Alexandria’s Jewish community struggles to cope with Hamas attack, specter of wider war
BY DYLAN JAFFE AND DENISE DUNBAR

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For Alexandria’s Jewish community – which numbers around 5,000, according to the Institute of Southern Jewish Life – these are not just events that happened to strangers in a faraway land. Rather, these are family members and friends who have been terrorized, taken hostage or killed.

To better understand how the invasion of Israel is impacting Alexandria’s Jewish community, we spoke with four Alexandria residents: a local rabbi; a resident who used to live in Israel; a resident who grew up with the mother of a young man taken hostage; and a Christian, whose husband is Jewish, who returned from a Holy Land pilgrimage days before the attacks.

This story is a localized look at how the sudden, brutal attack in Israel has affected Alexandrians, not a wider look at geopolitical issues in the Middle East.

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The attacks occurred 50 years and one day after the surprise launch of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Israeli Prime Testing ‘how much trauma one can hold’

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A heated debate

Zoning for Housing discussions intensify as November vote approaches
BY CAITLYN MEISNER

The city’s “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” is approaching a final vote next month, which is sparking intense debates of support and dissent of the initiative. This heated discussion accelerated after drafts of revised text amendments were released in early October.

The city recommended changes to the zoning ordinance on September 5 with a vote to come in late November by City Council. Recommendations, published on October 6, include changes to historic development patterns: identify neighborhoods where more units within the same footprint could be built, expand housing opportunities in single-family zones, potentially increase the number of household per lot in these zones, expand transit-oriented development, transition industrial zones to residential development, coordinate development districts and increase residential multi-family zones, office-to-residential conversions and townhouse zoning.

This initiative is meant to rewrite city zoning laws to allow for more units to be placed in various neighborhoods across the city, according to information released by the city and zoning staff. The initiative is meeting with stiff resistance, however, from residents who

SEE ZONING DEBATE | 11

Celebrating Halloween in ALX

Ghosts, spiders and other ghouly abound in Alexandria in the lead up to Halloween.

SEE TRAUMA | 5

Vol. 19, No. 43
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PHOTOS/DENISE DUNBAR

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We Let Our Clients Do The Talking

“We from the beginning, you instilled confidence in managing the many details [of our home sale], from the skillful analysis of the market to the planning and management of getting our home ready to show at its most appealing, to helping to determine the optimal date to go on the market, all leading to an impressively short time to “closed sale.”

Throughout the process, you provided positive and steady reinforcement of goals and deadlines. More importantly, you anticipated potential problems and quickly recommended viable solutions to keep the process moving forward and keeping stress levels to a minimum, often adding a necessary and much-needed dose of humor.

Finally, Courtney’s more youthful approach obviously appealed to younger first-time buyers while Bonnie’s years of experience and knowledge of the more seasoned buyer were key to reaching the broadest cross-section of potential buyers.

We could not have been happier working with Bonnie and Courtney or more grateful to The Rivkin Group for their amazing partnership and we could not have imagined a more satisfying outcome in the successful sale of our home.”

- Taylor family, Sellers in Fort Hunt 2023

Wishing everyone a safe & happy Halloween!

Bonnie & Courtney Rivkin
therivkingroup@compass.com
b: 703.598.7788 | c: 703.869.7788
rivkinresidential.com
APD vehicle display sparks investigation

An Alexandria Police Department vehicle displayed a cartoon pig head, domino mask and a shirt saying, “I can’t breathe,” Saturday, according to the ALX Accountability YouTube channel. Police Chief Don Hayes and City Manager Jim Parajon released a joint statement shortly after the video was posted saying they are aware of the incident, would like to apologize for it and have begun an investigation into what transpired. Mayor Justin Wilson said this incident was clearly unacceptable and City Councilor Alyia Gaskins said the city takes these incidents very seriously.

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Mob turns Seminary Road into race track

Drivers took over a Seminary Road intersection – near Southern Towers and The Blake, two residential complexes – by doing donuts early Saturday morning, according to a report from WUSA9. APD arrived at the scene later that morning and continued to monitor the area over the weekend. No injuries were reported and no arrests were made. A resident who lives near the intersection told WUSA9 that events like this happen often and are a regular nuisance for Seminary Road residents.

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Pedestrian struck at Duke and Paxton Streets

A pedestrian was struck by a vehicle in a crosswalk at the intersection of Duke and Paxton Street Sunday, according to a release sent by APD. The pedestrian received serious but non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to a hospital for treatment. The driver was cited for failure to yield at a crosswalk. APD is still investigating the incident.

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Shots fired on South 28th Street

Shots were fired at the 3200 block of South 28th Street early Wednesday morning, according to APD. No injuries were reported and APD is still investigating.

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Robbery on Duke Street

A robbery took place at the 2700 block of Duke Street Monday, according to APD. No injuries were reported and APD is still investigating.

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ALX Pink Gala celebrates local nonprofits

ALX Pink Gala attendees celebrating local nonprofits to benefit the National Breast Center Foundation.

Treats for Tricks

Our sweet, sweet Leroy Brown is 8-years-old and at 62-pounds, needs to ask for a special sort of home. He has a chronic condition which requires some special love from his Adopter. But, he promises you that he is worth it. Leroy is as sweet as they come with an incredibly loving and affectionate personality. He leans in for hugs and snuggles.

Meet Leroy!
AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt-By-Appointment
703-746-4774

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Old Town
“Because everyone needs a home.”
Scouts to collect food in annual drive

The 35th annual Scouting for Food drive will take place this weekend; Scouts of America’s Colonial District will be going door-to-door through neighborhoods asking for bagged food donations. Residents may leave their donations on their doorstep by 8:30 a.m. on November 4 when they will be picked up by the Scouts. Interested residents who may miss the pick up date and time should email colonial@ncacbssa.org until November 11 to coordinate or donate directly to ALIVE! on South Payne Street. This drive is held annually before Thanksgiving to assist local food banks, including ALIVE! More information can be found on fliers throughout the city.

Alexandria West hosting open houses

The city will host three open houses to promote the Alexandria West planning process, according to a press release from the city. The open houses will take place on October 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, November 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. at William Ramsey Recreation Center and November 8 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Del Pepper Community Resource Center. Each open house will allow participants to interact and ask questions about the project. Food, music and prizes are available. Those who miss the open houses can watch a recorded walk-through of each at www.alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest.

Crazy Mason Milkshake Bar grand opening

Crazy Mason Milkshake Bar celebrated its recently-opened Old Town location at 716 King St. on October 20 with a ribbon cutting ceremony, balloon-twisting and milkshakes. Mayor Justin Wilson attended to cut the ribbon with franchise owners, Erin and Robert Studer. Crazy Mason is a dessert chain with over-the-top milkshake and dessert options. This is the chain’s tenth location in the United States.

Annual leaf vacuuming, bag collection returns

Starting Monday through January, the city will vacuum leaves and collect bags according to a press release from the city. Residents who receive city trash and recycling collection services can recycle leaves at the curb. The city encourages residents not to mix leaves with trash or recycling. Residents can pick up free city paper leaf bags at City Hall, the Self-Serve Shed, Charles Houston Recreation Center, Patrick Henry Recreation Center, Mount Vernon Recreation Center and Chinquapin Recreation Center. Bags are available on a first come first served basis, and residents are limited to 15 bags per visit.

Roadwork continues

Road work on Duke Street, East and West Glendale Avenue and Ruffner Road has begun and will continue until November 5, according to a press release by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. Temporary “No Parking” signs have been posted throughout the city. Those interested in more information about the street work can go to alexandria.gov/go/2356.
Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared war on Hamas, the Palestinian militant group and governing body of the Gaza Strip. Hamas has fired around 2,200 missiles all over Israel, according to an ABC News report from October 19, particularly near populated cities such as Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and cities in southern Israel. The surprise aerial assault was accompanied by a ground invasion using bulldozers, paragliders, boats and thousands of armed Hamas fighters.

More than 1,400 people in Israel were killed during the invasion, including at least 32 U.S. nationals, according to The Washington Post. The region stands on the brink of a wider war, as Israel prepares to potentially invade Gaza, while regional Iranian proxies like Hezbollah, which, like Hamas, is labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State, appear poised to become involved.

'A constant knot in my stomach'

The surprise attack has left many Jewish Alexandrians distraught, afraid and angry. Alexandria resident Sharon Limmer is consumed by what has happened.

“I am watching or listening to the news constantly. Israel Radio has news headlines on the hour every hour, so I try to catch those,” Limmer said. “There’s a constant knot in my stomach. It’s what many of my friends are feeling.”

Limmer lived in Israel for 17 years and considers herself both American and Israeli.

“My family lived in Israel for a couple of years when I was a kid and then when I was 18 I moved back, and I was there for another 17 years, and served in the army. My kids were born there,” Limmer said.

Limmer, whose sister is a Hebrew-to-English translator in Israel, said it feels like everyone in the whole country is connected within one or two degrees of separation.

“We consider the whole country our family,” Limmer said. “Basically, I have seven million relatives there.”

Limmer’s sister lives in the city of Bet Shemesh, which is situated between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

“There have been a few rockets landing in the area and a few people were injured there, but nothing catastrophic like other places,” Limmer said. “The whole country is affected. But on a personal level, they’re feeling relatively safe because of where they are.”

As soon as she heard about the attacks, Limmer began trying to both contact friends and relatives in Israel and to grasp what had happened.

“It was a huge shock and my thoughts went immediately to all the people I know in that area [near Gaza],” Limmer said. “I didn’t watch all of the videos because I’d been warned. People who would videotape murders and rapes and brag about it... They decapitated babies. It will absolutely stick with everyone. You can’t forget that.”
TRAUMA

not get that out of your head. You cannot. There's no moving past that.”

A friend's son taken hostage

Rachel Goldberg grew up in Chicago with a friend of the same name.

Through the years, Goldberg lost touch with her high school friend, but, because of the deep interconnectedness between many American Jews and Israel, Goldberg has remained aware of her old friend through her Israeli brother, who works with the other Rachel’s husband.

The other Rachel’s son, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, is a 23-year-old who, like thousands of other young Israelis, gathered at the Supernova trance music festival in the Negev Desert, about three miles from the Gaza border, on the evening of October 6.

“It was a festival where you sleep over there, people had tents and you camp out and it’s just 24 hours of music and stuff like that,” Goldberg said. “He was there with some friends.”

When Hersh and his friends heard the shooting in the early hours of October 7, they ran to nearby shelters, which are in most public places in Israel. Goldberg said she was told that Hersh was consoling a young woman inside the shelter who was terrified when catastrophe struck.

“His best friend was standing at the door, and when grenades came their way his best friend would pick them up and throw them away from them,” Goldberg said. “And one rolled inside and Hersh picked it up, and I don’t know it must have gone off in his hand or something [because] his arm was severed. Somehow he made a tourniquet out of his shirt.”

After a while the shooting calmed down. Goldberg said she was told those inside the shelter began hearing people call out, “If you can stand up, come out.” Possibly because Hersh, who according to the Times of Israel was trained as a medic, was in need of immediate medical help, he went out of the shelter.

“That was the last he was seen,” Goldberg said. “The last thing they heard is his cell phone was at the Gaza border at around noon on [October 7].”

Goldberg said Hersh desperately required medical attention, as did many others who were wounded.

“Now they’re saying there are probably 200 hostages: infants, elderly, handicapped, everything in between,” Goldberg said.

Heroic story with a local twist

One of the best-known stories of individual heroism in the hours following the Hamas invasion of Israel has an Alexandria connection.

The CBS show “60 Minutes” on October 15 featured a segment about how Israeli journalist Amir Tibbon and his wife Miri Bernovsky-Tibbon were rescued by Amir’s father – retired major general Noam Tibbon – after hiding in their home’s “safe room” with their two young daughters for almost nine hours following the Hamas attack on their kibbutz, Nahal Oz.

When Amir and Miri heard the shriek of rockets on October 7, they ran into their daughter’s room, which was made of concrete reinforced to with-

Hersh Goldberg-Polin, whose arm was severed during the the October 7 Hamas attack on the Supernova music festival in Israel.
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stand rocket attacks. When they heard gunfire in the distance and then Arabic being spoken nearby, they realized Israel had been invaded.

Amir texted his parents, who live in Tel Aviv – about 45 miles away. Noam and his wife Gali Tibon jumped into their jeep, Gali at the wheel while Noam texted seeking help, and they raced toward Nahal Oz. Along the way they rescued a young couple who had escaped the massacre at the music festival and Noam helped a group of Israeli soldiers take on and defeat Hamas fighters.

Noam and several soldiers drove through fields and barricades after dropping Gali at a shelter before reaching Nahal Oz. They then fought their way house-by-house for an hour before reaching the home of Amir and his family.

Miri and Amir are well known to the congregants of Alexandria’s Agudas Achim synagogue, because Miri served as an Israeli emissary to the congregation for the two years that Amir was sent to work in Washington by his newspaper, Haaretz. The couple lived in Alexandria’s Parkfairfax neighborhood, according to Goldberg, not far from the synagogue.

“We have a program that brings Israeli emissaries for a couple years to educate about Israel and build connections,” Goldberg said. “She was one that we had here. Our whole community has been watching closely how they have been doing.”

Goldberg and her family were so fond of Miri and Amir that in the summer of 2022 they visited the Tibons at their kibbutz.

“We went swimming there. We saw how there are bomb shelters placed around the swimming pool area,” Goldberg said. “And then we were watching the 60 Minutes pro-

TRAUMA FROM 6

Despite the heavy stress load, Rein embraces his role of comforter.

“It is my duty, my responsibility and my honor to be able to be present with my community to help guide them during this extremely challenging time for the Jewish people,” Rein said.

The Agudas Achim Congregation has been contributing to multiple different organizations, such as the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, that help fund the IDF and provide relief for those affected. According to Rein, the first week the organization started the international crisis relief fund, they raised $8 million, and the first $2 million has been allocated to support victims of terror.

Rein said it’s been uplifting to see succor also offered by non-Jews. For instance, in Alexandria the City Hall building was lit up blue and white in a show of support after the Hamas attack. Additionally, Rein said churches in the area have reached out to Agudas Achim to donate and offer help.

Steven Rein is a rabbi at Agudas Achim Congregation. Day after day, he prays for the safety of “his Jewish brothers and sisters” and for the many people he knows who are members of the Israeli Defence Force.

Rein describes himself as the caregiver for his Jewish community, but admits it is hard to do so when it affects him so deeply as well.

“It’s like that saying, ‘Who is going to care for the caregiver?’” Rein said. “Sometimes when there’s a crisis, you just sort of go into overdrive. I always [have to] remember to pause for self care as well. So, I’m testing how much trauma one can hold at once.”

Agudas Achim Rabbi Steven Rein.
Community and vigilance

Goldberg said community members at Agudas Achim have helped each other get through this difficult time. “I think we have a very strong, vibrant community and we’re able to come together in times of crisis as well as in times of celebration,” Goldberg said. “It’s been very helpful. People know each other enough to know who has relatives and to cry together and hug and take care of each other in these kinds of times.”

Goldberg and Limmer said most non-Jewish Americans have no real concept of what it’s like to constantly be under threat, either in Israel or in the U.S., simply for being Jewish.

“All around [Israel], at the shopping mall, at the restaurant, wherever you go, at the park, there are shelters,” Goldberg said. “Because at any time, you could be under attack. It’s something we don’t have any understanding about [in the U.S.]”

Limmer said the threat Jews are under extends well beyond Israel. “There are threats against Jews around the world,” Limmer said. “Hamas specifically called for attacks against Jews. ... We never have an event at synagogue without police security. We’ve done it ever since the Pittsburgh shooting. And all the more so now.”

Goldberg warned that Americans should not think that terrorists can’t strike again in this country. “We [in the U.S.] should not take for granted that we are over the ocean and separate. We also should watch out for terrorists. You know, 9/11 is more than 20 years ago – but don’t think that was it.”

TRAVEL

A PILGRIMAGE ENDS JUST IN TIME

Edda Ashkenazi and her mother, Maria E. González, went on a 10-day Christian pilgrimage to Holy Land sites in Israel in late September. Their Italian tour guide from Peter’s Way Tours was in Israel with the next group of pilgrims when Hamas attacked Israel.

Ashkenazi, whose husband is Jewish and has relatives in Tel Aviv, said it’s difficult to juxtapose the safety she felt during her pilgrimage with the horrors that have taken place since.

“We felt very safe,” Ashkenazi said. “I can only imagine for so many of [the next pilgrimage group] it must have been an extremely anxious time. I know that it would have been for me. God was very merciful for us, because it was just a matter of days [until the attack].”

Ashkenazi had been to Israel twice before with her husband to visit his family and tour. But her mother, Maria, had never been to the Holy Land. Ashkenazi planned the trip to celebrate her mother’s 80th birthday – but knew they needed to join a tour rather than go alone.

“She’s OK but she needs help. I didn’t want to travel alone with her and have to take care of her and everything else. The idea of a pilgrimage really appealed to me,” Ashkenazi said.

The group traveled by chartered bus and visited various religious and historic sites, many of which were in Arab-controlled lands and run by Arab residents. Despite the feeling of safety on the pilgrimage, Ashkenazi was reminded of a scene from an earlier visit to Israel with her husband.

“The first time we went [to Israel], his parents always used to have the TV on the news – always. And I remember mentioning that to Keinan, ‘Isn’t it a little bit bizarre that the TV is 80% of the time?’ He said, ‘Israelis are like that because they’re always on alert.’ It’s almost like a constant state of vigilance.”

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Multiple fights break out at ACHS

Extra police and EMS called to King Street campus on October 18
By Ryan Hopper

A string of fights at Alexandria City High School left multiple students with minor injuries on October 18. A video of the melee, along with publicly available police, EMT and school audio communications, reveals a frantic scene as administrators, police and security tried to restore order.

In the aftermath of the fights, many parents took to social media to express their displeasure with what had happened. A few repeated a rumor that a student was stabbed during the largest brawl, with some saying it was with a pair of scissors.

However, the Times has found no evidence to corroborate these rumors. The worst of the confirmed injuries was a fifteen-year-old student who had difficulty breathing, and no students were taken to the hospital for further treatment, according to the Alexandria Police Department.

“On October 18, the Alexandria Police Department School Resource Officer initiated a call for assistance for the report of a conflict between two students at ACHS,” Tracy Walker, the department’s communications manager, said in an email to the Times. “Officers responded and resolved the matter. Two students reported minor injuries, however, no one was transported for further treatment. There were no weapons. At this time, no arrests have been made related to this incident.”

An ACHS teacher, who requested anonymity, also refuted any rumors of a stabbing, citing information they learned in an after-school staff meeting.

“There was no stabbing. There were students treated for injuries, but no stabbing,” the teacher said.

The first report of a fight, from police scanner recordings available on openmhz.com, indicated a fight was happening at 10:04:07 a.m. in the ACHS third floor east stairwell.

At 10:05:47, multiple students were reported to be running up the main stairwell above the cafeteria.

At 10:06:23, a panicked-sounding security guard said, “Officers! Fight in the stairwell! ... Middle stairwell! Cafeteria!”

At 10:07:09, school resource officers tried to disperse the crowd on the stairwell.

The first sign of injuries was reported at 10:11:13, when a voice on a dispatch call said, “We need a nurse, second floor C stairwell, please, and we’re [going to] need y’all in other academies to assess injuries.”

At 10:12:06, extra police were requested. About this time, SROs and ACHS administrators began securing the combatants, then, at 10:13:35, a female voice asked dispatch for medical help: “May I have medics to my location for a fifteen-year-old female having trouble breathing?”

Soon afterward, students were reported to be yelling at the librarian in the media center, and a group of male students began fighting in the Titan Garden between the second and third floors. The Titan Garden is an outdoor area where some students choose to eat lunch outside and is next to the staircase where the fighting originated.

Minutes later, at 10:16:25 a.m., an SRO requests police help: “Can you start coming to the high school? We just got a large fight in the cafeteria, and we are trying to control it.”

Less than a minute later, the same SRO requests two more police units.

At 10:17:46, a frantic female security officer said, “We have some trouble in the media center hallway. Sounds like it’s a fight. ... Stairwell A! Stairwell A!” This was followed at 10:18:53 with a male officer clarifying that a few students had just been in a loud argument.

10:19:51: EMS arrives at ACHS. The student with trouble breathing is revealed to be in the main stairwell above the cafeteria, where the fighting started.

Then, at 10:21:06, APD headquarters said: “Call center had a parent call in who’s on the way to the school. She was told her daughter was stabbed.”

APD and ACHS officials then verified in the following minutes that nobody had been stabbed. The Times tried contacting this parent but did not receive a response. It is unclear who told this parent that her daughter was stabbed.

There are two reports about the severity of injuries from the fight. At 10:30:52, it was determined that a second EMS unit was not needed. However, at 10:53:16, it is mentioned there had been a “traumatic injury at the high school.”

At 10:45:40, an administrator asserted that the school was not under lockdown, but they needed the halls clear.

After roughly 10:45 a.m., things had calmed down. Students who were involved in the altercations were sent home with their parents, with some being treated for minor injuries. Lunch was held in classrooms instead of in the cafeteria, but the rest of the school day went on as scheduled.

When asked for comment by the Times, ACPS referred to its statement sent out on October 18 to parents by ACHS Principal, Alexander Duncan III: “This morning, there was additional police presence at the Alexandria City High School King Street campus resulting from student altercations. As a precaution, the Alexandria Police Department was called for assistance in the event that additional support might be needed.

School administrators, APD and building security assured the safety of all students and staff in the building after the events. Lunch modifications were made and campus will resume a regular schedule after lunch has been served.

Alexandria City Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all. When students are involved in altercations on school grounds, ACPS will take immediate and appropriate action to ensure a safe learning environment for the student body and staff. Further, ACPS and school officials will address issues of student conduct and responsibility.”

It remains unclear what caused the fights and why multiple altercations broke out at the same time. When asked by the Times if any students faced disciplinary action for their roles in the fights, ACPS did not comment.

rhopper@utexas.edu
say the sharp increase in density will destroy Alexandria’s livability and quality of life.

Roy Byrd, chair of the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria, a grassroots organization of residents, is one of these voices in the debate.

“When we looked at the Zoning for Housing initiative, we saw that what the city was providing to residents was really more marketing,” Byrd said. “We saw the need for alternative viewpoints to be heard as well.”

Byrd said the organization’s goal is to slow down the initiative, as he believes the city is moving far too fast for residents to understand the implications of the text amendments and new rules.

“The public is just expected to plow through this on their own,” Byrd said. “For lay persons, it’s even more complex [but] City Council has access to city lawyers … to help them understand the nuances.”

For Mayor Justin Wilson, this initiative is somewhat of a no-brainer as the city is consistently in high demand.

“People are going to want to live here and as long [as that happens], if we are not building the amount of housing supply to meet that demand, costs are going to go up,” Wilson said. “As it gets more and more expensive, that changes the diversity of our community.”

Wilson said this was a values question for residents and the city.

“There are many communities who have chosen a different approach who have said that, ‘Listen, if you can afford here, great. If you can’t, that’s fine. There are other places to live,’” Wilson said. “I don’t think that’s an alignment with the values of Alexandria.”

What is the goal?

CLA and Wilson seem to disagree on the ultimate goal of this initiative. In a CLA community forum presentation, it states the “city aspires to add more than 80,000 more people,” to the population, despite Alexandria being one of the most densely populated cities in the U.S.

Byrd, in an interview with the Times, questioned the true problem the city is trying to solve.

“At the beginning, the problem [we thought] they were trying to solve was the affordability issue,” Byrd said. “That doesn’t seem to be the case anymore.”

Wilson said the goal is not to expand, but ensure the housing supply keeps up with the rapid increase in the population.

“This area … this region is going to grow whether we do anything or not,” Wilson said. “The question is: do we want...
If anyone wasn’t sure whether Halloween is the favorite holiday of Alexandrians, a stroll around our city’s neighborhoods would dispel that doubt. Spooky ghosts, smiling pumpkins, big spiders and skeletons of every sort adorn front porches, window sills and even the walls of Alexandria houses. We hope you enjoy this sampling of photos of scary sights around town. Happy Halloween!

PHOTOS/DENISE DUNBAR
An exciting new Gastro Pub, serving up Japanese + Filipino cuisine, has emerged in the thriving neighborhood of Del Ray. Zuki Moon promises all guests a unique and memorable culinary adventure. The vibrant Asian food and craft cocktail menus were inspired by the back alley street food stalls and vibrant colorful markets of the Philippines. Since opening in early October, Zuki Moon has become the perfect hotspot for couples to enjoy an intimate date night, friends to sip and laugh, families to share small plates and professional colleagues to relax during Happy Hour.

Zuki Moon features a "family-style" menu and guests are encouraged to order for the table and share. Offerings range from small plates such as traditional Filipino lumpia and Karaage Maitake (Tempura Fried Mushrooms), entrees such as the Tocino Spam Musubi Bowl and Spicy Miso Tinola Ramen, assorted "Yakiniku" skewers, freshly rolled sushi and unique and delectable desserts. Every dish at Zuki Moon was designed to capture the essence of the rich culinary traditions of Japan and the Philippines.

To complement the flavors of the cuisine, Zuki Moon offers visually stunning and innovative cocktails. Try the "Luscious Blossom," a smooth and fruity tequila-based cocktail that is topped with cotton candy fluff. Another guest favorite is the "Drama Queen" – an Asian twist on a Gimlet. The full bar at Zuki Moon also features wines, beers and even a "Zuki Beer" on draft.

Visit Zuki Moon for their immensely popular Happy Hour, every Monday – Friday from 4 to 6 p.m. and stay tuned to social media for announcements about the weekend live music series that will be launching soon!

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This is advertorial content.
There are many communities who have chosen a different approach who have said that, ‘Listen, if you can afford here, great. If you can’t, that’s fine. There are other places to live.’ I don’t think that’s an alignment with the values of Alexandria.”

– Justin Wilson, mayor

Wilson said the ultimate goal is to make sure the city is accessible and available for those who wish to live here and not about making the city bigger.

In response to this claim, Byrd said this does not make sense as there is not a large homeless population in Alexandria. In 2021, the city reported that there were 106 homeless people accounted for in the city, which included some families.

“There’s a high cost of living in Alexandria, but the mayor and Council should be working harder at creating the kinds of jobs [and] economic development that will make it more affordable for people to work and live in Alexandria,” Byrd said.

Wilson said there is a high cost of living in the city and it will only increase as the years pass. He said next year, a two-bedroom apartment rental will reach $2,100, meaning people must make $90,000 a year to live in those units.

“That closes the door on being a part of Alexandria for a lot of people, and the diversity that this community has relied on as a core value ... is changing,” Wilson said.

The tax on current residents
The city’s tax base is mainly based on property taxes acquired by taxing owners of homes and other residential dwellings based on the value of their property. Byrd said property taxes will increase as more assessments are conducted.

Byrd suggested the city should focus on economic development to bring big businesses in to alleviate the tax burden on residents.

Wilson said established residents often do leave because rent or the cost of a single-family home has skyrocketed in a short period of time.

“Providing additional housing supply is never going to push anyone out of the city,” Wilson said. “If anything, it’s going to help provide options for people to remain in the city. If people don’t have enough food and you provide more food, that doesn’t make more people hungry.”

The bottom line
Byrd said the CLA is ultimately concerned about the quality of life being harmed with this initiative, as many things in the city may change as a result.

“At the end of the day, if this is rushed through and passes in November, then what we’re going to see is life’s going to get a lot harder here,” Byrd said. “We’re going to see more expensive apartments added, but not a lot of affordable housing. We’re going to see more gentrification. We’re going to see increased housing costs because of tax assessments as land values go up and the city assessors take advantage of that to increase their tax revenue.”

Property taxes are influenced by the location, size, age and usage of the dwelling.

For Wilson, the bottom line is to create more opportunities for current and future Alexandrians. He said Zoning for Housing is not groundbreaking policy, but rather a reflection of an ongoing debate happening in urban areas across the nation.

“This is the same solution that is being offered in almost every palace in America because it’s something the last two governors have advanced and it’s something the last three presidents have advanced,” Wilson said. “This is not some kind of magical thing that we came up with in Alexandria. This is mainstream housing reform designed to address affordability challenges.”

Obituary
Alicia L. Spence
Alicia L. Spence, 59, passed from our earth on October 11 peacefully in her home. Alicia succumbed to her 5.5-year struggle with cancer. Alicia was raised in Neptune, New Jersey. She moved with her family to Southern Pines, North Carolina, where she spent her highschool years. She graduated from N.C. State with a degree in biology and then moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where she lived for thirty-two years. Her professional career was spent working for Genentech.

Alicia’s passions were riding her horses, caring for and rescuing animals, sailing with her husband, reading, playing piano, cooking and entertaining, spending time with her friends and dwelling with her husband in their home in Alexandria, Virginia.

Alicia is survived by her husband, Jake Baer, and her brother, Christopher Spence.

There will be a celebration of Alicia’s life on November 11 at 11 A.M. at Hyattsville Menno-nite Church, Hyattsville, Maryland. Alicia’s wishes are for you to donate to www.totherescueinc.org or your favorite animal rescue nonprofit.
The Little Theatre of Alexandria’s latest production takes the reins of comedic genius Mel Brooks in the musical “Young Frankenstein,” an adaptation of his 1974 film sharing the same name.

Director Frank D. Shutts II opened LTA’s production on Saturday, but Mel Brooks originally wrote the musical interpretation of “Young Frankenstein” in 2007. LTA’s production hilariously emphasizes the various elements of mature humor that the original film only alludes to in relatively small doses.

The musical follows the narrative of the original film, set in the mid-1930s and centers around the titular Dr. Frederick Frankenstein, a modern doctor who has estranged himself from the legacy of his legendary grandfather before embarking on an adventure in Transylvania.

Following young Frankenstein is an ensemble of characters both friendly and hostile, introducing themselves and their personalities to the audience through unusual musical numbers. From the loyal family Frankenstein finds in Transylvania to the superstitious villagers led by the inquisitive Inspector Hans Kemp, every performance as well as those of his fellow cast members when they share the spotlight, such as Joshua Redford’s Igor. The amusing camaraderie between these characters is especially prevalent in their duet “Together Again,” in which they foreshadow their dynamic of genius boss and incompetent but well-meaning underling.

Judy Lewis delivers an equally hilarious and uninhibited depiction of Frau Blücher in her standout song, “He Was My Boyfriend,” showcasing the impropriety of the old housekeeper’s youth through mature dialogue and dance moves.

Liz Colandene delivers a similarly explicit performance in her breakout song, “Please Don’t Touch Me,” preying on her fiance’s unrequited attraction toward her while subsequently denying him any physical contact.

Claire Jeffrey brings a not-so-innocent lightheartedness to the story through the antics of her portrayal of Frankenstein’s new assistant, Inga. The power of her voice and physical comedy are both made prominent by the laughter she delivers to the audience. She allows Joshua Nettinga’s portrayal of the Monster to take center stage as a physical spectacle and a musical marvel in his own right.

However, there can be no good story without conflict, and Brian Ash’s depiction of the local law officer, Inspector Hans Kemp, makes for an intriguing antagonistic force. Ash’s musical performances help the audience to better understand the motivations of his character in ways that even those familiar with the original film were not entirely aware of. The character’s ringleader-like position allows for more scenes with an ensemble of villagers, making for multiple fun musical numbers for both the cast and the audience to enjoy.

“Young Frankenstein” isn’t just meant for avid fans of Mel Brooks and his comedic works. The experience is no less enjoyable for audience members who are unfamiliar with the source material, nor would newcomers feel left out on Brooks’ style of humor.
The benefits of refinancing

BY JENNIFER MOLDEN

The real estate market has seen a steady climb in property prices over the years, leaving many homeowners wondering how to navigate this ever-increasing landscape. Amid rising property prices, it is important to remind homeowners of an effective financial tool at their disposal: refinancing.

Property prices have been on an upward trajectory, fueled by factors such as limited housing supply, increased demand and waiving interest rates. This can make homeownership seem out of reach for some, while others may find themselves with a mortgage that no longer aligns with their financial goals. The objective in this low housing inventory environment with higher than usual interest rates is to secure the house you’ve fallen in love with and look to refinance when rates are more in line with your financial goals.

Even as mortgage rates increase, you will always have the power of refinancing your current rate. Refinancing involves replacing your existing mortgage with a new one typically at a lower interest rate or with more favorable terms. This financial tool allows homeowners to adjust their mortgage to better suit their current financial circumstances and goals. In the context of climbing property prices, refinancing can offer several benefits.

Lower interest rates
Refinancing when interest rates are lower than when you initially obtained your mortgage can result in significant savings over the life of the loan. By securing a lower interest rate, homeowners can reduce their monthly mortgage payments, freeing up funds for other financial goals or investments.

Access to equity
As property prices rise, homeowners may find themselves with increased equity in their homes. Refinancing can provide an opportunity to tap into this equity through a cash-out refinance, allowing homeowners to access funds for home improvements or debt consolidation.

Adjusting loan terms
Refinancing also offers the flexibility to adjust loan terms, such as extending or shortening the repayment period. Homeowners can choose to reduce their loan term to pay off their mortgage faster or extend it to lower their monthly payments, depending on their financial goals and circumstances.

Consolidating debt
Climbing property prices may coincide with other financial obligations, such as high-interest credit card debt. Refinancing can provide an avenue to consolidate this debt into a single, more manageable mortgage payment, potentially saving on interest and simplifying finances.

As property prices continue to climb, homeowners need not feel trapped or overwhelmed by their mortgage. Refinancing offers a valuable opportunity to optimize your mortgage, taking advantage of lower interest rates, accessing equity, adjusting loan terms and consolidating debt. By exploring refinancing options, homeowners can effectively navigate the changing real estate landscape and ensure their mortgage aligns with their financial goals.

The writer is a sales specialist with Coldwell Banker Realty in Alexandria.
Due to their small size and heavy usage, bathrooms can become messy, cluttered areas for many families.

For those with smaller bathrooms, storage solutions can be even harder to find. Consider these organization tips to make your bathroom a clean and functional space for every member of the family.

Assess the mess

Go through all the cabinets and drawers to clear out unused makeup, health care products and medications. Make sure the items you keep are used on a regular basis. Items used sparingly should be placed in an alternate location.

Go vertical

Medicine cabinets can quickly get stuffed when combs, toothpaste and other toiletries are stored horizontally. Use organizer cups with suction adhesives to contain items vertically and save space.

Hang up in style

Old coat racks and ladders make perfect solutions for larger families to hang multiple towels. Snag an old one from a thrift store and paint it a bright hue, like red or turquoise, for a stylish accent piece.

Avoid spills and squirts

Hair products, such as gels, mousses or hairsprays, can create sticky, tough-to-clean messes if liquid escapes the container in a drawer or cabinet. Avoid such mishaps by placing these types of items in plastic tubs instead of directly in the drawer or on a shelf.

Divide and conquer

To keep items separate and tidy, insert dividers, such as those used for kitchen utensils. These often come in fun materials, such as bamboo or stainless steel, to add a fresh look.

Assign storage

Try to use a large enough cabinet so each member of the family has his or her own space or drawer. This can help limit the amount of items high-maintenance family members can bring into the small area. Plus, it makes it easier for everyone to find their things.

Declutter bathrooms in six simple steps

BY FAMILY FEATURES

Declutter your bathroom before the holiday rush approaches.
BOO-FEST
Get dressed up and join in for a good time with the entire family. Participate in a costume parade, carnival games, moon bounce, arts and crafts and spooky stories. Free and for all ages.
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St.
Information: 703-746-5552

FAMILY OKTOBERFEST
All are welcome to the festival to enjoy exciting games and a haunted house. $15 per person.
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Patrick Henry Recreation Center, 4653 Taney Ave.
Information: 703-746-5557

HALLOWTEEN NIGHT
Dress to impress and participate in a live costume contest with teenagers aged 13 to 17. Dance to a live DJ, compete in dodgeball, play games and eat food and candy at this teen-only event. Costumes encouraged. Free to all.
Time: 7:30 to 10 p.m.
Location: Various
Information: oldtownbusiness.org

HALLOWEEN HOWL
Arrive in costume for some Halloween fun aboard tall ship Providence. Little ghosts and goblins will take over the floating maritime center as they rotate through stations of story time, crafts and activities. Tickets required.
Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Location: 1A Prince St.
Information: tallshipprovidence.org

HALLOWEEN STAMPEDE
All-day festive cocktails, signature party favors, costume contests, photo ops, giveaways and more. Restaurant crawl. Profits from registration fees will be donated to ALIVE! Tickets required.
Time: 2 to 6 p.m.
Location: 301 John Carlyle St.
Information: Email Megan at megan@alxhgr.com

HALLOWQUEEN DRAG BRUNCH
Enjoy a lively southern brunch featuring the region’s drag entertainment. Come dressed to impress for the costume contest and win a prize. Show begins at 12:30 p.m. Tickets are $30 and parties should be bought together.
Time: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: 480 King St.
Information: Email Bailey at bailey.kornick@thealexandrian.com

FAMILY COSTUME BALL
All are welcome to dress up in their spookiest garb for the Family Costume Ball. Dance the night away with your family competing in the costume contest and eating spooky snacks. Free admission.
Time: 5 to 7 p.m.
Location: William Ramsay Recreation Center, 5650 Sanger Ave.
Information: 703-746-5558

HOMES ADVERTORIAL

Welcome to the week

1780s classic townhome

This lovely home is the epitome of Old Town charm. Located on one of Old Town’s prettiest blocks, this special home features gorgeous wide-plank heart pine floors, original exposed beams, five fireplaces, built-in bookshelves and pine shutters. The beautiful living room, formal dining room and spacious kitchen offer abundant warmth and character. The upper level features two generous bedrooms, sitting room or home office and a full bathroom. The spacious basement with brick floor offers storage or an excellent opportunity for expansion.

A wonderful garden with brick patio includes crepe myrtle, roses, azaleas, hosta, irises and peonies. One off-street parking space is located behind the garden fence. This special home has been lovingly maintained by the current owner for the last 16 years and is a true historic gem!

Address: 323 Queen St., Alexandria 22314
Neighborhood: Old Town
Price: $1,100,000
Square feet: 1,357
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1.5
Year built: Circa 1780
Contact:
Donnan C. Wintermute
Coldwell Banker Realty
dwintermute@cbrealty.com
703-608-6868
703-518-8300

PHOTOS/BART CHAMBERLIN

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Circa 1780 classic townhome. Middle: Living room. Right: Rear garden.
Running for newbies

Necessities for getting started as an amateur runner

BY LOGAN MITCHELL

Most of us have run at one point or another in our lives. Many of us played sports as children or were sent out of the house to play and run around until the street lights turned on. But, as we aged, most of us stopped.

It can feel like the chance to start running again has passed you by for plenty of reasons, but it’s never too late to start again, no matter what your goals are.

Having run for almost every morning for the last eight years of my life – three as a college athlete – I have learned that there are some items that every runner needs. All of them can make the difference between developing a healthy habit and hurting yourself.

Running shoes

A good pair of running shoes will help prevent injury, blisters and muscle aches, all of which will hinder your start. There are many different types of running shoes to match the several different types of feet and running patterns. The best way to ensure you get the right pair is to go down to your local running store and see if they have a person on staff who can analyze your gait and foot pattern and recommend a shoe that is right for you. Once you get a good pair of shoes, be sure to make sure you replace them when they’ve worn out. This typically happens between 300 to 500 miles run or around six months, whichever comes first.

The perfect ‘fit’

It can be easy to believe that since you already have activewear, you don’t need anything fancy to run, and you would be partly correct. Normal activewear is good for day-to-day activities or low-impact workouts, but moisture wicking clothes are the best way to keep yourself comfortable when running. The material keeps you cool in the summer months and warm in those early morning winter runs. For women, having the right support from a good sports bra is essential to maintaining comfort throughout the run as well.

Socks to match

The bane of my existence as a runner – and of many others – is blisters. They are annoying, painful and can take what feels like forever to heal. Running socks should be cotton-free and made of polyester or nylon because these materials move the sweat away from your feet. This further prevents blisters from developing.

Watches

Whether you’ve just started running, or you’re return-

SEE RUNNING | 20
Running

According to it, a watch with a timer is a must. It’s important to keep track of distance so you can track your mileage and keep your training in check. You could opt to use a fancier watch with GPS as these kinds of watches provide significantly more data, but a basic watch will get the job done all the same.

Recovery tools

The two tools that I recommend to everyone are a yoga mat and a foam roller. Studies have shown using a foam roller in conjunction with stretching greatly reduces your risk for injury and helps flexibility. They also help flush out any lactic acid that has built up in your muscles during the run and promote blood flow to your legs, which will help you feel better the next day. We’ve all woken up the day after a tough workout and felt too sore and decided to take the day off – which turned into days and weeks off. Using these tools ensures you stay on schedule with your training and workouts.

The most important muscle groups you want to target when stretching and rolling out are your calves, hamstrings, quadriceps, glutes and hips. Pro tip: start at your hips and work your way down.

Record keeping

You can record your runs electronically on an app like Strava or in a classic pen and paper fashion. Logging runs is essential to keep track of daily distance and see progress over time. A good rule of thumb for distance training is to make sure that you do not increase your weekly volume by more than 10% week-to-week. Following this rule will help you avoid getting injured or burnt out.

Setting goals

Running is tough, and it’s tougher when you have not done it in a while. Having a goal – whether it’s to lose weight, run the local turkey trot or to stay active – is important. It’ll keep you motivated on days where you do not feel like working out and want to stay in bed.

Yoga for Seniors

Flow under our atrium at Refresh! Join us at our new, fully accessible space at 1011 King St (first floor).

Our classes offerings include all levels Vinyasa and Slow Flow for yogis who have practiced before, Gentle Yoga (Tues 5pm) for anyone who wants to restore and reset the nervous system, and Mindful Movement (Fri 12PM) - designed for those want to stay active but may have injuries, mobility or joint issues, or other limitations.

Use code “ALXTimes23” for 20% off of class packages through 12/31/23.
Another way to make sure you get out of the door is to have a running buddy. There are countless running clubs in the area and they are always open to new members coming out to join them on a run. The people that you meet while running make it so much better.

Final pieces of advice
Here are some tips I’d like to pass along to you all from one runner to another before you hit the roads or the parks or wherever your running journey may take you.

Don’t run too fast when you’re getting started: if you’re able to hold a conversation while running, this is a good pace to stick with. If you’re struggling, this is a good point to slow down.

It’s OK to mix walking into your running and is normal for beginners.

Stick with it. It’s hard at the beginning, yes, but it gets easier. You can take time off when you’re sore, if you’re sick, busy or even if you just aren’t feeling it that day, but it’s important to get back in the saddle whenever you’re ready.

Good luck in your running journey, and I hope to see you out there on the roads.

The writer is a former Division I track and field and cross country college athlete.

Logan Mitchell recently ran a race in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

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Editorial

Happy Halloween, Alexandria style

The burnt orange banner atop the front page of this week’s Alexandria Times heralds one of this city’s great celebrations – that of Halloween.

Throughout the city, and particularly in Old Town, it seems residents become ever more creative each year in erecting elaborate Halloween-themed displays.

This year a group of residents on lower Prince Street have created their own multi-home fright-fest. Passersby can take in this free display featuring a gauntlet of spider webs with enormous arthropods and more than a dozen skeletons escaping from a house or being devoured by the spiders. There’s even a grim reaper skeleton on a horse!

Be warned: anyone who was squemish watching the spider scene in “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets” might not want to pass under these webs at night.

In addition to spooky scenes, humorous touches abound, such as the dog on Franklin Street that didn’t quite make it over the fence to its box of dog treats. Other fun decorations include smiling pumpkins, a happy Casper the Friendly Ghost holding onto a tree and a skeleton person petting a skeleton dog.

Yes, Halloween on Lee Street can be overwhelming, as thousands of people from around the region descend on roughly five blocks. But the crowds also lend to the festiveness, especially when adults as well as children dress up.

Also in Old Town, just in time for Halloween, is the Little Theatre of Alexandria’s production of “Young Frankenstein.” Though the play is based on the movie by Mel Brooks, LTA’s production is a musical that, as Times theater reviewer Thompson Eskew writes “hilariously emphasizes the various elements of mature humor that the original film only alludes to in relatively small doses.” See his full review, “Young Frankenstein at LTA delivers,” on page 15.

Residents of the Del Ray neighborhood get in on the fun with their annual Halloween Parade down Mt. Vernon Avenue at 2 p.m. Sunday. Prizes will be awarded for the best costumes for children and pets. This is a great event that brings the community together for a fun and festive time.

There are numerous other Halloween celebrations throughout Alexandria this weekend from gatherings for teens and another for families in the West End to a cocktail Halloween celebration in the Carlyle neighborhood. Check out the Times’ special Halloween calendar on page 18 for details.

Halloween is an odd holiday, as it seems strange to devote so much effort to celebrating the macabre. But perhaps we frighten ourselves in a fun way exactly because there’s so much real horror in the world.

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

The resident, formerly known as “Barbie” is aboard her motor scooter and dressed to party.

Commentary

Justice Matters

A new investigative tool

BY BRYAN PORTER

Like many jurisdictions, Alexandria has recently experienced a statistically meaningful rise in criminal offenses. As part of the strategy to address this increase, my office has partnered with other city agencies, to include the City Manager’s Office, the Police Department, the Sheriff’s Office and the Court Services Unit. One outgrowth of this collaboration is the recent impaneling of a Multi-Jurisdictional Investigative Grand Jury.

I note the multi-jurisdictional nature of the grand jury. Arlington County is a partner in the MJGJ and we hope to soon bring additional jurisdictions into the compact. The obvious questions are:
1. What is a MJGJ? and
2. What benefits does a MJGJ bring?

Consider a scenario in which a witness observes a murder take place. For purposes of this example, let us assume the witness personally knows the perpetrator, to include his name, address and telephone number. When a detective approaches the witness and asks for the suspect’s information, the witness replies: “I’m sorry, detective, I don’t wish to get involved.” Has the witness committed a crime?

Perhaps counterintuitively to a lay person, it is never a crime for a citizen to simply refuse to answer questions put to them by a law enforcement officer.

In the scenario above, the witness is well within his rights to decline to answer the detective’s question. Of course, while a simple refusal to answer questions is never a crime, a person who elects instead to lie to law enforcement may be committing an offense. Under Virginia law, if a person makes a materially false statement about an offense they did not commit, they are guilty of obstruction of justice, a mis-

SEE PORTER
A brilliant camera click

To the editor:

We live in a world of war, upheaval, dishonesty, chaos, gloom and dread.

So, when something breaks through that dreadful spiral, it is a cause for a moment of joy.

Such was the unexpected pause that occurred when I was leafing through the October 5 Alexandria Times issue. The stunning photo by Lee Moody on page 26 stopped me in my tracks. It wasn’t a picture “of just some unknown building.”

Instead, Moody’s brilliant camera click – at that moment – captured the shimmering elegance of the brightly lit façade, reflected in flooded waters in the street at the intersection of King and Union Streets. It gave new meaning to the old cliché that “a picture is worth a thousand words.”

But it also triggered in my mind another memorable cliché that “a thing of beauty is a joy forever.” Kudos to the photographer for offering us a good surprise in our weary world.

This photo belongs in an art gallery so many more can enjoy its visual tranquility and peaceful presence.

-Kathleen M. Burns, Alexandria

Evaluating the past

By the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham

It is true that in Rome, the oldest building standing is the temple of Hercules Victor, which dates back to the second century B.C. – 2,400 years old – and St. Bartholomew the Great in London, England, dates back to the 11th century – 1,000 years old. In this area, the United States cannot compete; however, to our credit, we do take good care of our history, and we work hard to make sure that even though our history is relatively recent, we create opportunities for people to learn about it.

Virginia Theological Seminary recently marked 200 years. We had an array of programming that captured our past. Both the flaws – our horrendous participation in the evil of the enslavement of human beings – and the grace – our service around the globe – were recognized. It was an exhausting but exhilarating occasion.

Historic Alexandria has an impressive array of museums that tells the full story of the city. Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Alexandria Black History Museum, Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum, Fort Ward Museum, Freedom House Museum, Friendship Firehouse Museum, Gadsby’s Tavern Museum and Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum. These museums are impressive: they are manageable – a typical visit need not exceed an hour – and yet so informative.

The past is a straightforward binary. We either remember or we forget. We either save the records of the past or we don’t. There is no middle way. And history is precious. Once forgotten, it is lost forever. And the act of remembrance is important. It is an act of respect, of “do unto others as you want them to do unto you.” It is also a space where we face up to the evil of our forebears as well as their achievements. And, yes, as we think about the present and the future, we can and should learn from the past.

As part of our bicentenary, VTS has created a new welcome center, which everyone is welcome to visit. Do explore the various exhibits on the main floor and learn about the history of the Seminary. Also allow yourself the time to enjoy the two remarkable exhibits on the lower level where the world of St. Nicholas and the diverse world of the holy family in creche form are captured.

Alexandria is blessed by many remarkable local historians. Please allow me to highlight two of my favorites. The first is Michael Lee Pope. He is the author of “Ghosts of Alexandria,” “Hidden History of Alexandria, D.C.,” and my favorite, “Wicked Northern Virginia.”

The second is Oran Warder. His book “Rebuilding Zion: William Holland Wilmer and the Rebirth of the Episcopal Church in Virginia 1782-1827” is a fascinating portrait of the former rector of St. Paul’s and the founder of VTS.

The next time you are thinking about, “How shall I spend today?” I invite you to decide to visit a museum or two, read a book or two and really appreciate the City of Alexandria in all its richness. It might not be Rome or London, but in its own way it is really special and very interesting.

The writer is dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary.
Ghosts of Alexandria’s past

Long-time residents of Alexandria probably know of the Female Stranger, who visits what is now Gadsby’s Tavern Museum. Others might have heard of the tale of a spirit walking by St. Paul’s Church on Pitt Street. An ambitious student recorded Alexandrians’ ghost stories as part of the Bicentennial Project in 1976. This week, Historic Alexandria offers you a brief synopsis of three famous ghost stories within our city limits.

While there are many versions of the Female Stranger story, the basic story is as follows. In 1816, a gentleman and his sick female traveling companion arrived at the city hotel, now known as Gadsby’s Tavern Museum. Here, at least one doctor and nurse attended to her; however, they were curiously sworn to secrecy regarding the identity of the sick woman.

On that fateful October day, she died, leaving the gentleman heartbroken. He ordered a very fine, expensive table-top grave, then promptly left town without paying his bills. Today, people can still visit this grave in St. Paul’s Cemetery, where she is listed as “The Female Stranger.”

Post-Civil War Alexandria also had a ghost story, having nothing to do with the war at all. The July 20, 1885, Alexandria Gazette reported:

“A year or two ago several individuals, at different times, were scared out of seven year’s growth by catching glimpses, after nightfall, of a somber-clad tall figure, supposed to be of the feminine persuasion, whose wont it was to glide noiselessly along the pavement in front of St. Paul’s church or to suddenly emerge from either of the alleys on that thoroughfare and stand in front of some belated pedestrian until each separate hair on the latter’s cranium assumed a perpendicular position.”

Sightings of the apparition had died down in the early part of 1885 until the Gazette reported:

“Last Saturday night, the ‘ghost’ made its appearance to Mr. James Wood, who was on his way home … It was twelve midnight, that lonely hour when graveyards yawn, for his home. Like others, Wood spotted the ‘irrepressible figure’ as he passed by St. Paul’s. Wood claimed to have no belief in the supernatural, and hurried his gait to catch the apparition, but found his efforts frustrated when he got within five feet of the specter, when it vanished.”

Alexandria secondary school students composed the Alexandria Bicentennial Youth Commission and received the support of the Alexandria Bicentennial Commission, who thought it would encourage youth participation in the Bicentennial. One member of the youth commission, Eric Segal, felt a special connection to the project. It led him from lengthy interviews at the library to appearing on a television news program. The end product is a 20-page booklet with a collection of six ghost stories and a summary of other stories he encountered.

The most famous story in the booklet is “The Teller of Tales and the Devil-Bat of Market Square,” which is referenced on page one’s ‘Haunted Tale: The devil-bat.’

Segal’s version was related to him by Louie Robert, who owned a frame shop in Old Town.

Whether you believe in ghosts or not, Historic Alexandria wishes you a Happy Halloween!

---

Weekly Poll

**Last Week**

What do you think about the city renaming Confederate streets?

- **77%** It’s inconvenient and a waste of resources.
- **17%** It’s good the city is making strides in this way.
- **6%** I don’t mind, but there are more important things to worry about.

**This Week**

How do you plan to celebrate Halloween?

- **A)** On Lee Street.
- **B)** At the Del Ray parade.
- **C)** Attending a different event.
- **D)** I don’t celebrate Halloween.
THE CAT’S MEOW by Denise Blasevick & Jeff Chen, edited by Jeff Chen

ACROSS
53 Video surveillance equip.
55 Org., that Curry favors?
58 Meager monetary amount
59 Use acid to make art
60 Flexible tube
61 Infant
62 Treat, as a twisted ankle
63 Verbal facepalm
64 Roll
65 Prior to, poetically
66 “Scram”!
67 Oscar Madison, for one
69 NaCl
71 Across the USA
72 Across the USA
74 “Silly rabbit”
75 Olympic award
76 Competitive investigation piece, for short
77 *Anglican architectural element (Maori)
78 Catch in the act
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106 Katey who played Peg Bundy
107 Curtail
108 Payment option
109 Massive quantity
110 HBO series named after a NOLA neighborhood
111 Activity starter?
112 Vapor’s option
113 Grazing ground
114 115 116 ... and a hint to the circled letters’ meanings
117 Did the hard part of being an author
118 Went in
119 Put off until later
120 Pull off until later
121 One who goes downhill, fast
122 Laurence who wrote "Tristram Shandy"
123 Impatient
124 Noble mounts

DOWN
1 Name meaning "exalted father"
2 Judged
3 *Actor who was once married to Courteney Cox (Catalan)
4 DC Metro stop
5 "Nonexistent meal, according to a saying (Estonian)
6 "It happens every year (Dutch)
7 "October carvecouts (Hawaiian)
8 "Bear in a classic children’s book (German)
9 "Missive from the heart (Hungarian)
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Classifieds

LEGAL NOTICE

The VA Dept of Historic Resources will conduct a public information hearing of the Executive Office and Governor’s Residence of the Restored Governor’s Residence of Virginia on November 8, 2023. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm, at the Lloyd House, 220 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Public comment regarding the proposal will be taken at the time of the hearing or can be sent to Director Julie Langan, Dept of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Ave, Richmond, VA 23221. This proposal has been recommended eligible for the Virginia Landmarks and National Registers. This proposal will be presented to the State Review Board and the Board of Historic Resources on December 14, 2023. For additional information, contact Amanda Terrell at Amanda.Terrell@dhr.virginia.gov or 804-482-8092.

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210 81st Street
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Online–Oct 21st-28th
Live On-Site Oct 26, 12Noon
81 LaSalle Avenue
Hampton, VA 23661

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10AM-2PM

Inspection Dates: Oct 21st & Oct 25th
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and our four-legged clients wish everyone a

Happy Halloween!