



## 'You can't put a price on the safety of our students'

FILE PHOTO

Alexandria City High School.

### ACPS to install weapons detectors in schools

BY AMY WILL

"You can't put a price on the safety of our students."

Those emotional words of support from Alexandria City School Board member Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi were echoed by his peers last week as the board approved the launch of a weapons detection pilot program in Alexandria City Public Schools.

The unanimous vote comes on the heels of a stakeholder survey taken by more than 4,000 members of the ACPS community: students, parents, guardians, staff and community members all responded to the survey.

ACPS facilities and operations director Alicia Hart explained the process to im-

plement the weapons detection pilot program, in which students and school staff could be screened daily upon entry as early as May.

"The next step is for Alexandria City Public Schools to procure the equipment and

This move by the School Board comes on the heels of a series of high profile violent incidents and weapons possession involving students in recent years. Most recently, a 14 year-old student was charged with possession of a firearm

**"Bottom line, this is the right thing to do and a long time coming."**

— Molly Kaiman, mother of two ACPS high school students

then to implement this pilot program at the Alexandria City High School King Street and Minnie Howard campuses, George Washington Middle School and Francis C. Hammond Middle School," Hart said.

after bringing an unloaded handgun to the Minnie Howard campus earlier this month.

That incident followed on the heels of a large brawl in December 2022 in which an

SEE **ABATEMENT**

| 8

## Expungement clinic to be held

### Vice mayor, other officials partner to clear eligible arrest records

BY BRIANNE MCCONNELL

Streamlining the process for citizens looking for a second chance is just one of the goals for the city's first sponsored expungement clinic, which will be held Saturday at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center starting at 10 a.m. and will run for several hours.

easier for eligible applicants at Saturday's event.

"This is a look into what may be holding people back and they don't even know. And it should be taken advantage of," Jackson said.



AMY JACKSON

Only charges within the City of Alexandria will be eligible to be expunged at the clinic. Individuals planning to attend will need to bring a certified copy of their charge and disposition as well as a photo ID.

According to the Virginia Pov-

erty Law Center, expungement is a process where an individual who has been arrested and charged with a crime, but was not convicted, can have police and court records of the arrest and charges sealed from public view. This doesn't mean that the records are destroyed. The records are taken away from public view and can only be seen if the court gives them to a law enforcement officer, for example.

Expungement of convictions of any type, whether easier for eligible applicants at Saturday's event. "This is a look into what may be holding people back and they don't even know. And it should be taken advantage of," Jackson said. Only charges within the City of Alexandria will be eligible to be expunged at the clinic. Individuals planning to attend will need to bring a certified copy of their charge and disposition as well as a photo ID. According to the Virginia Pov-

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Expungement of convictions of any type, whether

SEE **EXPUNGEMENT** | 10

### INSIDE

#### Business

Iconic local jewelry store celebrates 50 years.

Page 11

#### Homes

Local resident describes the path to designing their own project.

Page 13



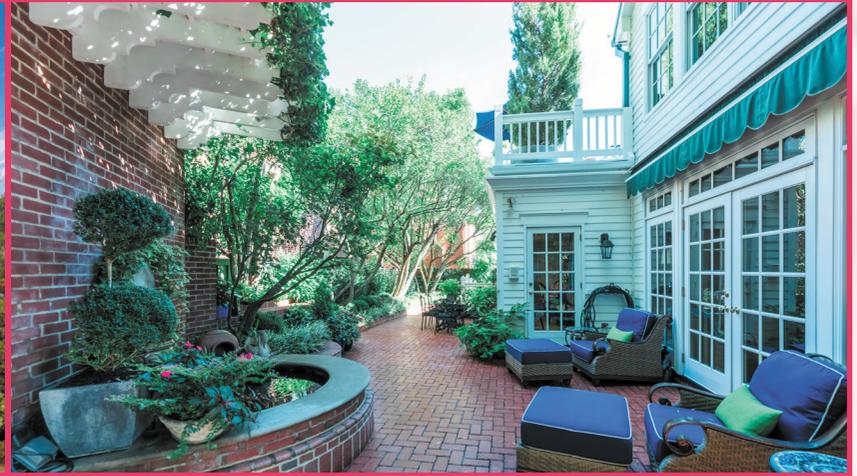
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## WEEKLY BRIEFING

## Man suffers gun shot wound

A 32-year-old male was the victim of an apparent gunshot wound to the upper body last Saturday. At approximately 10:26 a.m. the Alexandria Police Department responded to a call for shots fired in the 400 block of North Armistead Street, where they found the victim.

APD officers rendered aid until medics were on scene. The

victim was then transported to a hospital with serious injuries.

This incident is part of an active investigation, the APD is asking that any witnesses with information regarding this incident to please contact Detective Edmund Dougherty by phone at 703-746-6697 or email: [Edmund.Dougherty@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Edmund.Dougherty@alexandriava.gov).

-lgolden@alextimes.com

## City seeks applicants for board vacancies



City Council is seeking applicants to fill the vacancies on City of Alexandria boards, commissions and committees. All applicants must complete

a Personal Data Record form electronically at [www.alexandriava.gov/Boards](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Boards) no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 31.

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**Correction:** The column “No one pays a tax rate” in the March 16 Alexandria Times contained some incorrect numbers. This is partly because numbers regarding tax assessments differ in various city documents. The average 2023 residential assessment was listed as \$674,914 in “Real Property Assessment Information,” dated March 9, as \$677,521 in the “Proposed Budget in Brief” document and as \$679,914 in a staff memo

dated Feb. 7. The column, which stated that a 2 cent tax increase was possible, was written prior to Council setting a maximum tax rate of a 1 cent increase. The column stated that the city has \$135 million in reserve funds, when the actual number is \$138 million and not all of the funds were from pandemic relief. The FY23 fund balance in the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget is \$17.25 million. The Times regrets the error.



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## Warehouse to become market/event space

Murray Bonitt of Bonitt Builders announced plans to transform and preserve the waterfront warehouse at 10 Duke St. into a market, tavern and event space according to a news release. Bonitt will partner with Rex's Management CEO Noe Landini on the new concept. According to the release, the new venture will be called Copper Mill, “a nod to the former mill on the site which fabricated barrels for the Alexandria Flour Company. The site is located where the Robinson Landing development is today. The warehouse was also formerly used as a mess house and commissary by the Union Army during the Civil War. The current



PHOTO/BONITT BUILDERS

Artist's rendering of planned renovation of one of Alexandria's last remaining waterfront warehouses.

plans for the two-story 6,400 square-foot warehouse building will consist of a small up-scale market at the rear of the

building, with a casual tavern on the first floor, and a 3,200 private event space upstairs.”

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## WEEKLY BRIEFING

## Two-alarm fire causes \$1.2M in damages

The home at 216 S. Fairfax St. is condemned due to damage following a fire that occurred on March 15 according to a news release. In addition to the Alexandria Fire Department, first responders from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and Arlington, Fairfax and Prince George's counties responded to the incident. No civilians were injured while three firefighters sustained non-life threatening injuries responding to the fire. The

fire caused approximately \$1.2 million in damages while property value saved is estimated at \$607,469. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

The AFD encourages residents to have working alarms in their homes and to change replaceable batteries as needed. You can arrange a smoke alarm installation for your single-family home at [survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/SmokeDetectorRequest](http://survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/SmokeDetectorRequest)

-lgolden@alextimes.com

### ADOPTABLE PET OF THE WEEK



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Handsome and sweet, Kobi has a sunny disposition matched by his energetic personality. Kobi wants plenty of exercise and adventure time. He is a friendly sort and is excited to meet new people and other dogs. Very receptive and curious about training, he also loves a good game of fetch or tug. Only 2 years old, Kobi weighs about 60 pounds.

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## Council sets maximum tax rate

City Council established the maximum tax rate to be advertised for residential and commercial real property and personal property at a legislative meeting on March 14. Council gave initial approval to an advertised maximum rate of \$1.12 per \$100 of assessed valuation on residential, commercial and industrial property for calendar year 2023, which if enacted, would be a 1 cent in-

crease in the tax rate from last year.

The FY2024 proposed budget reflects a real estate tax rate of \$1.11, with an alternative budget with a \$1.12 tax rate. These totals include the continued dedication of 1 cent for affordable housing and the continued reservation of 2.2 cents of the real property tax rate for transportation projects.

Because of the rising as-

essed value of existing residential property, tax bills will rise by 4.26% even if the rate stays at \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value. At a rate of \$1.11, the average residential property tax bill in Alexandria in CY2023 would be \$7,546.89. The ordinance is scheduled for a public hearing and second reading on April 25 and final passage on May 3.

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## Inova campus at Landmark approved

City Council unanimously approved building of the 1.1 million square foot Inova campus at the old site of Landmark mall on Saturday. Development Special Use Permit #2022-

10023 allows for a new campus consisting of a hospital, cancer center, specialty care center, a central plaza and above and below ground parking garages. The DSUP allows for a

penthouse exceeding 15 feet in height on the hospital building. Construction is expected to begin sometime next year and take approximately four years.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Patrick Henry students performed for essential workers.

## ACPS students honor essential workers

On March 14, Patrick Henry students joined with school and community leaders to show their appreciation for essential

workers. Students wrote thank you cards, created banners and performed a song and dance tribute. Students also partic-

ipated in a career panel and toured vehicles used by essential workers during the week.

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## Walk-in services at AHD suspended

On March 20, the Alexandria Health Department closed their King Street location. Walk-in services will be unavailable until March 27

when the new location opens at 4850 Mark Center Drive. Clients may be directed to receive in-person services at nearby health agencies. Cli-

ents with concerns should call AHD at 703-746-4996 or email [alexhealth@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:alexhealth@vdh.virginia.gov)

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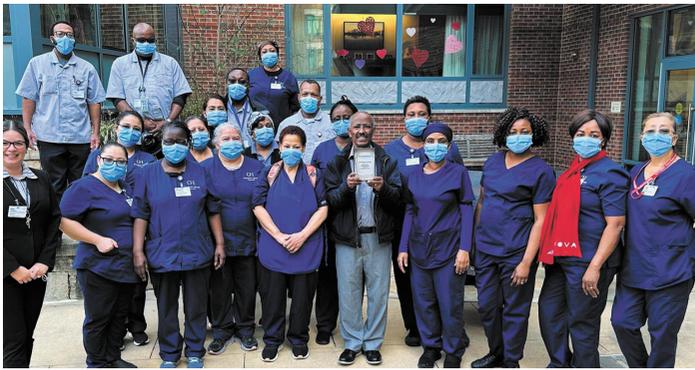
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## WEEKLY BRIEFING



COURTESY PHOTO

Mesfin Desta received the Ceca Foundation's highest honor.

## Local caregiver receives foundation's top award

On March 9 Mesfin Desta, a team leader at Goodwin House, received the Ceca Foundation's highest honor according to a news release.

"Mesfin exemplifies our mission to support, honor and uplift the lives of older adults," Rob Liebreich, president and CEO of Goodwin Living, said. Desta received a trophy and a \$2,500 cash award funded by the non-profit which partners with national healthcare communities to recognize exceptional caregivers.

"Mesfin exemplifies our mission to support, honor and uplift the lives of older adults," Rob Liebreich, president and CEO of Goodwin Living, said. Desta received a trophy and a \$2,500 cash award funded by the non-profit which partners with national healthcare communities to recognize exceptional caregivers.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

## New view in Old Town

The City of Alexandria will unveil its newest public art installation, "Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson," in Alexandria's Waterfront Park (1 Prince St.) at a free opening celebration for the community on March 25 from 2 to 5 p.m. This new temporary installation

by Nina Cooke John of Studio Cooke John is the fifth in the "Site See: New Views in Old Town" annual public art series that launched in 2019 and will be on display through November 2023. It follows R&R Studio's 2022 "I Love You" installation.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

## Ukraine relief benefit concert planned

Classical Movements will hold a concert to benefit Ukraine on April 30. The event will feature musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra performing music by Ukrainian composers in the first half of the concert and Mozart's clarinet quintet in the second half. Special guest Zino Bogachek,

violin and composer from the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, will be featured in the concert.

The performance will be held at Third Baptist Church, at 917 Princess St. Patrons who donate \$20 to Ukraine relief will be able to attend a reception with the artists following

the concert at The Secret Garden at The Rectory, which is two blocks away at 711 Princess St. For more information or tickets see: [www.eventbrite.com/e/benefit-concert-for-ukraine-and-mozarts-clarinet-quintet-tickets-536367849677](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/benefit-concert-for-ukraine-and-mozarts-clarinet-quintet-tickets-536367849677)

-ddunbar@alextimes.com

## Mulch delivery service available

The city is currently accepting orders for a limited supply of wood mulch made from previously collected Christmas trees. Deliveries will begin on April 3 through June 30. Dates and

times are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees apply for delivery. Free mulch is also available for residents to pick up at 4215 Eisenhower Ave., Monday through Friday from

7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Residents must bring their own shovels, buckets, and other necessary supplies. For more information, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/Mulch](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Mulch)

-lgolden@alextimes.com

## Ting Internet brings free internet

On March 14, thousands of Alexandrian residents gained symmetrical gigabit fiber Internet according to a news release. Ting Internet, a division of Tucows, is now offering internet to all Alexandrian residents who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program. Those who qualify will also receive one router rental at no charge



PHOTO/CNW GROUP/TUCOWS INC.

A Ting Internet team on-site in Alexandria.

and can purchase a tablet for a one-time \$20 fee plus tax. Ting will also provide free internet to some non-profit organizations, pa-rks

and farmers markets as chosen by the city. For information, visit [ting.com/internet/town/alexandria](http://ting.com/internet/town/alexandria).

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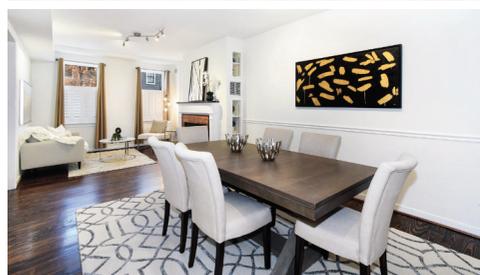
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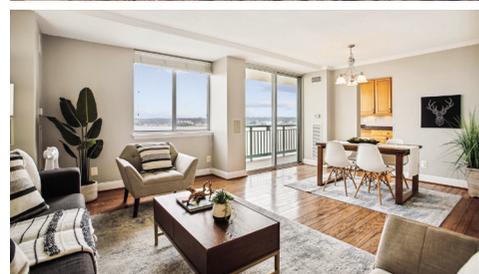
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## ABATEMENT

FROM | 1

administrator was knocked to the ground. Last May, an ACHS student died after being stabbed by another student. Though that tragedy took place off-campus, outside the McDonald's at Bradlee

Shopping Center, it happened during school hours.

According to a safety study released by ACPS in February, fifteen cases involving weapons on school property were reported between the months of August and December of last year. Weapons listed during

the reporting period included knives, brass knuckles, stun guns and BB guns.

"Bottom line, this is the right thing to do and a long time coming," Molly Kaiman, a mother of two ACPS high school students, said.

Referencing recent in-

cidents of gun violence and other issues compromising the safety of the school community, Kaiman said she believes the screening system is a wake-up call for ACPS parents who "don't know how brutal it is."

"It is the school's responsibility to provide kids with a safe learning space," Kaiman added.

Of those who participated in the survey, most agree with Kaiman, as 85% of respondents voted in favor of having the devices in all or some of their schools, according to survey results presented at the March 16 school board meeting.

Parents and guardians of ACPS students had the highest response rate at 52%. Parents and advocacy groups have been voicing the need for a boost in safety measures for years, but not all community members agree this is the solution. Roughly 15% of those surveyed were opposed to the pilot program.

Elnoubi's passionate comparison of price to safety referred to the percentage of those in the opposed group

who were mainly concerned with the impact on the budget. About 32% of those who said they were against the program in the survey cited the cost of the technology itself and 25% were concerned with the need for additional staff.

The prices for weapons detection devices vary. Affixed screening devices could cost an estimated \$60,000 and their mobile counterparts average \$13,000. The combination of the two state-of-the-art technologies will be used in all chosen pilot schools to allow the facilities a more flexible screening process.

These devices will be installed in the entryways of the buildings, requiring everyone to walk through them before entering. The screening process would be like that of a stadium or larger venue where positive alerts would result in a more thorough screening.

School board member Willie Bailey addressed the concerns regarding expense and voiced his support of the program.

SEE ABATEMENT

| 9

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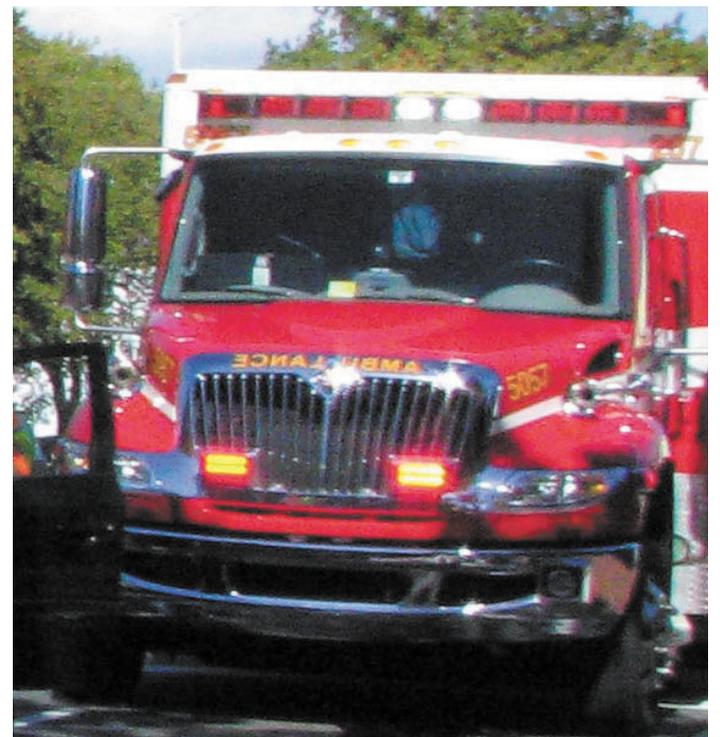
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FILE PHOTO

An ambulance was called to the Minnie Howard campus for a 15-year-old male complaining of stomach pains from the December 2022 brawl.

**ABATEMENT** FROM | 8

“The entire city needs to understand it is about the safety of their kids, not about aesthetics, not what it looks like, not what it costs,” Bailey said.

When asked about concerns raised by those opposed to the pilot, Elnoubi said as a decision maker, he takes his responsibility seriously.

“We’re supposed to be doing everything we can, so the appearance, everything is a tradeoff,” Elnoubi said.

Now that the collective efforts of parent and community advocates led the School Board to approve the pilot program, the focus is shifting to its implementation and operation in a way that is nonthreatening.

“We want to make sure that all students feel welcomed and can thrive in a safe and healthy learning environment,” Hart said.

School board member Ashley Simpson-Baird said although she has supported the program from the beginning, the initial decision to move forward was not easy.

“It was a difficult realization to come to, having to admit that our schools aren’t safe,” Simpson-Baird said.

Simpson-Baird noted that 59% of respondents who opposed the devices in all or some ACPS schools believed that weapons detection equipment in schools would make some students feel unwelcome. Although the idea of the detectors may seem intimidating to some, Simpson-Baird said she believes there are steps that can be taken to ensure everyone, especially students, feels more comfortable.

“It’s important that students are heard and they have a voice in their school environment,” Simpson-Baird said. She suggested schools consider holding facilitated discussions to encourage students to talk about the program and share their concerns.

Hart said those involved in the implementation of the program are already discussing creative ways to introduce the equipment to students, such as placing the logo, school mascot and/or school colors on the weapons abatement system.

When asked about the aesthetic changes, Kaiman said they would not impact her children.

“We go to concerts, sporting events, we walk right through the weapons detection systems and think nothing of it,” Kaiman said.

Hart said there is no specific timeline for the installation of detectors in all ACPS schools.

“At the conclusion of the pilot period, more discussion will be held with the school board to determine if a division-wide rollout will occur,” Hart said.

Kaiman is confident that with the screening process in place, sending her children off to school will get a little easier each morning.

“Hopefully it’s going to do what it’s meant to do,” Kaiman said.

-awill@alextimes.com



PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON

A fatal stabbing incident occurred on May 24, 2022 at Bradlee Shopping Center.



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**EXPUNGEMENT** FROM | 1  
misdemeanor or felony, are not eligible in Virginia. The ability to expunge entries from a criminal record in Virginia is limited to offenses which were eventually dismissed – and only some of those qualify.

In Virginia, a person may have charges expunged if one of the following applies: they were found not guilty of the charge, the charge or charges were dismissed, the individual was given an absolute pardon or if the person's identity was used incorrectly. Not all criminal charges are eligible. "If you were convicted, it doesn't matter what kind of offense you were convicted of, or how long ago it was, under current Virginia law it remains on your record," Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Brian Porter said.

Local organizations and businesses including the West End Business Association, the League of Women Voters, Port City Brewing Company and Hilton Mark Center are sponsoring the event. Sean Sherlock, a partner at King, Campbell, Poretz and Mitchell – one of the law firms also sponsoring the event – said another determining factor for expungement depends on if the charge is for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

"If it is a misdemeanor and it's eligible for expungement and they have no prior criminal record, it's what's called an expungement by right and the court has to grant the expungement," Sherlock said.

Officials say inaccuracies on criminal records or past charges sometimes make it difficult for someone to get a job, a home or a loan.

"I've definitely had people tell me prior arrests have caused them problems with employment and even housing," Porter said.

For an individual with a felony charge, or a misdemeanor charge and a prior criminal record, the court must determine a manifest injustice. This would mean that the court has determined that the continued existence of the charge will negatively impact the individual's life.

"Expungements exist to make sure innocent people aren't impacted by the mere fact of having a charge on their record and of course the standard of proof to be charged with a crime is relatively low – probable cause – and much lower than it is to convict a person, which is beyond a reasonable doubt," Sherlock said.

Sherlock added that the current process to get charges removed can be confusing and time consuming. A person seeking expungement is required to file paperwork with the court, obtain a complete set of fingerprints from a law enforcement agency, pay nearly \$100 in filing fees and if neces-

## ELIGIBILITY FOR RECORD EXPUNGEMENT

- A defendant in a criminal case who pleads "not guilty" and is then acquitted by a judge or jury.
  - A person in a civil action who is charged with contempt of court, but is found not guilty.
  - A defendant in a criminal case that the Commonwealth Attorney's office decides not to prosecute for all charges.
  - A defendant charged with assault and battery or other misdemeanor for which the defendant could also be sued in a civil action, if the injured person states in writing s/he has received satisfaction for the injury and the case is dismissed.
  - A person whose name or identification has been used without consent or authorization in a criminal case, i.e. identity theft.
  - A defendant convicted of a crime who later receives an absolute pardon.
- In 2021, the General Assembly passed a law that will revamp the expungement process, creating automatic expungements for some charges, among other changes. The new law is expected to take effect in July 2025.*

sary, schedule a court hearing.

On Saturday, all the needed agencies to help make expungement possible will be in one place. Trained defense attorneys will be working pro bono to determine if charges are eligible and to answer questions. Clerks from the Circuit Court of Alexandria will be on hand to complete court paperwork. Representatives from the sheriff's office will work to take and process fingerprints for eligible individuals who attend the clinic.

The nearly \$100 court filing fees associated with expungements will also be waived.

"We've really tried to take this whole process which can happen over weeks and weeks and condense it as much as possible," Sherlock said.

Jackson said the event, which has taken nearly a year to put together, hasn't faced any stated opposition.

"Everyone here is about giving people chances to improve their lives," Jackson said.

-bmconnell@alextimes.com

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# Today's Cargo celebrates its 50th anniversary

BY KAITLIN MURPHY

A long-time source of fine jewelry and gifts for special occasions in Old Town is having its big moment. Women-owned jewelry boutique Today's Cargo is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this month. The 50th birthday celebration kicked off on March 3rd with a party held at the store that included an auction and a special guest appearance from Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson, who presented a proclamation to owners Donna McIntyre and Carla Clarke.

More than 50 guests, including long-time customers and supporters of Today's Cargo, enjoyed the soiree with champagne and cake. A spin-the-wheel raffle guaranteed hand-picked baubles. People mingled, won beautiful pieces and celebrated the anniversary.

The event was the culmination of building a solid structure and making connections through the years as a key part of the community fabric in Old Town.

The foundation of this business was established in 1973 by Gladys Irvin, who sold jewelry at a card table at the Alexandria Flea market located at the Crilley Warehouse on Lee Street. Whatever pieces arrived in that day's mail shipment on the Potomac River made up the wares and so the name Today's Cargo was born. Demand for Irvin's jewelry grew and she moved to a new location at 217 Cameron St. Another move followed before finally settling at the King St. location in 2007.

Irvin remained affiliated with Today's Cargo until her death in Feb. 2019. While Irvin had a passion for jewelry, Donna McIntyre found To-



PHOTO/KAITLIN MURPHY

Carla Clarke remembers shopping as a young girl at Today's Cargo. She now serves as vice president and part owner of the store.

day's Cargo as a second career. In 1976, McIntyre, a retired teacher, joined the business and immediately began contributing to its growth. McIntyre had an interest in jewelry and was self-taught in all aspects of business. She learned all she could about gemology and sourcing stones, which contributed greatly to the continued success and growth of Today's Cargo.

Carla Clarke remembers shopping as a young girl at Today's Cargo with her mother. The warm and friendly atmosphere always made her feel welcome. Even though she was little, Clarke was invited to browse the cases of jewelry and when she couldn't reach the button on the rotating retail display, a helpful sales associate pushed it for her so

SEE ANNIVERSARY | 12

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PHOTO/KAITLIN MURPHY

Today's Cargo is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this month.

## ANNIVERSARY FROM | 11

that she could enjoy perusing the jewelry.

This attention to service not only led to not only a customer for life but a future owner. Clarke joined Today's Cargo in 2000 and now serves as the vice president and part owner.

"Gladys was the brain and Donna is the heart [of Today's Cargo]," Clarke said.

The staff of Today's Cargo continually try to learn new and innovative business practices. Recently, Clarke earned her Certified Master Appraiser accreditation through the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers and is currently the only C.M.A. in Old Town. Not surprisingly, Clarke receives

many referrals for her service.

The mission of the business is alive and well today. Its mantra of "treat customers well and provide unique jewelry for all tastes and occasions," is a timeless theme that still draws new clients in – and keeps old-timers coming back. The shop sells traditional, classic, modern and artistic pieces. It also provides full repair services, ear piercing, appraisals and custom design.

Periodic refreshes, such as a newer logo and branding, tie together the foundation of the past with a look to the future. Today's Cargo tries to appeal to its longtime, loyal customer base while also adapting to what newer customers want – which includes using the newest technology.

"The custom design studio uses a computer-aided design software program so that people can get exactly what they want," Clarke said. This service allows customers to create, design and produce a rendering of their ideas.

Today's Cargo celebrates clients who share stories of their lives when they purchase

memorabilia, jewelry and other gifts. Clarke enjoys being part of the significant events such as christenings and baptisms, graduations, engagements and anniversaries which are celebrated and acknowledged with gifts from the store.

Today's Cargo successfully maneuvered through the pandemic, though the future for their store and many small businesses are threatened by shifts in retail spending and rent increases.

"We are known for having quaint and charming small businesses and shops. A big worry is that Old Town will become a big box retail store town," Clarke said.

For now, honoring the past, present and future is the focus of the Golden Jubilee that Today's Cargo is celebrating.

Clarke said she is both proud to take on the legacy of the store and is ready for the next chapter.

*Today's Cargo is located at 1102 King St. The store's anniversary sale runs through March 23.*

## Happy Birthday

Jamila Mansurova is many things, chief among them a talented writer, remarkable vice principal and beloved grandmother. Though we call her by many nicknames, she is known abroad as M FirA, a brilliant author who has mastered the art of telling intimate, at times melancholic, at times humorous, stories.

In her youth, Jamila worked as a teacher of chemistry and biology in a school that specialized in musical talents. Over time, she became the vice principal of the school. She often organized engaging events for her students that revolved around literature and music. Her students fondly remember her as both strict and considerate, always paying her the same respects now as they did in their days of being her pupils. Her care for children has thus remained a defining characteristic in her life.

Since 1972, Jamila has penned articles for various newspapers for her home country, Azerbaijan. She has written a myriad of stories



containing themes that span from romantic and familial love to loss, grief and time. Her first collection of stories was published in 1978. Since then, she has authored novelettes and novels immersing readers into the historical accounts of Azerbaijani citizens. Not only an accomplished writer, Jamila has quite an eye for art – she designs the cover of her own books! She cleverly created her pen name to honor both her late husband, Arif Mansurov, and her late mother, known to family members

as Mama Fira.

Today, Jamila continues to write. She has not lost her desire to capture the world around her and delve into the intricacies of humanity. She has maintained her interest in fashion – she even designed jewelry in her youth – and has a growing love for photography. Jamila remains so dedicated to her craft that she spends time reading other people's stories, widening her literary knowledge and engrossing herself into foreign worlds.

It's clear that family is important to Jamila, and the reverse is true as well. Jamila is an inspiration to her children and grandchildren, an image of following one's dreams, excelling at one's talents and loving boundlessly. To be in her presence is a lifelong gift, and for these reasons we celebrate her birthday. We are so thankful for her infinite wisdom and the endearing, playful nature she has maintained throughout the years of her life. Cheers to many more years ahead!



PHOTO/KAITLIN MURPHY

Fine jewelry and gifts for special occasions can be found at Today's Cargo.

# Times Living

## CLOSE TO HOME

HOME  
PROFILE



PHOTO/NOVASOUL IMAGERY/MARKS-WOODS

Black kitchen cabinets are softened with a natural stone backsplash.

## Designing for yourself

**Del Ray homeowners lean into the process and love the product**

BY KAITLIN MURPHY

Homeowner Jamie Nolan and her husband purchased their 1940's brick duplex in Del Ray in 2017. The location

and deep yard were big factors in the purchase with the intent to renovate in the future. The 1,220 square foot two-bedroom, two-bath home was renovated in 2012 with upgraded electrical and plumbing, so the Nolans had a great canvas to start their project.

As they considered improving their space for three people and a dog, they settled on expanding the first floor with a rear addition to provide more space and storage as well as an expanded kitchen. The desire to entertain led to an open-concept design, includ-

ing a large gathering area and the addition of a small powder room. Their plans for the space required an expansion of 15 feet from the back of the house into the existing yard.

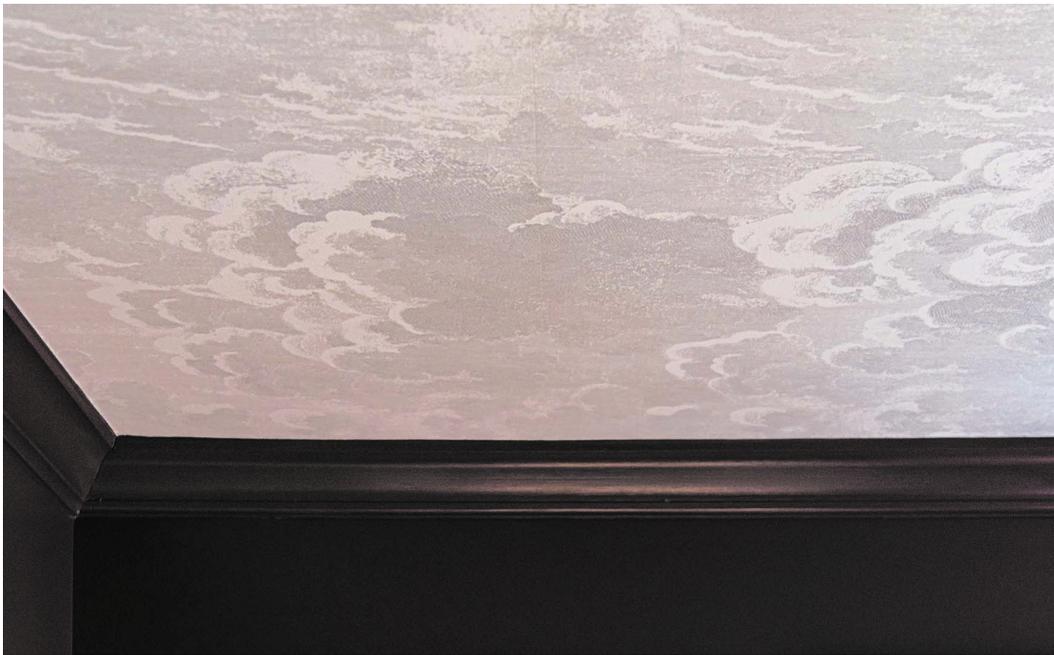
Once they met with the design team at Marks-Woods Construction Services, they soon realized that the entire home would need to be renovated to fully improve their space. In

addition to the first-floor expansion, the Nolans identified a need for a primary suite with an attached bathroom, a larger secondary bedroom and a separate office on the second floor.

While the floor plan reconfigured the footprint of the home, Nolan developed her own curated vision board

SEE **DEL RAY**

| 14



PHOTO/NOVASOUL IMAGERY/MARKS-WOODS

The ceiling is wallpapered with a cloud print.



PHOTO/NOVASOUL IMAGERY/MARKS-WOODS

The powder room pops with color and animal print wallpaper.

**DEL RAY** FROM | 13

of design inspiration that she had compiled over the years. Lots of dramatic colors, mixed metals and different materials complemented the space and outlined what they wanted. It was a great jumping-off point for the project.

“We love Del Ray and any-

thing we can do to make our home work long term for us is worth it,” Nolan said.

During the design and permitting phase, they found out that the yard was a nonconforming lot, which dictates how close you can build from the property line. Under the current zoning conditions, the design would not align

with the rules so extra permits were required.

The contractors had to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals to seek approvals on the alignment of the proposed additions with the current house. The project experienced additional delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Supply chain delays for items like the windows and

cabinetry added to longer lead time which had to be taken into consideration for the project.

During the renovation and construction, Nolan leaned into the designs and took numerous bold risks. Inspired by Parisian kitchens, the homeowners put on their own spin.

For instance, the kitchen cabinets are black along the perimeter of the room but wood tones are used on the center island, which, along with the natural stone backsplash, softens the view. Fun elements include vertical picket tiles which create the illusion of a

taller space while mixed metals of brass and chrome give the area a timeless look.

This unusual pairing works well as the lighting allows for dramatic finishes while the other color choices stand out. For a bit of whimsy to counter the sophistication of the kitchen, the adjacent powder room pops with color and animal print wallpaper.

These design elements carry throughout the rest of the house and the second floor also offers some personalized

SEE **DEL RAY** | 15

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# HOMES

**DEL RAY** FROM | 14

and bold features.

“My favorite space is my office,” Nolan said.

She selected a rich plum color paint for the walls and the ceiling is wallpapered with a cloud print. Bringing a little bit of the outside in, Nolan added a bird feeder to her office window. All the choices, decor and art work reflect her personality.

Prior to the renovation, Nolan had been working in a small corner of the home’s basement. Creating an office for herself has been meaningful.

“I created the space and the final product has really been great. It was an excellent investment of space for us,” she said.

Danielle Steele served as the lead designer for the Nolans and agreed that Nolan knew what she was doing.



PHOTO/NOVASOUL IMAGERY/MARKS-WOODS

SEE **DEL RAY** | 16 The penguin print wallpaper has an irresistible fuzzy texture.



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- Thomas J. Fannon, 1941 at the 56th Anniversary

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“Take more risks. Take one room and go bolder. Always go with your gut instinct and it will all work out.”

— Jamie Nolan,  
Del Ray homeowner

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### References Available

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- Sealing & Staining (Deck & Fences)
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- Gutter Cleaning
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DEL RAY

FROM | 15

“Clients should always design for themselves,” Steele said.

The family’s daughter has her own favorite detail that she loves to touch and include on any tour of the family home. The penguin print wallpaper in her room is visually appealing and the fuzzy texture is irresistible.

The back yard had a make-over as well. To replace a deck that was removed when the back of the house was expanded, they had a sustainable brick patio installed. The bricks sourced for this project were reclaimed from Old Town, which was a way to honor the family’s connection to the history and fabric of the community.

A new balcony off the primary bedroom on the second floor has a railing that serves as a hanging spot for red geraniums, which is another nod

to Nolan’s Parisian design influences.

Nolan offered advice to future homeowners looking to undertake a renovation and expansion:

“Take more risks. Take one room and go bolder. Always go with your gut instinct and it will all work out.”

The bold design choices won two awards with the Professional Remodeling Organization, a group that represents residential, commercial and general remodeling contractors.

“Goes to show, when you have a client that likes to get involved and takes some risks, the sky is the limit,” Greg Marks, director of business development for Marks-Woods, said.

After the renovation, the Nolans ended up with the home of their dreams. They now have plans underway to renovate their outdoor space.



PHOTO/NOVASOUL IMAGERY/MARKS-WOODS

The bold design choices won two awards with the Professional Remodeling Organization.

REAL  
TALK

# TAX TIPS

on your 2022

## CAPITAL GAINS

Wondering about the money you made on your 2022 home sale?

**Here's what you need to know at tax time.**



COURTESY PHOTO

Learn about these tax matters to avoid any surprises on your taxes.

## Understanding home sale taxes

### Here's what you need to know at tax time if you sold in 2022

BY ELIZABETH LUCCHESI

Last year was a wild ride in real estate. Homes flew off the shelves quicker than toilet paper did in 2020. And 2022's significant home value increases may mean you sold for more than you paid.

ATTOM, a curator of nationwide real estate data, reported home sellers nationwide profited an average of \$112,000 on the sale of their home in 2022, up 21% from 2021. This figure sounds fantastic but doesn't reflect potential capital gains taxes and is a digit or two less large once this tax is deducted.

With tax deadlines approaching, you may wonder if



**ELIZABETH LUCCHESI**

you'll owe the IRS for this capital gain. Here's how to sort through tricky tax matters as a recent home seller.

### Capital assets and taxes

A capital gain occurs when you sell an asset for more than you originally paid. Capital assets include most things you own, physical or otherwise, like your vehicle or a boat and

stocks, bonds and real estate.

Many sellers' profits fall under the capital gains thresholds for primary homes when selling a home. Others, particularly long-time property owners, may get hit with an unexpected bill in the form of a capital gains tax. This tax is calculated relative to the profit made from your home sale.

Short-term capital gains are profits realized from a home owned for less than a year and sold; these gains will be taxed at the ordinary income tax rate.

You have a loss if your basis is more than the selling price. While losses dent your wallet, there's no tax impact and you can't claim a loss.

### Exceptions

Like many tax-related it-

ems, there are exceptions and not all gain is taxable. For example, if the home was your primary residence for at least two out of the five years before you sold it, you may be able to exclude up to \$250,000 of the capital gain from your taxable income or up to \$500,000 if you're married and filing jointly. You can only claim this exclusion once every two years.

Homeowners will also not have a reportable gain or loss if their home was transferred to a spouse or ex-spouse as part of a divorce settlement. Other exceptions that may affect your gain include circumstances preventing you from living in your primary residence, deceased taxpayers, vacant land and condemned homes.

Exceptions made to ownership and residency are specific. For example, those on qualified official extended duty in the uniformed services, foreign service or intelligence community can suspend the five-year period for up to 10 years.

tial capital gain. Use a spreadsheet to enter all receipts and invoices for home-related expenses, including maintenance and have a physical copy filed away.

### Home Sales In 2023

Many homeowners will profit from their home sales in 2023. And assuming no changes from Congress, the same capital gains rules will apply.

If you're thinking about selling this year, start planning now. Organize your records. Gains recognized in 2023 won't be taxable until 2024, but you should think ahead to figure out your basis and adjustments now.

Be smart and save time when you lean into the advice of an experienced tax expert and realtor you know and trust. These professionals will help you understand your tax obligations when selling a home and clearly explain the best options for your situation.

### Keep better records

Every improvement and renovation related to your home should be closely recorded as these can increase your home value, sales price and ultimately your poten-

*The information provided here is not investment or financial advice. The writer is the founder of the LizLuke Team of Long & Foster Real Estate. She is also a buyer and seller agent.*

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## HOMES

# Bathroom break: four tips to freshen up

BY BRANDPOINT

Warmer temperatures, blooming flowers and brighter days inspire you to take a fresh look at your home. And spring is the perfect season to make a room feel brand new. Fresh, seasonal colors can give your bathroom an upgraded look and new products will help you keep that fresh spring feeling all season. Here are four simple ideas to help you revamp your bathroom this spring.

## Invite more color

Swap out some of the simple elements in your bathroom and brighten the space with fresh and colorful towels, bathmats and a new shower curtain. Choose light, appealing colors and patterns based on natural elements that will bring a springtime feeling into your home.

## Decorate with purpose

Consider adding some decorative accents, like glass jars filled with cotton swabs, small soaps or garden flowers. A little goes a long way, so choose only a few accents to keep clutter at bay.

## Add attractive storage solutions

Include smart and visually appealing storage options such as baskets on shelves. Useful for keeping your countertops clear, you can use baskets to easily organize items like toiletries, washcloths and makeup. Extra towels for guests can be stowed away to keep the bathroom bright and clean.

## Refresh your windows

Give your bathroom windows a thorough cleaning and consider updating window treatments. Install roller



FILE PHOTO

Appealing colors and patterns will bring a springtime feeling into your home.

blinds or Roman shades in lighter colors to let in natural light while still providing privacy. This simple step will help the whole room feel lighter

and brighter.

Ready to get started on refreshing your bathroom? You can easily accomplish this update— no plumber or de-

signer needed - to make a big difference in the look and feel so you can relax and enjoy your bathroom all season long.

## Make Your Home Less Hectic and More of a Haven

These days many people's homes are teeming with activity, with everyone in each other's way half the time. Tensions are high. Tempers are short.

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# CALENDAR

## MARCH 23



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH ART EXHIBITION** Local artist Anita Barondes took four years to research, design and stitch her award-winning "Women from the Dawn of Time." The tapestry depicts hundreds of women who made major contributions to the arts, medicine, writing, politics, sports, science and leadership since the dawn of time.  
**Time:** 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Location:** 4701 Seminary Road  
**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/7928370

**DIY RING DISH** Create a beautiful and unique product by forming and decorating a clay dish for your jewelry. Teens, adults and seniors are welcome. Registration is

required. Free to all.  
**Time:** 6 to 7 p.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.  
**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/7995612

## MARCH 24



**JUNIOR DOCENT PROGRAM** Students in grades 4 through 7 are welcome to apply to become a junior docent at Gadsby's Tavern Museum. To be considered, students must complete and return an application to the museum.  
**Time:** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**Location:** 134 N. Royal St.  
**Information:** alexandriava.gov/gadsbystavern

**'THE SYNDICATE SPY' AT LOST BOY** Ever wondered what it's like to be a spy?

Meet former CIA spy Brittany Butler as she discusses her experiences recruiting spies and dismantling terror networks abroad. Hosted by Hooray for Books and Lost Boy Cider, this event is free to all. Books, food and drinks available for purchase.

**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Location:** 317 Hooffs Run Drive  
**Information:** eventbrite.com/e/author-brittany-butler-at-lost-boy-cider-tickets-549556768087

## MARCH 25



**ART INSTALLATION DEBUT** Attend a celebration of the city's newest art installation. "Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson" will be on display through November 2023. Free to all.

**Time:** 2 to 5 p.m.  
**Location:** 1 Prince St.  
**Information:** alexandriava.gov/public-art/site-see-two-boxes-of-oranges-and-admonia-jackson

## MARCH 27



**ALEXANDRIA WEST OPEN HOUSE** Community discussion of housing affordability, transportation, and overall community feedback to discuss the future of Alexandria West. Free and open to the public. Food, childcare and language interpretation available.  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Location:** 1701 N. Beaugard St. and online  
**Information:**

alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest

## MARCH 30



**FRANCE AND THE GAULS LECTURE** How did Gaul come under Roman rule, and what is the legacy of the Gauls in France today? Join Catholic University professor Jennifer Paxton, Ph.D. will look at the complex chain of circumstances that led Julius Caesar to undertake the conquest of Gaul and explore the resonance of the Gaulish past in French politics and popular culture. Tickets are \$10 and include a wine reception.  
**Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.  
**Location:** 201 S. Washington St.  
**Information:** shop.alexandriava.gov/Events.aspx

## HOME OF THE WEEK



PHOTOS/OLEKS YAROSHYNSKYI/TOWNSEND VISUALS

**Left:** Historic Old Town townhouse. **Middle:** Beautiful wine cellar. **Right:** Professionally landscaped, deep garden.

# Historic Townhome

Classic Old Town living in this historic townhome located a stone's throw from Lee Street Park and Windmill Hill Park. More than 2,500 finished sq. ft. includes a newer two-level addition that includes a huge

family room overlooking the deep, landscaped garden. The addition also includes a sunny second level primary bedroom suite with newer bath and sitting/office area.

Plenty of room for ev-

eryone with four bedrooms. Great lifestyle opportunity. Enjoy gardening; stroll along the river; shop at the farmers' market on Saturday mornings; dine in one of dozens of restaurants within just a few blocks of home. Prime southeast quadrant location less than two blocks to the water-

front, dog park and biking/walking trail.

Less than a mile to public transportation, four miles to Amazon's HQ2, five miles to Reagan National Airport, eight miles to Capitol Hill and nine miles to the White House. World-class living, all in the shadow of the Nation's Capital.

## AT A GLANCE

- Address:** 209 Gibbon St., Alexandria, 22314
- Neighborhood:** Old Town
- Price:** \$1,725,000
- Square feet:** 2,577
- Bedrooms:** 4
- Bathrooms:** 2 full; 3 half bath
- Year built:** 1820
- Contact:** Heather Corey  
TTR Sotheby's  
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# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Food and health

### A journey of wellness can start with the smallest step

BY KATHY SEIFERT

I was twenty-three and had just moved to Denver, Colorado with my newlywed husband when the world of wellness opened to me. Over forty years ago, Denver was well ahead of the rest of the country when it came to health and wellness. Most office buildings were equipped with workout areas which included hand weights and a treadmill. Many places even had saunas, steam rooms and showers.

Despite being an athlete in high school and college, I'd never really considered how the quality and types of food we eat might impact our overall performance and wellbeing.

On my way back to from

grabbing lunch, I popped into a Natural Foods Store for a bottle of water. That one stop at a health food store in 1979 changed me. Over the next several months, I had many conversations with the joyful owner. This led to an insatiable desire to learn as much as possible about using food to prevent disease and maintain optimum health.

Since that time, I've had a passion for healing with whole foods. I believe in the intrinsic connection between our minds and bodies and search for ways to contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Now, at sixty-seven, my "cocktail conversations" are beginning to revolve around one's aches and pains, senior moments, joint replacements, back pain and more. It's assumed that as we age, such



FILE PHOTO

Practicing yoga can help prevent signs of aging.

annoyances are simply a natural part of the aging process. I strongly suggest otherwise.

A healthy lifestyle with the right amounts of exercise, sleep, meditation, yoga and pending time in nature go

a long way to preventing what most consider to be natural signs of aging.

Eating a plant-based diet, with quality sources of protein to prevent bone and muscle loss is important. Coupled with prioritizing movement and exercise, you can stay looking and feeling your best for years to come.

Start your wellness journey today. Start making choices that reflect a commitment to both feeling and looking good.

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Start moving. Engage with friends and family. Stop and smell the roses. You truly can become the best version of yourself – at any age.

*The writer is a longtime resident of Old Town and former Executive Director of the Alexandria Seaport Foundation.*



FILE PHOTO

Eat a plant-based diet with quality sources of protein to prevent bone and muscle loss.



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PHOTO/JAMESON BLOOM

Students from SSSAS wowed the crowd in their production of 'Mamma Mia!'

## 'Mamma Mia!' a hit at SSSAS

BY PREET MANUKONDA

The cast and crew of St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School's production of "Mamma Mia!" danced and jived, but most importantly they told a tale of true love, self-discovery and empowerment. The audience heartily applauded for the music and talent displayed on stage.

Based on songs recorded by renowned Swedish pop band ABBA, "Mamma Mia!" tells the story of Sophie Sheridan, an optimistic and lively young girl who's about to get married. Before she says "I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do" though, Sophie wishes to have her father walk her down the aisle. Simple enough, right? In this island love story, not so much. Because not only does Sophie not know who her father is, but her headstrong mother refuses to tell her. Cue the drama as Sophie secretly invites three of her mother's ex-lovers to her wedding anyway, in hopes of finding her true father. After all, what's the worst that could happen?

In the case of this production, the various shenanigans, heightened emotions and heartfelt dialogues of Mamma Mia! were conveyed admirably by St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School. With sets that took inspiration from classic Greek

architecture and high-energy ensemble pieces, each scene transported the audience to the islands of Greece and had them saying "Mamma Mia!" all night long.

This production wouldn't be complete without the recurring themes of love, especially between mother and daughter. Charlotte Nichols and Amber Dunton who played Sophie and Donna, respectively perfectly conveyed the relationship. As Sophie, Nichols accomplished the tough feat of going from an excited soon-to-be bride to a more mellow, mature woman. Dunton brought Donna's slightly pessimistic but good-natured personality to every scene. Dunton's powerful vocals asserted Donna's position as a strong-willed mom. Despite their differences as characters, Nichols' dazzling vibrato, and Dalton's powerful belting meshed wonderfully, creating stunning harmonies and making for emotional ballads like "Slipping Through My Fingers."

Alongside resident dancing queen Donna stood her two best friends: Rosie (Emma Lacy) and Tanya (Bailey Edwards). As two-thirds of the Dynamos, the duo entranced the audience with their hilarious antics and banter, while also convincingly portraying middle-aged

women looking for their version of happiness. Dynamos aside, the spirited ensemble brought the final touches to the pre-wedding, party-like atmosphere in "Voulez-Vous" and the titular song, "Mamma Mia." Each actor brought evident energy to every dance, demonstrating a clear mastery of the choreography.

Greece's architecture is one-of-a-kind, but it's no surprise that the crew at SSSAS managed to replicate the cobblestone streets, regal buildings, and homey atmosphere of Donna and Sophie's home perfectly. From small details like string lights, flowers and a boardwalk to larger details like a multi-leveled set and moving buildings, the set transported the audience right into Greece. Designed by Emma Lacy, Emmie Vajda, and Gabriella Miller Milow, the choreography complimented the mood of every song. Little swaying movements and large dance numbers enhanced every party scene.

Telling the story of Sophie and Donna Sheridan, the SSSAS cast and crew took on a very difficult task performing Mamma Mia!, but it was one that they managed to turn into an exceptional show.

*The writer is a student at Westfield High School.*



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## Our View

# Something's wrong here

In his column last week, “No one pays a tax rate,” Bill Rossello pointed out that a level tax rate does not equate to a level tax bill. This is because the tax rate is applied to property values, which rose by more than 4% in Alexandria last year.

In his letter this week, Kenneth Wolfe instructs that Alexandria's property tax rate has increased by 36% from \$.815 at its low point in the FY2007 budget to \$1.11 – and potentially \$1.12 if City Council uses the maximum possible rate it approved last week.

In another letter this week, Jimm Roberts ties Alexandria's overall high cost of living to a spike in housing costs that's correlated with the city's densification in recent years.

The news for Alexandria's taxpayers is actually worse than any of these writers indicate. That 36% increase in the property tax rate is coupled with a 29% increase in assessed property value, which combined – wait for it – have led to a 76% increase in the average residential property tax bill in Alexandria between FY2007 and FY2024.

The math behind this is straightforward.

According to a city document dated April 24, 2006 titled “[Archived] City Council Adopts FY2007 Operating Budget with a 10-cent Cut in the Real Estate Tax Rate – Revision”: The average residential property in Alexandria was valued at \$527,000. When the now quaint-sounding FY2007 tax rate of \$.815 was applied, that resulted in an average tax bill of \$4,295.05 in Alexandria.

While the City of Alexandria has published at least three documents showing different residential property assessment values so far this year, using the number \$679,914 found in one of them results in an average residential property tax bill of \$7,546.89 when the \$1.11 rate is applied.

That's an increase of \$3,251.84 in the average tax bill – an increase of 76% – in 17 years.

Discerning readers have probably already noted that there's seldom a tax increase of this magnitude without a corresponding spending hike of similar heft – and those readers would be correct. The city's annual operating budget has increased by almost 79% in the past 17 years.

Again, for those who want to do the math, the city's operating budget was \$493,700,000 in FY2007 and is proposed at \$881,132,896 in FY2024 – an increase of \$387,432,896. Whew!

Readers might be wondering how the tax rate could have been so low in FY2007? It's because City Council, worried about the tax burden on residents, lowered the rate by fully 10 cents from FY2006 to FY2007!

Here's what then Mayor Bill Euille said about that budget:

“I believe Council acted responsibly in adopting this new budget. We listened to our residents and business owners, and carefully weighed the costs to continue the level of services provided to our community.”

There's much to parse in the former mayor's statement.

If that council acted responsibly in trying to manage residents' tax burdens, what does that say about our current council? If that council listened to residents and business owners, what does that say about our current leadership's listening skills? If the level of services to our community were able to be maintained at a much lower level of taxation, what does that say about our current spending levels and priorities?

Finally, when's the last time an Alexandria elected official tried to keep the tax burden at a manageable level? Former Mayor Allison Silberberg certainly argued for a slower rate of tax increase. But our last elected officials to push repeatedly for actual cuts in spending were former Councilor Frank Fannon and former Vice Mayor Bill Cleveland, who left office in 2012 and 2003, respectively.

The bottom line is the bottom line: When the level of taxation rises more than twice as much as the value of what's being taxed, something is terribly wrong.

# Opinion

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

- Thomas Jefferson

## Photo of the Week



PHOTO/LUCIE HOLLAND

A devastating fire caused extensive damage at 216 S. Fairfax St.

## Your Views

# The taxpayer loses in Alexandria

To the editor:

The mayor and City Council seem to be patting themselves on the back for a property tax rate of \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value, while assessments of houses and condos continue to skyrocket. The bottom line is all homeowners are going to pay higher property taxes yet again this year, not to mention sneaky rising utility fees for the same level of services.

As a resident in his 40s who has been a homeowner in Alexandria since the late 1990s, I remember when mayors and city councilors used to argue that the property tax rate should go up when assessments go down – and should go down when assessments go up. That's how many of us in our 20s and 30s were able to afford to own and live here without being wealthy. Taxes were stable in real dollars.

We don't seem to hear that last part

anymore. But in 2007, the property tax rate in Alexandria was \$0.815 per \$100 of assessed value. You read that right – 81.5 cents compared to today's \$1.11. Do the math with your assessment. It is an enormous difference – a 36% increase in the property tax rate.

If assessments continue to increase as they have, why isn't the mayor or the city council – or our new city manager – talking about a decrease in the property tax rate? Shouldn't we be moving closer to the 81.5 cent rate now that assessments are through the roof?

As usual with the current mayor and council, it's heads they win and tails you lose. The taxpayer always loses in Alexandria under this regime while city spending just keeps going up and up and up.

-Kenneth J. Wolfe,  
Alexandria

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

## Your Views

# How about a population cap?

To the editor:

Get ready for a more costly city with more and taller structures, less open space, more people, their cars and youngsters and more schools in which to educate them. This result is attributable to a years-long effort by affordable housing advocates. The future they plan for you, whether or not you want it, was on full display at their day-long celebration on Tuesday, hosted by the City of Alexandria.

The contretemps in next door Arlington, inexplicably described as the “Missing Middle,” is a precursor to what’s in store for Alexandria. What its advocates declare missing is affordable housing to accommodate the many purportedly clamoring for it. The Missing Middle therefore means Arlington wants more accommodations which, perforce, will make it ever more densely populated.

What’s also missing is common sense.

Cramming more structures to house more people into the defined space called Arlington or Alexandria is not going to make housing costs more affordable. These costs, whether for building materials, sites on which to build or for the resulting rents, are determined by market forces, i. e., supply and demand.

Here’s what these two forces foretell for the champions of equity, inclusion and whatever else is agitating them to make Arlington and Alexandria more densely populated: More population density makes Alexandria and Arlington more costly.

To attain this epiphany, there is a simple process that anyone now residing in either city, or in any metropolitan city for that matter, can utilize. You don’t

need to read an academic study replete with footnotes and convoluted syntax to acquire it.

All you need is a measure of curiosity, a vehicle and a free day. Just jump into your EV – the very one whose batteries are filled with components made by China and electricity made by fossil fuels – and drive at least an hour away from your current domicile, the further the better.

And here’s what you’ll find: Apart from fewer people, less congestion and more greenery, you’ll also find less costly food, fuel and housing. Briefly stated, the smaller the city, the fewer the residents, the less costly it is, a simple fact likely not on any chart at the affordable housing love-in. Nor will there be one showing more people trigger the need for more city services, school rooms and teachers.

Perhaps the tradeoff should be more entry-level housing in exchange for a population limit. It’s not as if either city lacks the tools. They have zoning restrictions galore stipulating how many people can occupy buildings, even rooms within buildings. They can just as easily craft one to mandate how many people can reside in either city.

Without a limit, the future of Alexandria and of our neighbor Arlington will be something akin to Manhattan, an expensive city with lots of people crammed into a defined space, the surface of which is mostly concrete. Should this happen, then forever lost will be the charm that attracted people to reside in Alexandria and Arlington in the first place.

-Jimm Roberts,  
Alexandria



## Poor Robert's Ruminations

with Rob Whittle

### Are they a good egg?

BY ROB WHITTLE

On 8-8-08 I was in a meeting with my biggest client, who had imported two “professional cost cutters” from General Motors. They boasted that they had cut tens of millions of “waste” from GM’s vendors and gave me to understand that I had no chance against their beady-eyed expertise in reducing a vendor’s profits to dog poop.

My secretary called me out of the meeting to tell me that my wife was on the phone and it was urgent. Our daughter had gone into labor and I’d better exit the meeting. I returned to the conference room and, beaming, informed my new best friends that they could take their expertise and put it where the sun don’t shine. I was going to be a grandad!

Jane was born that night looking, as most infants do, like Winston Churchill after a particularly gaseous dinner.

Grandparents the world over understand their job. Be the good cop, the one who spoils, teach the children a thing or two from your geezer perspective – and then go home. Leave the real work to the parents. I wasn’t ready to be called grandad, so I became Robbie and my wife, who proclaimed she was born for this role, went with Nana.

There’s no manual on how to be a good grandparent. We make it up as we go along, right? For example, I figured I better try to get Jane’s brain whirring when she was a toddler so I invented two games: “Halt!” and “The Cane Game.” The former took advantage of a toddler’s perpetual motion. Jane would run around the dining room table until she reached my chair whereupon I would stick out my arm and, in my best military voice, shout, “Halt!”

I would then ask a question such as, “What’s the name of my brother?” Only when she answered correctly was she permitted to trundle around for another lap. “The Cane Game” involved creative uses of a walking cane. We’d pass the cane back and forth, inventing uses for it. Turned upside down, the cane became a hobby horse. A cane upside down with your foot in it was a stirrup. Hey, feel free to use these games, no charge.

Jane has an anxious side to her that once manifested itself in her dividing DVDs of movies into two piles: “scary” and “not scary.” Well-known “Exorcist”-type movies such as “Cinderella” and “Clue” resided in the scary pile.

Jane is also my running mate at our river



ROB  
WHITTLE

house. A couple of years ago, I took Jane, her mom, her friend and her daughter on a boat ride. The boat broke down about a half-mile offshore in ten feet of water. I took a tow line, jumped in the water and proceeded to urge the boat to shore. No one was in danger, but I kept an anxious eye on Jane, who, to my relief, was chatting and laughing with her buddy.

That was the beginning of her long hiatus on boat riding. She explained that laughing and chatting was how she dealt with stress. Happily, she’s back on board now. For years, we have performed perimeter checks of our property and that of our neighbors each morning we’re in situ. We report

in a SitRep our findings to mostly disinterested family members, though they feign keen attention, things such as “The light on the neighbor’s porch was left on overnight.”

A grandparent dreams – and frets – about what kind of person their little darling will become. Will she be a great athlete? A scholar? Win the Nobel Prize? And it’s just about the best thing ever to watch their personalities, strengths and, yes, weaknesses grow.

Jane, for example, is a coordinated girl. But I figured she wasn’t going out for Team USA Soccer after observing her on the pitch as she trotted along contentedly chatting and laughing alongside an opposing player, occasionally lapsing into a faux slow motion movement while paying little attention to the action. She still plays sports, but her real interests lie in singing and musical theater.

One of the joys of my life is giving her birthday and Christmas present tickets to musicals – one for her and one for me. We’ve seen “Hair-spray,” “Mean Girls,” “Dear Evan Hanson,” “My Fair Lady” and more. Jane can sing every single lyric to “Hamilton,” including the French parts of Lafayette. Her passion is acting in school plays.

To fellow and future grandparents, I contend that achievements in athletics, academics, social graces and the arts are important – but not the crux of the matter. What’s more important is: Are they a good egg? And did you do your part to help them become so? Simple, right?

The one boast I’ll make is that Jane is a good egg.

*The writer is CEO of Williams Whittle Advertising and is the author of two historical novels, “Pointer’s War” and “Pointer and the Russian.”*

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# 'A League of Their Own' in Alexandria

BY ANDREW MCELWAIN

For nearly a century, thousands of people of every age, ability and background have participated in "America's pastime" at Alexandria's Eugene Simpson Stadium. In 1926, the city transformed the site of a publicly funded poorhouse, known as the Alexandria Almshouse, into a sports field. Countless games of baseball have been played there ever since. But one game in particular, a match between the Racine Belles and the Fort Wayne Daisies in the spring of 1951 stands out from the rest.

The Belles and the Daisies were both members of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that later inspired the movie and TV series "A League of Their Own." It remains the first and only professional baseball league for women in the United States.

The league was founded in 1943 by several baseball team executives, including chewing gum magnate and Chicago Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley, who were trying to solve a problem that many other businesses were facing at that time: a lack of manpower. Just as factories were facing huge labor shortages due to the large number of men drafted to fight in World War II, minor league

baseball teams were struggling to fill out their rosters.

There were even fears that Major League Baseball teams might not be able to field enough players. The eventual solution for both industries was the same. Factory owners hired women to work on their assembly lines and the team owners hired women to play in their stadiums. Unlike their male counterparts, women in the league were required to attend charm school and to wear makeup and skirts on the field.

At its peak, 10 teams competed in the AAGPBL, though that number fluctuated over its existence. All of the teams were located in the Midwest and several of them changed cities during their tenure, including the two that visited Alexandria.

The Belles were one of the league's original teams founded in 1943 in Racine, Wisconsin, but ended up moving to Michigan in 1951 to play their last three seasons. The Fort Wayne Daisies started out life as the Minneapolis Millerettes in 1944 but moved to Indiana the following year where they stayed until the league dissolved.

The league folded in 1954, as declining attendance, poor finances and the advent of televised MLB games proved



PHOTO/UNIVERSAL NEWSREEL COLLECTION/NATION ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Patricia Scott of the Fort Wayne Daisies at Alexandria Municipal Stadium, now Eugene Simpson Stadium.

too much to overcome. Even though it only lasted a decade, the AAGPBL was a big first step toward a more inclusive sports landscape. While there are no professional women's baseball leagues today, leagues in other sports like basketball and soccer continue the legacy of those pioneering women.

So why did these two teams play in Alexandria? Just like major league teams today, the teams of the AAGPBL sought warmer climates for their spring training before the regular season started. While Northern Virginia is not as tropical as some of their other spring training locations like

Opa-locka, Florida or Havana, Cuba, it was probably downright balmy compared to their home cities.

Traveling to central hubs like Alexandria also served as a way to get publicity for the league and recruit players. Though the score of the spring training game remains hidden in history, some of the action was captured in a Universal Newsreel and provides a glimpse into the history of Simpson Park and women's baseball in Alexandria.

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

## Weekly Poll

### Last Week

**Do you think there should be set-aside funding from tax revenues for open space in Alexandria?**

**60% Yes, we are rapidly losing our open spaces.**

**20% No, other things are more important.**

**15% You mean parks?**

**5% I'm not sure.**

### This Week

*Take the poll at alextimes.com*

**Are you happy with Alexandria's property tax rate, which has risen 36% since fiscal year 2007?**

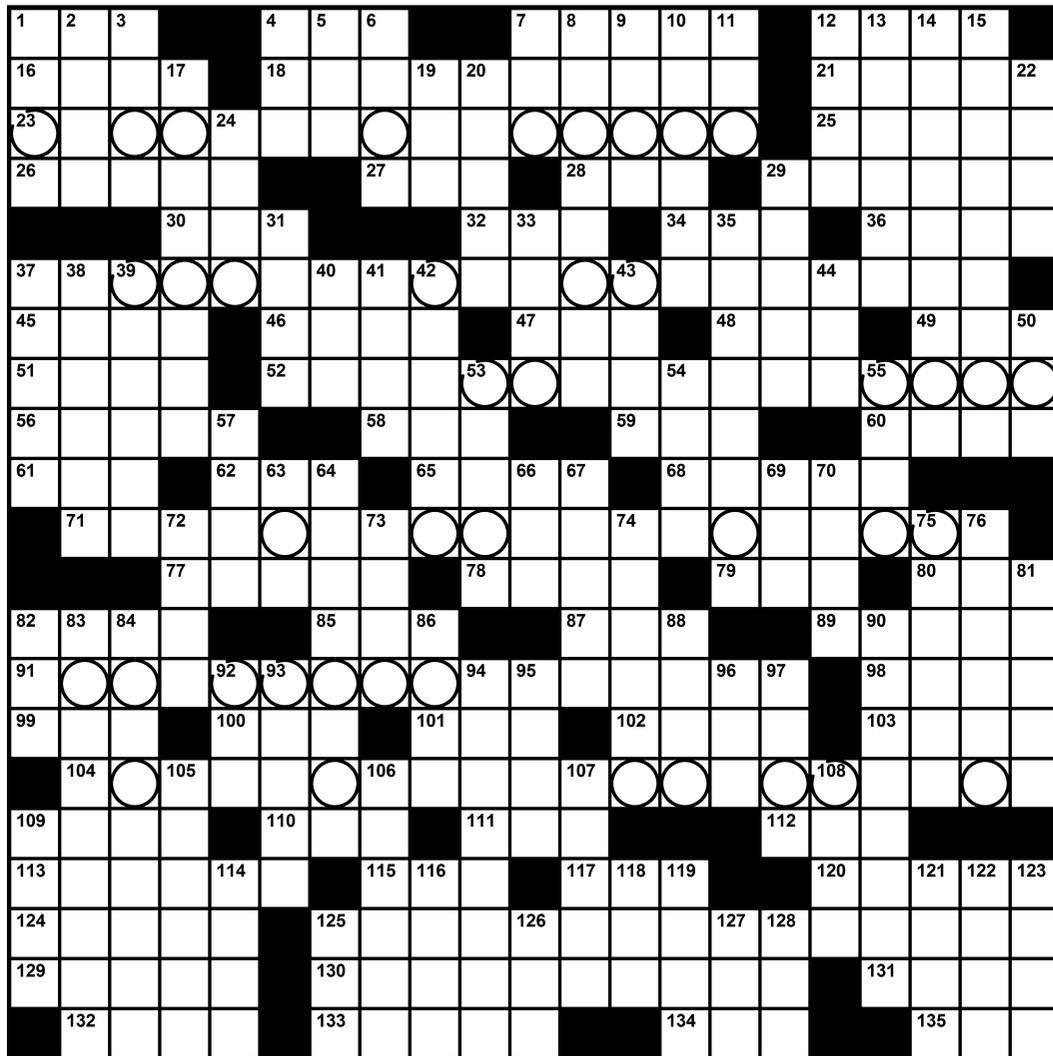
**A) Yes, it's needed to fund city priorities.**

**B) No, that's an outrageous increase.**

**C) I'm not sure.**

**D) I owe property taxes?**

# Weekly Words



## CRACKING OPEN A BOOK by Guilherme Gilioli, edited by Jeff Chen

### ACROSS

- 1 Radius's place
- 4 "Here, There \_\_\_\_ Everywhere" (hit by the Beatles)
- 7 Outdoor barbecue area
- 12 Has lunch or brunch
- 16 Half-moon tide
- 18 Chose sides
- 21 Persona non \_\_\_\_
- 23 Health form request
- 25 Intensify, in slang
- 26 Ancient Mexican native
- 27 What cartoon characters rarely do
- 28 Pugilist Laila
- 29 Adjusts to fit
- 30 Park it
- 32 Follower of epsilon
- 34 WSJ heads
- 36 Evening, for short
- 37 Doctor's stereotypical trait
- 45 Fashion icon Christian
- 46 Manicure target
- 47 Only zodiac sign that fits into the allotted space
- 48 Ball of cotton
- 49 Space between two teeth
- 51 Royal Norwegian name
- 52 Car with a cache of cash
- 56 Approach evening
- 58 Tinder blurb
- 59 Studio construction

- 60 Sugar bowl invaders
- 61 Prof.'s place
- 62 Drag to court
- 65 Billboard chart entry
- 68 Camera lens setting
- 71 Many a "Shark Tank" investor
- 77 Alert
- 78 "Off you go!"
- 79 Advanced degree in math
- 80 Half of "Mamma Mia"?
- 82 Camaro muscle car
- 85 Neon or helium
- 87 "Mayday!"
- 89 Hardly suitable
- 91 One hiking up for a run in the mountains?
- 98 New York canal
- 99 Marseille Mrs.
- 100 Filmmaker DuVernay
- 101 Congressional approval
- 102 Piece for a diva
- 103 "If I \_\_\_\_ you ..."
- 104 Line on some toy boxes
- 109 Companion of the radius
- 110 Doc. requiring secrecy from a reality show contestant
- 111 Approves
- 112 "Absolutely!"
- 113 Depends (on)
- 115 "Family Feud" channel
- 117 Actress Lucy who voiced a part in "Kung Fu Panda"
- 120 Art classification

- 124 Job at a lineup
  - 125 Fresh news ... and another possible title for this puzzle
  - 129 Giant leader?
  - 130 The majority of country flags, shape-wise
  - 131 Sound after "just like that"
  - 132 Legendary Loch
  - 133 Adjust a chronometer
  - 134 Tibetan beast
  - 135 Singer Winehouse
- ### DOWN
- 1 A, as in A.D.
  - 2 Short video on Insta
  - 3 Polite address
  - 4 @ signs
  - 5 Negating word
  - 6 Nickelodeon explorer
  - 7 Socially conscious TV spot
  - 8 Got to
  - 9 End of a kite
  - 10 Not hidden
  - 11 Neruda wrote one to the atom
  - 12 "Zooks!"
  - 13 Italian fashion name
  - 14 Touching gently
  - 15 Germany city mentioned in "The Book Thief"
  - 17 Keep intact
  - 19 Beer barrel
  - 20 A, in Hebrew
  - 22 Abbey area

# DEATH NOTICES

**RACHELLE BENNETT** (89), of Alexandria, March 5, 2023

**LARRY FULK** (88), of Alexandria, March 7, 2023

**PATRICIA GINSBURG** (80), of Alexandria, March 5, 2023

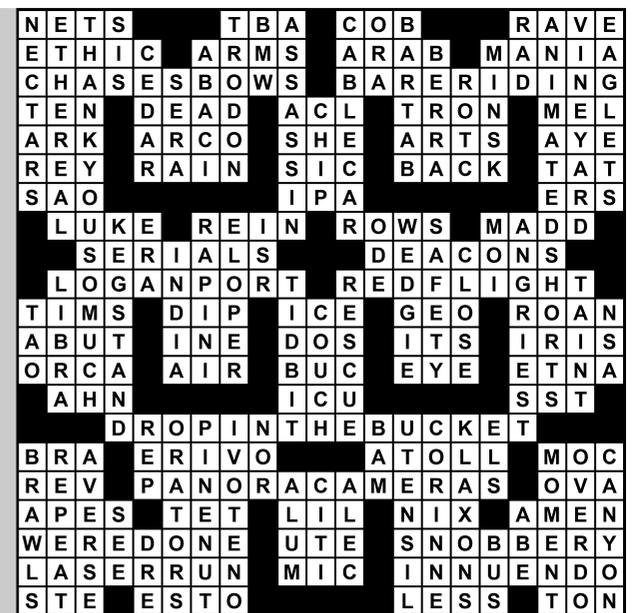
**CYNTHIA PEARSON** (71), of Alexandria, March 11, 2023

**BENECIO DE PAOLIS-QUISPE** (23), of Alexandria,

March 8, 2023

**VAUGHN VERVERS** (54), of Alexandria, March 19, 2023

Solutions from last week



- 24 Vaper's buy, for short
- 29 Like part of Russia
- 31 Grammy-winner Turner
- 33 Fit as a fiddle
- 35 Holmes' assistant
- 37 Role models
- 38 Flowering, aromatic shrubs
- 39 Can't stand
- 40 Snickers, e.g.
- 41 Swing supporter?
- 42 Plaza Hotel girl
- 43 "i" and "j" toppers
- 44 End zone scores, for short
- 50 Six, for 44-Down
- 53 Hotel inventory
- 54 Banking adjustment, briefly
- 55 Big \_\_\_\_ (nickname for a Red Sox legend)
- 57 Warning letters on an email forward
- 63 Thurman of "Imposters"
- 64 Wrestler's protection
- 66 Medical research org.
- 67 Lip cover
- 69 Explosive stuff (Abbr.)
- 70 Most populous Hawaiian island
- 72 Be short of
- 73 School head
- 74 Check out
- 75 Stood on hind legs
- 76 Roman or Ottoman
- 81 Noble horse
- 82 Company nicknamed "Big Blue"
- 83 Had a gabfest
- 84 Marine animals and plants
- 86 Affliction of the eyelid
- 88 Apple's virtual assistant
- 90 Targets of some software ads
- 92 Nyan \_\_\_\_ (animated meme)
- 93 Kitchen hot spots
- 94 Echo
- 95 Tug
- 96 A, as in Austria?
- 97 Edgy, perhaps
- 105 Defiles
- 106 "That's so true"
- 107 K.T. who sang "Hold Me"
- 108 Bricks used to make castles and forts
- 109 "Trinity" author Leon
- 114 \_\_\_\_ over easy
- 116 Short moments, for short
- 118 Suffix for a verb
- 119 Like a storied duckling
- 121 One of Columbus' three ships
- 122 Paper measure
- 123 Get a look at
- 125 "I'm freezing here!"
- 126 Crazy \_\_\_\_
- 127 "I'm not shore ... let's \_\_\_\_" (pun combo)
- 128 Impatient sound

# Classifieds

## LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF WISCONSIN      CIRCUIT COURT      DANE COUNTY

ROBIN MIELKE  
1360 MACARTHUR ROAD, APT 213  
MADISON, WI 53714,  
Plaintiff,

v.      Case No.: 23-CV-332

PROGRESSIVE CLASSIC INSURANCE COMPANY  
c/o CT CORPORATION SYSTEM  
301 S. BEDFORD STREET  
MADISON, WI 53703,

UROS TODOROVIC  
2801 PARK CENTER DRIVE, APT A710  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22302,

FROM A TO B LOGISTICS, LLC  
920 RIDGE SQUARE, APT. 209  
ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL 60007,

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF WISCONSIN  
N17 W24340 RIVERWOOD DRIVE  
WAUKESHA, WI 53188, and

XYZ INSURANCE COMPANY,  
Defendants.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
1 WEST WILSON STREET  
P.O. BOX 7850  
MADISON, WI 53707,  
Involuntary Plaintiff.

### SUMMONS

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

To each person named above as a defendant:

You are hereby notified that the plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit or other legal action against you. Within (20) (45) days of receiving this summons, you must respond with a written demand for a copy of the complaint. The demand must be sent or delivered to the court, whose address is Dane County Courthouse, 215 S. Hamilton Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703 and to Attorney Ronald W. Tusler, plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Tusler Law, S.C., 207 W. College Avenue, Suite 100, Appleton, Wisconsin 54911. You may have an attorney help or represent you.

If you do not demand a copy of the complaint within (20) (45) days, the court may grant judgment against you for the award of money or other legal action requested in the complaint, and you may lose your right to object to anything that is or may be incorrect in the complaint. A judgment may be enforced as provided by law. A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate you own now or in the future, and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property.

Signed in Appleton, Wisconsin this 7 day of February 2023.

TUSLER LAW, SC  
Attorney for the Plaintiff

By: Ronald W. Tusler  
Atty. Ronald W. Tusler  
State Bar No. 1066815

MAILING ADDRESS:  
Tusler Law, SC  
207 W. College Ave, Suite 100  
Appleton, WI 54911  
Ph: 920-749-0400

## 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 Tuesday, April 4, 2023 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 #2023-00090 OHAD  
Request for signage at  
220 S Union Street  
Applicant: Hotel Indigo

BAR #2023-00107 PG  
Request for alterations and  
addition at 215 N Payne Street  
Applicant: Harold Smith

BAR #2023-00111 PG  
Request partial demolition/  
encapsulation at 215 N Payne Street  
Applicant: Harold Smith

BAR #2023-00108 OHAD  
Request for signage at  
706 King Street  
Applicant: Bloomers LLC, Nicole  
White

BAR #2023-00109 OHAD  
Request for signage at 625 First  
Street and 510 Second Street  
Applicant: EAGH Alexandria LP

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 at lanning.blaser@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Alicia Chase at alicia.chase@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/dockets

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the City of Alexandria (VMRC #23-0307) is requesting a permit from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to repair and stabilize approximately 220 linear feet of storm-damaged retaining wall supporting the Holmes Run Park Trail along the southern bank of Holmes Run and within the Holmes Run Park north of Holmes Run Parkway and east of Van Dorn Street in the City of Alexandria.

You may provide comments on this application (VMRC #2023-0307) at <https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/habitat/comments/>

We will accept comments by the USPS provided they are received within 15 days of this notice to: Marine Resources Commission, Habitat Management Division, 380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96, Hampton, VA 23651.

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## AUCTIONS

ATTN. AUCTIONEERS: Advertise your upcoming auctions statewide and in other states. Affordable Print and Digital Solutions reaching your target audiences. Call this paper or Landon Clark at Virginia Press Services 804-521-7576, landonc@vpa.net

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## LIVESTOCK SALES

G&E Virginia Premium Assured Heifer/Cow Sale. March 25th, 2023, 12:00 noon. G&E Test Center Gretna, VA. Call George Winn at 434-489-4458.

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**PART 2: POSTING AND PUBLISHING**  
**PUBLISHING NOTICE**

Please publish the following item in the legal notice section of your newspaper. Please refer to the instructions provided on page 16.

Full name(s) of owner(s): MASUMA AKTER  
If general partnership, enter partners' names or name of partnership. If LP, LLP, LLC or corporation, enter name as recorded with the State Corporation Commission. If association or tax-exempt private club, enter name. Only if a sole proprietor, enter first, middle and last name.

Trading as: AKTER LLC  
(trade name)

1210 FORT MEYER DR.  
(Location where business will trade)

ARLINGTON  
(city/town)

ARLINGTON, VA 22209  
(county) (state) (zip + 4)

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a RETAIL license  
(type/s) of license(s) applied for

to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.  
N/A  
(name and title of owner/partner/officer authorizing advertisement)

Date notice posted at establishment: 03/23/23

**NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.**

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_ Application fee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postmarked date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date referred: \_\_\_\_\_ License fee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receipt no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ CBC fee: \_\_\_\_\_  
License no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Territory no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Form 806-4 (Rev. 09/2021) This is an official state document and all information contained or submitted therein is public information. Refer to Privacy Statement on the bottom of page two regarding personal/tax information. **Part 2: Retail License Application | 23**

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**CONTACT: Margaret Stevens**  
mstevens@alextimes.com

## AROUND TOWN WITH Lisa Groover



When I moved to Alexandria, I knew three people. Now, 33 years later, as I have become increasingly involved in the community, I have experienced what really makes Alexandria so special...the people, the variety of activities, and the organizations that help so many.

In 2022, it was wonderful to spend time around town again reconnecting with like-minded individuals and supporting philanthropic and cultural efforts throughout Alexandria. Between giving back, volunteering time in person, participating in events both large and small, and my rewarding real estate business, 2022 was a year to remember. I hope to see you around town more this year!

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