King Street business organizations petition for community buy-in
BY KAITLIN MURPHY

Second in a series

As reported in the Times’ April 7 article “Is business booming?,” a revised Business Improvement District is being considered in Old Town along the King Street corridor. Supporters in favor and in opposition to the BID have been voicing their concerns that stem from the very nature of the proposal.

When the attempt was made to implement a BID in 2017 and 2018, the legwork was done by a group of business owners.

As reported in the Times, the current 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” according to the proposal.

This time around the city has a hand in pushing it.
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— Pia Taylor

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It’s a homecoming for Five Guys

Five Guys Enterprises LLC relocates corporate headquarters to ALX
BY KAITLIN MURPHY

“It feels like we are going home,” Five Guys’ public relations coordinator Brooke Blankenship said.

What started in 1986 by the local Murray family as a stand alone restaurant on Columbia Pike in Arlington grew to five locations in and around Alexandria. The restaurant was franchised in 2002 and later went global. After decades of being located outside the Beltway, Five Guys saw an opportunity to move and settled on Alexandria.

The search itself was a tall order. With 250 people working in their corporate offices in Lorton living throughout northern Virginia and approximately 250 colleagues across the country, the headquarters had to be a convenient location. Five Guys took the time to find the best location. They started to look for space before the pandemic because their lease was coming up for renewal.

“That was the impetus of the move in general and the search paused during the shutdown. That benefited us because more spaces opened up and so we were really able to set the criteria that served us best,” chief marketing officer Molly Catalano explained.

“We held a focus group of what the employees wanted in a new space and how they envisioned a collaborative yet hybrid environment which had to be worked into the design,” Catalano continued.

The location at 1940 Duke St. fit the bill. Designers helped with the build out and incorporated the desired elements of the space, taking the employees’ ideas into consideration. Innovations such as standing desks and phone booth rooms were introduced to the design concept.

“The space is down to earth. It reflects our brand. Feels homey, very comfortable. The new space is designed more intentionally for better collaboration when the team comes together,” Blankenship said.

“It feels like Five Guys. We are also excited for the amenities of the city as it will help with recruitment and attract talent and we are excited to be within the energy of the Beltway. The owners of Five Guys are enthusiastic about Alexandria. Our new location feels like we have moved to a community rather than just an office building,” Blankenship added.

The Carlyle neighborhood is convenient with close proximity to D.C., the airport, public transit, hotels and restaurants in addition to partnership opportunities with local businesses.

From quiet beginnings to global success, the Alexandria homecoming reflects the depth and breadth of the city’s small neighborhood charm and big city offerings.

The doors to the new headquarters opened July 17.

-kmurphy@alextimes.com

CERT training program for teens

The Alexandria Fire Department’s Office of Emergency Management is launching its first ever Teen Community Emergency Response Team training program this fall. Per the release, “CERT is a national program tailored to Alexandria that teaches community members how to prepare for disasters. Trained CERT volunteers make Alexandria more resilient and can be activated to support the City in emergency situations.

Established in 2003, the CERT program has been traditionally open to Alexandria residents, business owners and employees who are 18 years of age or older.” Applications can be found online at alexandriava.gov/CERT. The application process will be open until 5 p.m. on August 31.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

Lab & Shepherd Combo Baby 🐶

Just 9-months-old, this sweet pup is ready for Boot Camp. Fraser came to the Shelter as a shy and timid fellow but is responding well to quiet lessons and soothing voices. At 40 pounds, he won’t be too large for most homes. A favorite among the Staff, Fraser has an abundant personality and his ears seem to reflect his sunny disposition. He is thought to be part Lab and part white Swiss Shepherd.

Meet Fraser!
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ADOPTABLE PET OF THE WEEK

The new headquarters will be located at 1940 Duke St.
National Night Out will be held on August 1.
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921 Vicar Lane, Alexandria, 22302
For Sale
$2,350,000 | 5 Beds | 4.5 Baths
Donnan Wintermute | 703.608.6868
DWintermute@cbmove.com

OXFORD
4206 Kimbrelee Court, Alexandria, 22309
Open Friday 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Sat and Sun 1 - 3 p.m.
$1,369,900 | 5 Beds | 4.5 Baths
Dave Smith | dave.smith@cbmove.com | 202-938-7780
Patty Smith | patty.smith@cbmove.com | 571-525-5280

WOODLAND LAKE
6207 Elati Court, Alexandria, 22310
For Sale
$1,100,000 | 5 Beds | 3.5 Baths
Christine Armintrout | 517.271.1670
Christine.Armintrout@cbmove.com

SUMMERDAY
9815 Summerday Drive, Burke, 22015
For Sale
$850,000 | 4 Beds | 3.5 Baths
Steve Deleyiannis | 703.966.6062
SDeleyiannis@cbmove.com

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Residents can make more informed judgments about the Alexandria Police Department and its daily operations.”

– Marcel Bassett,
APD Public Information Officer

She has enjoyed her time so much, she intends to participate in the academy again this fall.

“I’m on a mission now ... I’m kind of curious, a lot has changed.”

Bassett cited transparency as a priority in the department, noting educating volunteers about various tools and technologies – such as the department’s body-worn cameras – helps to strengthen communication between officers and citizens.

Reminiscing about her first training classes, VanOcker agreed.

“There’s a lot of coordinated effort that has to go on behind the scenes. I remember some of those events were pre-planned for the next week. You can sign up for your ride-along. ... I can remember one night we all walked up to the top of the hill and they demoed the radar detector. It was very hands-on.”

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Members of the academy can expect an open-door policy when it comes to feedback and will be supported by the department through the learning process and beyond.

“At the end of each class, there’s a form to fill out, give us feedback, whatever is on your mind, what you like, what you didn’t like. So, it’s a policing that isn’t just, ‘we think we’re right and we’re trying to present it to you,’ but, it’s also another way of getting community members to talk to us to tell us where we can improve. It’s an open dialogue moment,” Bassett said.

Encouraging those who might be hesitant, Bassett emphasized the importance of the program and its impact on the department and the city. He reiterated the critical role residents play in the department’s success.

“We’re here for community and just trying to build community. And, while police are effective, we’re not the only solution to solving crime. We need community.”

VanOcker said she now has a robust network of people she never would have met without programs like the Community Police Academy.

“You don’t know what is available until you allow yourself to get involved.”

For those interested in applying to the Community Police Academy, you can find the application on the city of Alexandria website at alexandria.gov/Academies or e-mail APD’s Volunteer Office at mary.bruno@alexandriava.gov. The deadline for registration is August 18.

–awill@alextimes.com
through and has hired consulting firm MuniCap, Inc. on a $100k contract to help. The formation of the BISD board is also in full swing with Maurisa Potts who has been retained as a public relations consultant in support of the BID progress.

“In regards to me, Old Town Business (not the city) retained me to oversee and handle communication and PR needs for the project due to my extensive experience in working and understanding BIDs or BID-like models,” Potts explained in an email to the Times.

“On the BISD, we have posted a draft board of directors slate and proposed governance information,” Potts further clarified.

The Old Town Business Association, which the IRS classifies as a 501(c)(6) organization, defines BISD on their website OldTownBusiness.org.

“Business improvement service districts (BISD) are defined areas in a city or county in which property owners pay an additional, annual special tax (on top of the standard real property taxes) which is utilized to promote and improve the business environment within the BISD. BISDs are typically governed by a dedicated board of directors and led by an executive director and key staff. BISDs organize and manage services, activities, and events in the BISD, as well as arrange amenities above and beyond what a city or county would typically provide.”

 Initiatives at this scale require money to be sustainable long term so where would the

June 1, 2023

Honorable Mayor and members of City Council

Re: Waterfront Commission Support for Old Town Business Improvement Service District

Honorable Mayor and Members of Council:

The Waterfront Commission endorses enactment of an Old Town Business Improvement Service District (BISD) to provide enhanced services to businesses, residents, and visitors at the waterfront and along the King Street Corridor.

The Waterfront Commission has long encouraged the City Council to find long-term and sustainable ways to fund investment in waterfront infrastructure, maintenance, and management through mechanisms such as a business improvement district. This recommendation has been a feature of our annual budget recommendation for many years now.

In 2015-16, the Waterfront Commission empaneled a subcommittee to study governance models for waterfront services and activities. To achieve the goals of the Waterfront Small Area Plan—to be authentic, connected, inclusive, dynamic, diverse, manageable and sustainable—the Waterfront Commission recommended development of an operating model that provides the leadership and resources needed to operate and maintain waterfront infrastructure and services, and support enhanced programming. After looking at several different governance models, the Waterfront Commission endorsed the concept of a Community or Business Improvement District (BID).

The Waterfront Commission found that a BID offers the following features:

- A dedicated, nimble structure with strategic oversight and ability to synergize all aspects of waterfront commerce and development
- Entrepreneurial orientation that would efficiently use available resources, with greater benefits to stakeholders (residents, businesses, visitors)
- A governance structure that engages people most impacted by waterfront activities
- Focused oversight of programming and marketing to balance higher traffic
- Emphasis on attractive, well maintained waterfront space to create a cohesive and consistent waterfront appearance to a designated standard
The Old Town Business Association breaks down the numbers on their website. The BISD will be funded by a $0.10 service district tax that will be levied in addition to the real property tax (current rate of $1.11, with service district tax a total of $1.21, representing a 9% increase in the total tax rate) on parcels of real property within the OTB-BISD.

The timing of the renewed efforts to create a BISD and available funding coincides with pandemic relief grants. Services already under contract signal that funds were available to promote these efforts. In October 2022, Old Town Business Association was one of eight Alexandria businesses to be awarded grant money from the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the city’s ARP funds. The ALX B2B Business Association Grant Program allocated $535,000 to the following organizations:

• Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
• Alexandria Minority Business Association, Inc.
• Del Ray Business Association
• Eisenhower Avenue Public-Private Partnership
• Old Town Business Association
• Old Town North Alliance
• Social Responsibility Group
• West End Business Association

Grants were awarded to associations that applied in August 2022. Applicants requesting more than $50,000 had to provide a match of $1 for every $5 in grant funds awarded. All grantees must use all funds by the end of 2023 and are required to file regular reports to AEDP on how the funds are being used.

City Manager Jim Parajon clarified in an email response to the Times that city allocated funds for the implementation of a BID were included in the city budget:

“The City of Alexandria is not funding the BID. As a part of the approved fiscal year 2023 operating budget for economic development, the city
allocated funding for the implementation of a BID in Old Town Alexandria.” Following budget approval, City staff conducted a solicitation to contract with a consultant experienced in working with local jurisdictions to implement similar districts. The consultant, MuniCap, is working to:

1. Ensure the proponent group is following Virginia’s statute and the City’s adopted guidelines and process to propose and submit an Old Town BID application for City Council consideration and,

2. Prepare materials that can be used by others as templates for similar economic development initiatives across the City.

With financial confidence in the viability of a BISD, groups within the City government are voicing their support. In a public letter dated June 1, the Waterfront Commission backs efforts to move forward with this plan:

“Waterfront Commission endorses enactment of an Old Town Business Improvement Service District (BISD) to provide enhanced services to businesses, residents, and visitors at the waterfront and along King Street.”

In addition, “The Waterfront Commission recommends that City Council take the key step of establishing an Old Town BISD, fulfilling a long-standing recommendation of our commission’s efforts to advise implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.”

The letter’s language lends its support to council, not directly to the small businesses along King Street. While the nature of the BID is a business owner-initiated endeavor, it appears that the current understanding is that a push from the city will bring the initiative to fruition.

This level of influence makes it harder for smaller non-city-backed businesses to be heard on the issue.

Organizers in opposition to the BID set up a public website bidno.org warning of the tax implications on the small businesses along King Street if a BID becomes established. A petition on the landing page of the website encourages neighbors to sign and share the petition.

How is this BID process so different from the earlier attempts of the Old Town businesses?

We have met ... with individual property and business owners to educate them about our initiative and to seek their feedback. Not a quick process, but the right way to do this.”

– Scott Shaw,
Partner, Alexandria Restaurant Partners

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In an email interview Scott Shaw, of Alexandria Restaurant Partners wrote, “[The] previous proposed BID area was much larger, running up and down Washington and including Prince and Cameron. It was a fair criticism then that it’s hard to design effective programs for an area this big, diverse. We have chosen to make our BID very tight, much smaller.”

The smaller area also reset the budget to around $1.2M, about half the size as initially planned.

A “blueprint didn’t exist in 2016 on how this might come to be. City Council has now laid that out clearly... who gets to vote, % property owners who must approve. We didn’t have to do anything here, but just having a process to follow now makes it very different. We have been very intentional in our efforts to reach out to people and then incorporate their feedback into our plans,” Shaw shared.

Shaw shared the steps taken in the new efforts via email:

“We began with a quiet phase last December/January in which we talked to 60+ property and business owners. We used that to test the basic viability of a BISD, and to get ideas on what people wanted to see it focus on. This became our initial plan.

Beginning in February we launched public meetings, virtual and in person, to present that draft plan

Since February we have met daily with individual property and business owners to educate them about our initiative and to seek their feedback. Not a quick process, but the right way to do this.

While conversations and planning around a BISD along King Street continue, the efforts to build out the board of directors, hiring of PR professionals, and city backing strengthen the foundation for implementation.

A bulk of the budget from the BISD would focus on social and PR to promote specific businesses and the 20+ local events that Old Town Business now runs, which the BISD would manage.”

With so many players involved, the BISD has the feel of a top-down approach instead of a grassroots initiative. The additional layers of bureaucracy have only muddied the waters regarding a BISD for the small businesses that operate under existing marketing plans that add charm and revenue to the Port City.
Out of the woods

John Woods Jr. discusses his life and legacy
BY LEXIE JORDAN

In September of 1967, when John Woods, Jr. was 24 years old, he was deployed to Vietnam. A little over a month later, after celebrating his 25th birthday, he was flying a helicopter near the Cambodian border and was shot down.

“It was on a Friday afternoon at 3 o’clock. It took them until 7 o’clock at night to cut me out of the aircraft,” Woods said.

Woods suffered a plethora of leg injuries and remained in a hospital in Vietnam for a month where he went into cardiac arrest twice while on the operating table and had pneumonia. He was then transported to a hospital in Japan.

“When [the Japanese doctor] had finished reading through my chart he looked at me and said, ‘Lieutenant, there is no way medically that you could have survived the cardiac arrest, shock and loss of blood. You are a ghost.’”

Woods was born in Washington D.C. in 1942. His father worked on the Hill, was in the Army at the Pentagon during World War II and went to law school at Georgetown at night. Once the war ended, Woods, his parents and three younger siblings moved to Rock Hill, SC where he spent the rest of his childhood.

Woods’ dream was to go to school at Duke University and
study engineering; however, he was unable to afford it and attended The Citadel where he was in the Army ROTC and studied engineering. When he was in his junior year, his dream came true and he went to Duke for graduate school where he got his masters in engineering.

Upon graduating from Duke, Woods went to Ft. Belvoir in July of 1966. He then was an executive officer for an advanced training company until that November. Following that, he went to flight school in Texas and then advanced flight school in Alabama. He graduated in August of 1967.

A month after graduating, he was deployed – or, as Woods likes to put it, he got his “all expenses paid trip to Vietnam.”

His return to the United States was bittersweet. He was put in the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD on Dec. 14, 1967. On his drive in the ambulance to the hospital, he asked the drivers to take him through the capital.

“I was in a full body cast, but I remember going by the capital and seeing the flags flying, and I was in tears,” Woods said.

Woods spent the next three years commuting from Old Town to Walter Reed where he would go for various surgeries and physical therapy. His goal was to be able to fly again.

“I hold a military record of 665 days of convalescent leave,” Woods said as he recalled all the days he was in and out of the hospital being the orthopedists’ “project.”

In the spring of 1970, Woods was deemed okay to fly again. The Corp of Engineers asked him to come work with them; however, after receiving advice from higher ranked officers, he chose to take a medical retirement and be an engineer outside of the Army.

In September of 1970, Woods got a job at an engineering firm that was offered to him by a friend, George Fortune, who lived down the street from him in Alexandria. He then retired from the Army in October.

Woods worked with Fortune and became the structural engineer at FDE, later renamed Woods Peacock Engineering Consultants. He was an architectural designer primarily in Washington, D.C. and northern Virginia. He received his professional engineering license in 1975 and became a minority
Woods was a part of many successful projects, including the building of the Torpedo Factory in Old Town.

“I worked on many historic houses here in Old Town, and I am very proud of the fact that, when I retired, real estate agents and small contractors often said, ‘John, we wish you hadn’t retired.’”

Woods also traveled to every continent and 45 countries throughout his career doing renovations, restorations, and other projects.
construction and physical security upgrades for the U.S. State Department.

“Rome is one of my favorite places, mostly because I got to go five different times,” Woods said.

Woods was also very busy outside of his engineering career. He served as the chairman of the Mayor’s Commission for the Disabled and around 1980 was asked to serve on the Governor’s Commission for the Disabled. He also was very active in the Alexandria Red Cross and Alexandria Chamber of Commerce of which he became president in 1985.

He was not very involved with veteran related programs until 1979 when he went out to dinner with some old Army friends.

“We were talking about our services in Vietnam and one of these individuals called me after that dinner and asked me if, as an engineer, I would be interested in participating with the building of the Vietnam Memorial, and I agreed,” Woods said.

Woods served on the board of the Veteran Fund for the next 40 years primarily as treasurer and stepped down last December. He is now a board member emeritus.

“My intent was that Vietnam veterans like me that are alive, when we are at the memorial, we see ourselves reflected in the black granite,” Woods said. “We had no idea that we would have as many people visiting the memorial each year as we do. To believe that I had a part in that is overwhelming.”

Woods said that one of his biggest frustrations is how divided this country is.

“When I was flying helicopters in Vietnam, I was not flying for democrats or republicans, I was flying for Americans to exercise all the privileges that we have.”

Woods retired from his job as an engineer in 2019 and now spends his time with his wife, Donna Cramer, at their house in Old Town.

He noted how COVID-19 stunted his post-retirement traveling abilities, and now that it’s clearing up, he plans on traveling as much as he can. He spent this past Christmas in Europe with his wife and two kids.

This coming fall, Woods and Cramer plan on traveling across Canada trying all the delicacies.

“My wife and I like to say that we are foodies and wineies, but if the food’s not good we’re whinies,” Woods said with a laugh.

Regardless of where Woods’ heads next, it is sure to be an adventure.
National Centenarians Day is September 22. The day recognizes individuals who are 100 or more years old. This special day was founded by Williamsport Nursing Home in Williamsport, Maryland. According to the Population Division of the United Nations, there are currently 573,000 centenarians in the world. A recent study by the World of Statistics noted that the United States of America is leading other countries in reaching this milestone with over 98,000 centenarians!

These older adults continue to add value to society. They bring 100 years of experiences, living through historic events such as The Great Depression, the First Man in Space, Y2K and our most recent pandemic. This is a time to celebrate their resilience, wisdom, and contributions. Last year we celebrated 13 honorees. Some advice given were to “learn another language and try to travel and learn about other cultures,” “make the best out of every situation,” and “avoid excess in everything.”

It is with pleasure that we announce the City of Alexandria, in collaboration with Mayor Wilson and the Successful Aging Committee, will celebrate the distinctive experiences and achievements of our centenarians.

The United States of America is leading with more than 98,000 centenarians.

There was a time when the thought of living off MREs did little for your appetite. But those days are done—at Falcons Landing, you’ll find the MRE replaced by culinary delights ready for your enjoyment. Whether you’re looking for something quick and convenient, a cocktail with friends or something more elegant, our three dining options are sure to keep you coming back for more.
achievements of Alexandria centenarians in-person. Participants will receive certificates honoring their lifetime achievements and an Alexandria recognition coin.

The presentation will be September 12 at 5 p.m. in the City Hall Vola Lawson Lobby. Alexandria residents who will be 100 years or older by December 31, 2023 and wish to be acknowledged are invited to participate. Light refreshments will be served and a special musical selection from the Alexandria Citizen Band will be played.

Participants can sign up online at alexandriava.gov/Aging by August 15.

TheSuccessful Aging Committee includes representatives from Senior Services of Alexandria, St. Martin de Porres Senior Center, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Catholic Charities and the City’s Division of Aging and Adult Services and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. Join them by helping to honor your older loved one living in the City of Alexandria.

For additional questions call Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-4414, extension 110 or email admin@seniorservicesalex.org.

The writer is the resource coordinator for the City of Alexandria's Division of Aging and Adult Services.

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“Faith and Race” is available now.

Local author secures church’s legacy in new book
BY AMY WILL

Melynda Dovel Wilcox never set out to write a book. The long-time Alexandria author and publisher of the newly released, “Faith and Race: One Church’s Response to the Civil Rights Movement,” fell into a dark and complicated hole, however; and the light she discovered, would profoundly change her life.

“I tell people this is sort of an accidental book. And, as I came to appreciate during the course of doing the research, it was a book that I felt like I had no choice but to write. That I had to write this book because the main character was basically speaking to me directly and telling me that I needed to write this book – which is kind of a very surreal kind of experience for me,” she said.

Wilcox grew up in the Shenandoah Valley area of Virginia. After attending college in North Carolina, she moved to Alexandria and never left.

“I’ve spent my career as a writer and editor, mostly for Kiplinger’s personal finance magazine, where I wrote mostly about retirement and health care issues. Those are sort of my areas of expertise.”

And, while her passion for writing is strong – Wilcox discusses local issues in her blog “Port City Notebook” – so is her faith.

Wilcox found Westminster Presbyterian Church on Cameron Mills Road shortly after settling in the city and immediately felt at home.

“I’ve been a member there for almost 50 years – or actually 35 years. I joined right after I moved to Alexandria just after I graduated from college… I was married there. My children were baptized there.”

Wilcox speaks warmly about Westminster and the role the church has played in her life.

She never imagined that decades of old sermons from a forward-thinking pastor would lead to a personal awakening.

In May 2020, the death of a 46-year-old Black man in Minneapolis named George Floyd spurred outrage; resulting in a racial justice movement that touched communities everywhere – including Westminster’s congregation.

“After the murder of George Floyd, the session of the church – which is the governing body – decided to form a committee or task force really, to look at our church’s response to racism and racial justice. To look at what we should be doing differently as a church in order to advance racial justice. A part of that… a big part of that was to understand our history.”

She went on to explain, “I think there were nine recommendations that came out of that task force. One of them was to prepare a history of the church as it related to race and the civil rights movement.”

Wilcox volunteered to take on the research and write up her findings for members of the church.

“Really, honestly, I didn’t expect to find a lot of information. I was not aware that our church had done anything noteworthy.”

Wilcox soon realized that was not the case. She found she had a story to tell. And it started with a man named Cliff Johnson.

Westminster’s congregation was founded in 1939 by the Reverend Frederick W. Haverkamp and the original portion of the colonial-style building was constructed in 1942. The following year, a young pastor named Cliff Johnson arrived and immediately began to carve out his corner in the community.

“Cliff Johnson was the first called pastor to Westminster and he was there until 1970. He died of a brain tumor in his fifties. He died prematurely. His legacy was really cut short, even though it was a long legacy. It was not as long as it might have been,” Wilcox shared.

“I started reading his sermons. What I found was a human being who was really wrestling with his own upbringing as a child during the Jim Crow south, in Columbus, Georgia.”

According to Wilcox’s report for Westminster, published on the church’s website and titled, “Westminster and the Civil Rights Movement,” Johnson graduated from Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina and earned a master’s degree in journalism from the University of South Carolina. He then attended Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, eventually settling in Alexandria.

Wilcox described the emotions she experienced combing through pages of vintage documents and listening to sermons recorded on reel-to-reel tapes as Johnson’s words revealed a man grappling with his own feelings of trepidation towards desegregation and the realization that the climate also needed to change.

“His preaching was very honest and personal. Sometimes it is honest to a point of feeling raw. And he felt that it was his duty as the pastor of the church to share his convictions about these issues from the pulpit,” Wilcox explained.

“There was a point at which I felt like I had to write this book and that’s when he has a quote in one of his sermons where he says that ‘someday someone is going to go back and look to see where we stood on this issue and I want it to be known that Westminster had one shining page in that book that will be written about it.’ And, you know, I was that person he was talking to and that just really gave me goosebumps and it was like, ‘yes, this story has to be written and I have to be the one that writes it; so that 50 years from now somebody can go back and see where we stood.’”

SEE WILCOX
The quote Wilcox is referring to is from a sermon delivered on September 7, 1958 and printed both in Wilcox’s report and the book. A portion of the quote reads:

“Somebody will go back and write what was done in this community in this conflict. It is my unabashed aim, as the minister of this church, for Westminster to have one glowing page in that book. I should like for that page which shall be written in history about the conduct of Westminster to run something like this: There was a bitter struggle in that community; there were high feelings, there was anger and there were internal conflicts throughout the community. The bitterness and the feelings ran into one crisis after another, but right on through the battle, there was a church known as Westminster Church which in her unity stood solidly as a rock.”

Wilcox continued her research and finished what would become the draft of her book in April 2022.

Along the way, she saw the progression of Johnson’s beliefs and ultimately his support for the integration of schools. She also came across another voice for change within Westminster, named Connie Ring, who later embedded himself in Alexandria’s political scene and committed to the push for equality.

“The book is roughly broken into part one about Cliff Johnson, part two about Connie and then part three about the church itself,” Wilcox noted.

She continued, “You’ve got the pastor and what he was telling people; and, you’ve got a member of the church who was really very quietly – but effectively – working in the realm of local government to make change. The third part is sort of what the church was doing as an organization, as an institution.”

Reflecting on her journey, Wilcox shared, “It felt like a calling that I needed to do. And, it also made me realize how important it is that we all look in our own mirrors at ourselves, our families and our family histories, our church histories, in our community histories and see what roles did people play that were constructive or – or not constructive.”

She hopes the book will give others the courage and motivation to speak out.

“Cliff Johnson was having these really honest and courageous conversations with his congregation back in the fifties and sixties. And if he could do that in the fifties and sixties, well, why can’t we do it today?”

In a full-circle moment, “Faith and Race: One Church’s Response to the Civil Rights Movement,” was published by Cliff Johnson’s granddaughter, Ellen Hamilton. Her company, Yellow Dot Publishing, is based in Alexandria.

“She [Ellen] was amazed that I had uncovered some stuff about her grandfather that she didn’t know. So, it was just natural to have her be the person to do it because it was her grandfather and she did a beautiful job.”

As for another book down the road, Wilcox indicated there is more to be told.

“I recently learned from Cliff Johnson Jr.’s wife that they have printed copies of all of Cliff Johnson’s sermons in their basement in a box. I think there is maybe three and ten odds that there might be a second edition of the book that has more information about Cliff Johnson’s sermons.”

awill@alextimes.com
Staying put

How to make your home work for you through the years

BY BRANDPOINT

“Aging in place” is the phenomena of older adults remaining in their homes as they age, rather than relocating or moving into an institutional setting. In fact, about 75% of adults aged 50 and older would like to stay in their current homes or communities for as long as possible, compared to about half of 18 to 49-year-olds, according to AARP.

With age, lifestyle needs change. If staying in your home is important to you, you may have concerns about getting around your home. Getting simple tasks done, including personal care, may seem overwhelming as you age. Whether you’re a future caregiver or a care recipient, the suggestions below can help alleviate worries along with easy ideas to ensure you have a functional home.

Plan ahead

Take the time to sit down and think about the types of help you, a partner or a care recipient may need. Everyone’s situation is different, so it’s important to take the necessary steps now to avoid future issues.

One way to plan ahead is to talk to a doctor. Oftentimes, there may be medical conditions that could affect or complicate the way one ages in place or even hinder mobility around the house. If you’re a caregiver, it can prove helpful to be proactive. While these may be daunting conversations, it’s important to have them with a doctor and discuss best practices for living in your home long-term.

Another way to plan ahead is to create an at-home checklist of simple design updates that’ll allow a safe, independent living experience. The easiest way to identify what to change is to walk around the house and take note of anything that could pose a challenge in the future. Consider door levers over doorknobs, light switches with a rocker panel versus a toggle switch or even awning-style windows to make them easier to open and close.

Aging-in-place updates don’t always have to look and feel dull.

HOME OF THE WEEK

1780s Federal townhome with off-street parking

History and modern vision intersect in the heart of central Old Town. Completely renovated between 2021 and 2022, modern luxury and convenience function alongside historic charms in this 1780 Federal home. More than 4,800 total square feet, four bedrooms, five full and one-half bathrooms, a finished lower level with historic brick alcoves and a fully enclosed brick patio. Space is as abundant as the character in this home.

The primary suite is situated on a private half-level featuring nearly 11-foot ceilings, a light-filled dressing area, fireplace and en suite bathroom. Another private respite can be found in the fourth bedroom or bonus room, which encompasses the entire upper level of the home.

Bathed in natural light courtesy of the dormer windows and skylights, this large space has its own full bathroom, closet and gorgeous original wood floors.

A rare luxury in Old Town, discover the serenity found in the private back and side yards. Features garden beds of magnolias and hydrangeas. Your personal oasis in the heart of the city. A sunroom off the kitchen leads to the brick patio with gate access to allow the patio to be used for off-street parking.

The home comes with one assigned parking space located in a paved surface lot just outside the property.

The ideal location, situated in the heart of Old Town.

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Completely renovated while maintaining the historic charm. Middle: Primary bedroom suite features nearly 11-foot ceilings. Right: Rare off-street parking and large outdoor space.

AT A GLANCE

Address:
609 Cameron St.,
Alexandria 22314

Neighborhood:
Old Town

Price: $2,995,000

Square feet: 4,803

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 5 full, 1 half

Year built: 1780

Contact:
Jennifer Lloyd Miller
TTR Sotheby’s International Realty Old Town
703-345-4004
jlloydmiller@ttrsir.com

ttrsir.com

PHOTOS/ANTHONY DANIELS, HOMETRACK REAL ESTATE MARKETING
close. Making subtle changes like these can have long-term impacts on your comfortability and ability to stay put.

Tap resources
If one is already having trouble moving around the house, it may be time to outsource assistance. Some people avoid electric scooters or chairs due to the hefty price tag, but what many don’t realize is that some at-home electronic aids are covered by Medicare. Other available resources you can contact if in need of home modifications or low-cost assistive devices include the Administration for Community Living, the National Rehabilitation Information Center and AARP.

If you wish to revamp your space with stylish home furnishings that allow for aging in place, having a consultation with an experienced local home designer, or Certified Aging in Place Specialist is your best bet. These professionals are trained in meeting the needs of older adults by assisting with aging-in-place home renovations. Whether you need pocket doors to help with mobility between rooms, wider hallways for wheelchairs, or even a single-story house plan with a complete second suite, these designers can help update a home to adapt to a family.

Stylish installations
Aging-in-place updates don’t always have to look and feel dull. You can make simple tweaks to make any space look presentable and elegant. An easy place to start implementing these tweaks is in the bathroom. Easy home aging-in-place modifications could be eliminating hard-to-reach areas like high or low cabinets. Instead, opt for darker hued drawers right under your countertop. They are more accessible and can easily match almost any kitchen décor. Need additional aging-in-place thoughtful kitchen inspiration? Introduce a mobile, adjustable kitchen island with lots of storage to avoid excess meal prepping and standing time.

If aging in place is the path forward, it’s important to realize there’s more to it than just staying put. Like every stage in life, it’s important to ensure that plans are thought through. When thinking through ways to create a safer and age-friendly home environment, take advantage of resources available to you and prioritize updating rooms you utilize the most. Focus on the basics and create a well-coordinated and accessible space with fixtures that don’t compromise on aesthetics or functionality.

to see an active dig and learn about local history. Event includes food, a DJ and other fun activities. 

**Time:**
1 to 3 p.m.

**Location:**
999 N. Henry St.

**Information:**
alive-inc.org

**JULY 29**

## BEATS, BITES AND BREWS

Enjoy a full day of entertainment. Food, music, shopping and more. Local bands, wineries and breweries will be on site for tastings with purchase of ticket. Admission is free. Pet friendly. Rain or shine.

**Time:**
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Location:**
300 John Carlyle St.

**Information:**
thecarlylecommunity.com

**JULY 30**

## HARRY POTTER’S BIRTHDAY

Enjoy a special guided tour for families that will explore the old Apothecary and the historic muggle medicines that inspired the Herbology and Potions of Harry’s wizarding world. At the end of the tour test your skills and make your own potion to try at home. Tickets required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Time:**
Varied

**Location:**
105 - 107 S. Fairfax St.

**Information:**
apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=52236
Commentary

Duke Street Transitway

BY SANDY MODELL

Had the mayor listened to my opening statement at the public hearing on June 27 instead of planning his “gotcha moment” by reading a memo I wrote over a decade ago in support of bus rapid transit, he would have heard me say “I am all for transit improvements, increased mobility and attracting more people to transit.”

After reading extensively from my 2011 memo, the mayor demanded to know what had changed. I answered that Duke Street had changed.

He cut me off when I attempted to elaborate and explain my concerns about the design and its impact on adjacent neighborhoods, small businesses on the corridor and bus riders. I also attempted to ask Wilson my questions as to why there was no small business representative on the advisory committee, as set out in the committee’s establishment. Sadly, he refused to let me ask the question.

The city’s presentation made it clear that the Duke Street Transitway project consultants relied on computer modeling to support the project’s goals and findings. Modeling, although useful, should not be solely relied upon in a project of this magnitude, cost and impact. Because with a project of this size, the devil is always in the details.

For example, did the consultants and staff actually come out to the corridor in the afternoon peak period and observe the traffic nightmare caused by the Telegraph Road ramp and the backups beyond Quaker Lane or did they rely on the models and cursory drive-bys?

How often do they observe the gridlocked intersections at Duke and Quaker, Duke and Sweeley and Duke and Roth where they are proposing new U-turn movements to access businesses?

How many business owners between Roth and Sweeley knew about the proposed elimination of left turns into their parking areas? I visited several of those businesses and was told they either did not understand the impacts or did not receive a visit or information from the city.

At the June 27 hearing, the local business owner of the Caribbean Pool Service on Moncure stated that no one from the city called to inform him that the Duke Street service lane that he relies upon to access his business is proposed to become a one-way street. City Council seemed surprised that his service vehicles and customers will no longer have direct access to his business from Duke Street and instead will have to cut through the West Taylor Run neighborhood to get to it.

This is one of several proposed design changes that will significantly negatively impact both businesses and adjacent neighborhoods.

In addition to citizen concerns regarding the major changes to service roads and limiting access to homes and businesses, there are also concerns about reducing bus stops from twenty to eight and the impact of those changes on bus riders, particularly riders with limited mobility. Although the staff had reached out to riders at some of the stops, I spoke with a number of riders who were completely unaware that the city is proposing to eliminate their stops and that they will have to walk an additional quarter to half a mile to access the transitway.

The Duke Street corridor is too fragile and too dysfunctional to build a transitway fraught with design problems. City staff writes it off by saying that “change can be hard.” But if the changes negatively impact businesses and their customers, bus riders, and overall traffic safety, particularly at already gridlocked intersections, then those proposed changes should be reevaluated before the BRT project enters into further design phases.

The city should first address the current peak period congestion and backups caused by the Telegraph Road ramp. The city plans to implement several transportation projects that could reduce congestion and increase bus reliability, such as a new Telegraph Road access point, Adaptive Traffic Signalization, or dedicated bus lanes.

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.
Changes to the criminal code

BY BRYAN PORTER

In the 2023 session, the Virginia General Assembly passed a number of bills which would affect changes to the criminal code. In this article I will highlight a few of the bills that are likely to have a noticeable impact. By no means is my list designed to be comprehensive, as literally dozens of changes were made by the Assembly, many of them small procedural fixes. Unless noted otherwise, all changes to the code went into effect on July 1, 2023.

Organized Retail Theft

As the Times recently reported, organized retail theft remains an ongoing problem around the Commonwealth. The legislature created a new criminal felony offense in response to the issue, punishable by up to 20 years in prison. The new organized retail theft section requires proof that the person charged acted in concert with another person to commit larceny from a retail store and stole more than $5000 aggregated over a 90-day period with the intent to sell the stolen property for monetary or other gain.

Fentanyl

Another pressing public safety issue is the distribution of fentanyl. The Assembly passed a bill including any substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl in the definition of the term “weapon of terrorism” as that term is already defined in the Code. Any person who knowingly manufactures or distributes a substance containing fentanyl for profit is now guilty of distributing a weapon of terrorism, punishable as a felony with a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Sexual Extortion

The threat to release intimate photos or videos for the purpose of extorting sexual favors has unfortunately proliferated in the era of social media. Unfortunately, such actions did not violate the current criminal code, which requires a financial motive to establish extortion. The Assembly remedied the situation by enacting the Sexual Extortion section, which makes it a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison to threaten to release or publish intimate photos or videos for the purposes of extorting sexual favors.

Drones

As is often the case, the Code falls behind the progress of technology. Two new code sections address the proliferation of drones. The first makes it illegal to fly a drone for the purposes of secretly peeping or spying into a dwelling. The second prohibits flying drones over any jail or prison for the purposes of dropping any item or photographing or videotaping of inmates. As people devise more unlawful methods for using drones, expect more code sections addressing the problem.

Child Abduction

In 2021, an unfortunate event occurred in Giles County. A deranged woman abducted a toddler from a church day care program, intending to raise him as her own child. Luckily, law enforcement quickly made an arrest and returned the child unharmed to his parents. But the Commonwealth’s Attorney, Bobby Lilly, soon learned the maximum penalty for this crime was only 10 years, exactly half the maximum penalty for grand larceny.

This situation caused Lilly to act in concert with the victim’s family. Through perseverance, they persuaded the Assembly to enact a significant change. The new maximum penalty for non-parental abduction for any illegal purpose is life in prison.

“Swatting”

Another new crime, engendered by technology is “swatting.” Named for police special response “SWAT” teams, the crime consists of using an internet connection to mask one’s identity and location when calling 911 to report a violent offense. The aim is to punish an enemy by falsely causing the police to respond to the enemy’s home with tactical teams and a show of force. Obviously, such a situation is more than a nuisance and can end in tragedy. A new code section more directly addresses this situation, creating a misdemeanor for simply falsely summoning an emergency response and a more serious felony offense if the emergency response results in serious bodily injury or death.

All of these changes went into effect on July 1, 2023. As always, I encourage citizens to go online and read each of these bills. The text of all bills may be found at lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+men+BIL

The writer is owner of the Wholistic Hound Academy and served as CEO of the DASH bus system for 28 years. She helped start the system in 1984, serving as the lead transit expert for the City of Alexandria for more than 33 years.

The writer is the commonwealth’s attorney for Alexandria.
Entertainment radio made its debut in the United States around 1910. Soon radio stations played a variety of comedies, dramas, game shows and music formats for millions of listeners around the country. The first broadcasts used AM signals, and Alexandria’s first radio station, WPIK broadcast in AM, despite the recent popularity of FM broadcasts. WPIK’s 730 kHz signal continued to broadcast well into the 21st century, even though its call letters changed multiple times. Early wireless radio transmissions in the Washington, DC area belonged to the U.S. Navy and Post Office. The first commercial stations in the area began to broadcast around 1921, and by 1923, stations began to spread across the AM dial. The 1920s to 1950s are considered the Golden Age of Radio in the United States, and it was in 1945 that WPIK signed on as a country music station. Television’s popularity exploded in the 1950s, which hurt radio stations’ hold on the American public. WPIK broadcast from 1945 through 1980. Legend has it that Jimmy Dean, of sausage fame, debuted his hit “Big Bad John” on WPIK in 1961. The song about a drifter named John, who died saving his fellow miners, was the first country song to go gold. Dean was nominated for a Grammy as Best Male Vocalist of the Year in 1962, and the song was nominated for Song of the Year. Ultimately, it won the Grammy for Best Country & Western Recording. Dean had to re-record the song with altered lyrics, since the original included the line, “At the bottom of this mine lies one hell of a man—Big John.”

After 1980, AM 730 frequently changed call signs and formats. Some highlights include a soul-oldies format, an oldies station, a business news financial advice format, ESPN Deportes Radio, a conservative talk-radio station, and in this century a Spanish-language music station.

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

DEATH NOTICES

SANDRA BIBLE (78), of Alexandria, July 10, 2023
BETSYANNE BLACK (77), of Alexandria, July 10, 2023
MICHAEL CAMPILONGO (77), of Alexandria, June 9, 2023
CAROLE CLEM (84), of Alexandria, July 16, 2023
NEHA DEWAkar (23), of Alexandria July 8, 2023
WILLIAM EPES III (76), formerly of Alexandria, July 11, 2023
VERNA LOMAX (79), of Alexandria, December 19, 2022
TIMOTHY "TIM" LUTZ (75), of Alexandria, July 10, 2023
HUGH MOORE (84), of Alexandria, July 7, 2023
LOWELL "LOU" SCHUETZE (81), of Alexandria, July 12, 2023
WAYNE SIMPSON (89), of Alexandria, July 4, 2023

ACROSS
1 "The Devil Wears _____" 58 Dedicated poem
6 Detest 59 Raising up
11 Polluted haze 63 In progress
15 Prefix meaning "prior to" 65 "The Family Stone" actor Diane
18 Martini garnishes 68 "Label that tropical fruit already!"
19 _____ shirt (collared top from Hawaii) 71 Pheasant relative
20 Sleeveless top, for short 72 Steal from
21 *"Hey man, what happened to the surfboards I shipped?" 74 Turns sharply
22 *Splash" director Howard 75 Pheasant relative
23 Olden day "Wow!" 76 Sleeveless top, for short
24 "You Send Me" singer Sam 77 Bakery fare
25 Not even 78 Group of whales
26 Thing 79 Group of whales
27 Animals with rectangular pupils 80 Appeal to a higher power
28 Minecraft find 81 Mock a pigeon
29 Barn toppers 82 *Drum whose sound really comes to life?
31 "Shoot the Moon" singer Jones 83 Scottish city with a ferry to Ireland
32 *Kinshasa party night activity? 84 ___ Island (Providence's state)
33 Insects that live in hills 85 Hive buzzer
34 Ad_____ 86 *Drum whose sound really comes to life?
35 Voice part in a choir 87 VHS player
36 *World of Warcraft" event 88 Charged atoms
38 *Copycat Argentinian dance? 89 Petroleum jelly brand
41 Prompt 91 "Our Flag Means Death" actor Waititi
44 Sixty seconds 92 "Let me think about it...."
47 Arm bone 93 "I'll pass"
48 Secondary collegiate focus in cheese studies? 94 Violas' cousins
50 Hiking guide 95 Fairy tale character whose brother was almost eaten
54 IRS form info 96 Brooks of "Orange Is the New Black"
56 Aint correct? 98 Female horse
61 ___ it (walks) 99 Make changes to
66 "I'm impressed!" 100 In unison
67 Get older 101 Hirunks
68 "I'm impressed!" 102 Shop posting (Abbr.)
69 Darjeeling or chamomile 103 Weight unit
70 Aot base 104 Egghead
71 College application stat 105 Some-August babies
72 Steal from 106 Speed-of-sound word
73 Turns sharply 107 "Como usted?"
74 Turns sharply 108 TV cable port
75 Ages and ages 110 ___ Island (Providence's state)
76 Overdo it with the grandchildren 111 ___ Island (Providence's state)
77 Make changes to 112 Some-August babies
78 "Como usted?" 113 "I'll pass"
79 "Como usted?" 114 RPG runners
80 Appeal to a higher power 115 One of eight in a byte

Solutions from last week

GIVE IT A GO! by Sara Cantor, edited by Jeff Chen
PUBLIC NOTICE

The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation is planning to construct a floating kayak launch on Four Mile Run meeting ADA standards. The project is partially funded by the Recreational Trails Program. Project information is available at: https://www.fourmilerun.org/p/kayak-launch-project.html

Investigations are complete evaluating impacts to cultural and natural resources, and environmental justice. The Draft Categorical Exclusion (CE) is available on the Project’s webpage. If you do not have internet access, please call Kurt Moser at (703) 249-9895 to have the plans and/or CE mailed to you. Ask questions or to receive CE "as issued" - refer to the Recreational Trails Program. Project information is available at: https://www.fourmilerun.org/p/kayak-launch-project.html

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

RETAIL LICENSE APPLICATION – PART 2 (POSTING AND PUBLISHING)

Please publish the following item in the legal notice section of your newspaper. Please refer to the instructions provided on page 11.

Full Name(s) of Owner(s): [Redacted]
Trading as: [Redacted]
Address: 529 E Howell Ave, Alexandria, VA 22304
Date Notice Posted: July 14, 2023

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