School Board seeks staggered elections

Proposals for reducing board size, eliminating districts draw less support
BY AMY WILL

Nearly 30 years after its first election cycle, Alexandria City’s School Board is looking to shake things up for a more consistent future – one that includes a staggered election process and possibly fewer members at the table.

Board member Kelly Carmichael Booz said the reasoning behind a proposed transformation is turnover. She said she has seen too many superintendents, staff and fellow members depart over the years, and believes something needs to change.

“I want to make sure we are setting our school system, our students, our staff, our community up for success. And this current model does not set us up for success,” Booz said.

Under the existing structure, all nine board members are elected every three years in November and begin three-year terms on January 1. Three members are elected from three districts – A, B and C. Before the first election in 1994, Alexandria’s School Board was appointed by City Council. Since then, the School Board’s terms have aligned with that of council’s, moving from a May to a November election date in 2012.

Booz said the idea for staggering the election of board members is not new, and blames misinformation for the idea’s failure to gain traction.

“The assumption had been that if the School Board wanted to stagger their terms, they had to be staggered in tandem with council. So, whatever the election cycle is for the School Board would be the

Student overdoses prompt action

Fentanyl surge expedites education collaboration, expanded Narcan distribution
BY KAITLIN MURPHY

Joint efforts around the City of Alexandria are underway to combat the opioid epidemic affecting students in our community in the wake of several recent overdoses.

As the Times reported last week, one student at Alexandria City High School overdosed and received administration of Narcan by emergency responders while at school. Another student, Yonatan Vazquez Méndez, died on May 2 after going into cardiac arrest at his home. As of press time, the cause of death has not been confirmed pending the medical examiner’s ruling. In February of this year, a student from neighboring Wakefield High School in Arlington suffered a fatal overdose.

As of Sunday, the APD has reported 34 overdoses citywide in 2023. Deaths caused by narcotics require a chief medical examiner ruling, which tends to take more than four months so the number is subject to change. In comparison, from Jan. 1, 2022 to May 7, 2022 there were 49 reported overdoses which included confirmed fatalities. The calendar year 2022 had a total of 106 overdoses reported to APD.

The City of Alexandria asked the community to be vigilant about the dangers of illicit drugs in an announcement sent out on May 3 following the two suspected drug overdoses involving school-aged youth last week.

“Illicit drugs are often laced with fentanyl, an inexpensive substitute that is up to 100 times more potent than
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BY BRIANNE MCCONNELL

As the school year winds down, Alexandria City Public School officials are looking to the future with new leadership at the helm. The Alexandria School Board announced at the May 4 meeting that Interim Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D. will step into the role permanently.

“I think going through the process ... it was challenging and rewarding at the same time. You have to make tough decisions that are in the best interest of that school or school community, so challenging. But also rewarding knowing you’re making a decision that is going to change the way we do schools or programming,” Kay-Wyatt said.

Kay-Wyatt, who has more than two decades of experience in education, was selected from a pool of 35 applicants after a months-long national search that was launched in November 2022.

The search included feedback from 2,056 community survey participants and representation from 19 stakeholder groups, including school principals, PTA council, students, bus drivers and senior leadership teams.

When asked about what a new superintendent would need to know about Alexandria schools, many of the stakeholder groups raised the issue of retention. Turnover has been an issue for teachers and the superintendent.

During the announcement of Kay-Wyatt’s appointment, School Board Chair Meagan Alderton said stability was key for her.

“It was one of the questions asked to anyone interested in the position, do you see yourself here for the next five years or more? What are your goals?” Alderton said.

Alderton said she believes the issue of stability trickles down to the classroom. The turnover from the top can affect the climate of teachers and staff.

“Historically what has been challenging is lack of a system,” she said.

Alderton said she believes a negative tone around the education field has added to the issue of recruiting and retaining educators.

“I think the climate socially and politically has changed when it comes to schools, and school leadership. The tone has been a lot more negative,” Alderton said.

ACPS has 18 schools serving more than 15,700 students who come from more than 100 countries and speak 124 languages.

Kay-Wyatt said she already has a list of priorities for her transition on July 1.

The list includes a focus on building a better school culture and school experience for students and staff, tackling absenteeism and a focus on instructional achievement.

“I think the pandemic has really made it challenging to make that a priority because there are so many things we have had to deal with as we transitioned back,” Kay-Wyatt said.

Alderton agreed, adding there has not been as much progress as she would like when it comes to achievement.

“We are really focused on academic achievement. We have to move the needle for our students, particularly those who are in a category who we know continue to struggle,” Alderton said.

Prior to her appointment as Interim Superintendent, Kay-Wyatt was the Chief of Human Resources and executive director of Human Resources for ACPS. According to a statement from ACPS, the department significantly increased recruitment and hiring during Kay-Wyatt’s time as chief.

Kay-Wyatt holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Mary Washington College, a master’s degree in education from Old Dominion University, a master of education degree in educational leadership from University of Mary Washington and a doctorate in educational leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. He started her career as a special education teacher in Culpeper Middle School in Fredericksburg, VA. She then served as a middle school assistant principal and later principal at Walker-Grant Middle School. She has served as a professor at the College of William and Mary and Shenandoah University where she focused on teaching classroom management techniques and human resource leadership.

Alderton said she believes in addition to Kay-Wyatt’s combination of classroom and central office experience, a major reason Kay-Wyatt was selected for the permanent position was how gracefully she stepped into the role of interim superintendent last fall.

“You’re dealing with a political landscape, local and national. You’re dealing with 18 different schools, school leaders, lots of personalities, community partners and she just jumped in and went hard. She was always out there and learning from whomever she was talking to,” Alderton added.

Kay-Wyatt said as a product of public schools herself, she just wants to give back. She said during her primary education in public schools, she developed a passion and dedication to getting the work done.

Describing the past year as both challenging and rewarding, Kay-Wyatt said she said she looks to the 2023-24 school year with only two words to describe how she feels, “I’m honored and humbled.”

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Part of Del Ray makes Preservation Virginia’s Most Endangered list

Preservation Virginia has listed The Town of Potomac, which is now part of Alexandria’s Del Ray neighborhood, as one of 11 locations on their 2023 Most Endangered Historic Places list.

Preservation Virginia said the rapid loss of historic homes and buildings in The Town of Potomac Historic District, which is accelerating, led to that section of Del Ray’s inclusion on their annual Most Endangered list. Originally formed in 1908 as one of numerous commuter neighborhoods, the City of Alexandria annexed the Town of Potomac in 1930.

“Many recent residents and developers in need of larger living space are demolishing the historic, mid-sized houses to build new, often outsized and out-of-character houses in their place. Approximately 75 houses in the Town of Potomac Historic District have been demolished in recent years, and the rate of loss is accelerating,” the Preservation Virginia release said.

According to Preservation Virginia, despite the Town of Potomac Historic District’s inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places, “there is no local process to review, slow down, or prevent the demolition of the district’s contributing buildings.”

Preservation Virginia suggests the creation of an overlay district, such as those in Alexandria’s Old and Historic and Parker-Gray neighborhoods, to manage change in The Town of Potomac portion of Del Ray.

Other sites on the Preservation Virginia 2023 list of endangered sites include “Dwellings of the Enslaved, Statewide,” “Last Headquarters of the Virginia Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, Hampton” and “The Willa Cather Birthplace, Frederick County.”

The Preservation Virginia website describes the organization’s purpose as: “...[making] Virginia’s communities and historic places of memory stronger, more vital and economically sustainable through preservation, education and advocacy.”

Sites the organization manages include Historic Jamestowne, Patrick Henry’s home and the Cape Henry Lighthouse in Virginia Beach.

Felony assault results in arrest

On Saturday at approximately 2 p.m., the Alexandria Police Department responded to the 1400 block of Beaurgard Street in response to a felonious assault. Minor injuries were reported and one arrest was made in connection with the incident. The incident remains under investigation.

Drumgold indictment issued

On Monday, the Grand Jury for the City of Alexandria returned an indictment charging Dontae Lashawn Drumgold, a 28-year-old resident of Prince William County with one felony count of first-degree murder and one count of use of a firearm in commission of a felony in the murder of Elijah Williams.

On March 23, 2022, the Alexandria Police Department responded to emergency calls to an apartment in the 4500 block of Raleigh Avenue. Williams, a 25-year-old Alexandria resident, was found deceased on the sidewalk.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined a gunshot wound as cause of death.

Drumgold remains in custody and faces a maximum penalty of life in prison without parole. No trial date has been set.

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“We had an initial conversation to get the pulse of the board in December of 2022 to see if there was an appetite for having this conversation and pursuing terms,” Booz stated.

School Board member Ashley Simpson-Baird also said she saw a need for change.

“Once they realized this was more important than ever. We had an initial conversation to get the pulse of the board in December of 2022 to see if there was an appetite for having this conversation and pursuing terms,” Booz stated. School Board member Ashley Simpson-Baird also said she saw a need for change.

“There’s definitely a pattern when a new School Board is elected. It’s quite challenging to have the majority of the School Board be new and need to make sometimes pretty high stakes decisions without having been in that position before; and so we all sort of see the benefit to continuity,” Simpson-Baird said.

Simpson-Baird referenced data presented by the School Board back in February that showed an average of five of the nine School Board seats – which is 56% – have changed each election cycle since 1997. “In the 28-year period since switching to an elected School Board, ACPS has seen six superintendents resign with interim superintendents filling in between,” Simpson-Baird said.

The document presented also noted on average, ACPS superintendents have resigned nine months after a new School Board takes office, and that since 1994 four of five superintendents left their jobs when the School Board turned over at least five members.

At a previous meeting, board members reiterated the reasoning behind staggered terms with a spotlight on the benefits. A slide at the meeting stated: “... ensures retention of institutional knowledge as a continuing body by avoiding large-scale turnover, continuity of policy instead of frequent changes in focus, members have more time to gain experience before running for reelection, increased voter interest, members better able to serve public/constituents, improved relationship with the Superintendent.”

Booz and Simpson-Baird said the proposed plan not only includes the potential of district voting rather than an all at-large election, but that other changes are also being considered, such as:
• whether or not to increase term length from three to four years,
• whether to keep district representation or move to at-large voting,
• whether to decrease the size of the board, and
• whether to align with state and federal election cycles.

Since Dec. 13, 2022, the board has conducted various work sessions, public hearings and most recently, a survey taken by ACPS families. Booz said these resources helped to shape a myriad of options, and that she and her fellow board members plan to winnow the best combination and take it to City Council.

“Some I like and some I don’t like, but we really wanted to be comprehensive because we didn’t want to get to the point of having a conversation about terms and somebody to say, ‘Well, why didn’t you consider this option?’” Booz said.

According to Booz, three models are being proposed. Each is slightly different, but most of the variations include two key points: a board with staggered versus whole-board elections, and the retention of district voting rather than an all at-large election.

Most of the proposals also retain a nine-member board, though several would reduce the board’s size by two members, to seven.

With so many possibilities in the works, some parents, like Jennifer Rohrbach, said they fear a dramatic shift in structure could add to problems down the line.

“How is this good for the parents and the students and the citizens? What are the benefits? I really don’t see any,” Rohrbach said.

Rohrbach said her greatest concern would be the reduction of the board’s size, leaving two fewer voices to implement change and to respond to parent concerns.
“To cut down the number of School Board members, it doesn’t serve the residents, it doesn’t serve parents well or students because I just don’t think that the representation will be there,” Rohrbach added.

Booz said a smaller board is not an option she favors, but she is “open to reducing the numbers if that’s the route that we want to go.”

Perhaps the most controversial issue on the table is the possibility of an all at-large board, a system that mirrors that of City Council. Although stated in the community survey as a viable option, both Booz and Simpson-Baird said it is not one they would vote for.

“I personally really like the districts because I think it provides the representation across the city that we need,” Booz said.

Simpson-Baird concurred.

“District A, B and C are each unique and distinct for their own reasons. And I think continuing to have representatives from each of those areas is important in reflecting the diversity of our city,” she said.

ACHS parent Marie Randell has been vocal in her support for staggered terms. She agreed drastic alterations can be daunting, but models that include a staggered election cycle or even a four-year term could be the key to seeing long-term change in the ACPS system.

“I think there’s something that we have been missing. I am very supportive of what they’re trying to do. Staggering is probably where my biggest support lies. But, the other ones ... I don’t see any of those as negative.”

The proposal has created a pool of differing opinions, but all agreed that consistency is the overall goal.

“It’s so hard when you’re so close to it. I can see now – being on this my second round on the school board – just how significant the impact is on our school division in our district and that impact really does trickle down to our students, which is the core of what we do,” Booz stated.

The School Board is still awaiting results from the community survey and hopes to present a final proposal to City Council before summer. From there, any changes to Alexandria’s School Board election process would need the state legislature to pass legislation and the governor to sign it into law.

—will@alextimes.com

| SUMMARY OF SCHOOL BOARD PROPOSALS |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| MODEL           | TERM LENGTH     | DISTRICT/AT-LARGE | HOW ELECTED     |
| CURRENT         | 3-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL FROM DISTRICTS | CONCURRENT TERMS|
| MODEL A         | 3-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL FROM DISTRICTS | STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL B         | 3-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL FROM DISTRICTS | DIFFERENT MODEL OF STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL C         | 4-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL FROM DISTRICTS | STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL C1        | 4-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL FROM DISTRICTS | DIFFERENT MODEL OF STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL C2        | 4-YEAR TERMS, 7 | TWO EACH FROM THREE DISTRICTS, ONE AT-LARGE | STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL C3        | 4-YEAR TERMS, 9 | TWO FROM EACH DISTRICT, THREE AT-LARGE | STAGGERED TERMS |
| MODEL C4        | 4-YEAR TERMS, 9 | ALL AT-LARGE | STAGGERED TERMS |

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FENTANYL
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morphine and can be deadly,” the statement read. “City officials are asking for the public’s help in understanding the prevalence of fentanyl overdoses; how they can be prevented, recognized and treated; as well as speaking with people, especially youth, regarding the dangers of all illegal drugs.”

Parents and other residents are demanding action to combat the presence of Fentanyl in schools and communities in Alexandria.

On April 19, ACHS teamed up with the U.S. Drug Enforcement AdministrationDiversity Program and the Office of Student Support Teams for a community event addressing rampant substance abuse.

The collaboration between schools, agencies, local health departments and police is aimed at educating the public on how to fight and treat the opioid epidemic. According to the DEA, prescription drugs are abused more often than cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and ecstasy combined.

The opioids in prescription pain medications become misused when more than the intended dose is taken or when an individual takes someone else’s medication without a prescription. Death can result from abusing prescription drugs or from ingesting “fake” pills laced with Fentanyl. Fake pills are on the market and are made to look like prescription opioids. These pills are manufactured illicitly by unregulated sources rather than pharmaceutical companies.

According to the DEA, six out of 10 Fentanyl-laced fake prescription pills now contain a potentially lethal dose of Fentanyl. The fake pills look and feel just like prescription opioids.

Recently, there has been an uptick in the use of little blue pills, known on the street as M30’s or Perc30’s, among younger people. These pills are present in Alexandria and neighboring cities. According to reports, these pills are being found on the scene of many of the area’s recent overdose cases.

“The more you know, the more you can help others, the more you can help yourself. This is relevant for everyone,” Sweden said. “The only medicines that are safe are those from medical doctors and should be taken in small doses.”

Emily Bentley, the director of opioid response for the City of Alexandria, said the city has data on 2023 overdoses, but the data is incomplete.

“Since January of 2023, there have been 28 overdoses, and nine have been under age 18. One overdose was as young as 12. And we don’t have a full juvenile data set,” Bentley said.

In addition to these efforts, current strategic initiatives are planned to battle the opioid epidemic, particularly the use of non-prescription “street pills.” Education on the opioid crisis and expanding treatment options for those addicted are part of this initiative.

Too many opioids in the system cause the brain to shut down, dropping heart rate, breathing and lowering body temperature. Fentanyl is the key player in overdoses. In case of an overdose, quick access to Narcan can save a life.

Narcan is administered as a fast-acting nasal spray.
FENTANYL  FROM  8

application can pause opioids from the brain receptors and revive the patient until further medical treatment can be rendered. Narcan administration can create a 30-to-40-minute window which allows time for proper medical attention.

ACPS has supplied city schools with Narcan, according to ACPS Media Relations Specialist Issmar Venture.

“Narcan supplies are readily available and there is ongoing training for ACPS nurses, staff and administration,” Venture said.

In fact, the Times reported last week in “ACHS student receives Narcan” that it was one of the police officers, also called SROs, at ACHS who administered Narcan to a female student who had overdosed and was turning blue, according to openmhz.com.

Programs from other agencies are also actively underway.

The Opioid Work Group is composed of city staff and community partners in response to the city’s opioid crisis. OWG coordinates and oversees work that the city does in response to the impact of opioid use in our community and in our schools.

The OWG partners with Alexandria to distribute Narcan at no cost to city residents.

Following an increase in juvenile overdoses in April 2022, the Alexandria Police Department added a category of 18 and under to their data set for overdoses.

Communities throughout the region including the neighboring counties of Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William and Loudoun have experienced a similar rise in overdoses. The region has an opioid response network that shares data on a variety of issues.

Due to the porous nature of the city and county borders, there is a daily system of providing real-time information to each neighboring department. With this system, communities are better prepared and on higher alert for incidents affecting city residents or students.

Bentley has been assisting ACPS with Narcan training for all school nurses, teachers, administrators, coaches and health and physical education teachers.

The Alexandria Health Department has a partnership with the teen wellness center located inside ACHS to prevent and treat opioid-related incidents. The AHD has provided ACHS with backpacks containing fentanyl test trips, Narcan, information on treatment and how to administer the tests. And the teen wellness center distributes these bags to anyone who requests one.

“One way to reach the youth is with Narcan. It is for use as a first aid approach in case we are in the right place at the right time. It is good to have this skill to save a life. That is our hope with Narcan. To keep our community safe,” Bentley said. “[My team] works hard to push Narcan across the city as a preventative measure to keep people safer.”

APD or other first responders who administer Narcan on the scene send the incident information to the opioid outreach coordinator. Support and information for recovery services are provided and data is collected in real-time to help connect to treatment options for patients following treatment.

Narcan also serves as a diagnostic tool to determine if an opioid is involved in a po-

SEE FENTANYL  | 9
tential overdose. If Narcan is administered and there is no response, next steps are then taken in the diagnosis and treatment of individuals.

The OWG has provided multiple training opportunities to public and private schools. The message from OWG is the same at every school.

“Safety measures in place with medical treatment, prevention, and education to all youth in the city will provide them with the skills to go out into the world and make good decisions,” Bentley said.

Bentley warned that the landscape has shifted and it’s no longer a narrow segment of people who are at danger from an overdose.

“The current outreach and workshops are to help the community make the mental shift on ways to think about long term chronic substance abuse. The message has changed so much with the introduction of Fentanyl and substance abuse. Someone is equally at risk for an overdose with their first pill or their thousandth pill,” Bentley said.

In an initiative to address the opioid crisis on a national level, the Federal Drug Administration recently voted to make Narcan an over-the-counter medication as early as this coming July. By removing the barriers to attaining Narcan, the life-saving drug will move to store shelves and be identified by the generic name Naloxone.

Closer to home, a youth-focused 12-step meeting launched six weeks ago in partnership with the County of Arlington. No sign-up is required. Youth are invited to the Fairlington Community Center on Thursdays to speak with their peers about issues with drugs. They also receive support for treatment.

During the youth meeting and in a room at the same location, parents meet to seek support. They are given a chance to share their story with other struggling families and to learn more about resources available to them and to their children.

“The overall goal is to raise education about substance abuse. Get parents talking to their children early and often so people feel empowered to talk about this at home. Children feel this subject is familiar to them and they have practice on what to say,” Bentley said.

-k murphy@alextimes.com

Fentanyl test strips are available for walk-in clients at the AHD at their new location at 4850 Mark Center Drive.
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Browne Academy students blasts off

Browne Academy welcomed astronaut and entrepreneur Sharon Hagle to campus on May 3. Hagle is the founder of SpaceKids Global, a nonprofit dedicated to bringing the possibility of space to children, promoting STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education for elementary students and ensuring that girls are represented in that space (no pun intended).

Hagle and her husband participated in the suborbital 2022 NS-20 Blue Origin flight in 2002 as the first married couple on a commercial space flight and are planning to go on another Blue Origin flight in the future.

Hagle gave Browne's 4th through 8th grade students an exclusive look into her experience as the 599th person in space. Hagle asked students about their own roles in making the world a better place and spoke about inspiring kids in STEAM and environment education. Hagle introduced Browne students to her space pup Saba and answered questions about what it was like to blast off into space.

Breaking news from SMS

Students from The Basilica School of Saint Mary’s Drama Club invite you to the action-packed performance of “Newsies, Jr.” Don’t miss the exciting shows at Bishop Ireton High School’s Garwood Whaley Auditorium on May 12 and 13. Tickets will be sold at the door for $10. Get ready for an unforgettable night of music, dance and the magic of live theater.

Life is a cabaret

Metropolitan School of the Arts will perform its 10th Anniversary Academy Cabaret-style Showcase this weekend at The Vault at Capital One Hall in Tysons. 22 MSA students, ages 12 to 18, will present a cabaret-style performance with live music and guest artists. The show will feature selections of classic and contemporary theatre, musical theatre and dance with pieces from “42nd Street,” “Eurydice,” “The Sound of Music,” “Twelfth Night,” “Kinky Boots,” “Jagged Little Pill” and many more.

For more information, go to https://metropolitanarts.org/academy-showcase/
Out of the classroom
Education section

Immanuel Lutheran School welcomes Aslan

Immanuel Lutheran School was honored and excited to welcome Aslan and other costumed characters from the Academy of Arts Logos Theatre’s “The Horse and His Boy” based on Chronicles of Narnia series by C.S. Lewis on May 1.

The Theatre brought the giant puppet Aslan, along with King Edmund, Queen Lucy and the raven Sallowpad, to meet students, share about the performance and give some fun behind the scenes insights to their production. Immanuel Lutheran School students read the entire Chronicles of Narnia series as their 4th grade literature curriculum, and re-read “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” as part of their literature study on the theme of redemption in their 8th grade year.

Fusion Academy looks to the future

Fusion Academy celebrated College Week. Hosted by the Post-Secondary Team within Fusion Education Group, the week featured a series of events both on- and off-campus examining options for students as they navigate life after high school.

Students and teachers were encouraged to wear college gear all week and the school was bedecked with flags and banners from various universities. On-campus observations culminated in a tailgating party on campus replete with cornhole and snacks.

Fusion sponsored a series of webinars about life after high school. These included an alumni panel, discussion of Gap Year options and a session on how to write a college essay. These virtual sessions offered families from across the country the opportunity to interact and to see the impact of a Fusion education on alumni.

Grace gifts poems

Grace Episcopal School’s third grade students celebrated National Poetry Month in April with a poetry tea. Students shared their poetry books with parents and friends.

School Profile

Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

Children are loved and love learning in Douglas MacArthur Elementary School’s welcoming and joyful learning community. At MacArthur, talented faculty and staff believe that the foundation for a quality education is a safe and inclusive environment for every student.

MacArthur’s reputation for having a strong instructional program is attributed to the staff’s commitment to implementing academic, enrichment and social-emotional curricula with fidelity in support of the whole child. Students enjoy art, vocal music, instrumental music, physical education and family life instruction in addition to their hands-on experience of the core curriculum.

A cornerstone of the Taylor Run neighborhood, MacArthur’s new state of the art facility features multiple extended learning spaces that expand opportunities for one-on-one instruction and self-guided collaboration through designing, tinkering, problem-solving and reflecting.

Enthusiastic family involvement and leadership at MacArthur strengthens the school community through several academic and community-building initiatives including after-school enrichment programs, Reading Is Fundamental, Fun Run, Glow Dance and International Heritage Night.

Douglas MacArthur is excited to celebrate its 80th anniversary in fall 2023.

This is advertiser content
Alexandria Times staff win 11 VPA awards

Staff members of the Alexandria Times won 11 Virginia Press Association awards at the annual banquet held Saturday in Short Pump, Virginia, just outside of Richmond. The paper won five first place awards, two seconds and four third place finishes.

Times Graphic Designer Jessica Kim led the way with three first place awards, along with one second and one third place finish for her ad designs. Kim’s first place awards were for the “Home and Garden,” “Fashion and Personal Care” and the “Education - Churches and Organizations” categories. The judge awarding Kim’s first place award for fashion design in her Serafino ad said “Great layout and clean design. Highlights all the important information.”

Times Publisher and Executive Editor Denise Dunbar won first place for editorial writing for “What constitutes good behavior,” “Don’t strangle Duke Street” and “Education vs. ideology.” The judge making this award said: “Solid editorials on subjects readers are interested in – what constitutes jail time, city growth and the dilemma of ideology vs. education.”

The Times other first place award was for “Specialty pages or sections” and was a team award given to former Kim, former Editor Cody Mello-Klein, then-reporter Olivia Anderson, Dunbar and Sales Director Margaret Stevens. The award was for the Times’ “Tying the knot” wedding sections, which feature a story on a couple and smaller wedding-related stories, as well as special ads. The judge making this award said of the Times’ entries: “Nicely written with some good standing items. Section is well marked within the tab to let readers clearly see where the section starts and stops.”

Anderson also won second place for her feature writing portfolio and third place for investigative/in-depth reporting. The paper earned third place honors for its front page design in another group award that included Kim, Anderson, Mello-Klein, former Reporter Kassidy McDonald and former Intern Liana Hardy. The Times’ final award was a third place finish for “Special Sections or Special Editions” for our City Creatives arts section, which was produced by the team of Kim, Anderson, McDonald, former Intern Ariana Wilson, Stevens and Office Administrator and Graphic Designer Tina Franco.

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Obituary

Stephen Charles Fife

On April 17, 2023, Stephen Fife passed from this life. Born in Alexandria, on May 11, 1961, Steve is survived by his mother, Sara Lee Taylor, of Alexandria; his sister, Lee Ann Gardner, of Alexandria; his brother, Andrew T. Fife, of Hartford, Michigan; and his sister-in-law, Pamela Fife (Andrew), and many aunts, uncles and cousins across the United States. He was predeceased by his father, Thomas A. Fife, of Old Town, Florida. Memorial service arrangements are pending. In lieu of flowers, his family suggests donations be made in his name to Samaritan’s Purse samaritanspurse.org.

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-tddunbar@alextimes.com
The Alexandria City High School production of “Sister Act” was an absolute masterpiece.

Based on the beloved 1992 film, this musical tells the story of Deloris Van Cartier, a lounge singer with dreams of finally getting her big break until she witnesses a murder that puts her life at risk. She is placed in a convent where she believes she will never fit in, but she ultimately transforms the choir into a sensational act that even gets the attention of the Pope.

It is a story about friendship, sisterhood and the power of music. The talent displayed by every member of the cast and crew was simply extraordinary. It is clear that everyone involved poured their hearts and souls into making this production a success.

Lilac Haynesworth stars as Deloris. She brought incredible energy to the stage with her powerful voice and electrifying stage presence. Her entire performance was mesmerizing and she truly brought the character to life in a way that was both captivating and hilarious.

Naeem Scott’s portrayal of Eddie Souther was equally impressive. His flawless vocals and impeccable acting had the audience rooting for him from the very beginning. Lucas Trueblood’s performance as the unhinged mobster Curtis was also outstanding. His smooth voice was an added bonus.

Mary Roberts, played by Mariel Carr, had the voice of an angel. Her portrayal of the innocent and wonder-filled character was both heartwarming and inspiring. The vocal blending in this production was off-the-charts amazing and it was clear that every member of the cast put in countless hours of hard work to achieve incredible results.

Student Director Abigail Gerstein deserves a special shout-out for the creativity and ingenuity she brought to the production. Her vision for the show was awe-inspiring. She was able to bring out the best in every member of the cast and crew.

The ACHS stage crew also deserves a round of applause for their incredibly smooth transitions and creative diversions of attention. The sets created by Helen Russell, Nora Malone and Abigail Gerstein were terrific. The audience was transported to another world.

Finally, Virginia “Jesse” Jones’ lighting brought the whole show together. At times, her lighting offered a comedic release.

The ACHS production of “Sister Act” was a true triumph. It is clear that everyone involved worked hard to make it a success. This production had the audience laughing, crying, hooting, hollering and at the end clapping in a wild standing ovation. Everyone involved should be incredibly proud of what they accomplished.

The writer is a student at the H-B Woodlawn Secondary Program.
Reduce, reuse, redecorate

Shop pre-owned for furniture and help the environment, too
BY BRANDPOINT

If you’re searching for ways to make a positive impact on the planet, consider how you buy furniture. By opting for pre-owned or used furniture, you can save money. It’s also an excellent way to reduce waste and contribute to a sustainable future.

Purchasing new furniture can have a significant environmental impact. Furniture production contributes to deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and waste.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, furniture accounts for 9.8 million tons of waste in landfills each year. By choosing to buy pre-owned, you can help divert usable items from ending up in a landfill. Sourcing pre-owned furniture also prolongs the lifespan of resources already extracted from the earth.

Buying pre-owned isn’t just good for the planet. It can also be good for your wallet. Pre-owned furniture is more affordable than buying new. You save money while still getting quality pieces for your home. Pre-owned shopping can give you access to unique and vintage finds. It can make your home feel stylish and unique.

It can feel overwhelming if you’re new to shopping for pre-owned furniture. The most sustainable piece of furniture is the one you already own. Before browsing for new furniture, take stock of what you already have. Can you repurpose or upcycle an item to give it new life? Sometimes a fresh coat of paint, new upholstery or modern hardware is all you need to completely transform a piece of furniture.

Determine your needs
Consider what kind of furniture you’re looking for before shopping. Think about the size and style of the piece. What is your budget? Knowing what you want will help you refine your search and make the process less daunting.

Shop local
If you still need new furniture, consider shopping locally. This reduces transportation emissions and supports small businesses. Look for resale stores in your community or browse online marketplaces.

Materials matter
When shopping for pre-owned furniture, consider Sustainability emissions and supports small businesses. Look for resale stores in your community or browse online marketplaces.

Luxury condominium living at its best

Potomac River views with brilliant southern and eastern sun light in this rare corner residence at the luxurious Muse Condominium.

Two bedrooms plus den with over 1,800 square feet provide plenty of space for work, recreation and visitors.

Watch the sunrise glisten over the Potomac while enjoying morning coffee. Entertain or relax on the private balcony located off the open plan living and dining room. Kitchen includes Snaidero cabinets, quartz countertops, Therma-Dor appliances, wine cooler, kitchen window over the sink area and large island.

Other features include 10-foot ceilings, upgraded custom closets, upgraded light fixtures, ceiling fans, a 65-inch Sony television with sound bar and subwoofer and cabinet upgrades. Recessed lighting, 6-inch plank hardwood floors, large laundry room with full-sized washer and dryer, walk-in closets with extra storage, and two parking spaces allow for plenty of room and style.

World-class amenities include a 24-hour concierge, fabulous fitness center, meeting and lounge room, rooftop deck, rooftop clubroom and more.

Enjoy strolls along the Potomac, the Farmer’s Market on Saturdays, local restaurants and shopping, neighborhood parks and more. One mile to Braddock Road Metro, less than three miles to Reagan National Airport, less than five miles to National Harbor, less than five miles to National Harbor, and six and a half miles to Washington, DC.

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Sunrise from the living room. Middle: Views of the Potomac River. Right: Amenities include large rooftop clubroom with rooftop, fitness center and yoga studio.

Luxury condominium living at its best

Potomac River views with brilliant southern and eastern sun light in this rare corner residence at the luxurious Muse Condominium.

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Home of the Week

HOMES ADVERTORIAL

AT A GLANCE

Address:
1201 N Royal Street #404,
Alexandria, 22314

Neighborhood:
Old Town,
Muse Condominium

Price: $2,170,000

Square feet: 1,825

Bedrooms: 2 plus den

Bathrooms: 2 full, 1 half

Year built: 2022

Contact:
Heather Corey
TTR Sotheby’s International Realty, Old Town
703-989-1183
hcorey@ttrsir.com
ttrsir.com

PHOTOS/OLEKS IAROSHTYNSKI/TOWNSEND VISUALS

Left: Sunrise from the living room. Middle: Views of the Potomac River. Right: Amenities include large rooftop clubroom with rooftop, fitness center and yoga studio.
When buying used, look for items constructed from sustainable materials.

**PRE-OWNED**

**FROM | 16**

- it’s important to carefully inspect items before you buy them. Look for any signs of wear and tear, such as scratches, dents or stains. Make sure the piece is sturdy and functional. However, minor imperfections can often be fixed with a little bit of DIY work. You might consider hiring a professional to complete repairs.

**Invite imperfection**

When shopping pre-owned, use this opportunity to be creative. Don’t be afraid to experiment. Have fun with your unique finds.

**Negotiate**

Many resale stores and online marketplaces allow for negotiation on price. Don’t be afraid to make an offer that fits within your budget. Ask about the piece’s backstory. Where it was originally purchased? How long it was owned? Having the facts will enable you to achieve a fair purchase price.

- When shopping pre-owned, look for items constructed from sustainable materials.

- It’s important to carefully inspect items before you buy them. Look for any signs of wear and tear, such as scratches, dents or stains. Make sure the piece is sturdy and functional. However, minor imperfections can often be fixed with a little bit of DIY work. You might consider hiring a professional to complete repairs.

- Sometimes simply cleaning an item thoroughly can bring it back to life.

- Choosing to shop pre-owned furniture instead of new is a step toward reducing our environmental impact and creating a more sustainable future. With a little bit of effort and creativity, you can find beautiful and unique pieces. Give your home a fresh new look while also protecting the planet.

**CALENDAR**

**MAY 11**

**TODDLER ROCK N’ READ**


**Time:** 11:15 to 11:45 a.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8318314

**GIRLS WHO CODE**

Explore different programming topics. Encourage future programmers. Girls ages 8 though 14 are welcome. Free.

**Time:** 6 to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** 5005 Duke St.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8435049

**LET’S GO LEGO**

Open to children ages 6 through 12. Kids will join together on teams. Teams will take hour to build a prompt from the judges with LEGOs. Evaluations and winners will be chosen. Free.

**Time:** 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8318365

**MAY 12**

**TRASH TREKKERS**

Free and open to all. Start your Saturday off right. Join the Barrett Branch walking and litter pickup club.

**Time:** 10 to 11 a.m.

**Location:** 717 Queen St.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8191240

**MOTHER’S DAY SPA**

Mothers and daughters ages 5 to 12 are welcome. Enjoy fabulous food, facials, massages and manicures. $25 per person. Registration required.

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

**Location:** 2701 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** apps.alexandriav.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51912

**MAY 13**

**TRASH TREKKERS**

Free and open to all. Start your Saturday off right. Join the Barrett Branch walking and litter pickup club.

**Time:** 10 to 11 a.m.

**Location:** 717 Queen St.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8191240

**WATER SAFETY**

Learn the basics of water safety before the start of summer. Join instructors and lifeguards to hear about how to stay safe in the water. Swim lessons for youth, adults and families. Registration required.

**Time:** 6 to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** 3210 King St.

**Information:** apps.alexandriav.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51958

**MAY 14**

**LETTUCE EAT LOCAL**

Enjoy local food, music and art.

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

**Location:** 3201 King St.

**Information:** apps.alexandriav.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51958

**MAY 15**

**MOTHER’S DAY SPA**

Mothers and daughters ages 5 to 12 are welcome. Enjoy fabulous food, facials, massages and manicures. $25 per person. Registration required.

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

**Location:** 2701 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** apps.alexandriav.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51912

**WATER SAFETY**

Learn the basics of water safety before the start of summer. Join instructors and lifeguards to hear about how to stay safe in the water. Swim lessons for youth, adults and families. Registration required.

**Time:** 6 to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** 4200 Eisenhower Ave.

**Information:** apps.alexandriav.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51912

**MAY 16**

**COMMUNITY CLEAN UP**

Join the Barrett Branch walking and litter pickup club.

**Time:** 10 a.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** alexlibraryva.org/event/8318365

**MAY 17**

**PARKS AND REC**

Walk and tour the site of the Joseph Hensley Park. Proposed improvements include: increased parking capacity, upgrades to the lighting, addition of play space and replacement of current restrooms among others. Free to all.

**Time:** 6:30 to 8 p.m.

**Location:** 7918 Fort Hunt Road

**Information:** nepenthegallery.com/events/original-works-from-brazil-art-that-stirs-the-soul

**MAY 18**

**ART STIRS THE SOUL**

Visit the Nepenthe Gallery. Two-week exhibit showcasing original art from Brazil. Art Broker Vera Kramer will be on hand to discuss the art scene in Brazil and share stories about artists. Wine and cheese. Free.

**Time:** 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** 7918 Fort Hunt Road

**Information:** nepenthegallery.com/events/original-works-from-brazil-art-that-stirs-the-soul

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

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Our View

New superintendent, old problems

A spate of news from our schools has reverberated around Alexandria in the past week – some good, some horrible and some to be determined. It’s a lot to digest. Below, we touch on each major news item briefly, with more to follow in coming weeks.

Because there’s been lots of bad school-related news recently, let’s start with the good: Alexandria City Public Schools has a new permanent superintendent, Melanie Kay-Watts, Ed.D. We and others noted when Kay-Watts was named interim that she had no prior experience running a school district and had only been at ACPS a short time. On the face of it, she was an unusual selection as interim superintendent, but was nonetheless clearly the favorite to land the permanent job from the start.

The more cynical among us may roll their eyes at the “nation-wide search” that took place in the superintendent search. But in corporate as well as government settings, a process must be followed even if there’s an existing, internal preferred candidate who is likely to emerge with the posted job.

While our schools have not become safer nor achieved visible academic progress since Kay-Wyatt took over as interim superintendent last September – ACPS continues to lag behind the rest of Virginia in most measures of learning, and the drug and violence issues have reached a boiling point – we also think she inherited a district in crisis that had suffered from several years of distant leadership.

We welcome Kay-Watts and offer several pieces of advice:

• Focus on rubber-meets-road issues such as safety and academic achievement for all rather than aspirational initiatives.

• Be visible, responsive and accountable. Don’t just issue statements that are mostly public relations spin and then disappear when something bad happens. Instead, stand in front of parents, students and the media and discuss solutions.

• Show empathy for the real and justified concerns that parents and students have about both safety and the difficult learning environment that exists in many of our schools.

More encouraging news comes from the safety front, where the first weapons detection equipment began being installed Monday in ACPS. Alexandria City High School’s main campus and the Minnie Howard Campus, along with the city’s middle schools, will receive these safety devices.

The other positive school safety news is the new two-year agreement between ACPS and the Alexandria Police Department to have police officers, commonly called SROs, in schools. The current agreement runs out at the end of June. According to Alxnow, the School Board will meet with City Council on May 15 to discuss the memorandum of understanding, which will be followed on May 18 by a School Board public hearing and vote. The MOU would take effect on July 1 if approved.

Despite a dangerous flirtation a couple of years ago with axing the SRO program, we are relieved that practical concern for the safety of students and ACPS staff seems to have prevailed.

Unfortunately, the school news in Alexandria is not all good, as one student died last week after suffering from cardiac arrest at home and another overdosed at Alexandria City High School before being administered Narcan by an officer in the school, according to openmhz.com.

As today’s page 1 story “Student overdoses prompt action” indicates, community leaders are taking steps to educate

SEE OUR VIEW

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

An APD officer poses with a young resident at a recent ‘Coffee with a Cop’ gathering.

Your Views

Goodbye American Dream

To the editor:

I challenge anyone who thinks housing affordability is not a problem. However, I also challenge anyone who thinks there is a simple solution. A recent editorial in the New York Times by Peter Coy linked the nationwide affordable housing shortage to land use reforms initiated during the 1920s.

At that time land use was generally unregulated, resulting in what Coy describes as a landscape of “…chaotic cities and towns, where a lack of controls on land use allowed grimy factories, livery stables and the like to spring up in residential neighborhoods.” The solution, a novel progressive reform: zoning.

It was unforeseen how zoning could be manipulated to solidify racial segregation and exclude undesirable ethnic and socioeconomic classes from gaining access to selected neighborhoods. During the latter half of the 20th century, new reforms were enacted to eliminate discriminatory zoning practices. Despite these changes single family housing accessibility remained inequitable.

Additionally, neighborhoods zoned exclusively for single-family housing generally appreciate more than areas with other forms of housing. As a result, even absent discriminatory policies, these neighborhoods tend to be out of reach for less affluent diverse populations.

It is understandable that affordable housing advocates underscore past socioeconomic harms and inequities associated with current zoning policies. Zoning reforms like those recently enacted by Arlington County are appealing because they promise to solve disparities in affordable housing. However, are these reforms proven? And are there safeguards against manipulation, abuse or unintended consequences?

A tenant of the American Dream is homeownership. Not a condominium, duplex or townhouse, but that venerated suburban home, on a quiet street, with a driveway and fenced in yard. Moreover, it has been the most accessible means of generational wealth accumulation.

African American homeownership aspirations were denied, hindered – or as was the case in Alexandria – revoked through eminent domain. For most of the 20th century, even after passage of the landmark Fair Housing Act of 1968, African American homeownership remained, as coined by the Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes, “a dream deferred.”

While residual vestiges of racist policies in the banking and the real estate industry occasionally still manifest barriers to homeownership, Alexandria’s existing zoning structure imposes none. Today African Americans can purchase a home anywhere in the City of Alexandria. Still, proponents of land use deregulation claim reform is necessary to reduce homeownership barriers and open neighborhoods historically inaccessible to African American and other minorities. What advo-
Community, not congestion

To the editor:

I am writing with concern about your recent coverage of the proposed Duke Street transitway. The article seems to assume that Duke Street will always be a traffic-choked “nightmare.” A redesigned Duke Street, with high-quality transit, can instead be a public space that builds community.

We are all aware that loss of community, and growing feelings of isolation, are modern American problems. According to an African proverb, “A child that is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth.” U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy recently spoke about an “epidemic of loneliness and isolation.”

If Alexandria is to be a strong, post-pandemic community, we must embrace our people. One way to embrace our people is to build public spaces that people want to use and thereby spend time together. High-quality transit gets people out of individual cars and into a shared space. I know from experience that occasionally I run into friends and neighbors on the bus or the metro. It is a small thing but, when it comes to community, small things add up.

Center-running dedicated bus lanes would significantly increase access to shops on Duke Street. Instead of driving to Fairfax to shop, people could more easily spend money and, more importantly, spend time here in Alexandria, with other Alexandrians.

-Jonathan Krall,
Alexandria

BYRD

FROM | 18

cates fail to recognize is the potential inverse effect zoning deregulation is likely to induce.

A central objective of single-family housing deregulation is to open these neighborhoods to diverse housing stock such as apartments, condos, duplexes and townhomes. However, this necessitates shrinking the stock of single-family homes. The ensuing scarcity will drive single-family home values up, making them even more unaffordable for most citizens, disproportionally so for African Americans.

A dream deferred to a dream denied, “Housing for All” is yet another in a long list of hollow promises to African American and other historically disadvantaged citizens of Alexandria. Is this palatable?

Zoning regulations began as a noble progressive solution to real problems. They were soon manipulated for what are now acknowledged nefarious purposes. Before making an equally consequential zoning decision, our elected officials and policy makers need to thoroughly weigh the outcomes these changes could invite, and institute appropriate safeguards up front, not after the fact.

Perhaps the most prudent course of action for now is to pause and see whether Arlington’s land use deregulations achieve the desired outcomes of accessibility, affordability and availability. That is, housing for all.

For those who believe we cannot afford to wait, I ask “Can we afford to get it wrong?” Are Alexandrians OK with further restricting, and potentially eliminating, single family homeownership opportunities in Alexandria, and saying goodbye to this slice of the American Dream?

-Roy Byrd,
Alexandria

Don’t Suffer in silence

Mental health concerns were pushed to the forefront amid the COVID-19 pandemic. While mental health has always been an issue in need of open discussion, it had not been addressed due in large part to the stigma associated with it. As we mark Mental Health Awareness Month in May, Alexandria City Public Schools realizes silence or inaction is not the answer.

The consequences of not addressing mental health problems adversely impacts our students. Strain on a student’s mental health can affect their energy level, their ability to concentrate, hindering their performance and outlook on life.

In the midst of the pandemic, ACPS took a proactive approach by setting aside 30 minutes each day for SEAL, which is social, emotional and academic learning. SEAL lessons continue within each of our schools and students say it helps to take pause to ask that question, “How are you feeling today?”

Those simple words open the conversation to help students address and understand how the stresses of their daily lives are impacting them and as a result their ability to concentrate throughout the school day. SEAL also helps students to improve their communications skills, helping them put their feelings into words instead of acting out in a negative way.

Our teachers tell us that SEAL is about making the environment comfortable for students to share and help process their emotions. These daily conversations build rapport between teachers and students. Employing what the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence calls a Mood Meter allows students to label, understand and address the cause of an emotion they are experiencing. SEAL can also alert a teacher to a concern that warrants a follow up talk with a student to make certain they get the assistance needed.

Further addressing the needs of our students within ACPS, there are Student Support Teams of counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers within each school. They are there to help address health and wellness needs, social-emotional and behavioral development, as well as academic matters. SST partners with our teachers and other school staff to plan and implement programs that ensure every child thrives and achieves their goals.

Our SST are also there to assist families with concerns including behavioral challenges, mental health and access to school and community resources. In addition, teenagers can visit the Teen Wellness Center at Alexandria City High School, King Street Campus to talk with a counselor.

This spring, ACPS held substance abuse workshops, one of which was delivered in Spanish, at our middle schools and high school, realizing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression can contribute to substance use as a form of self-medication. These workshops served to inform families where they can get help when needed. They also empower families in their efforts to keep their children safe from the dangers of using illegal substances that can be laced with fentanyl which can be deadly.

Amid the pandemic, our Family and Community Engagement Center reached out to our families to provide support needed. For instance, a workshop with Amharic-speaking health professionals was organized, after parents expressed concerns about their children’s mental wellness, such as depression, sleep disturbances and being argumentative. As a cultural stigma can often be associated in addressing mental health related issues, this session let families know they can reach out to school counselors, psychologists and nurses about their children’s mental health needs.

ACPS is committed to addressing the needs of our students using a Multi-Tiered System of Support that is holistic and needs-based. When students display the need for added support in the areas of social, emotional and behavioral development, services and interventions are provided to address their specific needs.

There is never any shame in asking for help. Everyone faces challenges in their life. As basketball legend Michael Jordan once said, “Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

The writer is interim superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools.

Filling in the Blanks

with Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D.

BY MELANIE KAY-WYATT, ED.D.

MELANIE KAY-WYATT

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.
Alexandria’s historic districts

Historic districts make up a key component of Alexandria’s efforts at Historic Preservation. The National Register lists seven districts in Alexandria, and the city has designated two districts. Those two local historic districts are regulated by the Board of Architectural Review. Alexandria’s seven National Register Historic Districts are: Fairlington, Alexandria Historic District, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Uptown/Park Gray, Parkfairfax, Rosemont and Town of Potomac.

The two local districts are the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray District. The boundaries of the local districts differ from those of the National Register Districts. Additionally, buildings designated by City Council ordinance as One Hundred-Year-Old Buildings are regulated by the Board of Architectural Review. Readers can view the historic districts as well as the 100 year-old buildings protected by the Board of Architectural Review at alexandriava.gov/preservation.

The Old and Historic District, with its protections for historic buildings, was established to control development along the George Washington Memorial Parkway as it passed through Alexandria as Washington Street. Alexandria also sought to protect the city’s colonial heritage.

Since it was first designated as a Historic District in 1946, the Old and Historic District’s boundaries have changed. Today, the district generally runs from the southern edge of the city from Hunting Creek north to Bashford Lane and from the Potomac River on the east to near the King Street Metro on the west. As noted above, the boundaries for the local historic district regulated by the BAR differ from those of the National Register district. The Historic Preservation Map viewer, which can be found online at the above address indicates the current boundaries for each.

The Parker-Gray District is named for the Parker Gray School which opened in 1920. The school was named in commemoration of John Parker and Sarah Gray who had been principals of two segregated schools in Alexandria during the latter part of the 19th century, the Snowden School for Boys and the Hallowell School for Girls.

In 1984, Alexandria designated the Parker-Gray Historic District. As previously noted, the boundaries of the local Parker Gray District regulated by the BAR differ from the Upton/Parker-Gray National Register Historic District.

In addition to the Old and Historic Alexandria District and the Parker Gray District, the Board of Architectural Review oversees the protection of designated One Hundred Year Old Buildings located outside of the locally regulated historic district boundaries. These resources have been designated as historically or architecturally significant by the City Council and are subject to the regulations in Article 10-300 of the Zoning Ordinance. Readers can find out about the process of nominating a One Hundred Year Old Building at alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/Historic-Preservation-100YOBldg-Designation-Process.pdf.

Alexandria’s ability to maintain the historic character of its buildings is a reason people choose not only to visit Alexandria, but also to live here. The designation of historic districts and the Board of Architectural Review are major contributors to maintaining that historical character.

May is National Preservation Month. To find out more about what Historic Alexandria is doing to celebrate, visit alexandriava.gov/news-oha/2023-05-01/preservation-month-in-historic-alexandria.

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week
What needs to be prioritized in improvements to Duke Street?

52% Multi-modal transportation options.
32% Traffic congestion.
8% Safety.
7% Access to neighborhoods and businesses.
1% I’m not sure

This Week
What do you think about the proposed changes to the school board?

A) I favor staggered terms.
B) I favor reducing the board’s size.
C) I favor at-large rather than district elections.
D) All of the above.
E) Don’t make changes.
### Weekly Words

**ACROSS**

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**Solutions from last week**

- **MARY BELLIMAM** (56), of Alexandria, April 27, 2023
- **MARY CARPENTER** (88), of Alexandria, May 4, 2023
- **STEPHEN FIFE** (61) of Alexandria, May 11, 2023
- **MICHAEL HEINTZ** (81), of Alexandria, April 21, 2023
- **KELLINA HENDERSON** (56), of Alexandria, April 21, 2023
- **ESTHER KAMINSKY** (93), of Alexandria, March 27, 2023
- **PAUL MILLER SR.** (75), of Alexandria, May 4, 2023
- **DONA SAUER** (69), of Alexandria, May 3, 2023
- **SUSAN SMITH** (65), of Alexandria, April 25, 2023
- **CATHERINE SMOOT** (100), of Alexandria, April 30, 2023

### DEATH NOTICES

- **MARY BELLIMAM** (56), of Alexandria, April 27, 2023
- **MARY CARPENTER** (88), of Alexandria, May 4, 2023
- **STEPHEN FIFE** (61) of Alexandria, May 11, 2023
- **MICHAEL HEINTZ** (81), of Alexandria, April 21, 2023
- **KELLINA HENDERSON** (56), of Alexandria, April 21, 2023
- **ESTHER KAMINSKY** (93), of Alexandria, March 27, 2023
- **PAUL MILLER SR.** (75), of Alexandria, May 4, 2023
- **DONA SAUER** (69), of Alexandria, May 3, 2023
- **SUSAN SMITH** (65), of Alexandria, April 25, 2023
- **CATHERINE SMOOT** (100), of Alexandria, April 30, 2023
PUBLIC HEARING of an Ordinance to amend and reordain Section 2-135.2 (HEALTH PROFESSION OFFICE) and 2-174 (MEDICAL CARE FACILITY) of Article II (DEFINITIONS) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment No. 2023-00002 (Implementation Ordinance for Text Amendment No. 2023-00002 associated with outdoor dining and parklets approved by City Council on April 15, 2023).

PUBLIC HEARING of an Ordinance to amend and reordain the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, by adopting and incorporating therein the amendment heretofore approved by city council to the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of such master plan as Master Plan Amendment No. 2023-00001 and no other amendments, and to repeal all provisions of the said master plan as may be inconsistent with such amendment (Implementation Ordinance for Master Plan Amendment No. 2023-00001 associated with Montgomery Center approved by City Council on April 15, 2023).

PUBLIC HEARING of an Ordinance to revise Title XI (Health, Environmental & Sanitation Regulations), Chapter 2 (Food and Food Establishments) of the City Code to amend the requirements for additional Food Protection Manager Certificates, to allow mobile businesses to use alternative contact methods to be displayed on their food truck, to adjust the permit expiration date to 12 months from date of issue and to remove duplication of inspection with other State agencies.

PUBLIC HEARING of an ordinance to amend and reordain Ordinance A (General Provisions) Chapter 4 (Committees, Boards and Commissions) of Title 2 (GENERAL GOVERNMENT) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

PUBLIC HEARING of an Ordinance to amend and reordain Section 2-4-112 (CREATION, COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION) of Article N (ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) of Chapter 4 (COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS) of Title 2 (GENERAL GOVERNMENT) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL (LIMITED COPIES AVAILABLE). If the mayor finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting, this meeting will be continued to the following Saturday.

GLORIA SITTON, CMC, CITY CLERK

THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

For information on the following applications or to comment, visit the City’s website at www.alexandriava.gov/planning or call (703) 746-4666.

Special Use Permit #2023-00032
1320 Prince Street
Administrative Special Use Permit request for a New Use for a Restaurant with outdoor seating; zoned: CL/Commercial Low Business Name: Connect & Sip Cafe Applicant: Marsha D. Banks-Harold Planner: Mavis Stanfield – mavis.stanfield@alexandriava.gov

In accordance with Section 11-500 of the Zoning Ordinance, the above listed request may be approved administratively by the
The Alexandria City School Board is holding a public hearing to solicit input and collect information from the community to guide the school division on the current Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund Plan.

The public hearing will be held on June 1, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room at 1340 Braddock Place in Alexandria.

Use the link below to sign up to speak or submit written comments.
The deadline to sign up or submit comments is noon on May 31, 2023. The deadline to submit written comments must be submitted by Noon on May 17, 2023.

For more information, please contact the Clerk of the Board at 703-619-8316 or at email at boardclerk@aps.k12.va.us.

**Public comments regarding the MOU** may be submitted in the following ways:
- **Sign up to speak** at the May 18, 2023 public hearing at: https://acpsweb.wufoo.com/forms/s6xswfn1ilhn1x/
- **Email written comments** to the Clerk of the Board at: boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us
- **U.S. Mail:** Clerk of the Board, Alexandria City School Board 1340 Braddock Place Alexandria, VA 22314

For more information, please contact the Clerk of the Board at 703-619-8316 or at email listed above.

The Alexandria City School Board will hold a budget public hearing on the FY 2024 Combined Funds Budget and the FY 2024-2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget during the School Board Meeting on May 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room located at 1340 Braddock Place in Alexandria.

**Public comments regarding the FY 2024 Combined Funds Budget and the FY 2024-2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget** may be submitted in the following ways:
- **Sign up to speak** at the May 18th public hearing at: https://acpsweb.wufoo.com/forms/wlfupeo0e02qz4w1/
- **Email written comments** to the Clerk of the Board at: boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us
- **U.S. Mail:** Clerk of the Board Alexandria City School Board 1340. Braddock Place Alexandria, VA 22314

Only comments related to the FY 2024 Combined Funds Budget and the FY 2024-2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget will be heard at the public hearing. Requests to speak or to submit written comments must be submitted by Noon on May 17, 2023.

For more information, please contact the Clerk of the Board at 703-619-8316.

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