**

CHARLES CLINTON (80), of Alexandria, Sept. 21, 2022
BRUCE MCCARTHY (89), of Alexandria, Sept. 24, 2022
GERALDINE MITCHELL (81), of Alexandria, Oct. 2, 2022
TOFIE OWEN (85), of Alexandria, Sept. 28, 2022
MAUREEN SCHREINER (85), of Alexandria, Sept. 19, 2022
OCTOBER 7
DEATH COMES TO CARLYLE HOUSE Carlyle House presents an exhibit on mourning practices in the 18th-century through the experiences of those who occupied the Carlyle household, mourning the death of Alexandria’s co-founder, John Carlyle, in September 1780. Reservations are required as space is limited. Time: 6 to 8 p.m. Location: 121 N. Fairfax St. Information: novaparks.com/parks/carlyle-house-historic-park/events/death-comes-to-carlyle-house

OCTOBER 10
FALL FROLIC AT LEE-FENDALL HOUSE MUSEUM Enjoy some fall-themed family fun in the garden during Lee-Fendall House’s Fall Frolic event. Activities catered to children ages 3-12 include a “ghost” hunt, crafts, a costume parade and more. Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: 614 Oronoco St. Information: http://www.leefendallhouse.org/events/

OCTOBER 11
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE’S DAY EXHIBIT UNVEILING For thousands of years, Native Americans moved through the region, trading and drawing resources from the land and river. A new exhibit at the Alexandria Archaeology Museum shows how archaeologists study changes in stone projectile point technology to help figuring out the age of an archaeological site and how the area was used. Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: 105 N. Union St. Information: https://apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=47964

OCTOBER 13
FASHION FUSION The Yacht Haven Garden Club is presenting its 38th annual Fashion Show and Luncheon, Fashion Fusion, at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria. Fashions will be provided by Johnny Was and inspired by world cultures and the arts. Time: 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Location: 5111 Old Mill Rd. Information: https://www.visitedlray.com/events/halloween-house-competition-touring-voting/

OCTOBER 15
ACS PRESENTS OUT OF THE DEEP The Alexandria Choral Society, under Artistic Director Brian Isaac, will open its 2022-2023 season with Out of the Deep, featuring John Rutter’s exquisite Requiem. This glorious work, provided by Johnny Was and inspired by world cultures and the arts. Time: 6:30 p.m. Location: 2701 Cameron Mills Rd. Information: https://www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/out-of-the-deep

OCTOBER 17

OCTOBER 21
TOAST TO HOPE, NOVA’S BLUE TIE AFFAIR Stop Child Abuse Now of Northern Virginia’s annual Blue Tie Gala, Toast to Hope, unites individuals who stand up for abused, neglected and high-risk youth. The community is invited to join over 300 of NOVA’s champions for children for a night of childhood magic as they honor those who are survivors, share the impact donors and look forward to a future where all children have the opportunity to thrive. Time: 6 to 9:30 p.m. Location: Army Navy Country Club Information: https://www.scanva.org/take-action/toast-to-hope/

OCTOBER 28
DEL RAY HALLOWEEN PARADE Children, pets and strollers in costumes are invited to march and show off their finest and scariest Halloween garb; awards are given for best pet costume, best decorated business, best decorated home and best decorated stroller. Time: 2 p.m. Location: Begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte Ave. Information: https://www.visitdelray.com/events/halloween-house-competition-touring-voting/

https://www.facebook.com/yachtHAVengardenclub/

https://www.visitdelray.com/events/halloween-house-competition-touring-voting/

https://www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/out-of-the-deep
Alexandria, VA, and may be examined or copied weekdays 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. The ERR may also be viewed at the Office of Housing’s website (alexandriava.gov/Housing).

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to kimberly.cadena@alexandriava.gov or to the Office of Housing, 421 King St, Ste. 215, Alexandria, VA, 22314. All comments received by October 22 at 5 p.m., will be considered by the City of Alexandria prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION
The City of Alexandria certifies to HUD that James F. Parajon in his capacity as City Manager consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts in any action that is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD’s approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the City of Alexandria to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS
HUD will accept objections to its release of funds and the City of Alexandria’s certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the City of Alexandria; (b) the City of Alexandria has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD, 820 First Street, N.E., Suite 450, Washington, DC 20002-4255, Attention: Mr. Michael D. Rose, Director, Community Planning and Development Division. Potential objectors should contact HUD at (202) 775-6266 to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

James F. Parajon, City Manager

LEGAL NOTICE
Board of Architectural Review
LEGAL NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, room 2400, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 on the following applications:

BAR #2022-00397 OHAD Request for alterations at 308 North Columbus Street. Applicant: Peter Henry
BAR #2022-00398 OHAD Request for demolition/encapsulation at 308 North Columbus Street. Applicant: Peter Henry
BAR #2022-00429 OHAD Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for alterations at 808 Duke Street. Applicant: Wood + Starr
BAR #2022-00430 OHAD Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for demolition/encapsulation at 808 Duke Street. Applicant: Wood + Starr
Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD); Parker – Gray District (PG)

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Lanning.Blaser@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Jackie Cato at jackie.cato@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711.

For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit alexandriava.gov/boards

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704 Fords Landing Way

Waterfront in Old Town Alexandria as you've been hoping to discover! It is infrequent to find this location and quality – classic Colonial with open floor plan for your 2022 lifestyle! This home's interior has been restored and curated with absolute premium fit and fixture throughout. The phenomenal water views from all levels and private setting are distinctive features in this opulent locality. Featuring easy walkable access to all that defines why Travel and Leisure has ranked Alexandria #EIGHT of the top cities in the US! Four large bedrooms and light-filled throughout! Six miles to National Landing, five miles to DCA, and eight miles to our Nation's Capital! Offered at $3,495,000

Celebrating 27 Years of service to my clients and my community!

Janet Caterson Price
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