Alexandria couple, wed for 44 years, die on the same day

BY HANNAH DOCTER-LOEB

Alexandria couple Andrew “Andy” Stephen Duet Jr. and Sandra “Sandy” Engelhart Duet both died on Dec. 18, 2022 within hours of each other following 44 years of marriage. Theirs was a love story to the very end, as they each spent years tending to each other’s health before dying about eight hours apart one week before Christmas.

The passing of spouses in such close proximity seems like a one-off coincidence, but this phenomenon has been previously observed. Some dub it “broken heart syndrome.” A Johns Hopkins nurse who had been caring for Sandy referred to it as ‘sweetheart syndrome.’ Regardless of what it’s called, it’s certainly an apt description of Sandy and Andy’s relationship.

When Sandy and Andy’s obituaries ran side-by-side in the Alexandria Times last month, we were profoundly interested in the story of how this long-married couple, with the unlikely last name of “Duet,” could have departed this world in the same way they had spent most of their lives together.

Standing tall

Former SSSAS stalwart builds strength, becomes Bucknell’s starting center

BY JIM MCGRATH

At first glance, Andre Screen looks like a typical college student. With his scholarly wire rimmed glasses and a beard that is filling in, Screen fits in well with the rest of his fellow Markets, Innovation and Design majors at Bucknell University.

Yet, as one moves closer to Screen, it becomes obvious that he is not the typical college student. At seven-foot-one and 261 pounds, he towers over the student body at Bucknell, as well as many of the teammates and competitors with which he shares an athletic space as part of his sporting endeavor, more specifically, the starting center for the Bison basketball team.

It has been an interesting trip for the St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes alumnus, Class of 2020. “I started out at Lane Elementary School, and then attended Mark Twain Intermediate,” Screen said following a recent Bison practice. “I was supposed to go to Edison or Hayfield, but [former SSSAS] Coach [Ron] Ginyard saw me in seventh grade and brought me to St. Stephen’s.”

At the time, Screen’s basketball skills were not in great demand. He was tall in seventh grade, but at six feet even, Ginyard would never have guessed that the bespectacled youth would end up becoming a dominant center for the Saints. In fact, the “big man” spot was already filled by Charles Thompson, who would go on to play for Towson University.

Soon after arriving at the SSSAS campus in Alexandria, Screen began growing at a

Together to the end

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Timeless elegance and panoramic vistas from this classic brick four square perched majestically in the shadow of the Masonic Temple! Sited on the corner of Highland and King St., this landmark home has been brought back to life by Bluestone Builders in collaboration with ThompsonMoran Design team. This approximately 3,400 sq. ft. residence is the epitome of classic: showcasing quality custom finishes and true craftsmanship, the home has been taken down to the studs, the floor plan reconfigured, the basement dug out and the 3rd upper level finished! The home has 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths and is ready for many more years of memories. Be it front door or backdoor guests, all are welcomed by covered porches, a gracious front entry foyer and a light filled home with an open floor plan, exposed brick wall and gourmet kitchen with soapstone center island! The main and upper level have 9 ft. tall ceilings, transom windows above the doors, wide plank wire brushed white oak wood flooring, open staircase, 9 in. baseboard and oversized 2-over-1 windows. Entertaining is effortless with the open circular floor plan making this the social center of the home... or use the pocket doors between the family and living room for multi-functional use or some quiet time! The dining room is thoughtfully located close to the kitchen and has a secondary entry. Tucked away off the hall is a main level powder room, beautiful french doors off a family room, which lead to the back porch overlooking and convenient to National Airport & Amazon HQ2.

A timeless home filled with modern conveniences, coupled with the charm of yesteryear, Hunter Mews is one of Old Town Alexandria’s few single-family homes nestled on one of its oldest streets. This home is a true rarity that is seen through two conventional lenses – the classic look and feel of Old Town from the exterior, yet young and new throughout the interior – that awaits you as you pass through its gates. Upon entering the 6/7 bed, 4.5.5 bath (5,584 sq ft) home you will be welcomed by the entry foyer, the main living room radiates from the natural light that shines through a full bank of windows across the room. An elevator provides access to all three levels of the spacious home. The light-filled breakfast/family room has a 20-foot wall of floor to ceiling windows which look out to meticulous gardens with plush plantings. The primary bedroom offers the perfect space to unwind, as it has a gas fireplace, floor to ceiling wall of windows, vaulted ceilings with built-in speakers and cove lighting. The upper level also includes four additional bedrooms that have been extensively renovated. A well appointed roof deck is accessible from two rooms and overlooks the private gardens. There is an attached garage with additional storage and custom floor finish, as well as additional off-street parking.

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Christine Garner (703) 587-4855
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For additional information & photos, go to: www.ChristineGarner.com
Man pleads guilty to assault on Tuesday

A man from Frederick, Maryland pleaded guilty on Tuesday to assault with a deadly weapon in the City of Alexandria, according to an Alexandria Police Department news release.

Juan Marcus Smith, 58, was driving on the George Washington Memorial Parkway when a dump truck collided with his vehicle. Smith proceeded to pull in front of the truck and stop his car in the middle of the parkway, according to the release. The victim was subsequently transported to the hospital and there have been no further reports on his condition.

According to the police dispatch call, someone was screaming and calling for help on the south side of the ninth floor of a building.

“He got somebody stabbed and I’ve got one at gunpoint,” an APD officer said at 6:02 p.m. on OpenMHz.com.

Edwards is being held without bond, and goes to court for the incident on March 15, according to ALXnow, which also reported that Edwards was previously sentenced to 90 days in the Alexandria jail for indecent exposure in 2011, with a year suspended. In addition, they reported that court records show Edwards was found guilty of trespassing in 2020, subsequently spending two months in jail, with two years of supervised probation.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact Detective Edmund Dougherty at 703-746-6697 or Edmund.Dougherty@alexandriava.gov.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

Man arrested for West End stabbing

Akkeim Edwards, 45, was arrested and charged with felony assault following a stabbing incident that occurred on Saturday in the West End, according to an Alexandria Police Department news release.

At approximately 5:59 p.m. APD responded to a shots fired call for service in the 300 block of South Reynolds Street. But when they arrived, officers discovered a male victim, 29, with stab wounds to his midsection, according to the release. The victim was subsequently transported to the hospital and there have been no further reports on his condition.

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Arlandria assault leaves one injured

A man was injured early Monday morning near West Glebe Road and Mount Vernon Avenue.

Alexandria Police Department police responded to a call for service at 2:26 a.m., according to the dispatch call, which specified that a group of three men followed a victim behind AutoZone with a knife.

“The subject is going to be hiding behind a parked truck. ... [There is] a white pickup truck involved,” one dispatcher said.

Then, at 2:30 a.m., the same dispatcher said that the subject “answered, advised that he was being attacked and disconnected again.”

According to police, the victim suffered lacerations to his head. No one has been arrested in connection with the incident.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

Meet Fries!

Fries is house-hunting, and having heard that there aren’t many adoptable dogs available, hopes that she’ll find her new home soon. A lovely hound-mix with a beautiful brindle coat and golden eyes, Fries is the perfect walking partner and is always ready to go. A very affectionate girl, Fries weighs about 50 lbs and, when curled on a lap, appears much smaller. A highly companionable gal.

Meet Fries!
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“Because everyone needs a home.”
Shots fired in Arlandria on Tuesday

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a shots fired incident that occurred in Arlandria on Tuesday, according to a news release.

Police responded to a call for service around 9:45 p.m. in the 900 block of West Glebe Road. No injuries were reported, according to the release. The investigation is active.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

Tax preparation services offered

The City of Alexandria will offer free tax preparation services to qualifying residents beginning this month.

Volunteers from Community Tax Aid will help to ensure that taxpayers apply for all applicable credits and deductions, especially the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Taxpayers are eligible if their income is below $59,000. Electronic filing will be provided.

Starting Feb. 18, services will be offered Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon and Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Department of Community and Human Services. The program ends on April 19.

Required documents include a social security or taxpayer ID, photo ID, W-2 forms and other income records. For more information, call 202-830-1480.

-oanderson@alextimes.com

City seeks community feedback on audits

The City of Alexandria is seeking community input on safety issues at the intersections of Duke and South Patrick Streets, and Duke and South Henry Streets.

According to a news release, feedback is part of the Duke Street and Route 1 High Crash Intersection Audits Project, which aims to evaluate safety and mobility risks and develop designs for improvements.

Since 2014, more than 70 crashes have occurred at these two intersections, according to the release, and both are ranked among the city's high-crash intersections.

Feedback submissions are open until Feb. 28. For more information, visit www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-DukeRoute1.

-oanderson@alextimes.com
Just steps to the riverfront, the “Backyard Boats” community includes 28 sensational residences constructed in 2003 with a nod to the Colonial era. Many homes have elevators or are elevator-ready; all have two car garage parking. 720 Potomac Street boasts over 3000 interior square feet plus a private patio; an additional summertime room. Inside find tall ceilings, spacious rooms, great closets, two fireplaces, wood flooring throughout, all topped by gorgeous moldings. This Old Town location is walkable to markets, river front restaurants, the bike trail and all that our beautiful city offers.

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Diann Carlson
+1 703 628 2440
dcarlson@ttrsir.com
With the help of Sandy’s sister and a work colleague of Andy’s, we were able to piece together the narrative of their remarkable love story.

I do take thee

Andy was born on Aug. 26, 1955 in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana and graduated from Hahnville High School. He had been a drummer in a local jazz band, according to the St. Charles Herald Guide, and was the first person in his family to attend college. Andy attended Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana for two years studying journalism before switching to a paralegal program – but photography remained his passion.

Andy owned a photography studio in Luling, Louisiana, worked as a stringer for UPI, as a reporter for the Times Picayune and as a reporter for several local newspapers, according to the Herald Guide.

Lenny Gray, who went to high school with Andy and worked with him at various publications, recounted that if there was ever a disaster going on, Andy was quick to arrive on the scene. Andy even won an award from the Louisiana Press Association for pictures he took of a small plane which crashed landed after taking off from Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans.

“He was out there. He loved talking. He loved to interview people,” Gray said. “He loved to be where the action is.”

Sandy was born on February 12, 1951 in Cairo, Illinois. Her childhood was spent moving fairly often, as her father built major bridges in Mississippi and elsewhere. Despite attending three different high schools, Sandy graduated as salutatorian from Red Bud High School in southern Illinois. She attended Southeastern Missouri State University and graduated cum laude with a teaching degree in physics, according to the Herald Guide.

Sandy then moved to Louisiana, where she started teaching science in a high school before entering an emerging field as a cardiovascular sonographer. She earned multiple certifications and worked at West Jefferson and Touro Hospitals in New Orleans.

It was in Louisiana that Sandy and Andy met at a bar in the mid-70s.

While it wasn’t quite love at first sight, according to Cindy Engelhart, Sandy’s sister, Sandy was nonetheless moved by Andy’s humor and compassion, and the two began dating. They were a couple for a year or two before marrying in 1978, according to Engelhart.

“When I asked her why she married him ... and what was special about him, she said ‘He made me laugh and he was more concerned about me than himself,’” Engelhart explained.

Andy’s compassion extended beyond his relationship with Sandy. He spent much of his life being a caretaker, tending after his ailing mother for five years after she had a stroke. In 2001, Sandy moved to Alexandria to take a job at Sibley Hospital where she trained ultrasound.

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For better or for worse

Andy stayed behind in Louisiana to take care of his mother, but his devotion to Sandy never wavered. Engelhart recounted that Sandy was supposed to come up for a job interview right around the time of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, but all flights were canceled. That didn’t stop Andy from trying everything he could to get her to D.C. He spent hours on the phone trying to get Sandy on a flight so she could make the interview.

After his mother’s death in 2005, Andy moved to Virginia and the two settled in Parkfairfax, where they bought a condominium. Unfortunately, Sandy’s kidney health started to decline in the early 2010s. Since Sandy worked 10-hour days, Andy took on the caretaker role, driving her to work and cooking more. Sandy retired from Sibley in the fall of 2012 when she started dialysis. Dialysis was difficult for Sandy, so Andy would drive her to and from her appointments. After a successful kidney transplant in 2015, Sandy’s energy level rebounded and the pair became more active, even taking a few trips to visit friends in Louisiana.

While Sandy stayed active during the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of social activity severely impacted Andy’s health, particularly his mobility. By December 2021, he was no longer able to walk and was limited to their apartment. He was admitted to the hospital in September 2022 with pneumonia and congestive heart failure. During this time, Sandy coordinated his health care with their dedicated doctors. Andy quickly recovered and was discharged from the hospital in late October.

Unfortunately, the stress of Andy’s hospitalization impacted Sandy’s health. Her diverticulitis flared up, and then she had an autoimmune reaction to the antibiotics being used to treat it. She was admitted to the hospital in October, and while the doctors worked diligently to heal her, every time they tried to fix one illness, a few days later something else would fail. Eventually she was transferred to Johns Hopkins, but it became apparent that Sandy would not recover.

Until death do us part

Unable to travel to Hopkins on the day Sandy’s ventilator was disconnected, Andy and Engelhart spent four hours on a Zoom call talking to Sandy, the hospital chaplain and her nurses.
nurses. Eventually Engelhart left the call, but Andy continued to talk to Sandy even as she became unresponsive. Around 9:30 p.m. or so, Andy lost the Zoom call connection and he decided to go to sleep, Engelhart said.

“One of the things I remember Andy telling her is ‘It’s ok to go. Your mother and father are there. Margaret [his mother] is waiting,’” Engelhart recalled. “[He said] ‘I will come and join you soon.’”

But the next morning, at 7:50 a.m. on Dec. 18, 2022, it was Andy who was pronounced dead, having aspirated at some point after the Zoom call. About eight hours later, at 3:51 p.m., Sandy also passed away at Johns Hopkins Hospital from embolic strokes.

Dr. Vivek Sinha, chief medical officer of Belleview Medical Partners in Old Town, has seen similar things happen in his practice, of spouses dying within a few days or weeks of one another, but never within a few hours. However, he said it’s not surprising why it could happen.

“I’m a big believer that what happens in the mind affects the body and what happens in the body affects the mind,” Sinha explained. “We do know if somebody has chronic comorbid conditions like a kidney transplant or any underlying heart disease or undiagnosed things like high blood pressure, anything that would make their immune system more susceptible to illness, we know if something stressful or major happens, that can affect them in major ways.”

Sinha is also aware of broken heart syndrome, or “takotsubo cardiomyopathy” as it’s officially called in medical literature. The condition is usually diagnosed as a dysfunction of the left ventricle, which can mimic signs and symptoms of a heart attack. Sinha emphasized there’s no way to know for sure whether this is exactly what happened.

“It’s clear from speaking to those who knew Sandy and Andy that they were soulmates. They deeply appreciated each other and cared about each other,” Gray said. “It was a love story. You never saw one without the other.”

They were a couple without any real hobbies or many outside interests apart from each other. In fact, Engelhart said that when Andy had to cover a story, Sandy would often go with him.

“I once asked my sister, ‘Why is it that you don’t have a hobby?’ Everything they did, they did together,” Engelhart said. “They felt like they were each other’s best friends.”

“They loved each other to the very end,” she added. “There’s no doubt about it.”

Andy and Sandy Duet in August 2022, right before Andy went into the hospital and their final cavalcade of medical issues began.
rate of three inches per year — a growth spurt that would last for four years — adding a whole foot to his frame. While Screen was growing into a larger role on the basketball team, moving from public school to private school brought along numerous challenges.

“It was a tough transition in the beginning,” Screen said. “Everyone, the teachers and students, were speaking so fluently in class. And I wasn’t used to all the homework. In the past, I could finish all my work on the bus ride home. But once I got used to the work and building study habits, it got better.”

Ginyard left before Screen’s sophomore year and the new coach Mike Jones began. Jones brought a wealth of basketball experience with him, including 11 years of playing as a professional. He joined the SSSAS staff after a stint with the NBA’s Brooklyn Nets.

“He was gangly — long,” Jones, who is now the head basketball coach at DeMatha High, said of Screen. “But I didn’t know he’d end up being seven feet tall!”

Screen had one attribute that got Jones’ attention, and it had nothing to do with height. “He always asked a lot of questions. I appreciated that about Andre. He is always interested in improving,” Jones said.

There was one great deficiency in Screen’s toolbox. “It wasn’t that his body grew too fast. [In terms of coordination] he got his body right by junior year. But when I met him in middle school, [Andre] could probably only do five or six pushups,” Jones recalled.

Playing behind Thompson and learning from his teammate’s work habits helped. “By the time he was a senior, Andre could do 25 pushups,” Jones said.

There was also a matter of building stamina. “We’d go out to the track at St. Stephen’s to run the mile, and it would take Andre about 17 minutes to finish,” Jones said. “But he was phenomenal, and always had a smile on his face, even when we were doing track work. He managed to go from 17 to 12, and then 10. I believe the last time we talked he told me that his mile time was now 9-something.”

Yet the brainpower was always working for Screen. “Andre always had good hands and a good basketball IQ,” Jones said. “I believe his mother played basketball.”

Tragically, Screen’s mother Deborah Screen passed away in her sleep on Jan. 13, 2021, at age 60.

“As Screen progressed, so did the Saints. During his ninth grade year with the JV, the SSSAS varsity sported an 18-10 record. But by his junior year, with Screen playing center, the Saints won the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division I and Interstate Athletic Conference championships, while finishing with a 27-3 record. They followed up in his senior year with a 30-4 record and VISAA runner-up.”

Screen was well courted by college recruiters and armed with roughly 35 scholarship offers. However, he made the decision to commit before
Blessed Sacrament holds Culture Day

For many years, the eighth graders of Blessed Sacrament have taken the rest of the school on a tour of the world.

Divided into groups of two or three, this event is almost entirely student-organized. The eighth graders choose their country, research the history, culture, traditions, food, music, clothing, language and patron saint. They also designed a short quiz for the end of their presentations. However, the eighth grade students quickly learned during their preparations that they could not give the same quiz to the seventh grade class and to the kindergarten class.

After weeks of preparation, grades kindergarten through seventh grade were treated to food, games and fun facts from Brazil, Canada, Peru, Japan, Germany, India, Egypt, Australia and Madagascar.

In Brazil, students played soccer – or rather, football. While visiting Canada, students ate “beavertail” and played hockey. In Peru, they played volleyball and relaxed in Japan while playing a traditional card game called “haba-nuki.” Students learned a traditional Indian dance and a game similar to field hockey. Things became very competitive in Egypt where they played “drop the handkerchief.” Another competitive presentation was in Australia where the students played a game of netball. Finally, in Madagascar, students danced and completed a safari scavenger hunt.

Culture Day is an annual event that brings the world to our students, and helps them discover how vast the world is. The goal of the day is to teach the eighth grade students that they are capable and confident young people.

Immanuel Lutheran School celebrates National Lutheran Schools Week

The Immanuel Lutheran School community joined more than 1,800 Lutheran schools across the country in celebrating National Lutheran Schools Week from Jan. 22 to 28 to recognize and celebrate the work of Lutheran Schools in serving students, families and communities.

To start the week, the ILS Upper School Choir sang at the divine service at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Since the founding of both the church and school in 1870, ILS has received support from the congregation. Upper School students sang again during the school’s weekly all-school Chapel Service on Feb. 1.

Lutheran Schools Week provides opportunities for ILS students, teachers and families to participate in a variety of activities and school traditions. The school week started with literary Character Dress-Up Day and Drop Everything and Read Day on Monday. Popular literary characters included Mary Poppins, Heidi, Madeline, Sherlock Holmes, Robin Hood, the Hardy Boys, the Cat in the Hat and many characters from The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Upper School students engaged in a variety of competitions throughout the week, including three engineering challenges, a bible bowl and the annual Peeps Diorama Design contest. Lower School classes competed in a door decorating contest, and all classes participated in a contest to collect items for baby showers for Assist Pregnancy Center, and the family of former ILS teacher, Vicar Shawn Barnett, now attending Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

Students and teachers also enjoyed a special Bible character dress up day, a teacher swap, a cross-grade game day and a school spirit day. To celebrate the entire Immanuel community, the ILS Parent Teacher League organized the return of the popular Chili Cook-off.

After testing a number of different structures and propellers, the fourth graders planned out, drew and eventually 3D-designed and printed their own propeller. Each team focused on changing one variable, while keeping everything else constant. After testing their designs, they went back to the design process and made necessary changes to achieve maximum success.

ACDS students create wind turbines

After learning about various energy sources – renewable and nonrenewable – as well as electrical circuits, fourth graders at Alexandria Country Day School used the engineering design process to construct an efficient wind turbine.

After testing a number of different structures and propellers, the fourth graders planned out, drew and eventually 3D-designed and printed their own propeller. Each team focused on changing one variable, while keeping everything else constant. After testing their designs, they went back to the design process and made necessary changes to achieve maximum success.
Out of the classroom
Education section

Browne students win competition

On Jan. 28, Browne Academy’s eighth graders won second place in the Virginia state We the People competition.

Sponsored by Virginia Civics and held at the University of Virginia, We the People engages students in the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution.

To prepare, We the People coach Alissa Kharkar divided Browne’s students into six teams, which each received two questions, including sub-topics, to study. Delving deep into their respective aspects of the Constitution, the teams wrote four-minute oral presentations addressing each prompt. Next, they anticipated and researched questions judges might ask during simulated Congressional hearings at the state competition. Before heading to Charlottesville, the students had two dress rehearsals at Browne, complete with judges, questions and feedback.

Browne begins preparing students for public appearances and speaking at age 3, when the youngest students perform on stage during assemblies and concerts.

Under the guidance of Alissa Kharkar and Glenn Siegal, Browne’s Ariella B. and Grace L. received the highest score from the judges.

Fusion Academy students go ice skating

A recent Friday afternoon saw the students and staff of Fusion Academy Alexandria hitting the ice, when the campus participated in a field trip to a local ice skating rink.

Students of all grade levels helped each other, teaching one another to skate. Some students were seasoned professionals, demonstrating their skills on the ice, while others had never put on skates before.

The event proved to be a great bonding experience for students both new and returning.

Classes at Fusion Academy are one student and one teacher, so the campus embraces any opportunity to encourage socializing and collaboration between students. It allowed students to spend time with friends they don’t normally see on campus and meet new people.

The campus hopes to institute this as a yearly tradition.

School Profile

Charles Barrett Elementary School

Children are engaged and motivated to learn at Charles Barrett Elementary School, where arts integration is woven into the foundation of teaching and learning. Tucked into Alexandria’s North Ridge community, Barrett is one of a select group of schools in the metropolitan area to be a member of the John F. Kennedy Center’s Changing Education Through the Arts program.

Barrett provides a program of academic excellence, social-emotional learning and equity. Its committed staff and diverse student body enjoy a strong arts-integrated curriculum that energizes educators and aligns with how children simply learn best. Students build and demonstrate their understanding of history, literacy, math and science through the arts. The school’s “Encore” classes also provide students with rich experiences in music, the arts, physical fitness and health.

Barrett students are lifelong learners who value kind actions and use kind words. The school offers a positive, child-centered learning environment that is nurtured by learning partnerships with students, families and local organizations.

Community partners who contribute to the school’s mission include Alexandria Tutoring Consortium, Alexandria Soccer Association and Move to Learn.

This is advertorial content.
Valentine's Day is less than a week away, which means many people are beginning to think about how – and with whom – they want to spend the special day, as well as where to make a reservation.

Alexandria has endless options in a variety of neighborhoods and with a variety of flavor profiles. Because the romantic holiday falls on a Tuesday this year, some restaurants are featuring special prix-fixe menus for an extended period of time.

Whether you're looking for something more casual or an intimate and luxurious atmosphere, we've got you covered with a list of city spots for a perfect date night.

See Valentine
VALENTINE

The Loft at Lena’s
Located in Del Ray at 401 E. Braddock Road, the Loft at Lena’s is a secret, intimate space located upstairs within the popular Lena’s Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap that offers a truly romantic atmosphere. From glowing lighting to velvet banquets to hanging chandeliers, the current Velvet and Rye experience provides a “1920s speakeasy old world glam” feel, Operations Manager Donna Shore said.

“I really do think it has the luxurious atmosphere while still giving you the warmth and comfort, and all of our tables are not tightly next to each other,” Shore said. “It’s a great place because it has that sexy 1920s flapper feel to it, but it also has enough energy where you can feel like you’re part of something great but not sitting right next to the next couple.”

Lena’s is offering a prix-fixe menu on Valentine’s Day with the choice of two appetizers, two entrees, a dessert and a choice of house wines, one of which includes champagne. Appetizer options include a jumbo shrimp cocktail and winter salad and whipped feta; entree options include lobster carbonara and slow roasted prime rib; and dessert includes key lime pie, affogato and dark chocolate panna cotta.

City Kitchen
Pop over to Alexandria’s West End for a fun twist on American cuisine and a wide range of local beers, house fused liquors and wines. City Kitchen, located at 330 S. Pickett St., is an industrial-chic gastropub with iron, concrete and wood decor and a menu inspired by American cities.

If you’re looking for a cozy, laid-back atmosphere for Valentine’s Day, City Kitchen is the spot for you. The restaurant provides a three-course menu for the big day, with the first course offering three choices: Manhattan phyllo brie cups baked with bourbon-soaked apples and finished with sour filthy cherries; broccoli and gouda soup; and winter salad.

The second course features Frutti di Mare con risotto, or jumbo scallops, Gulf shrimp and cherry tomatoes folded into arborio rice; New York strip char-grilled with mushroom brandy cream sauce, asparagus and scalloped potatoes; rainbow trout pan-seared and topped with a lump crab relish; and veal saltimbocca with a white wine butter sauce, asparagus spears and wild mushroom risotto.

Finally, the third dessert course offers the choice between a chocolate Chambord cake or strawberry shortcake cheesecake and, of course, suggested wine pairings.

Hummingbird
Hummingbird, located at 220 Union St. inside Hotel Indigo, is a bar and kitchen right on the waterfront that offers a

Valentine’s Dinner for Two

CHOOSE 2 Soups or Salads
• Boston Salad
• Red Pepper Soup
• French Onion Soup
• Caesar Salad

CHOOSE 2 Delicious Entrees
• Beef Tenderloin Filet with Blue Cheese Scalloped Potatoes & Broccoli Florets
• Chicken Valentino with Roasted Asparagus & Rice Pilaf
• Grilled Salmon Filet with Parmesan Risotto & Roasted Asparagus
• Brown Butter Scallops with Parmesan Risotto & Roasted Asparagus

CHOOSE 2 Heart-Shaped Pastries
• Chocolate Ganache
• Luscious Cream Puff with Mixed Raspberry Marquis
• Lemon Poppy Seed Petit Four

Port City Flavor

Located in a secretive upstairs space, the Loft at Lena’s includes glowing lighting, velvet banquets and hanging chandeliers to provide a truly romantic atmosphere.
seafood menu that follows the rhythm of the seasons. Some options include clambakes, fish fries, oyster roasts and whole fish. Hummingbird also offers eggplant gratin as a popular starter.

“It’s got this nice little spiciness to it, it’s got tomato in it, it’s a nice little vegetarian starter that I really like to order if I’m a little peckish,” Manager Nathaniel Berman said.

Hummingbird is also known for its eponymous cake, a traditionally southern dessert with rum and cream cheese frosting and dehydrated pineapple.

For Valentine’s Day the restaurant will offer a signature drink called the Cosmic Love Bird, which includes rose shaped ice made out of ingredients in a typical cosmo like triple sec, cranberry, lime and vodka. The pink ice will be in the middle of a glass filled with champagne to get into the spirit of the holiday.

“It’s going to be a nice, pretty pink rose ice, and it’ll melt into the drink as people talk and laugh and have fun,” Berman said.

Bastille Brasserie & Bar

Those desiring a sophisticated yet cozy environment with a splash of French culture will find it at Bastille Brasserie & Bar, located at 606 N. Fayette St. The restaurant offers modern takes on traditional French cuisine, with all ingredients locally sourced and seasonal.

France, often hailed as one of the most romantic countries in the world, brings its flair to Bastille’s Valentine’s Day prix-fixe menu. Each of the three courses offers an array of options, as well as premium wine pairings. Just some of the “premier” course options include a bisque de homard, consisting of lobster, creme fraiche and chives, and salade de betteraves, consisting of beets, oranges, arugula, pistachios, goat cheese and shallot dressing.

Some of the “deuxieme” course options include the filet mignon, with angus beef filet mignon, bordelaise sauce, and dehydrated pineapple.

For a vegetarian option, try Hummingbird’s eggplant gratin, which has roasted tomato confit and wild oregano Piave Vecchio cheese.
VALENTINE

potato gratin and mushrooms, and the daurade, with Mediterranean sea bream fillet, lemon brown butter caper sauce, fingerling potatoes and roasted olives.

The final “troisième” course offers three choices: “Fromage Compose,” delice de Bourgogne cow’s milk cheese with Amarena cherries and candied nuts; “Cerises et Creme,” cheesecake with red cherries, graham sable and chocolate; and “Mon Coeur,” with Valrhona Tainori dark chocolate and raspberry ice cream.

Cafe 44

Cafe 44 in North Old Town, located at the top of the 44 Canal Center Plaza, will offer a four-course prix-fixe menu on both Saturday and Tuesday to give patrons more opportunities to try the Valentine’s Day special menu. For the first course patrons will receive the chef’s charcuterie, a selection of fig and honey goat cheese, prosciutto, cranberry stilton, chocolate chips, raspberry jam and pita crackers.

For the second course, guests will choose one of several options: shrimp and tomato bisque, salad with bacon and brown butter breadcrumbs, or seared ahi tuna. The third course offers choices between baked cod, osso buco, seafood tagliolini neri or vegetable risotto.

Finally, the fourth dessert course gives a choice between espresso chocolate torte and red velvet cake. There are also his and her cocktails guests can choose from; the Lady Jane is a cherry and peppercorn-infused tequila cocktail with lime, agave and prosecco rose, and the Cabin in the Woods is a hickory smoked wood cocktail with four roses bourbon, black walnut maple syrup and orange bitters.

Want some nice scenery? Because it overlooks the Potomac River, Cafe 44 offers magnificent views. Getting to the restaurant involves taking an elevator up several stories, and the indoor-outdoor seating offers an option for every occasion.

“We dim the lights, put candles on every table, have nice music, it really sets the tone,” owner Jula Coggins said. “... Our location is quite unique, it’s sort of like a speakeasy vibe on your way up and then you come in and are like, ‘Okay, I get it.’”

–oanderson@alextimes.com
Wine valentine

BY VAL N. TINE

Uh oh – Valentine’s Day is coming up. Maybe you’re planning to be at home. Good. What are you eating and what will you mate it with for harmony? Or, still higher-seeming stakes, you’re at a restaurant and the wine list has arrived. What then to do?

Well, you’ll have noticed some subtle suggestions in bright red, pink frippery and foil. And that’s OK. There’s safety in numbers, and any number of your friends and colleagues, otherwise panic-stricken, will take that for solace and pair their bubbly with dark chocolate hearts and steak.

Bubbles are most lascivious with oysters; more prosaically, with eggs. You’re likely getting anxious from the wine list staring back at you, the well-stocked shelves of your wine shop and the awful nakedness of asking for advice. Wine doesn’t have to come with bubbles or be pink – or have some irritating label rife with lips. Why run from normal? Why not reach for the unusual and wear it well?

In the white range, there’s Vermentino – luscious, rounded and distinctive – memorably more than lacy filigree and fizz. Roussanne, or any one of the slope-shouldered products of Alsace – for body – Pinot Gris or Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Sylvaner, Grenache Blanc or Riesling – or from Germany. More colorfully, perhaps, is the red side of wine. Roses come in many colors; so, too, do reddish wines. So why not, just this once, venture definitively off-piste and try Schiava, or Scioppettino – you’ll both be attracted; Blaufränkisch, for its full-bodied flavor; a French peppery Syrah laced with Mourvèdre. Or take your Grenache from southern California, lighter on the palate and delightful.

Ah, but what best not to do this day? I wouldn’t reach for that LBV Port, Sake or single malt whisky. Not for tonight. You’re probably not after quite such high-test stuff this evening. Still, if your palate pulls you vaguely in that direction, try some nice Madeira; it’s lighter, but so utterly before-the-mast that it will transport you.

And, let’s not forget, Valentine’s Day is not just for the paired. Should you be wiser or beyond that stage, there’s many-splendored juice perfect for you alone. That musk-hinted, subtle Nebbiolo – often Barolo or Barbaresco in its native habitat – will surface old loves, or perhaps long-lost dreams. Burgundy’s chalked leather spine whispers its invitation; through faint lavender, its deeper down into a hot bath or back to that book you started years ago. It’s waited for you long enough. Where will the night end? Who knows. Enjoy!

The writer has decades of experience with Valentine’s Day – and nearly as much in visiting vineyards and wineries on three continents, establishing a practical wine cellar and pulling from it complements to food across the globe.

In the way of white wine, Vermentino is luscious, rounded and distinctive. In the way of red, Blaufränkisch has a full-bodied flavor.
All about boutique wines

A labor of love for the Valentine season
BY LISA KATIC

It’s Valentine’s season, which brings to mind love and giving to those important in our lives. As the saying goes, “go big or go home” and big can mean many things: At Wine Gallery 108 we’re big on flavor, big on iconic names, big on customer service and more!

Bubbles are always a welcome option for giving at this time of year because who doesn’t love a great, well-crafted bottle of Champagne? Do you love the big name Champagne houses like Billecart Salmon, Laurent Perrier, Cristal, Heidsieck? So do we, and we offer great wines in that category.

A top selling grower Champagne is Michel Turgy Blanc de Blanc brut reserve. Blanc de Blanc means the wine is made from 100% chardonnay grapes. This Champagne is crafted by Jean-Michel Turgy in the Le Mesnil-sur-Oger region of Champagne. Turgy adheres to organic farming practices and his vineyards are rated 100% Grand Cru, which is the top designation in the Champagne region. The wine is sumptuous, richly flavored and captures the true character of the region’s terroir. Some believe this character is often muted by large production Champagnes made in the “big house” style.

If bubbles don’t send you to the moon, then perhaps a big, bold red is more your style. It certainly fits the winter season and can pair with so many hearty options for a homemade Valentine’s Day spread.

We have noted big Cabernets from California and Bordeaux, but let’s consider Lady May, a wine offering a taste of Bordeaux, but hailing from South Africa. Lady May is the flagship wine of the Glenelly Estate in Stellenbosch, South Africa and is only in its eighth vintage. The owner is the grande dame of Bordeaux’s Pichon Longueville Comtesse De Lalande.

The story goes that Lady May traveled to South Africa in the late 1970s and fell so in love with the wine country that she decided to open a winery called Glenelly Estate where, at 90 years old, she still works today. It is certainly a different kind of love story, but a worthy one nonetheless.

This Bordeaux style blend is made from Cabernet sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and a touch of Petit Verdot and is a show stopper. The wine possesses beautiful dark fruit, mushroom notes, earth and firm, balanced tannins.

If wine is on your list this Valentine’s Day season, don’t miss the opportunity to explore the many unique Champagnes and rich wines from around the world at your nearest boutique wine merchant. It will surely make you fall in love with these wines and the producers that pour their heart and souls into every bottle.

The writer is the owner of Wine Gallery 108.
How incorporating technology can enhance wellness

BY BRANDPOINT

Creating a spa-like bathroom that enhances your overall well-being is seriously on trend, and for good reason. Self-care can become part of your daily ritual if you make your bathroom into a calm oasis – and technology can help create that sanctuary. Sensors that detect water flow can alert you to potential leaks and knowing your systems are safe will allow you to relax and stay calmer.

If you’re ready to make improvements in your bathroom, here are some recent innovations to help you put your wellness front and center.

Personalize bathing

If you’d like to have better control of your shower, the innovative Anthem Smart Showering Valves and Controls can simultaneously deliver different temperatures, pressures and spray settings for each water outlet with the touch of a button for a personalized shower experience. Rinsing with warm and cool water at the same time offers hydrotherapy benefits and creates a spa-like experience right in your home. Many smart showering systems will show how much water was used after each shower to help inform you about your water consumption. This is an effective way to use technology to provide smart water delivery and management in your everyday life.

Shower luxuriously

If water conservation is important to you, use shower heads that use less water than a typical 2.5 gallons per minute showerhead. These provide strong rinsing coverage while still maintaining warmth – addressing two key shower experience needs. Many collections also include air-induction technology that infuses air into water droplets to make them feel larger while retaining heat longer, for a more luxurious soak while still using less water.

Protect your home

If you have ever had to cope with plumbing leaks or frozen pipes, you know how devastating and costly these problems can be. Achieve a sense of serenity in the bathroom by planning ahead so you can avoid these calamities in the future. Smart water monitoring systems track all household water usage, alerting you to leaks and providing pre-freeze warnings. Some brands have a frozen pipe mitigation smart feature that will even detect if pipes begin to freeze and instruct your water fixtures to briefly relieve pressure and minimize potential damage.

Improve personal cleansing

For next-level hygiene and

Create a spa-like bathroom to enhance your well-being, relax and stay calmer.
personal care, try a smart toilet, many of which offer convenient features such as a heated seat, customizable personal cleansing, a hands-free auto open and close lid, a nightlight and smart automatic flush capabilities that meet the EPA’s WaterSense criteria.

**Bring the spa home**

If you’re looking for easy ways to turn your daily bath or shower into a spa-like experience, try a shower infusion system. Retrofitted to your existing shower, these devices diffuse aromatherapy into the water, making it simple to elevate your daily routine into a moment of escape. Aromatic bursts of freshness can be spritzed directly onto the skin or into the air immediately transforming your shower into a decadent spa.

Technology can help conserve water and protect the home from potential problems.

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**HOME OF THE WEEK**

**Left:** Wonderful end unit townhouse surrounded with mature plantings and an attached two-car garage. **Middle:** Natural light from three sides allows the sunshine to illuminate the beautifully appointed open concept design. **Right:** The luxurious primary suite features a wall of windows, vaulted ceiling, hardwood floors and a seating area with a gas fireplace flanked by handsome shelving.

**Stunning Old Town home in a prime location**

Exceptional three-bedroom, three-and-a-half bathroom brick townhouse offers hardwood floors, handsome millwork and custom built-ins on every level. This is elegant and comfortable living where you can walk to everything including Old Town’s specialty shops and restaurants, the Potomac riverfront and several Old Town parks.

The stunning living room with walls of windows is gracious for entertaining with an open concept design. Enjoy gourmet dinners in the inviting dining room featuring a stylish designer chandelier.

The chef will love the stainless/granite kitchen with gas cooking, tall cabinets, lower pull-out shelving and under counter lighting. Gather together in the delightful sunny family room with a fireplace and enjoy a casual dining area with built-in, lighted shelving on one wall and access to the deck with new composite flooring.

Upstairs, relax in your private primary suite with a dramatic two-story ceiling, gas fireplace, spacious closets and a spectacular renovated bath. Designer Arabesque tiles in the oversized walk-in shower surround the dual shower heads, behind a seamless glass shower door. Dual vanities with soft close drawers, tasteful lighting and mirrors, plus a private water closet complete this spa-like bath.

The second bedroom features all wool carpeting, a large double closet and an ensuite bath.

The top floor third bedroom is spacious and bright with its own updated ensuite tub/shower bath and enormous closet. The private home office or library on the entrance floor with glass French doors featuring custom moldings and bookshelves. An attached two car garage with epoxy flooring and additional storage completes this special home.

**AT A GLANCE**

**Address:**
1235 Roundhouse Lane,
Alexandria, 22314

**Neighborhood:**
Old Town

**Price:** $1,410,000

**Square feet:** 2,771

**Bedrooms:** 3

**Bathrooms:** 3.5

**Year built:** 1998

**Contact:**
Babs Beckwith
Babs@BabsBeckwith.com
www.BabsBeckwith.com
703-627-5421
Weekly Words

SPLIT PEAS by Sam Koperwas and Jeff Chen, edited by David Steinberg

DEATH NOTICES

FRANCES BAUER (92), of Alexandria, Jan. 28, 2023

SUSAN BELL (81), of Alexandria, Jan. 25, 2023

GILDA CHARLTON (70), of Alexandria, Jan. 21, 2023

MARGARET DOCKERY (86), of Alexandria, Feb. 3, 2023

GARRY FITTON (72), formerly of Alexandria, Feb. 4, 2023

ELLEN GALE (91), of Alexandria, Feb. 3, 2023

Solutions from last week

FRANCES BAUER (92), of Alexandria, Jan. 28, 2023

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Our View

An erosion of trust

There are two distinct facets to the ongoing controversy surrounding renaming of streets in Alexandria and, as with many issues, the fault line is as much about process as substance.

The substance is straightforward: Naming streets and schools after Confederate leaders, or erecting statues in their honor, took place mostly during the Jim Crow era, often 50 years or more after the end of the Civil War. This commemoration was by and large a segregationist statement rather than homage to a beloved figure. As a letter writer points out on the next page, this practice was odious.

What these names mean in 2023 is more nuanced.

To many, the names are an affront; they’re a poke in the eye each time they’re seen. They’re a reminder of a particularly foul chapter of American history, and for some, the enslavement of their ancestors.

To many others, particularly those who live on the streets, the names are simply their place of residence. For these people, removing the names would be a major inconvenience, yes, but also jarring in an emotional way that may not be easily apparent.

Someone who has lived on Rucker Place for 20 years, for example, likely has part of their identity wrapped up in where they live, that is separate from any original intent associated with the naming of that street. For many of these residents, an initiative led by those who don’t live on the street – or worse, don’t even live in Alexandria – is an affront as much as an inconvenience.

The process fault line – another angry wound that Alexandria’s current leaders keep gouging – is that resident input from those directly impacted is increasingly ignored.

Only two current members of City Council, Mayor Justin Wilson and Councilor John Chapman, were on that body when the issue of renaming Alexandria’s Confederate-associated streets first arose back in 2016. At the public hearing on Sept. 17, 2016, council voted to remove the name Jefferson Davis from the Alexandria portion of Route 1, and to also ask Virginia’s General Assembly for permission to remove the Appomattox statue from the intersection of Washington and Prince streets. Council decided to leave the city’s existing street renaming process – which required 75% of the residents on a given street to petition for change – in place. Changes were to be considered one-by-one.

Apprently dismayed by the slow pace of name change requests, in 2021 the city initiated a pilot program whereby only 25% of residents on a street needed to petition for a name change, with up to three names allowed to be changed per year.

It would appear that activists, some of whom have admitted to living outside of Alexandria, have been unable to muster even that low threshold of one in four residents favoring the renaming of their street. Otherwise, why would Mayor Justin Wilson have advocated last month for Alexandria to simply change three streets a year by decree, without following either the long-established or recently revised processes for street name changes?

Confederate names are offensive. So is a city that repeatedly disregards the clear wishes of residents who are most impacted by unwanted, top-down initiatives. From development special use permits to small area plans to street renaming, the theme is the same: if leaders can’t get what they want under existing rules – which were arrived at following processes that relied on resident input – no problem, they’ll just change the rules.

This short-sighted approach promises “wins” that elected officials can tout to outsiders, while also guaranteeing further erosion in the trust of those they actually govern.

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

A recent view from Alexandria’s waterfront looking toward Maryland on a morning with unusually dense fog.

Your Views

Political rhetoric, not history

To the editor:

In 2016, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names recommended, and City Council concurred with, renaming portions of Route 1 and allowing the typical city renaming process for three-streets per year. The mayor’s proposal presents selectively skewed assertions about the historic figures for whom three streets are now named. Wilson would task the Office of Historic Alexandria with renaming recommendations, but the Office of Historic Alexandria staff points out the following countervailing factors would risk their jobs, given that the mayor has told them up front what the facts are.

The facts Wilson omitted are:

• Quantrell Avenue: Far from “executing nearly 200 men and boys” during William Quantrill’s raid on Lawrence, Kansas, typically they were Jayhawkers – a Union-allied guerrilla group which had committed similar actions in nearby Missouri.

• Forrest Street, whose name easily

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.
Get rid of odious names

To the editor:

Two recent letters to the editor which you’ve published, objecting to the renaming of Alexandria streets, are particularly offensive. Both letters, which seem to be tone-deaf and insensitive to the community around them, conveniently minimize the fact that the streets in question honor individuals who led the fight against the United States in a war – the country’s deadliest – whose main purpose was to perpetuate the assumption that it is legally or morally defensible to support the enslavement of other human beings.

This should be odious to everyone, regardless of color. And do the writers really think that the names on those streets are just everyday names, and that they don’t specifically refer to the leaders of that other country and its war against the United States? One can’t help wondering if – when the writers were students in school, and they said that “the dog ate my homework” – did they really believe that, too?

Stephen Leeds,
Alexandria

Filling empty spaces

To the editor:

I write today not with a complaint or an idea, but with a desire to learn. As we all know, the pandemic, the financial recession and other factors have taken a toll on our beloved Old Town. Many shops that were once bustling with customers are struggling or closed down completely. The ugly sight of brown-papered shopfronts and “For Lease” signs mar the once-vivid main streets of our town.

Now that the president is lifting the last of the pandemic precautions, what can or is being done to fill our empty shop spaces?

I’ve searched in local newspapers, asked around town at the other small businesses, and tried a few internet searches, but I can’t seem to find anything. The empty spaces along King Street are especially sad – the gaping windows in the old Francesca’s store, the old Gap and Banana Republic store, Gatsby Arcade and Tavern Square remind me of a once-vibrant community that, sadly, took a hit over the past few years.

I am proud to be an Alexandrian, and I know that we are resilient. Somehow, our town will be rejuvenated and interesting and useful businesses will fill the now-empty spaces. But for now, I’d like to learn if there are any plans in place to do so, or how I may learn more about those plans. I want to learn so that I may be more active in encouraging new businesses and so that I can patronize them as they open. Thanks to you all and see you around town!

Caitlin Buchheit,
Alexandria

Achieving equity in education

The words of the late civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. resonate with us today as we celebrate Black History Month: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

These words help put into focus the importance of the Alexandria City Public Schools’ 2025 Strategic Plan as its vision is to provide an equitable education for all students no matter the color of their skin or ethnicity. Falling short of that would be an injustice.

From the days of the slave trade to the Civil War and the civil rights movement to present day in our city, African American history is a fundamental part of Alexandria’s story. This is reflected in the five ACPS schools named for Black men and women who helped to remove barriers for generations to follow. These individuals include Alexandria teacher and community leader Naomi L. Brooks, Ferdinand T. Day – who was the first African American to be elected chair of a public school’s board in the Commonwealth of Virginia – Charles Hamilton Houston, the first general counsel of the NAACP, local educators of color Rozier D. Lyles and Jane A. Solomon Crouch and civil rights attorney Samuel Wilbert Tucker.

“Resistance” is this year’s theme for Black History Month and these noted Alexandrians, for whom our schools are named, were part of the movement. They resisted the norm of the day to prevail against discrimination in all sectors of society including education, employment and housing. Resistance has also been reflected in the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project to honor the victims of lynchings in our own community: Joseph McCoy in 1897 and Benjamin Thomas in 1899.

With the pilgrimage last fall to the Equal Justice Initiative’s National Memorial for Peace and Justice and Legacy Museum in Alabama, ACPS staff and students reflected on the pain of our history while also realizing this is a means toward opening the conversation and collectively saying never again. The truth is, in looking back at our past we can learn from it, enabling us to move toward a future that will offer equity for all in our schools and in every aspect of our daily lives.

As ACPS’ interim superintendent, my task is to make certain all our students are provided with the equitable education they deserve within our school division. Marking Day 100 this month in our schools serves as not only a time to look back at our many accomplishments but also to look ahead to the work that needs to be done to benefit all students in terms of academics and social and emotional support. In keeping with our strategic plan, our ACPS staff is here to address barriers to learning as we work to empower all students to successfully make their way in our diverse and ever-changing world.

That is why this month, ACPS is engaging in its third annual Equity Climate Survey which serves as a system of checks and balances for our 2025 Strategic Plan. This survey offers our families the opportunity to let us know if our schools are providing an equitable learning environment with the academic, social and emotional support needed. This will help us measure progress on division efforts at reducing disparities in outcomes across all student groups.

Removing the inequities of past generations, ACPS leaves behind the days when Black students were separated by race and could only attend Parker-Gray to get an education. Students at that school could only dream that one day some of our division schools would bear the names of Parker-Gray students – yet they do. In the words of African American poet Langston Hughes, “Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

Melanie Kay-Wyatt

Filling the Blanks
with Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D.

The writer is interim superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools.
Cornerstone rededication at G.W. Masonic Memorial

This month, freemasons from around the world will unite to re-dedicate the cornerstone of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The memorial is a National Historic Landmark that stands as American Freemasonry’s tribute to George Washington and the values of freedom. Each year, thousands of museum guests visit the memorial to learn about Washington and Freemasonry and to become inspired by the great heritage left to us by the Father of our Country and our nation’s foremost Freemason.

“The centennial of that spectacular event is nearly upon us, and it is our great pleasure to extend to you a cordial invitation to a special re-dedication of our cornerstone on February 20, 2023,” Ken Nagel, past grand master of California and the first vice president of the memorial Association, said. “This will be an opportunity for supporters of the memorial from around the world to join in a Celebration both of the memorial’s past as well as its future in the century to come.”

The original Nov. 1, 1923, celebration of the cornerstone was a national Masonic event. That day began with a parade containing seven divisions that included 22 marching bands and more than 10,000 freemasons. Several military units and bands, including 500 sailors from the light cruiser USS Richmond, that were anchored in the Potomac River led the parade.

More than two hours after the parade started, the Grand Lodge of Virginia and more than 15,000 freemasons and spectators were in place on the hill. President Calvin Coolidge, Chief Justice William Howard Taft, Virginia Gov. E. Lee Trinkle, most U.S. grand masters and other civic and Masonic dignitaries attended. Alongside the American Masonic leaders, including Puerto Rico, were representatives from Ontario, Panama, Philippines, Quebec and Venezuela.

The ceremony began as Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia Charles Callahan stepped to the microphone. After opening remarks, he used the same small silver trowel used by Washington on Sept. 18, 1793, during the Masonic cornerstone ceremony of the U.S. Capitol, to dap wet cement on top of the stone. He handed the trowel to Coolidge, who with Taft and every U.S. grand master present, or his representative, followed suit. As each grand master stepped forward he also placed books, coins and other representative items into a strong box, after which the cornerstone was lowered over the box into place. The cornerstone was duly tested by plumb, level and square and formally declared “to be true and trusty, and duly laid.”

The stone was then ceremonially “blessed” with the traditional corn, wine and oil. Lastly, the working tools were presented to architect Harvey Wiley Corbett, “with the superintendence and direction of the work, having full confidence in your skill and capacity to conduct the same.”

Prayers, hymns and short addresses punctuated the work. The Right Rev. James E. Freemason, bishop of the Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Washington, D.C. concluded his speech that day with this charge:

“There is a common level in our Fraternity, a great democracy that binds us all together. As the years come and go, may that bond keep us so closely knitted together that we shall contribute our part, dear Brethren, not only to perpetuate the memory of Washington but to perpetuate that for which he gave all he had of genius and of wealth, to perpetuate the fair Republic of which we, as citizens, are so justly proud.”

The years have indeed “come and gone” and for freemasons, now is the time to renew their fraternal bonds, celebrate the memorial’s timelessness and honor the sacred memory of Washington. You can join freemasons from around the country in February 2023 and become part of the memorial’s second century of making history.

OUT OF THE ATTIC

Weekly Poll

**Last Week**

Do you support the collective bargaining agreement for Alexandria’s fire department?

- 62% Yes, it’s a step in the right direction.
- 31% No, there are too many financial consequences.
- 7% I’m not sure.

**This Week**

What do you think about Mayor Justin Wilson's proposal to rename three “offensive” streets per year?

- A) I think it’s a great idea.
- B) I’m in favor of renaming streets but there was a process already in place.
- C) It’s too disruptive to rename streets.
- D) I’m not sure.

*Take the poll at alextimes.com*
American historic sites in Alexandria. Attendees will hear stories of both enslaved and free African Americans prior to the Civil War as well as understand the stories behind some of the city’s most well-known historic sites.

**Time:**
11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**Location:**
902 Wythe St.

**Information:**
manumissiontours.com

**GALENTINES DAY COOKIE DECORATING WORKSHOP**

Stop by AR Workshop for “Galentines” cookie decorating with guest instructor and local Alexandria cookie artist, Desiray of Orbiting Cookie Company. Participants will receive a set of five Galentines-themed cookies and learn cooking techniques like utilizing icing scrapers, how to make and use icing transfers, incorporating sprinkles and cutting tipless bags for ruffle texture.

**Time:**
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Location:**
902 Wythe St.

**Information:**
manumissiontours.com

**DAVID DUNCAN**

Duncan, about whom he said, “You gotta have that confidence and he has the mindset to keep improving.”

Screen models his game after NBA Hall of famer Tim Duncan, about whom he said, “I like his presence and post play.” But the player Screen slightly resembles is all-time great NBA center Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. When asked if there are any similarities between his game and that of Abdul-Jabbar, Screen had a ready response.

“Dad would always work on a ruffle texture.”

Andre Screen dunks the ball for SSSAS at the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association final in 2020.
NEED TO PLACE AN AD?

CONTACT:
Margaret Stevens
mstevens@alextimes.com

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AT&T proposes to modify an existing facility (new tip heights 87.3’, 90.8’, 93.5’, & 97’) on the building at 6040 Richmond Hwy, Arlington, VA (20230057). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

The City of Alexandria seeks input from community stakeholders regarding the Mount Vernon Trail at East Abingdon Drive Project.

The City plans to widen the existing trail adjacent to East Abingdon Drive north of Slaters Lane to create more space for people walking and biking along East Abingdon Drive and reduce potential conflicts between trail users.

The trail widening begins at the intersection of Slaters Lane and East Abingdon Drive and runs north along East Abingdon Drive for about 200 feet, which is adjacent to 615 and 625 Slaters Lane. The trail will be widened from approximately 4.5 feet to 10 feet, which is consistent with the rest of the City’s trail network and will allow trail users to pass side-by-side more comfortably. The width of the trail at the bus stop will be approximately 13 feet.

The draft design plans are available for review on the project website: https://alexandriava.gov/go/4189. This information is also available for review in-person at City Hall, 301 King Street, Suite 3600, Alexandria, VA. In response to COVID-19, all visitors must have an appointment scheduled with a City staff member to visit City Hall offices. To arrange for a time to review the project documents and plans, please call 703.746.4408 or email alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov.

Comments and questions may be submitted by email to alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov or over the phone by calling 703.746.4408, no later than February 17.

This project is funded by a grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Pursuant to the grant requirements, the City is willing to hold a public hearing if requested. To request a public hearing, send a written request postmarked by February 17, 2023, to:

Alexandria Carroll
City of Alexandria Department of Project Implementation 301 King Street, Suite 3200
Alexandria, VA 22314

If a request for a public hearing is received, the City will post an announcement (including the date, time and location of the hearing) at a later date. Please note, a public hearing is not required to submit comments or questions.

The City of Alexandria ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To request more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact the City of Alexandria Office of Human Rights at 703.746.3140, 311 or TTY/TDD 311.

**LEGAL NOTICE**

Mt. Vernon Trail at East Abingdon Drive Project
VDOT UPC #100422
DPI PROJECT #1503003

Willingness to Host a Public Hearing

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