Leaders downplay Amazon HQ2 pause

Landrum and Wilson emphasize benefits already received from the state, Amazon, VT

By Amy Will

First in a series

In March, global technology titan Amazon declared a halt on phase II of its headquarters development in Arlington, the much-anticipated PenPlace. Now in the shadow of the company’s phase I Metropolitan Park site, groundbreaking on the second campus has been delayed until at least 2024.

This announcement came down as Amazon received to hand out pink slips to close to 27,000 employees. Layoffs were announced in two rounds, with the first being the largest in the company's history.

Two Alexandria leaders, Stephanie Landrum, president and CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson said the delay of PenPlace is just a blip that’s insignificant in the bigger picture.

Landrum said Amazon’s promise to invest in Northern Virginia and put 25,000 people to work remains solid.

"It’s not really a huge cause for alarm, it’s actually very reasonable and relatable behavior," Landrum explained.

Is business booming?

New BID initiative causes ripples down King Street

By Brianne McConnell

First in a series

For the second time in six years, a business improvement district is being considered in Old Town.

Many of the same players have staked out familiar-sounding positions, though there are also new voices. Some are arguing that the additional tax on business owners that a BID would impose would provide funds to better market King Street, while others contend that small businesses on upper King Street are being asked to subsidize larger, wealthier establishments near the waterfront.

Both positions seem to have significant support, and it’s unclear whether BID supporters will be able to generate the required 60% support of businesses within the proposed boundaries by the May 31 deadline.

How we got here

This is not the first effort of its kind, as prior efforts to establish an Old Town BID failed in 2005 and 2017. When the most recent BID initiative came before City Council

INSIDE

Garden Tour

Check out the annual Historic Garden Tour.

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Homes

Fixes for fresh flowers in your home.

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Pets

Learn what questions to ask before you adopt.

Page 32

City Creatives

Read about local authors, actors, dancers and more.

Page 13
HUNTER MEWS | 119 WOLFE STREET | $4,700,000

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. 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—this home awaits you as you pass through its gates. Upon entering the home you will be welcomed by the entry foyer, the living room radiates from the natural light that shines through a full bank of windows across the room. The gourmet kitchen has been renovated with brand-new high end appliances, quartz counters & center island. The light-filled breakfast/family room has a 20ft 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 & luxury primary bathroom. The upper level also includes four additional bedrooms that have been extensively renovated. A well appointed roof deck is accessible from 2 rooms and overlooks the private gardens. Finished lower level, family room, 6 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, 3 fireplaces, ELEVATOR and attached garage! **So come in, stay awhile, and fall in love as this gracious piece of charm, elegance and history welcomes you home.**

5901 RESERVOIR HEIGHTS | $999,000

Beautiful home in THE PALISADES! Three finished levels, 2-car garage, 4 large bedrooms, 3.5 renovated baths, 2 fireplaces, office and finished lower level with access to the yard. Large deck and beautiful lawn and extensive plantings. Many updates throughout.

2500 KING STREET | $2,200,000

Stunning colonial in GW Park! Another beautiful renovation by Bluestone Builders. The home has 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, living room with fireplace and finished lower level with separate entrance. Two expansive porches, backyard and off-street parking.

Christine Garner (703) 587-4855

It’s not just my business, it’s my neighborhood.

For additional information & photos, go to: www.ChristineGarner.com
Delivery driver robbed at gunpoint

According to an Alexandria Police Department notification, a delivery driver was robbed at gunpoint at approximately 10:50 p.m. around the 4200 block of Duke St. on March 31. No injuries were reported. The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information should call the APD at 703-746-4444. -lgolden@alextimes.com

Robbery and shots fired

On April 3, the Alexandria Police Department released two Twitter notifications regarding a commercial robbery and a report of shots fired. Per an update to the APD’s feed at 11:52 a.m., there was a commercial robbery in the 400 block of John Carlyle St. At 9:42 p.m., the APD updated their Twitter feed with a report of a response to a call for shots fired near the intersections of Ascot Court and Sanger Avenue. No injuries were reported in connection with these incidents which do not appear to be related. Requests to the APD from the Times for updates were not answered at the time of publication. Any individuals with information should contact the APD at 703-746-4444. -lgolden@alextimes.com

School zone speed cameras

On March 28, the city announced plans to install speed cameras near the following school zones: Francis Hammond Middle School, John Adams Elementary School, Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School and George Washington Middle School. The locations for installation of cameras were based on data-collection. Factors such as crash history, traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and age and number of students were taken into consideration. Cameras are slated to be installed this spring and will be active through the 2023/2024 school year.

-kgolden@alextimes.com

39th PNC Parkway Classic returns

On April 23, runners from near and far will participate in the 39th PNC Parkway Classic. Local retailer Pacers Running will sponsor the event. Individuals are invited to take place in a 5K, 10-mile race and a 600-meter dash for kids. Registration is required and a fee applies. Learn more at parkwayclassic.com

-lgolden@alextimes.com

Curbside compost open for registration

A new curbside food waste composting collection pilot program is now open for registration. Residents who receive city trash and recycling services are welcome to register. Collections are expected to start this spring. Residents will place items such as fruit and vegetable scraps, meat and bones in a dedicated bin for food waste collection instead of putting food waste in the trash. The city will subsidize the cost of supplies and collection for the first six months. More information is available at andriava.gov/waste/project/curbside-food-waste-composting-pilot

-lgolden@alextimes.com
Noche de Ciencias will take place on April 12.

**Obituary**

David Lee Fannon

David Lee Fannon, Sr. of Amissville, Virginia passed away peacefully on March 9th, 2023 at the age of 87. David was born in Alexandria, Virginia in 1935 and spent his formative years there. He attended Georgetown Preparatory School and graduated from the University of Virginia.

In 1965, David moved to Rappahannock County. He became an avid runner, bird hunter, and fly fisherman. He enjoyed coaching his sons’ baseball teams and traveling the world with his loving wife of 50 years. David, with his brother Chester W. “Billy” Fannon, Jr. and his cousin Thomas J. “TJ” Fannon, founded a successful commercial fuel delivery business, Fannon Petroleum Services, in Alexandria. David was a savvy and well-respected businessman; he was well loved by those who worked with and for him. A true outdoorsman, his passions were traveling, haggling, and collecting all types of folk art. He could not walk away from 2 things - a good deal and a heated political discussion.

David was predeceased by his loving wife Elizabeth “Dutchy” Fannon, his parents Chester and Hazel Fannon, his sister Rosilyn “Rosie” Rothrock and his brother Chester “Billy” Fannon. He is survived by his sons David L. “Gibby” Fannon, Jr. (Lisa Venable) of Flint Hill and John C. Fannon (Heather Fannon) of Haymarket, his grandchildren, Kaylee Venable, Ethan Fannon, Garrett Fannon and his great grandson, Ridge Pawlek.

A time of visitation will be held Saturday, April 29th, 2023, from 2pm to 5pm at Laurel Hill Farm, 641 Laurel Mills Road, Castleton, Virginia 22716. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in David’s memory to the Amissville Volunteer Fire and Rescue, 14711 Lee Highway, Amissville, Virginia 20106.

**Name for development announced**

On March 27, Housing Alexandria announced the names and brand identities for their new affordable, mixed-use development in Arlandria-Chirilagua. According to a news release, the chosen names are Sansé (san-say) and Naja (na-jah or na-ha), which come from Nahuatl (na-watl), a language indigenous to Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras with millions of speakers today. The brand identity was developed by Moya Design Partners in consultation with residents of Arlandria-Chirilagua.

“We are very excited about the brand identity created for this community,” Jonathan Frederick, president and CEO of Housing Alexandria, said in the release. Housing Alexandria plans to break ground on the development this summer.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

**Earth Day celebrations continue**

Numerous opportunities for residents to participate in river and stream cleanups will be part of an effort to positively impact the environment throughout the month of April. Artwork created by Alexandria City Public School students is on display at city hall. Visit the Office of Climate Action on April 50 to see electric vehicles in the city. Plant trees. Learn to ride a bike. Make a change. Details on this and more available at alexandria va.gov/EarthDay

-lgolden@alextimes.com
Days of Remembrance

On April 18, the City of Alexandria will observe the Days of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust. The annual ceremony hosted by the city will begin at noon in Market Square. This is the 34th year of the week-long commemoration of the national Days of Remembrance. Guest speaker Robbie Schaefer, the son of a Holocaust survivor, and guitarist for the indie folk band Eddie from Ohio, will be in attendance along with the mayor and members of City Council. The event is free and open to the public.
-lgolden@alextimes.com

New food hub for ALIVE!

On April 12, ALIVE! a nonprofit organization that feeds thousands of individuals in Alexandria, will open its second food hub, according to a news release. Located at 2601 Mt. Vernon Ave., this new location will offer residents food, personal items, cleaning supplies and school supplies. All are welcome to attend the ribbon cutting. More information can be found at alive-inc.org
-lgolden@alextimes.com

Yellow Line set to reopen on May 7

On Tuesday, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority announced a scheduled reopening of the Yellow Line via a news release. Following eight months of construction, commuters in Alexandria will once again be able to use the Yellow Line via a news release. The renovation and rehabilitation work addressed critical structural and safety issues with the line. More information can be found at wmata.com/about/news/Metro-announces-Yellow-Line-reopening-date.cfm
-lgolden@alextimes.com

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2 To open an M&T Select Time Deposit (CD), customer must have a MyChoice Premium Checking, M&T Select, M&T Select With Interest, Power Checking or Advantage Checking account or open a MyChoice Premium Checking account.
3 The minimum deposit required to open the CD account is $1,000. The maximum deposit is $1,000,000 per account. After the CD is opened, the minimum balance to obtain the advertised annual percentage yield “APY” is $1.00. Advertised APY’s stated are accurate as of 3/20/2023 and these offers may change at any time. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. Fees could reduce earnings on the account. Offer not available for non-personal accounts. Advertised APYs cannot be combined with any other offer. Rates are subject to change without notice and vary by state and county. A CD (Certificate of Deposit) is sometimes called a Time Deposit.

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Landrum said post-pandemic times have left many employers wondering how much office space they really need.

“So really not surprising that Amazon would pause before diving in, building this huge second set of buildings,” she added.

The sprawling 2.1-million-square-foot complex Metropolitan Park is expected to open in June and will consist of two 22-story towers with both office and retail space. Much consideration has gone into the physical layout of the HQ2 buildings, which are expected to be eye-catching pieces of architecture.

The latest cuts in Amazon’s spending and workforce, however, have left many wondering if the agreement between Amazon and the state of Virginia – which convinced the tech behemoth to choose the Arlington site, just across the Alexandria city line – is sustainable.

“The state and Amazon entered a memorandum of understanding that explains what each party must deliver as part of the HQ2 deal. The majority of state dollars are being filtered into workforce, transit and housing,” Landrum said.

The Times reached out to Amazon regarding their long-term commitment to the area, including the pledge to create 25,000 jobs. The company re-emphasized its commitment to the region.

“Our second headquarters has always been a multi-year project, and we remain committed to Arlington, Virginia and the greater Capital Region,” Amazon Head of Real Estate John Schoettler said. “In fact, we are currently ahead of hiring at HQ2. This shift is not a result of, nor indicative of, recent role eliminations.”

Amazon’s investments to date in the region have been hefty.

Landrum said Amazon has “meaningfully contributed dollars and volunteer efforts” to a variety of Alexandria-based organizations. For example, ACT for Alexandria, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Campagna Center, Good Shepherd Housing and Volunteer Alexandria have received contributions.

Last year, the Bezos Day 1 Family Fund, created by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, presented a $2.5 million grant to Alexandria’s Carpenter’s Shel-
Landrum shared that the tech company also set up a Housing Equity Fund, with $51.4 million in low-rate loans for Park Vue Apartments and $2.3 million for Parc Square Apartments in Arlandria.

To fully understand Amazon’s reach across our area, it is important to start at the beginning – with the 2018 agreement that led to Arlington being chosen for HQ2, on land adjacent to the new Virginia Tech Innovation campus in Alexandria.

“Our strategy in winning Amazon was to be really upfront with our weaknesses,” Landrum explained. “And we identified kind of three major issues.”

She described being transparent about a need for better transportation, funding for affordable housing and a boost in jobs.

“We had a very low unemployment rate and so we wanted to be able to demonstrate that there was a pipeline of new talent that would be available to work at the headquarters,” Landrum said.

Wilson said that city leaders are constantly looking to bring new employers to Alexandria.

“We’re always going to seek investment in the city,” Wilson said.

But he cautions people not to place too much importance on HQ2.

“I did think it was a good win for the city, but I think people were making too much of a deal when it happened and too much of a deal now,” he said.

“I think it remains to be seen what their financial pullback will be. They’ve funded some very important projects in the city. If they pull back, that’s unfortunate,” Wilson added.

The first of five major transportation projects to come out of the state’s deal with Amazon is an additional entrance to the new Potomac Yard Metro, the 98th Metrorail station, which is under construction between the Reagan National Airport and Braddock Road stations.

A Southern entrance was part of the original plan for the station, well before HQ2 was a twinkle in anyone’s eye, but was eliminated for cost reasons. The removal of the Southern entrance from plans for the station was controversial, and a resident-filed Freedom of Information Act request showed that some city leaders were not forthcoming about what they knew regarding the removal of the entrance.

According to Landrum, the Southwest entrance is valued at approximately $50 million. The State of Virginia agreed to provide funding to restore that entrance to the Potomac Yard Metro. A second major development move is a Pentagon City transit expansion.

Officials hope five new transit stations and additional bus lanes will help to alleviate the increase in traffic. The other three state-funded projects include a Crystal City East Metro Entrance, improvements to Route 1 and a connector bridge from National Landing – formerly known as Crystal City – to Reagan National Airport.

While the HQ2 campus is located wholly in Arlington, the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, which is nearing completion, was Alexandria’s prize. Landrum explained that as a part of the HQ2 investment package, the state committed $250 million to Virginia Tech to build their campus in the city.

“The Virginia Tech Innovation Campus is a game changer,” Landrum said. “It will provide a tremendous amount of tech talent.”
Amazon's promise includes providing 25,000 jobs in Northern Virginia.

**AMAZON**

On behalf of all of the waiting pets at Alexandria’s shelter, Brownie would like to wish you well this Easter and Passover. Aged 3, Brownie is just one of many pets awaiting new homes this springtime. If you have interest in learning more about them, please tour the AWLA site or call for information.

**Happy Holidays!**
AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt-By-Appointment
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“Because everyone needs a home.”
in June 2017, several council members said that public feedback was running about three-to-one in opposition.

Because of that pushback, Council approved a memorandum directing then-City Manager Mark Jinks to bring a revamped BID proposal forward in the fall with revised boundaries – the 2017 proposal included several residential streets in addition to King Street – along with a specific list of services and a framework budget.

But in September 2017, Jinks announced that the effort was being abandoned, saying BID initiatives need to be business-led rather than government-initiated and that the BID exploratory committee members didn’t have the time needed to develop a new proposal.

Jinks’ explanation was hotly refuted by exploratory committee member Victoria Vergason, who owns The Hour.

“The idea that our significant amount of time and work spent on the BID proposal should be turned against us is unfathomable and, quite frankly, disgusting,” Vergason said in 2017. “Let the city manager and City Council take the blame for their own failures to act.”

The current BID effort differs from the 2017 version in one important respect: It consists of only King Street rather than several adjacent mostly residential streets north and south of Old Town’s main road.

The newest proposal calls for creating a 13-to-15-member board made up of business owners and property owners within the defined district. One to two city appointees would also join the organization.

Two additional non-voting members appointed by Visit Alexandria and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership plus two members representing residents within or near the district would round out the governing body.

Paid staff would also be part of the plan to create direct liaisons for the business community and city officials.

Let the city manager and City Council take the blame for their own failures to act.”

– Victoria Vergason, owner of The Hour
According to a petition for the OTBISDI, currently a parcel of land with a taxable value of $700,000 receives a tax bill of $7,770 in annual property taxes. Under the increase proposed in the new BID, that tax bill would rise to $8,470. This would be an increase of $700, or 9%.

Some properties, such as churches or residential buildings used strictly for housing, would be exempt.

The case for a BID

Old Town business owner Amy Rutherford said improved marketing is why she supports the current BID initiative. “We felt like there was a huge hole where people were not marketing businesses regionally ... the new mission is to do more of that,” Rutherford said.

Rutherford is a board member for the Old Town Business Improvement Service District Initiative. She opened Red Barn Mercantile in 2007 and her second store, Penny Post, launched in 2017. Both businesses are located on upper King Street.

Rutherford and her fellow board members are spearheading the latest push to establish a business improvement district in Old Town.

Supporters of the initiative say the revenue generated by the tax increase would be used for marketing, branding, event programming and overall improvements to the business environment.

"After having lived through a pandemic and having our businesses close ... like never before had it been more apparent to me that we need an organization like this," Rutherford added. “This is small business owners running this organization. So, it is for us and by us.”

The case against a BID

Six years ago, business owners raised concerns that the OTBISDI currently manages partnerships with more than 20 events such as the Cookie Crawl and the Walkable Warehouse Sale.

Backers of the OTBISDI say those events will stay and they will work to create four signature events a year like a Christmas market or a spring flower festival. Their goal is to draw more people to these events and ultimately into the doors of businesses.

According to Rutherford, many surrounding areas have already established business improvement districts and she fears Old Town will start to lose out on customers if it does not follow suit. “We can’t fall behind and I’m afraid that we will if we don’t make this happen,” Rutherford said.

AMY RUTHERFORD

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The case against a BID

Six years ago, business owners raised concerns that
a BID would create additional bureaucracy and cost. Those same arguments are being raised again today.

Wayne Fisher, owner of Wayne Fisher’s American Design, opposed the effort in 2017 and continues to oppose it now.

“They have failed to convince me I would get anything out of this,” Fisher said. He doesn’t see how his niche business of four decades, which is only open six days a month, would reap any benefits from paying an additional $1,200 in taxes.

“I’m the littlest of the little guys. I deal in a specific commodity to a specific client. They aren’t going to buy from me three times a day, but they will eat and drink three times a day,” Fisher said.

Opponents argue that a strategic marketing plan or proposal from the OTBISDI is not going to add more than what other groups already do to run large events in the city.

According to longtime resident Boyd Walker, the increase in taxes that would come with a BID does not hold water.

“To a large extent they’re not proposing doing anything more than what they already do,” Walker said.

Walker contends that those in favor of the new BID had been working behind the scenes for six months to develop a proposal, but the first public meeting about the plan was announced with only two days’ notice.

“Basically the only notice people got was an article in ALXnow on Feb. 13 [that] announced they were having public meetings – the first one on Feb. 15, the day after Valentine’s Day,” Walker said. “I spent a couple of hours on Valentine’s Day going down and talking to people to see if they knew about it and talk about the meetings.”

Walker said an anti-BID website that was developed in 2017 by Old Town resident and business owner Robert Ray called “bidno.org” has been updated for the new battle.

Walker said he is meeting with members of City Council, five of whom are new to Council since the 2017 BID initiative, to explain why he and others oppose the new proposal. His message is:

“There were two days’ notice before the first meeting. It’s being thrust upon us. We don’t want it. We didn’t ask for it.”
The process

Last year the City of Alexandria put basic guidelines into place allowing businesses to create a petition to start a business improvement district.

According to those guidelines, the proposal needed signatures from 60% of the property owners within the district. Organizers say they have nearly two-thirds of the required signatures that are needed by the end of May.

"I look at the numbers and it’s daunting, but in my heart, I believe the people in Alexandria know they need it," Rutherford said.

According to Walker, the rules have been changed since the proposal was announced two months ago.

“They’ve changed the date, moved the date back, to move the goalposts down the field. To give themselves more time to get to the number they want to get to,” Walker said.

If supporters do get the required votes needed by the end of May, the proposal will head to City Council for consideration this summer.

Opponents say the proposal would cause more harm than good.

“My main concern is that Alexandria will lose some of its character and more of its small businesses if we tax them more," Walker added.

Rutherford said she knows there is an added cost, but she is also concerned there will ultimately be a larger cost for all the businesses in Old Town if nothing changes.

"I love Alexandria and I see its potential," Rutherford said.

-bmcconnell@alextimes.com

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St. Paul's Episcopal Church
228 South Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

We warmly welcome you to worship this Holy Week and Easter. A schedule of all services can be found on our website stpaulsalexandria.com.

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<th>GOOD FRIDAY</th>
<th>APRIL 7, 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Joint Service with Christ Church Held at St. Paul's</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Family Stations of the Cross</td>
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<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Traditional Stations of the Cross</td>
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<th>EASTER VIGIL</th>
<th>APRIL 8, 2023</th>
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<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>The Great Vigil of Easter</td>
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<th>EASTER SUNDAY</th>
<th>APRIL 9, 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Sunrise Service at St. Paul's Cemetery</td>
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<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Traditional Easter Eucharist</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Festival Eucharist with Brass and Children's Sermon</td>
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<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Festival Eucharist with Brass</td>
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Crooked Beat owner overcomes industry trends, and rats, to keep selling vinyl
BY ANDREW DUNBAR

Bill Daly, unsurprisingly, is a lifelong lover of music. Daly’s record collection and knowledge of bands were turning heads long before he opened Crooked Beat Records, which sells old and new vinyl in Alexandria.

“One night I got a call from a friend of mine who used to date one of my housemates. When he’d come over to see her, he’d look at my album collection and was always mystified. He wanted me to come work with him at a record store near North Carolina State and next thing I know I was there seven years,” Daly said.

Daly decided to take the leap into entrepreneurship with his own store. In 1997, the first Crooked Beat Records opened its doors in Raleigh. The Raleigh location became difficult to keep afloat due to dwindling foot traffic in the early 2000s. Though Daly and his partner had fewer in-store customers than desired, records were still being shipped out every day. Most of these records were going to the Washington, D.C. area. A move to a new DMV location started to make sense.

Upon finding a seemingly good spot in D.C.’s Adams Morgan neighborhood, Daly moved the store to 18th street in 2004. Although parking was an issue, the store went on to do very well – until the rats came. Exacerbated by the presence of a meat market upstairs, the rat infestation became so intense that Daly began developing respiratory problems from breathing in rat antigens in the air. He knew it was time for another move.

Their next – and current – location at 800 N. Fairfax St. in North Old Town has something that the Adams Morgan location didn’t: minimal mice and ample parking. Many loyal customers of Crooked Beat drive hours and travel many miles to find the store that sells vinyl records.

“I don’t watch TV anymore,” a frequent customer once told Daly. “I come home from work. I turn on the turntable. I listen to records sometimes for six hours a night. I just sit in the chair and hold the


When you walk into Crooked Beat, you are greeted by the vibrant colors of all the records. Posters adorn the walls and shelves. It looks and feels like an art exhibit. It is. A permanent fixture is dedicated to local artists. The walls are a mix of famous artists and recent acts with a cult following.

“Fans will come in and see the posters and say ‘Okay, we know they’ll have Joy Division. We know they’ll have Sonic Youth,’” Daly said.

But they also have Bob Dylan and The Beatles. The ability to cater to mainstream listeners as well as dedicated fans looking for rare records is a key component to Crooked Beat’s success.

Many listeners were put off by CDs upon their arrival. In the late 80s, jazz legend Miles Davis said that he thought they sounded “tinny.” Davis did all he could to ensure his records would be sold on vinyl even after his death.

Many audiophiles would say that despite the optimization of audio quality by manufacturers, the sound of CDs just doesn’t hold the same warmth as a record. And some feel the small plastic packaging of CDs has less soul.

According to Daly, in the five years Crooked Beat spent in Raleigh, vinyl made up 33% of the store’s sales every year. After the store moved to D.C., sales of vinyl increased to about 40%. In 2007 vinyl outsold CDs for the first time. In 2008, vinyl sales would make up 99% of the store’s business.

This remarkable increase shows the loyalty of vinyl collectors. The sales numbers at Crooked Beat proved that records are not a fad, but a form of buying and listening to music that will never truly go away.

Not only does the store serve fans, it also helps support artists. D.C. bands Fugazi and El Quatro have found many new local listeners and a steady stream of record sales through Crooked Beat.

Despite its success in Old Town, Crooked Beat Records is about to move to its fourth location – though not by choice. The building on North Fairfax Street is scheduled to be torn down sometime later this year. Every business housed in that building is being forced to relocate and Crooked Beat is no exception.

Daly admitted he would prefer the store at its current location if given the choice, as some of the store’s best years have been since he moved to Old Town, but he’s also excited about his store’s new home at 2417 Mt. Vernon Ave, in Del Ray. Daly said the limited foot traffic in North Old Town has always been a drawback, whereas that situation should be remedied by relocating to Mt. Vernon Avenue.

On April 22, record stores around the globe will welcome fans for Record Store Day. Fans are expected to flock to brick and mortar buildings for exclusive releases like El Quatro’s new album “Displacement” in a limited vinyl form.

As a final goodbye, Daly and his team have chosen to spend Record Store Day at their current space.

Daly continues to provide an invaluable service in an ever-increasing digital age. For the past 30 years, major labels have been intent on minimizing vinyl releases, first touting CDs as superior, then promoting the convenience of iPods and other streaming devices.

But a significant swath of music lovers have never left the vinyl medium. The large, and growing, community of vinyl collectors depend on owners like Daly and stores like Crooked Beat to keep records alive.

–awdunbar23@gmail.com
Celebrating 20 years of supporting Alexandria and Northern Virginia home buyers & sellers to achieve their real estate goals.
Local author tells how Vietnam War wives helped change POW/MIA policy

BY KERRY BOYD ANDERSON

Local Alexandria author Taylor Baldwin Kiland has a forthcoming book featuring a group of women who changed history. “Unwavering: The Wives Who Fought to Ensure No Man Is Left Behind” tells the story of women who took matters into their own hands, demanding the return of husbands imprisoned or missing in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. The book was co-written with Judy Silverstein Gray.

March 29, 1973 is recognized as the date of the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops and the homecoming of known prisoners from the Vietnam War. On the 50th anniversary of the return of nearly 600 POWs, the event is remembered as a high-profile and emotional event for the country, as well as for the families.

“These men were celebrated as heroes,” Kiland said. “The homecoming and release of the POWs was the only victory left from the Vietnam War.”

Raised in a Navy family, Kiland also served in the Navy for five years. As a child, she lived in the large Navy community of Coronado, California, and remembers the yellow ribbons on trees, the POW/MIA bracelets and other symbols designed to keep the imprisoned and missing in the forefront of the nation’s consciousness. Growing up, Kiland knew the children of POWs and MIAs, including some whose mothers are featured in the book. Those relationships were a major inspiration for “Unwavering” and Kiland’s two previous books on Vietnam War POWs.

“This book has been a true labor of love,” Kiland said.

The women’s “homefront battle” required that they break traditional conventions about women’s roles in society – and especially the behavior expected of military wives. These military wives had limited agency. For example, they faced restrictions such as an inability to open a bank account without a husband’s or father’s approval.

The military bureaucracy initially told the families of those lost or imprisoned in Southeast Asia to not publicly discuss their missing loved ones. The government was concerned that the North Vietnamese could use any information for propaganda. There was a broader sense that the women should let the diplomatic professionals handle the situation.

For a while, the women followed
these rules. But as time went on and more men disappeared, “the women were just sick of it,” Kiland said. The women became disillusioned with the government’s efforts, feeling that their plight was not a priority.

“Unwaver ing” tells the story of women who started a grassroots movement to pressure the government into publicly talking about the manipulation, starvation, torture and mistreatment of POWs. The women in Kiland’s book began to speak publicly and to organize effective lobbying campaigns. They contacted politicians and developed recognizable symbols such as the MIA flag. Through their work with the media, these women were able to uncover the fate of many MIAs and to ensure the release of prisoners.

Some of the women featured in the book saw their efforts lead to the return of their loved ones. Others tragically learned that their husbands had died, but at least they found closure. For some, though, years were spent before remains were found. Some never learned what happened to the men they loved.

Their personal journeys did not end with the war. The women and their children – and the men who returned home – moved on in different ways. Some left activism behind, while others continued.

Regardless of the personal outcomes of their stories, their efforts transformed how the United States approaches the principle of “no one left behind.” Kiland notes when the United States withdrew from Afghanistan after 20 years of war, no American soldier was left behind.

“For the first time in the nation’s history, a major conflict was ending without the U.S. military leaving any troops behind: no one missing in action behind enemy lines, and no nameless, unidentified bones to be uncovered.”

Hunter Ellis and children, Bourne (6) and Parish (8) at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

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Today, the United States military goes to extreme lengths to rescue any soldier who is captured – examples include Scott O’Grady in the Balkans, Jessica Lynch in Iraq and Bowe Bergdahl in Afghanistan – and to find and identify the remains of soldiers lost in previous wars.

Kiland argued that the women featured in “Unwavering” made a huge contribution to that policy.

“I can trace a direct thread back to the work that the women started,” Kiland said.

Two of those women had close ties to Alexandria. Carol McCain, who was married to John McCain during his imprisonment, lived in Alexandria with her children for some time after the war. Candy Parish (later Ellis) was married to pilot Chuck Parish, who was listed as MIA after his plane crashed. She and her son, Hunter, lived in Alexandria from 1969 to 1971, and again after the war in the 1980s.

Kiland hopes that the book will highlight what women can accomplish.

“A few women can change history,” she said.

Kiland noted that the women had to fight to make their voices heard. At a time when controversy about the war, the civil rights movement, the sexual and cultural revolution and political scandals easily grabbed headlines, they pushed for change.

In an era with no internet or social media, the women of “Unwavering” relied on telegrams, letters, phones and meetings. They helped bring home hundreds of Americans.

“They made sure that America never, ever forgets its missing,” Kiland said.

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Local Motion Project merges dancing and teaching to affect social change  

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

At a recent Local Motion Project dance rehearsal, nine women clad in earth-toned flowy dresses leapt, darted and splayed across the studio floor. Ranging in ages from mid-20s to early 60s, the group moved with a cohesive dynamism as dance instructor Sara Lavan watched intensely. The energy was unified and spear like.

The Alexandria-based collective was preparing the final number, Silo(ed) Stories, for an upcoming show at the GALA Hispanic Theatre in Washington, D.C. The performance has been a long time coming, Lavan said.

Silo(ed) Stories encapsulates the complexity that comes with womanhood, touching on sensitive subjects like abortion and sexual liberation. The piece explores what might happen when women come together and support one another in sharing their stories.

“[It’s] the idea of women coming together because we're all so siloed and we are a lot of times pitted against each other because of things in society like thinness, fatness, the way you look, ageism, sexism,” Lavan said. “... There’s a reason people are keeping us away – because we’re really powerful people.”

The piece’s objective, along with LMP’s as a whole, is to create movement experiences that engender social change and personal growth. For approximately seven years, Lavan – a long-time dancer, teacher and current executive director of LMP – has used the organization as

PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON  
An artist in rehearsal.
a vehicle for expression and human connection.

Although Lavan has been dancing for most of her life, there was a time where she thought she wouldn’t continue the craft. A Newtown, Connecticut native, Lavan began dancing at a local ballet school, which she said fostered an environment of creativity and connection.

She enjoyed dance, but decided against pursuing it upon entering college at New York University and majoring in English. After signing up for recreational dance classes as a way to find community, Lavan rediscovered her love for the art form and ultimately minored in dance.

Lavan continued her dance training at Peridance Center, where she met an instructor and National Dance Education Organization member named Deborah Damast, who introduced her to the beauty of teaching.

“[The NDEO goes] beyond just the skill building. It’s how do you observe dance, how do you make dance, learning histories of dance. It is a very encompassing approach to teaching dance,” Lavan said.

While in New York, Lavan tried her hand at teaching to supplement her income. She quickly realized that doing so was incredibly fulfilling in more ways than one.

“It filled my desire for learning, history, philosophy, writing, creating, expanding,” she recalled.

When Lavan relocated to Alexandria in 2012, she eventually opened her own studio, Local Motion Studio. That studio became a nonprofit dance organization called Local Motion Project when it received a 501(c)(3) status in 2016.

Though LMP was initially created for youth, it grew to include all ages. According to Lavan, the aim of LMP is to increase accessibility and the understanding of dance by expanding the definition of what it means.

“We’re trying to bring diverse experiences to the community, and then engage people in any way that they want to be engaged, whether it’s through participation in classes, watching performances, educational ways, maybe watching a film that we’re showing or reading our newsletter,” Lavan said. “We’re increasingly working towards a more inclusive and accessible dance field. I feel like we’re a part of that – removing the silos in the dance field to make a more inclusive space, and that inclusivity means a lot of things.”

Part of what that means to Lavan is including artists and educators as a whole, rather than separating the two into different categories. According to Lavan, dance culture tends to divide educators and performers, in the process shielding aspiringancers from the reality that making a living as a dancer is not always possible.

“We emphasize teaching our students more than just performing, because if they don’t learn any other skills then they may try to be a dancer and may go into the world and audition, and they may or may not get a company, but no one is teaching them what to do if that doesn’t happen,” Lavan said.

Lavan wants students to realize that there is a world where they can acquire both performance and teaching skills, which might ultimately make the dream of a career in the arts more sustainable. She also hopes that dancers view the art of teaching as a valuable skill, rather than a fallback.

Instructors at LMP are able to teach adults and youth through residencies at recreation centers, dance integration programs and a creative aging program with Encore University. The studio also has a multi-generational dance company that offers a space for artists to perform, choreograph and create.

Additionally, through LMP, Lavan aims to promote equity through exploring current events and societal themes.

“[We’re] realizing how dance is this amazing tool and vehicle where you can address sociological, psychological, physical, mental [themes]. There are just so many issues
and social issues you can address through dance that I think people don’t always understand outside of just the skill building,” Lavan said.

One of the ways Lavan achieves this goal is by diversifying what the studio shows, who it shows and what kinds of themes are discussed. For example, when LMP is in spaces that have a more racially or ethnically diverse population, staff undergo culturally responsive, antiracist and allyship training.

LMP also values equitable pay with teaching artists and performing artists, an emphasis that stems from Lavan’s own life beliefs and understanding of “how much harm is done in the dance world.”

That harm is experienced by different people in different ways, Lavan said, and it’s imperative to listen to those who have experienced it in order to mitigate future harm. LMP strives to remain curious and open to evolving.

“Anytime you are continuing to listen to people who have experiences that are not your own, you’re expanding your worldview and you’re expanding the way you want to teach, and to me that is what a true educator is,” Lavan said. “When you’re an educator hopefully you’re always expanding and always wanting to be inclusive and always wanting to bring everyone into what you’re passionate about, and meeting them where they are so they feel welcome when they get there,” she added.

For Lavan, the future of LMP is wide open. She’s the first to admit that Alexandria isn’t exactly a hotspot for dance. Because not many dancers or educators live in the city, performance spaces are few and far between. However, the organization is still relatively new and change is happening, albeit gradually.

As of late, she’s currently exploring the possibility of moving to a larger space to accommodate the growing need. She hopes to continue to spread awareness about the benefits that dance — all facets of it — can provide.

“[Dancing and teaching] work together, in conjunction, because the more people you teach, then the more people you meet, then the more perspectives you get, then the more training you get [on] how to reach different people,” Lavan said. “Hopefully your artistry expands, and when your artistry expands you can bring that information back to your students. It’s this amazing cyclical inspiration that doesn’t have to separate.”

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Alexandria actress discusses her life and work on and off the stage

BY KIM JACKSON

Pat Nicklin is passionate about her first love – performing on a stage. Her month-long run as the lead in the Little Theater of Alexandria’s “Lettice and Lovage” ended on March 18. Now Nicklin is thinking about the stages of her life.

“I kind of call this my third act,” Nicklin said. “You’ve got the beginning first, which is college, and second, there is career and the last third is kind of, ‘Okay, what am I doing now?’ And I’m entering that last third.”

Her performance in “Lettice and Lovage” is part of what Nicklin has called her return to the stage, which started about six years ago. The Richmond, Virginia native also runs a consulting firm specializing in nonprofit management and has a long history of achievement in that sector.

“I’ve done a little bit of commercials and other things. But the theater is the place where I’m able to love that passion. You know, whether it’s professional or community theater, whatever it is, it’s just a great opportunity.”

“Lettice and Lovage” was written by Peter Shaffer for the famous Dame Maggie Smith, who first played the part of main character Lettice Douffet. Nicklin is following in Smith’s footsteps, and she says playing the part of an eccentric, flamboyant British woman was one the hardest things she has ever done.

“It was the most difficult thing. But you know, we had a British dialect coach, Hilary Adams, and she was fantastic. She’s American, but she was fantastic,” Nicklin said. And it wasn’t just a British accent she had to perfect – it was a high British dialect, involving vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Colin Davies and James Blacker, two other actors in the production, are British, which Nicklin says only added to the pressure to perfect her performance.

“So that upped our game,” Nicklin said. “It was very much, ‘Okay, you’re going to be acting against these guys.’” She and co-star Rachel Hubbard prepared for the challenge.

The two female characters begin the historical, satirical British comedy as ‘frenemies’ who become enemies and eventually become friends in the end.

“What I found in the play is it’s really about a woman realizing who she is. And pursuing
her passion in a very weird way,” Nicklin said. “It allows us to kind of examine at our age, right, who we are.”

Nicklin, the first person in her family to attend college, has always been driven and determined. She began participating in community theater in Richmond when she was 15, first appearing as “Mrs. Noah” in Benjamin Britten’s “Noyes Fludde” (“Noah’s Flood”).

She attended the University of Virginia, where she majored in English as an undergrad, then attended the Darden School of Business where she received her MBA. Along the way Nicklin discovered a love for a playwright by the name of Shakespeare.

“I thought, well, I’ll just, you know, be a doctor or a nurse or something and then in the middle of it, I fell in love with Shakespeare. There was a medieval Renaissance literature specialty, so that’s what I did,” she said.

Nicklin said her mother, who passed away in 2022, and her father were supportive of her career choices.

“When I think about my parents, you know, they were just so happy to give me what they didn’t have,” she said.

But being allowed to explore her passions also came with expectations.

“There’s a lot of pressure. I mean, when I got out and they were like, ‘Okay, what kind of job are you getting?’”

Nicklin’s entry into the nonprofit world came after she graduated from business school and was working for the consulting firm McKinsey and Company. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush and his White House Office of National Service staff asked McKinsey for help in creating the strategy to launch “The Points of Light Foundation.”

“I was the engagement manager on that McKinsey Team,” Nicklin said in an email. “I was then asked to join Points of Light Foundation – which by the way, is still going strong – as its PAT NICKLIN FROM | 24
Pat Nicklin
FROM | 25

first head of programs. Our focus and mission was to engage every American in volunteer service.”

Nicklin said she is proud and satisfied with work she has done on and off the stage. She served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the National Park Foundation, where she launched the Centennial Campaign to celebrate the National Park Service. Nicklin also worked with Billy Shore to establish the national “No Kid Hungry” campaign to end childhood hunger in the United States at the nonprofit Share our Strength, of which she was managing director.

“I would say it’s, you know, my most proud moment, and I definitely did it with a team, definitely did it under Billy’s leadership,” she said.

Nicklin and her husband Walter have lived in Old Town, where they raised their son Thomas, for about 20 years. Pat and Walter now split their time between Alexandria and their home in Pemaquid Point, Maine. One of the things Nicklin said she loves about performing at the Little Theatre of Alexandria is that her friends can easily come and watch.

“The community that it offers is just really, really fun,” Nicklin said.

The stage in Alexandria is a place where she finds comfort and joy, even though she says the feeling is short-lived. “It’s momentary. It’s an art that you’re just as good as your last performance. So, for me, it’s kind of like okay, this is the next audience, who is it? I’ve got to deliver, you know.”

With the curtain closed on her most recent performance, Nicklin is looking forward to the next act of living her dreams out on the stage.

-kimjacks@hotmail.com

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PHOTO/FRED LASH
Pat Nicklin (right) with Rachel Hubbard in ‘Lettice and Lovage’ at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.
APRIL 7

A TALE OF TWO STUDIOS Attend the opening reception. See the inspiring and diverse art of two local community organizations. Witness creative exchange through artist talks, workshops and tours. Featuring favorite works by Del Ray Artisans members and Art Enables resident artists.

Time: 7 to 9 p.m.
Location: 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Information: delrayartisans.org/exhibits#event=two-studios;instance=2023042900000?popup=1

APRIL 8

BUNNYFEST

Visit a rabbit habitat and view art at the annual BunnyFest. Sculpture, paintings and prints abound. Make buttons, create crafts, take part in screen printing and paper maché.

Time: Noon to 4 p.m.
Location: 105 N. Union St.
Information: torpedofactory.org/partners/scope

APRIL 13

CHERRY BLOSSOM CELEBRATION Live music, themed activities, scavenger hunt and more. Cherry blossom inspired art created by local artists adorn windows along the avenue. All are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring individually wrapped children’s snack and juice boxes for donation to the Boys & Girls Club.

Time: 6 p.m. to dusk
Location: 2311 Mt. Vernon Ave.

APRIL 16


Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: 200 Wolfe St.
Information: thelittletheatre.com

APRIL 22

MARY STUART AT LTA Opening night at the Little Theatre of Alexandria. “Mary Stuart” is a highly charged political drama about two mighty royals, Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth I. This show contains adult themes that may not be suitable for children. Tickets required.

Time: 4:30 p.m.
Location: 917 Princess St.
Information: eventbrite.com/e/benefit-concert-for-ukraine-and-mozarts-clarinet-quintet-tickets-536367849677?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

APRIL 30

UKRAINE BENEFIT CONCERT Principal musicians from the National Symphony will perform selections from Ukrainian composers to raise money for Ukraine. A donation of $20 or more gains invitation to a reception and meet and greet with the artists.

Time: 8 p.m.
Location: 2311 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Information: www.artsonthehorizon.org/10th-anniversary-celebration.html

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Times Living

Historic Garden Week turns 90

Five Old Town homes and gardens will be open for tours
BY RUTH GATES BRIGHTBILL

On April 15, five Old Town private homes and gardens will open to visitors for the annual Historic Garden Tour. This one-day-only event is part of the 90th annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia during which visitors are able to tour remarkable historic homes and gardens in Old Town.

The properties on tour were specially selected for their historic restorations and architectural design. Beautiful floral arrangements will adorn rooms throughout each home. Painstaking attention to detail is evident in the displays created by the members of the Garden Club of Alexandria and Hunting Creek Garden Club, which host the annual event. Club members serve as docents in the homes, offering insights and history on the homes and gardens.

“We are excited to welcome visitors to the tour, and to share this unique glimpse into rarely seen parts of Old Town,” tour Co-Chair Katherine Murphy said. Murphy and Co-Chair Barbara Warder have organized the event with the help of homeowners and garden club volunteers during the past year.

“We are particularly grateful to the generous homeowners who are opening their homes for the tour – some for the first time ever,” Warder said. “The gorgeous homes and gardens on this year’s tour have been lovingly restored and updated and are sure to delight visitors.”

Among the homes on tour is the Dr. William Brown House, which George Washington frequently visited. The home integrates original features from Brown’s era, including a 1790 hand-hewn stone sink and bake oven, with updated interiors and exteriors. Magnificent examples of Federal and Greek Revival architecture and neighboring frame homes provide a sense of day-to-day life in 18th century Alexandria.

“The beautiful gardens and floral arrangements are sure to inspire on tour day. Visiting these homes and exploring Old Town is the perfect way to spend a Saturday in April,” Murphy promised.

The writer is a member of the Garden Club of Alexandria.

The Old Town tour will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 15. Tickets are $55 each and are available at www.vagardenweek.org in advance or at the Alexandria Visitor’s Center at 221 King St. on tour day. Tour tickets also provide access to the public gardens.
of Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House, River Farm, Gunston Hall, Mount Vernon and Green Spring Gardens on the day of the tour. At the first house you chose to visit with proof of purchase, you will receive a wristband which will serve as your ticket for the tour. The following homes on this year’s tour are as follows:

513 South Lee St.
519 South Lee St.
210 Wilkes St.
212 S. Fairfax St.
414 Duke St.

Tour proceeds fund the restoration and preservation of historic public gardens and landscapes in Virginia, as well as two research fellowships in landscape architecture. The tour is made possible in part by the generous support of McEnearney Associates and George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

Beautiful gardens and indoor arrangements will be on display.

HOME OF THE WEEK

Luxury and Style in the SE Quad

This stunning 5-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom detached townhome in the southeast quadrant of Old Town boasts 3,900 square feet of living space and off-street parking. A luxurious and spacious retreat, the attention to detail and designer finishes are immediately apparent upon entering the home.

Thoughtfully chosen fixtures and hardware create an inviting atmosphere. The chef’s kitchen is a standout feature. A Wolf range, professional hood, freezer drawers, Subzero refrigerator, steam oven and plenty of counter space will awe potential homeowners.

An oversized island with space for a breakfast table make the kitchen the perfect space for grab and go meals. The kitchen seamlessly flows into the grand family room. Exposed beams, natural light and a gas fireplace feature beautifully in the space. Two sets of French doors open into a new flagstone patio which creates an entertaining flow.

Upstairs, you’ll find five spacious bedrooms. Each bedroom offers its own unique features and ample natural light. The bathrooms are also beautifully appointed with high-end finishes and modern fixtures.

Outside, a private wrought iron side gate leads through an alley to the flagstone back patio and new storage shed. A keyless entry door allows for easy access directly into the kitchen which makes it simple to bring in groceries and other items.

Conveniently located near schools, grocery stores and the Mt. Vernon Trail, this property offers easy access to everything you need. If you appreciate luxury and style and want to live in one of Alexandria’s most charming and historic neighborhoods, don’t miss your chance to make this exquisite townhome your new home.

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613 S. Royal St.,
Alexandria, 22314

Neighborhood:
Old Town

Price: $2,699,000
Square feet: 3,900
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 4.5
Year built: 1985

Contact:
Kristen Jones
kristen@kristenjones.com
703-952-0441
Fixes for fresh flowers

Easy tips to keep your floral arrangements looking their best
By Family Features

The beauty of having a garden is the blooming of one plant or another throughout most of the year. While this provides lovely views from your windows, it can also be nice to bring that beauty indoors.

Don’t be afraid to snip off a few blossoms each week. Many plants thrive after trimming and will reward you with even more flowers. Once you’ve gathered a bouquet from your garden, consider these tips to help keep flowers fresh:

• Bacteria can quickly destroy fresh flowers. It's important to use a clean vase. Any floral foam or wires used in your arrangement must also be washed in warm, soapy water.
• Remove any lower leaves that may touch the water inside the vase.
• Carefully trim each flower stem at a 90-degree angle. It may be helpful to cut flowers while they are underwater to keep moisture flowing into the stems.
• Keep your arrangement out of direct sunlight. The darker and cooler the room, the longer your blossoms will bloom.
• Add a crushed aspirin, bleach, vinegar, sugar or penny to the vase. This age-old trick keeps bacteria at bay. You can find flower food at most florists or grocery stores. Help flowers thrive by adding a packet to the water.

Flowers are living things that require water, food and care after they are cut. Every two to three days, be sure to change the water, replenish the flower food and recut the stems for additional days of glorious color.

Use a clean vase to avoid bacteria build-up.

Keep your flower arrangements out of sunlight to preserve your blossoms longer.
Adopting a Pet?

Questions to ask and steps to take before adopting
BY ERIN SHACKELFORD

Adopting a pet can enrich our lives in many ways. They provide companionship, increase opportunities for exercise and socialization and can improve our health.

Studies have shown that the bond between people and their pets is linked to several positive health benefits including decreased blood pressure, lessening symptoms of PTSD and curbing feelings of loneliness. But having a pet comes with personal and financial responsibilities.

Here are some questions to consider before deciding to adopt a pet:

What kind of pet fits you best?
Whether it’s a dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig or bird, all pets require daily care. Cleaning up after, getting exercise for and feeding your pet depends on the breed you chose. Certain breeds demand more attention and time. It’s important to also consider the expected lifespans of different kinds of pets.

Can you afford a pet?
Besides basic veterinary care, food, cleaning and care supplies, there are additional possible costs like training, walking/daycare services, grooming and unexpected veterinary bills.

Does your abode allow pets?
Some rental communities don’t allow pets, restrict certain breeds or have weight limits. It’s important to check with your rental property on their pet policies and about any pet deposits you may be required to pay.

Shed happens. And so does other stuff.
Are you prepared for the aspects of pet parenthood such as shedding, messes, barking, chewing and scratching?

Bringing your pet home
If you have determined that adopting a pet is right for you, it’s time to think about preparing your home. Here are a few tips to get your house ready:

• Introduce the pet to new people and places slowly. Avoid situations which may overwhelm the pet.

• It can take around three months for a pet to decompress. Remember it takes pets a while to learn a routine. Try not to get frustrated. Patience is key.

• Keep pets properly identified with a fitted collar. An ID tag and an up-to-date microchip are also key.

Adopting from a shelter or rescue
The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria has all kinds of wonderful companion animals up for adoption including puppies, small and large dogs, cats and kittens, guinea pigs, rabbits, birds and even lizards on occasion.

All manner of pets and breeds enter shelters and rescues. Make sure to consider adopting your next animal companion. You’re sure to be rewarded with a lifetime of love and appreciation.

The writer is the marketing and communications specialist for the AWLA.
APRIL 13

HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY Woodbine Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center will host a free healthcare decisions day. Volunteers will be offering free consultations, explanations and support to anyone wishing to learn about palliative and hospice care or complete an advanced directive. All are welcome.

Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Location: 2729 King St.
Information: woodbinerehab.com

APRIL 15

HISTORIC GARDEN TOUR
This walking tour includes private townhomes and secluded gardens located along the tree lined streets of the historic district, boutique shopping, and fine dining, which are all just steps away. In addition, the tour ticket allows access to two Garden Club of Virginia restoration projects, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens and Green Springs Gardens and to other local places of interest. Tickets required.

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Location: 411 Duke St.
Information: eventbrite.com/e/historic-garden-week-old-town-alexandria-tour-tickets-389685699417

APRIL 18

DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE
Musician, singer, songwriter and theater artist Robbie Schaefer, who is also the son of a Holocaust survivor, will serve as speaker for the commemoration. Mayor Justin Wilson and members of City Council will light a candelabrum at the site of the original Police Station House where McCoy was kidnapped by a white mob.

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: Various
Information: dea.gov/takebackday#collection-locator

APRIL 19

FREE SEMINAR ON HISTORIC EASEMENTS
Listen to a panel of experts discuss interior, exterior and open space easements for historic homes, the tax benefits and impacts on real estate sales. Several current easement holders, both original and subsequent, will also be available to share their experiences. A question and answer session will follow the panel discussion.

Time: Reception at 7 p.m.; Program at 7:30 p.m.
Location: 201 S. Washington St.
Information: alexandriava.gov/Lyceum

APRIL 22

DRUG TAKE BACK DAY
Doing spring cleaning? Then it’s the perfect time to clean out your medicine cabinets. Safely dispose of your expired and unneeded prescription medications.

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: Various
Information: dea.gov/takebackday#collection-locator

APRIL 23

REMEMBRANCE WREATH LAYING Alexandria will remember the 1897 racial terror lynching of Joseph McCoy with a wreath laying ceremony. Join the procession from the doors of the original Police Station House where McCoy was kidnapped by a white mob to the corner of Cameron and Lee Streets where McCoy was lynched.

Time: 2 p.m.
Location: 301 King St.
**Our View**

**A creative city**

This week the third Alexandria Times City Creatives section is part of our April 6 edition. We launched City Creatives this time last year in an attempt to showcase the many facets of Alexandria’s thriving arts community.

In the eight stories that have appeared in the first two City Creatives sections, we have profiled institutions like the Alexandria Harmonizers and individual artists such as dancer Carleigh Jones from the Metropolitan School for the Arts.

This installment of City Creatives focuses on four individuals, each involved with a different art form.

**Bill Daly**, owner of Crooked Beat Records, has helped keep vinyl records alive by selling them in his own shop since 1997 – deliberately bucking the trend away from vinyl records just as the growth of CD sales had many predicting vinyl’s looming extinction.

Daly is about to move to his second Alexandria location, from his current shop in North Old Town, which is part of a block that’s slated for redevelopment, to Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray. Daly’s story is told by local freelance author Andrew Dunbar.

**Dance instructor Sara Lavan** is currently executive director of Local Motion Project, which seeks to create movement experiences that engender social change and personal growth. Expression and human connection, vital elements of successful artistic endeavors in any medium, are prioritized at LMP. Former Alexandria Times Editor Olivia Anderson relates the story of Lavan and LMP.

**Alexandria actor Pat Nicklin** has returned to her first love, the stage, after a remarkable career in the nonprofit world that included helping found the National Points of Light Foundation, running the National Parks Foundation and helping launch the No Kid Hungry campaign at the nonprofit Share our Strength. While Nicklin still runs her own nonprofit consulting firm, she revels in stage roles at the Little Theatre of Alexandria and elsewhere. Freelance writer Kim Jackson, a former on-air TV reporter, tells Nicklin’s story.

**Local author Taylor Baldwin Kiland** in her book “Unwavering: The Wives Who Fought to Ensure No Man Is Left Behind” describes the important work done by a group of women who bucked norms of the 60s and 70s to change U.S. policy. These women, including John McCain’s first wife Carol, pressured the U.S. government to find and free their husbands, children and fathers who were captured or missing in action while serving in the U.S. military. Freelance journalist Kerry Boyd Anderson penned the piece about Kiland.

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We have just scratched the surface in telling the stories of artistic innovators with a connection to Alexandria. There are dozens more who write books or songs, dance or teach ballet to kindergartners. They create or curate art. They act, write plays and sing. We look forward to relating their accomplishments, and their artistic philosophies, to you in each semianual edition of City Creatives.

Discerning readers may also notice that the entire newspaper this week is printed on thicker, higher quality newsprint to enhance the colors and print quality. While the cost is prohibitive for us to do this every week, we wanted to highlight the significance of this section by making it as visually vibrant as possible.

Alexandria is many wonderful things, including a true city of creatives.

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**Opinion**

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

**Photo of the Week**

Cherry Blossoms on a recent spring day.

**Your Views**

**Living in a militarized zone – indefinitely**

*To the editor:*

I feel as if I’m living in a militarized zone. As I look out my front windows, all that I see are last fall’s brown leaves and trash that is piling up between two fences, fences that are literally blocking my egress to the street.

Across South Alfred Street, a long stretch of green tarp covers a portion of the now-deserted Heritage complex; many of the windows have remained open for months, and there, too, trash is building up, and who knows what else is inhabiting this decimated structure. This is not the Old Town living I bought into and have enjoyed for so many years.

When the Heritage redevelopment project was first proposed, I, along with many other concerned neighbors and area residents, fought hard against its approval, fearing that its density and the seeming lack of planning for the impact on traffic and parking on the 500 block of South Alfred Street would cause a serious deterioration in our neighborhood living. Sadly, our efforts failed, as plans were pushed forward and then were ultimately approved by City Council.

Last fall, a contractor working with the developer notified me that demolition was going to start in December 2022 and asked whether I wanted to have a vibration monitor installed in my home, purportedly so that they could monitor the impact of the demolition, as they dug the foundation. I agreed because I thought it would offer me some protection from cracks to my own foundation.

That box was installed in mid-November, but days and months went by without any sign of any demolition. In mid-February of this year, the contractor contacted me and informed me that they needed to remove the monitor, since there were permitting delays for the developer.
and that the project would not be started until this summer.

I was given the name of the developer’s community liaison officer and told he might be able to give me some updates. I contacted him and inquired about the purpose of the fencing and when it would be removed. His explanation was that the city had installed the fencing to protect my trees and that it wouldn’t be removed until the project was complete.

I’m all for protecting trees, but I don’t really understand the need for this fencing if there is a road that separates me from the development project, especially if it’s going to be in place for years.

And what about the people who were forced to move out of their homes at the Heritage last summer? They were my neighbors, some of whom had lived there for 30-plus years. So many promises made, so many lives disrupted. Oh, yes, the planners say that some will be given the chance to move back once the project is complete. But when will that be?

The Heritage Redevelopment website, heritage-developmentinfo.com, now says demolition won’t happen until November 2023, with completion in June 2026. What is driving this delay? What guarantee do I have that the project will ever move forward? And if not, who is responsible for the maintenance of this depressing structure?

Please do not tell me I must live with this eyesore for three or more years. And, yes, I know the worst is yet to come, whenever construction crews begin the blasting and pounding that will interrupt my family’s sleep for months to come.

I have been a homeowner in Old Town for more than 20 years. I love this community. But the manner in which our city government has handled this project leaves me questioning who is watching out for my homeowner interests.

What and why was the decision to approve this project made? Further, what has caused these construction delays? Does the city have a guarantee that the financing is in place to even make this project happen?

And Council members, why don’t you stroll around my neighborhood? Can you even begin to imagine what this street will look like at that time with the added number of people living in those apartments? The building hasn’t even been constructed, and already the traffic stretches more than a block because commuters want to make an illegal right-hand turn onto Gibbon Street to get onto the beltway. Maybe someone in the city will look into that situation before 598 apartments are built and occupied.

As I sit here looking out my windows and considering what lies ahead, my future living here on South Alfred Street appears very bleak.

-Kim Burstein
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.
The Northern Lights and Alexandria: a very brief history

Northern Lights.—Last night there was, in addition to a bright full moon, a most magnificent display of the “aurora borealis” or northern lights, the flames of which were peculiarly brilliant, stretching in broad bands or streamers from the northern horizon to the zenith. The display began at about 6 ½ o’clock and lasted nearly an hour, illuminating the whole northern heavens with electric light. The aurora was almost vermillion in its brilliant hues, and attracted a great deal of attention, reappearing about midnight, and continuing almost until morning.

The announcement in the Oct. 15, 1872 Alexandria Gazette of sightings of the Northern Lights in Alexandria.

Last month provided Alexandria residents with a rare sighting of the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis. Though this was not the first time that they were visible this far south, for many years, Alexandria residents only knew of the phenomenon through newspaper accounts written in other cities. There are two instances, both in the 1870s, that indicate the Northern Lights being visible in our city.

Early references to the Northern Lights in the Alexandria Gazette show up as reports filed by correspondents in other cities. For instance, the Dec. 17, 1818 edition includes a description of the Aurora Borealis filed from Liverpool, England. The Aug. 23, 1828, issue quoted the Boston Statesman’s description of the phenomenon as “the appearance of large banks of clouds lightened by the most intense heat of the sun. At 2 o’clock, yesterday morning, the light was nearly sufficient to read by.”

It was not until Aug. 20, 1870, that the newspaper described being able to see the Northern Lights in person here in Alexandria. The newspaper chronicled that:

“The western, eastern and northern horizon was vividly illuminated by a succession of rapidly changing colors of all hues of the rainbow.”

Two years later, on Oct. 15, the Gazette reported:

“The display began at about 6 ½ o’clock and lasted nearly an hour, illuminating the whole northern heavens with electric light. The aurora was almost vermillion in its brilliant hues…”

Sightings like the one that just occurred in March are rare at this latitude. The Washington Post from March 24 of this year noted that the most recent prior G4 geomagnetic storm was in 2017.

The Alexandria Gazette articles from the 1870s remind us that these weren’t the first times Alexandria residents saw the Aurora Borealis for themselves. Our forebears of 150 years ago were also treated to the miraculous sight of the Northern Lights over our city’s landscape.

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Do you intend to see the new art installation in Waterfront Park “Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson?”

49% Yes, I’ve seen them all.  
27% No, I won’t make it down to the waterfront.  
13% Yes, this will be my first.  
11% I don’t like art.

This Week

Are you concerned about Amazon's decision to pause construction of its second HQ2 building at National Landing?

A) Yes, this could really harm Alexandria’s economy.  
B) No, we will still reap significant benefits from Amazon.  
C) I’m not sure.  
D) What’s National Landing?
DEATH NOTICES

MOLLIE ABRAHAM (96), of Alexandria, March 25, 2023
ALVERT BANKS (70), of Alexandria, March 15, 2023
ROBERT BARRY (89), of Alexandria, March 16, 2023
RACHELLE BENNETT (89), of Alexandria, March 5, 2023
VIRGINIA "GIGI" BERBRICH (79), of Alexandria, March 21, 2023
VERNA BROWN (88), of Alexandria, March 27, 2023
DAVID LEE FANNON (87), of Alexandria, March 9, 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 RAUL DE PAOLIS-QUISPE (23), of Alexandria, March 8, 2023
VAUGHN VERVERS (54), of Alexandria, March 19, 2023

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COAL CATER PILLAR ROLLS
EMMA ADONIS AILS RAMS
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CAMPING MISHAPS by David Alfred Bywaters, edited by Jeff Chen

ACROSS
1 Corset tighteners
6 Company once known as "Fluor-S-Art Co."
11 Llama cousins
19 Statement that might halt raises
20 Got serious (with "up")
21 Ancient Greek
22 Camper's flatware mishap?
24 Flower originating from Adonis' blood and Aphrodite's tears, according to myth
25 Slang term for a rowing machine
26 Is worth it
27 Celestial bear
28 Fuels (up)
31 Ohio city sharing its name with a Spanish city
32 "That's ___!"
33 "Hey!"
34 Second-person possessive
35 "Bye!"
36 "Bosh!"
37 "Don Giovanni" and "Don Carlos"
38 "Don Giovanni"
39 "Don Carlos"
40 "Don Giovanni"
41 "Don Carlos"
42 "Bosh!"
43 "Don Giovanni"
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62 Statement that may initiate waginger
63 Some goose lovers
64 "Honest" POTUS
65 "Honest" POTUS
66 Used to be
67 "Hey!"
68 "Bye!"
69 Rock
70 Corbett's regal father
71 Sarge's superiors
72 Fly-swatting exclamation
73 "Well, lah-di-___!"
74 "I see!"
75 "I see!"
76 "I see!"
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127 "I see!"

Solutions from last week

121 "Well, lah-di-___!"
120 Like Bach's French Suite No. 6
119 It's fit to be tied
118 Ingredient for olive eaters
117 "Well, looky here!
116 Caller's concern
115 Approved
114 "I see!"
113 "I see!"
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2 "I see!"
1 "I see!"
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NEED TO PLACE AN AD?
CONTACT:
Margaret Stevens
mstevens@alextimes.com
A PUBLIC HEARING will be held by

A CITATION having been duly issued, directed to the persons hereinafter named, among others, requiring them to show cause before this court on the 5th day of June 2023, why the prayer of the petitioner in the above-entitled proceeding should not be granted, NOW, on reading and filing satisfactory proof:

That the place of residence of Jamie Harding to whom said citation is directed is unknown and cannot with reasonable diligence be ascertained; therefore it is ORDERED that service of said citation upon the persons above-named or described be made by publication thereof in one newspaper, to wit:

Alexandria Times published at 1199 N Fairfax St, Ste. 401 Alexandria, Virginia once each week for four successive weeks;

AND THE SURROGATE, being satisfied by proof upon which this Order is granted that the petitioner(s) cannot with reasonable diligence ascertain a place where the aforesaid unknown parties reside, hereby dispenses as to each party whose names and/or place of residence is unknown, the mailing of the citation.

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