Christ Church’s 250th anniversary

From George Washington though the COVID-19 pandemic, a beacon in troubled times
BY LAURA VAN PATE AND DENISE DUNBAR

When Christ Church first opened its doors in 1773, Alexandria was a young city in the colony of Virginia. A British flag would have flown outside. The Declaration of Independence was still three years away. The British surrender at Yorktown was nine years distant — and the Constitutional Convention 14 years hence.

In 1773, George Washington was a gentleman farmer concerned with his lands, though according to his diary, he worshipped at the new church soon after it opened.

During Colonial times, Christ Church was part of the Church of England — which was then the official church of Virginia — and the colony was divided into parishes. According to the Christ Church website, membership was not voluntary.

“All residents of a parish were members of it and required to pay taxes to sustain it,” according to the Christ Church website. “An elected vestry of twelve men conducted the business of the parish, which consisted primarily of religious activities and provision of the equivalent of modern social welfare services.”

Following the Revolutionary War, Virginia’s Church of England parishes evolved into the Episcopal Church.

“This change meant the end of government support and protection,” according to the Christ Church website. “Unlike many Virginia parishes, Christ Church survived and grew through the support of local residents like George Washington and Clerical leadership.”

Robert E. Lee attended Christ Church starting at age three, according to the Christ Church website. Unlike most churches, Christ Church continued holding services and operating as a church even when we were in the process of really getting FLARE up and running.”

FLARE – of which Smith will be president starting in January – is working to promote the importance and knowledge of the First Ladies and foster more research on the role. In partnering with many organizations, including the White House Historical Association and George W. Bush Institute, FLARE provides programming and talks from other leading scholars.

The organization, according to the website and Smith, was established in June 2019.

SEE FIRST LADIES | 10
Thank You & Happy Holidays

Because of the generosity of readers and clients like you, our 4th Annual Holiday Toy Drive was a smashing success... we even had to call our friends (and newest toy drive partner) at Olympia Movers to help us transport all the toys to A Wider Circle! A huge thank you goes out to our longtime partners, Rubia’s and Mae’s Market & Cafe for being your neighborhood drop-off spots and fueling donors with complimentary cocoa, coffee and booze! There are so many local families who will have a special holiday this year thanks to everyone in this amazing community.

Speaking of our community... there’s a lot going on in Alexandria! If you or someone you know have questions about recent news, fluctuating interest rates or are considering a move any time in 2024, contact us! We are never too busy to answer questions, help identify options and make goals happen.

From our family to yours, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season, and a fabulous new year. We look forward to seeing and working with many of you in 2024.

Cheers,
Bonnie & Courtney

Bonnie & Courtney Rivkin
therivkingroup@compass.com
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On December 9, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson announced her run for mayor in a press release and email blast. An Alexandria native, Jackson wrote that her love for the city led her to run for City Council in 2018. She also wrote that while the city has made strides since her time as a young girl, she hopes to make more and continue “the work that proves Alexandria is innovative, future-thinking and keeps us moving forward.”

Amy Jackson announces mayoral run

After being elected to Council in 2018, she became vice mayor in 2021 after receiving the most votes among Council candidates. In her announcement, Jackson said she wants to focus on crime prevention, fair teacher compensation, economic development and affordable housing as priorities. Jackson joins Councilor Alyia Gaskins in the Democratic primary race for the mayoral seat after Gaskins’ announcement on December 4.

James Lewis, a longtime Alexandria resident and senior director of policy and advocacy with the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists, announced Monday he is running for City Council via Facebook. As a Democrat, Lewis has served as the deputy vice chair of West End precinct operations for the Alexandria Democratic Committee and former president of the Virginia Young Democrats. He is also currently the vice president of the West End Business Association and a cofounder of the Holmes Run Civic Association. Lewis has also served on several boards and committees within the city, including the Traffic and Parking Board where he is the current chairman.

“In Council, I will bring my experience listening to neighbors and developing collaborative solutions to address the major challenges facing our city: affordable housing, climate change-driven flooding, infrastructural needs, long-term [ecological] sustainability and equal opportunity for all,” Lewis said in his announcement video.

James Lewis announces run for City Council

According to a press release, the Alexandria Fire Department will be accepting donations of new, unopened and unwrapped toys until Christmas Day at each of the nine stations 24/7. Local 2141 is seeking donations of toys suitable for children up to 16 years old, including action figures, dolls, board games, sports equipment, gift cards and arts and crafts kits. All donations will be given to children in the city’s shelters. Visit alexandria va.gov/Fire for a complete list of station addresses.

AFD accepting toy donations
The Alexandria City School Board approved the proposed Capital Improvement Program budget of $379,555,400 for the next 10 years at the December 14 Board meeting, according to an Alexandria City Public Schools press release. The funds, which are allotted by the city, include money for modernizing the ACPS transportation facility, replacement of the George Mason and Cora Kelly elementary schools and playground maintenance. This budget aligns with the goals of ACPS’ Strategic Plan to prioritize aging facilities, invest in textbook and technology upgrades in addition to addressing capacity needs.

Visit Alexandria CEO to retire in June

Patricia Washington, the CEO of Visit Alexandria, announced Friday she will retire on June 30 in a press release on the organization’s website. Washington has led Visit Alexandria since 2012 and strived to increase visitor spending, hotel occupancies and website visitations. The search for a new CEO and president has commenced, with the help of an executive search firm, SearchWide Global.

“It’s been such a privilege to lead Visit Alexandria’s vision, culture and content-first marketing strategy for more than 11 years, and this feels like the right time for my retirement both organizationally and personally,” Washington said in the press release.

Kay-Wyatt named “Superintendent to Watch”

On Friday, Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools, was named one of 24 Superintendents to Watch by the National School Public Relations Association for her effective use of technology to inform the community according to an ACPS press release. This fall, Kay-Wyatt hosted the first “Superintendent’s Community Chat” and has supported the launch of a new website, supported ParentSquare, engages the community via social media and updates the community with her monthly “Supe’s Spotlight” video series.

“Strong communication between our schools and families fosters understanding and collaboration and helps build success for our students. I am proud of the work we do within ACPS to keep our community engaged and informed,” Kay-Wyatt said in the press release.

Faccia Luna closes its doors

Faccia Luna, situated on 823 S. Washington St., is closing its doors Saturday after 27 years serving the city of Alexandria. No reason for the closure was given. The outside signage has been taken down and customers were handed a note to notify them of the closure, along with a Dr. Seuss quote. Bill McFadden and Joe Corey, the owners, opened the first location in Old Town in 1996, then opened locations in Arlington – which closed in 2018 – and in State College, Pennsylvania, where they attended college. The restaurant received awards for “best pizza” by the Washington City Paper in 2015 and 2016.
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after the Union Army occupied Alexandria in 1861.

Numerous presidents have visited Christ Church, including President Franklin Roosevelt, who went on New Year’s Day 1942, accompanied by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Church, situated on Cameron Street between North Washington and North Columbus Streets, is surrounded by gardens and a graveyard.

Christ Church has remained a vital part of Alexandria’s community throughout its 250-year history. For a recent example, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, white flags were placed in the Christ Church graveyard. A sign in the graveyard, which is open to the public, read, “Each flag represents the death of one of our fellow Alexandrians from COVID-19…. All are welcome to come, to pray, to remember.”

Honoring Christ Church’s history

While the people that attend the church have changed since 1773, the monumental anniversary continues to inspire parishioners.

“We’ve been celebrating all year,” Rev. Noelle York-Simmons, who has been rector at Christ Church for seven years, said. “One of the ways we’re celebrating is having a special preaching service throughout 2023 for our parishioners. We are so excited to celebrate our community, our history and our future.”

Each month, Christ Church has held a special event or hosted guests to come into the church. Starting in January 2023, the church held a presentation given by a history team to tell the story of Christ Church and the role it’s had during the past two-and-a-half centuries.

In February, the Most Rev. Michael Curry, the presiding bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church, was a guest lecturer, along with Rev. E. Mark Stevenson, a diocesan bishop for the Diocese of Virginia. Other notable guest lecturers for the special monthly preaching service have included March visitor Catherine Meeks, Ph.D., known for her use of religion to fight racism, and Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D., director of the Center of Anglican Communion Studies.

“Our parish has more than 1,600 registered members, and about an average of 370 attend Christ Church each week for service, so we wanted to do something special for them – like famous guest speaker services – during our 250th anniversary year,” York-Simmons said.

Besides the guest lecturer services, Christ Church has had many fun events to celebrate the anniversary. On May 7, the church held a music recital featuring Director of Music Jason Abel and a performance by the Christ Church Choir. On May 13, the church held an anniversary gala hosted by ministry partner Virginia

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Theological Seminary, which featured dinner, dancing and celebrations of the community's past, present and future.

In September, Christ Church had a block party to celebrate its anniversary complete with music and dancing, and a group of parishioners learned about past members of the church who have gone above and beyond to help those in Alexandria who need it, including the poor, those living with addictions and refugees.

**Christ-centered in everything**

All of the events that Christ Church has held this year have reminded parishioners that Jesus is the main focus of both the church and the lives of congregants.

“Christ before us, Christ behind us, Christ among us,” York-Simmons said during a service. “These words are the theme of this celebratory year, reminding us that Christ is central to everything we do, say, and believe in our church community, and has been for a quarter of a millennium.”

Parishioners from Christ Church believe this year is not only about celebrating or focusing on Christ, but reflecting on the church as a whole and remembering Christ Church is a family.

“I first joined Christ Church because I really liked the work that it was doing with the Alexandria community, and also I wanted to further myself spiritually,” Libby Witt, an 11-year parishioner at Christ Church, said. “I think this year is giving us the opportunity to not only celebrate the amazing work we’ve accomplished in the past, but also allows us to continue doing great things while also bettering ourselves as a parish.

“I haven’t been going to Christ Church as long as some of the other members, but what’s amazing about Christ Church is that no matter if you’ve been going there a day or a hundred years, we’re all a part of the same family, and we get to celebrate this momentous anniversary together,” Witt said.

Anne Shine, an 85-year old parishioner at Christ Church, had similar thoughts about this season.

“I’ve been going to Christ Church since I was three years old, and it’s had an amazing impact on my life,” Shine said. “I think this year’s been amazing to not only show the Alexandria community what Christ Church has done but also to continue promoting our church for future events. I really love going to Christ Church because it’s like family to me and I couldn’t think of a more deserving church to be celebrating its 250th anniversary.”

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First Ladies

at Smith’s Old Town home with six of the other founding members: Carlin, McBride, Myra Gutin, Elizabeth Natalle, Katherine Sibley and Molly Wertheimer. Carlin, who already had experience writing textbooks and had an existing relationship with a publisher, pitched the idea of a First Ladies book with Smith and McBride. The publisher said yes immediately. “There’s not a shortage of books [on the] First Ladies out. There are many biographies,” McBride, current director of the First Ladies Initiative at American University and former chief of staff to Laura Bush, said. “This is different in the sense of putting these women in the context of the time that they were in the role and how society may have dictated women’s roles at the time.”

Each of the authors mentioned that there is always a resurgence of interest in First Ladies posthumously, which is ever present since Rosalynn Carter’s death last month. Through this work, each hopes the interest and recognition of the Ladies’ work comes far before their deaths.

“[First Ladies] are getting attention for things that are very predictable [while in office],” McBride said. “I saw that working for Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush and Laura Bush: The focus on how they wear their hair, what their clothes are.”

Another difference between the many biographies and this textbook: a foreword by First Lady Jill Biden, Ed.D., herself, currently a college professor at Northern Virginia Community College teaching English. She’s the first First Lady to have a paying job outside of the White House.

“We weren’t sure that [Biden] would be able to accept because it’s not typical for a sitting First Lady to do something like that unless it’s a government publication,” McBride said. “But she was really interested in making it happen. ... There was an element of trust by their office with us. We weren’t a big commercial venture. We were an academic, educational teaching tool, and that was important to them.”

A part of the deal was to create a textbook for colleges and universities to use for courses, but also create a book for the general public. The latter version has much of the same information, but allows the authors to expand in differ-

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Dec. 31 - First Sunday after Christmas
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ent ways and leave out learning objectives, discussion questions and key terms.

Biden’s foreword is only available in the textbook version, not the version meant for the general public.

The three started writing in the summer of 2021, but already had one chapter pretty much done: After George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in May 2020, the co-authors submitted an opinion piece to CNN. It was jointly written to show the role and impact First Ladies have had on slavery and civil rights.

Smith, a retired National Archives director of the Presidential Materials Division and current lecturer, said the setup for the book is based thematically around women who changed the role of First Lady dramatically: Eleanor Roosevelt, Lady Bird Johnson and Michelle Obama.

“We feel [they] affected that role so much that we showed them in terms of single chapters,” Smith said. “We’re looking at it ... in terms of the impact on the role and what their biography dictates in terms of how they approached and did the job.”

In the 18 textbook chapters, the authors explore the evolution, refinement, formalization, expansion and influence of the role of the First Lady. Many chapters focus on particular issues that have faced this nation, including slavery and civil rights to World War II and how First Ladies have left their mark.

“You can’t really study the arc of history of either the country or the presidency without looking at the First Ladies because they were involved, especially before we were even a country,” Carlin said. “These women were among our first female political actors, and I think that’s an important story to tell.”

McBride echoed Carlin, stating the First Lady is a “partner to the president.”

“The most unique of all confidants that a president has, a front row seat to what’s happening in history,” McBride said. “This was an opportunity to fill a gap in academic literature.”

And after a preliminary pilot of the book in five college classrooms, this is what the authors heard from students: Write more about the family dynamics and how political events impacted the West Wing.

 “[The] tremendous feedback from students [was] very helpful, including the title, which one of Carlin’s students gave us the suggestion for,” McBride said. “The common response by students – both men and women – is, Why did we never learn this before?”

Carlin also said while teaching the courses online, she had never seen so much virtual interaction with the material, both in and out of the classroom.

“Virtual classes are not easy to get people to participate in, but I would have four and five hands raised all the time,” Carlin said. “McBride came to those classes and they were full of questions.”

The textbook version is currently available and the general public version, under the title, “Remember the First Ladies: The Legacies of America’s History-Making Women,” will be available in January.

From left to right: Nancy Kegan Smith, President of the White House Historical Association Stewart D. McLaurin, Anita McBride and Diana Carlin.

cmeisner@alextimes.com

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City Council deferred action on the redevelopment proposal for 301 N. Fairfax St. at Saturday’s public hearing. Action on the project was pushed back to January 20 per a request by the applicant’s lawyer, M. Catharine Puskar.

This request followed a protest petition from local residents that necessitated a supermajority vote of support from Council for approval. Her request was passed unanimously.

“At this point, I’m planning to not support this project going forward,” Councilor John Taylor Chapman said in the hearing. “As I understand it, not having the full Council here and having a protest petition, the applicant would need all six votes.”

The full Council was not physically present at the public hearing, as Councilor Alyia Gaskins had a personal conflict and Councilor R. Kirk McPike joined via Zoom. Chapman said in an interview with the Times that McPike’s votes count as if he was present in the City Hall chambers.

There is a petition of nearly 900 signatures in opposition to the development, which according to the city’s zoning ordinance Section 11-808, mandates that the Council cannot approve a proposed amendment “except by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of its members.”

Chapman also said to the Times that without Gaskins present, Puskar did not have the votes to pass the redevelopment application. Deferring until January 20 ensures that each member of Council is present and six votes can be secured. Since six of seven members were present Saturday and Chapman plans to disapprove, this made it impossible for Puskar to push through the application.

Chapman also said to the Times his “eyebrows were raised” when he saw the Planning Commission was split 4-3 in approving the redevelopment. He said he was particularly concerned about the planning of the entire block.

“For the property to the north, we have no clue what they’re going to do,” Chapman said. “I think I want to look at this as if I am planning that entire block and what would I want to see? I would want to see some ground-floor, open-space buildings not built right next to each other.

“While there is the expansion of a building – and I’m fine with that – doing it to the property line where it could possibly be brought together with another building, I don’t think is appropriate,” Chapman said.

He also said he was hesitant to approve the redevelopment because of a possibility this would create a single wall of development on North Fairfax Street.

“If they both go to the property line, that would be kind of a connected building [and] would stretch the entire block,” Chapman said. “I wanted to hedge that off by requesting this development leave some room between the end of their site and their building, and they were not willing to do that.”

Chapman acknowledged the oddity of speaking up in notifying the chambers of the deferral, but said he wanted to tell those who had come to speak beforehand in an act of transparency.

Puskar did not respond to requests for comment.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com
Landrum, Parajon reveal preliminary plans for new complex
BY CAITLYN MEISNER

At Saturday’s City Council public hearing, City Manager Jim Parajon and Alexandria Economic Development Partnership’s President and CEO Stephanie Landrum presented Council with more details on the proposed Monumental development at Potomac Yard.

In their 16-slide presentation, the two touched on funding sources, community priorities and the economic impact of the proposal.

Parajon spoke first and said this was a competitive project in which the city competed against multiple cities and states for the new arena.

“When we think about the competitive nature of this, that compels that competition to be in a more private setting,” Parajon said. “We now are at that [public] point where many of these things can get shared publicly. No formal decision has been made on this project.”

Parajon said while negotiations were private, the project cannot move forward unless it’s in public. He also quickly clarified that this project was not just merely the moving of two sports franchises to the city: It means the creation of an entertainment district, two new corporate headquarters, new jobs, hotels, affordable housing and more.

“The city of Alexandria was selected and chosen to potentially be home to two sports franchises, which puts us in very elite company in terms of visibility, brand awareness and marketing value,” Parajon said.

He then listed four reasons why the community should seriously consider this project. Parajon emphasized “seriously” because Council has not yet acted and the public engagement process has just begun.

“This project aligns very well with the vision that was established for this area in a small area plan. This site was always intended to be a significant development,” Parajon said. “It has the potential to create a stronger financial future for the city by growing our commercial tax base, which will support city operations into the future. It creates opportunity for wealth creation, particularly in marginalized populations through job creation.”

Landrum then discussed the layout of the planned development area. Landrum said there are four sections of the area: Monumental’s headquarters and arena; the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus; future development of office, residential, retail, meeting spaces and hotels; and long-term future development.

Landrum said Monumental’s headquarters would act as the catalyst for all future development in the area and would be built first. In addition to the headquarters, other development would include an arena to house the Washington Wizards, and Washington Capitals, the Monumental Sports Network media studio, a Wizards practice facility, an esports facility, a performing arts venue and a 2,500 space underground parking garage.

She said Monumental’s campus will only encapsulate about 15% of the project and the remaining 85% is for retail, hotels and housing. The 85% is considered Phase I of the project, while the 15% is considered the Arena Phase.

“By making this 15% of the project happen, we actually catalyze the remainder...”
Peter Sutherland Race, 82, died on Dec. 2, 2023, in Alexandria surrounded by his beloved wife and daughters.

Peter lived a life full of love, laughter and family. He was born on July 17, 1941, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, to William Race and Betty Sutherland Race and was the third of four brothers. He attended high school at The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut, where he played football, hockey and ran track and graduated in 1960. Peter then moved west to study political science at Stanford University, expanding his horizons with new friends and interesting travel. While at Stanford, he served on the Executive Committee of Rally Com, helping to organize card stunts at football games and protecting the Stanford Axe from rival University of California, Berkeley during the Big Game.

After graduating from Stanford in 1964, Peter received his commission as an officer in the U.S. Navy and spent most of the next two years on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Ranger based in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. Peter went on to attend law school at the University of Michigan and graduated in 1969. He described his greatest achievements in Ann Arbor as earning his J.D. degree and meeting the love of his life, Kristen LeAnderson.

Peter and Kristen married in 1970 and raised their two daughters in Alexandria. Peter dedicated his life to serving others, working for 42 years at the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C. He ultimately became an Assistant General Counsel and led the enforcement of HUD’s consumer protection programs. He took great pleasure in contributing to his community, including coaching his girls’ soccer and basketball teams and volunteering as a long-time board member of the Hollin Meadows Swim & Tennis Club. Peter loved having daughters and was a devoted and caring father.

Upon retirement, Peter and Kristen spent much of their time at their home on Little Traverse Lake in Northern Michigan. “Up North” was a cherished gathering place where they shared special times with their children, grandchildren, extended family and many friends.

Peter’s dry sense of humor, gentle smile and kind nature endeared him to everyone he met. Peter was as devoted a fan as could be, whether it be loyalty cheering on his beleaguered Detroit Lions, his less-beleaguered Michigan Wolverines, or supporting his dear grandchildren — of whom he was incredibly proud — at their many games, performances and activities.

Peter is survived by his wife, Kristen, his daughters, Katie Race Brin (husband, Lory) and Elizabeth Terborgh (husband, Andrew), and grandchildren, Aaron Brin, Talia Brin, David Terborgh and Lucas Terborgh. Peter was preceded in death by his brother, William Race, and is survived by brothers Geoffrey Race and Louis Race. A memorial service celebrating Peter’s life will take place at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial at 101 Callahan Drive on Saturday, January 27 at 2 p.m.

The family is eternally grateful for the caregivers who provided loving and compassionate care to Peter and Kristen during his final years. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Little Traverse Lake Association (LTLPOA, P.O. Box 145, Cedar, MI 49621; littletraverse-lake.org/get-involved-1) or Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area (parkinsonfoundation.org/).
Here are gifts perfect for the procrastinating holiday shopper

**Opal Music Studio**
Opal Music Studio at 607 Prince St. has gift certificates of four to six lessons in the instrument of your choosing. The studio, founded in 2008, now offers lessons in a wide array of instruments, including piano, guitar, mandolin, ukulele, banjo, violin, cello, clarinet, saxophone and the oboe. The teachers are all practicing professionals and are well-versed in a broad range of styles and the art of motivating students of all ages.

The studio also offers a piccolo class for young musicians aged 3.5 to 5. This is a small-group class for musicians designed to build a love of music and a strong musical foundation in the youngest students. Children who love music and are excited to start playing an instrument will adore this class. To purchase, email the studio at info@opalmusicstudio.com or call the office at 571-970-2615.

**School of Rock**
The School of Rock is offering an immersion pass, which includes four lessons for $99. This pass is a set of four 30-minute lessons meant to provide an introduction into School of Rock programs. These are in-person only and are available to new enrollments as well as existing students on guitar, bass, keyboard, drums and/or vocals. For more details contact Alexandria@schoolofrock.com or call 571-376-7625.

Simon Pearce’s signature pieces are the Vermont Evergreens.

**Waited till the last minute?**

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_It’s crunch time! With only a few days left in the holiday season, stop by an Alexandria shop or two to fill that stocking or grab a gift for your favorite family member._
If you’re still looking for something for her, stop by and browse the many holiday gift sets at Bellacara located at 1000 King St. Bellacara, a boutique for fine cosmetic, skin care and hair care products, has been a staple in Old Town for the past 23 years.

There are many great products to choose from, including Antica Farmacista’s white spruce reed diffuser and scented candle set for $124. Already in a perfect gift box set, this includes a diffuser, candle and diffuser tray. Not to be overlooked are the Kusshi signature makeup bags which range in price from $45. These bags are leak-proof and machine washable with a colorful removable lining and zippers on each side to provide full visibility to your products inside.

London-based Molton Brown has plentiful gift sets, including the Orange & Bergamot classic hand wash and lotion. For $60, you can get a combined 20 fluid ounces of product to spruce up the winter scents. Molton Brown also offers a floral and aromatic liquid soap set of three for $80, including orange and bergamot; pink pepper; and cypress and sea fennel.

But if you can’t decide on just one or three scents, Bellacara also sells Molton Brown’s stocking stuffer set of 10 miniature body washes for $50 with a variety of scents, including amber, jasmine, rhubarb and rose, gingerlily and black pepper.

A gift for the ages might

**Family History Intelligence**

A gift for the ages might

**Last Minute**

**Bellacara**

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A gift for the ages might

**Family History Intelligence**

A gift for the ages might
include a gift certificate for a family history from Old Town resident and former CIA analyst Lisa Maddox’s Family History Intelligence service. Maddox and her team of researchers incorporate your ancestors’ narratives into a custom, private website, creating an interactive family history with a family tree. Relatives can easily share and add to the story. All documents, pictures, maps and data is uploaded onto the site, serving as a library that provides enduring access for families.

A “preliminary dig” at $50 determines if there is enough available material and data to develop a family history project. Within a week, preliminary research results are made available along with a custom project proposal. You can also purchase gift cards for $50 on their website. For more information, visit familyhistoryintelligence.com.

The Happy Place Gift Bar Boutique
For a few novelty gifts, stop by The Happy Place at 105 S. Union St. The locally owned shop is filled with holiday themed glitz tops, shimmer shorts, Christmas sweaters, cups, tumblers, sweatshirts, pillows, candles and puzzles to name just a few things. Perfect for a young adult, teenager or college-aged students, these gifts are brightly colored and work as stocking stuffers. The Happy Place offers Christmas-specific items or their very own “Happy Face”

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shop. Between happy face daisy hats for $25, mini tie dye backpacks for $44 and slippers for $25, there is no shortage of products to choose from.

Simon Pearce
If you’re looking for a last-minute treasure, you might stop by Simon Pearce, located at 721 King St. Pearce, a native of Ireland, relocated to the United States in 1981 and opened a glass blowing and ceramic factory mill. Pearce’s products are inspired by centuries-old Georgian glass-making techniques and cut to perfection. The collection’s signature pieces are the handmade evergreens, which start at $175.

Pearce has a holiday shop, which includes ornaments, evergreens and teals. The store also offers barware, drinkware, serveware, decor and bowls.

The Dog Park
And no forgetting the dog or cat in your life! The Dog Park, located at 705 King St., is an independently owned pet boutique filled with toys, treats, coats, collars, leashes, harnesses and costumes. The shop also carries beds, sweaters, and bowls.

In addition, The Dog Park has artwork, greeting cards, mugs, picture frames, magnets and other items perfect for your dog or cat loving friend, pet sitter or dog walker.

Le Vintage Wine
Le Vintage Wine, located at 1218 King St., is a relatively new business in Old Town, but has made its mark as an accessible wine shop to Alexandrians. Le Vin offers a wide variety of carefully selected wines, beers and cheeses. There is also a big under $20 rack in the shop. Gift certificates are available online, or you can call the store at 703-647-9802 or email cheers@levintagewines.com. -louisekrafft@comcast.net

LAST MINUTE FROM | 17

A bounty of dog treats are available at The Dog Park on King Street.

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Mulled wine

BY MARTY DEVINE

No matter where one ventures in the world in winter, virtually every country has some version of the cozy, warm winter drink, known – at least in the United States and United Kingdom – as mulled wine. While many opt to pick up a bottle of pre-made mulled wine from their local specialty grocery or wine store, this tasty beverage is easy to make at home. One can even pick up “mulled wine spices” to enhance a bottle of red vino or dry white wine.

There are no wrong answers in this recipe: All the options will result in a delicious drink. If you do opt to search for pre-made mulled wine, keep in mind your local shop may know the wine by another name such as glögg, glühwein, bisschopswijn, vino caliente, or vin chaud – just to name a few of the possible variations.

Ingredients

- **Fruity red wine** is ideal but dry white wine is fine as well. There’s no need to break the budget with an expensive bottle of red or white.

- **Tawny port, brandy and Cointreau** are often used to enhance the wine. Start with a dash or two of any one of these three options.

- **Cinnamon sticks** are a good addition and just a couple will suffice. When the wine is warm, you can make the mugs or glasses appear more festive by including a cinnamon stick in each one. In a pinch, if you are out of cinnamon sticks, just stir in a tablespoon or so of ground cinnamon. Note that the drink might seem a wee bit grainy.

- **Fresh peeled, thinly sliced oranges**

- **Nutmeg.** A couple of whole cloves and a half teaspoon is enough. If you have some star anise in the spice rack, add some to the mix. These are your mulling spices. After you have made mulled wine a few times, you will know which spices you like best and your mulling spice mix will be better than anything from the store.

- **Sugar or honey** to sweeten the wine. Again, perhaps start with a tablespoon of sugar and taste the mix as you go to see how much sweetener you want to include. You can also wait until the drink is warm and ready to serve before you sweeten it.

Directions

1. Stir all of the ingredients up in a pan on the stove top and heat the burner to a medium to medium high heat. DO NOT BOIL! The wine mixture should not be too hot.

2. Turn the heat down to low. Cover the pan and let it simmer for as little as 10 minutes and as long as a few hours.

3. Strain the wine into a carafe or pitcher. Some people insist that you must use a fine mesh strainer, but it isn’t necessary. Keep the cinnamon sticks and dispose of everything else except for perhaps the thinly sliced, peeled oranges from the pan.

4. Taste the strained beverage and determine if you want to add more sugar or honey.

5. Finally, pour the mulled wine into mugs or heat-resistant glasses. Add a fresh cinnamon stick – or one from the pot to each mug or glass – and garnish with the oranges that were not in the original pot. Note that some people prefer the oranges that were simmered in the pot, but the fresh orange slices certainly look more attractive.

6. Serve. Enjoy and customize this simple “recipe” to suit your own palette!
Steps to start planning your estate

BY FAMILY FEATURES

Regardless of your age, it’s never too early to plan your estate and ensure last wishes are met. Estate planning isn’t just for the wealthy – it’s a process that allows you to determine how your assets are bequeathed and managed upon incapacitation or death.

Discuss these basic estate planning steps with your loved ones and consider consulting an attorney for individual guidance.

Document your wishes

Although not typically legally binding, preparing a letter of final wishes allows you to share information and requests, like funeral arrangements, which often fall outside of the will. It may also include an explanation of will provisions or suggestions for how funds you’ll leave behind should be used.

Prepare a will

A legally binding last will and testament is often considered the most important aspect of estate planning. This involves naming guardians for minor children and pets, listing all property, designating people and organizations that should receive assets, directing funds to charities and naming an executor.

Consider causes important to you

As part of will creation and estate planning, consider charitable causes you’d like to support after passing. Talking with loved ones can be a way to gather input on important causes, and those conversations can act as a springboard for generations to support a particular cause or organization, based on their shared values.

Assign beneficiaries

Naming people who should inherit assets like life insurance policies or retirement accounts is something you may have completed long ago when creating those assets. However, it’s important to ensure the beneficiaries named align with your will to avoid conflict as designated beneficiaries often take precedence over a will, which could create confusion and legal headaches.

Regularly review your plan

Establishing your estate plan is important for ensuring last wishes are met, but it’s also beneficial to revisit the plan regularly to update when necessary. For example, many people review their plans every couple of years or at major life events, such as the birth of a child or grandchild, marriage or divorce, purchasing a large asset, changing life insurance coverage and career changes.
Staying safe during the holidays

BY RAUL PEDROSO

It’s a wonderful time of year: Alexandrians are visiting with family, attending holiday events and shopping for presents. All that activity, travel and shopping is fun, but it also creates opportunities that criminals look to exploit.

Crime – especially robbery and larceny – increases nationwide in December, and the average value stolen in each crime goes up compared to every other month according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ National Crime Victimization Survey. Alexandria isn’t immune to that trend, as more robberies were reported in December 2022 than in any other month. Nothing ruins holiday cheer like becoming the victim of crime.

The Alexandria Police Department wants to help you protect yourself this holiday season, so we’re sending out some personal safety tips so you can make sure your holidays don’t turn from merry to scary.

Shopping

There are several ways you can protect yourself from scammers and thieves while you conduct your holiday shopping, whether you’re buying online or checking out the sales at Alexandria’s local businesses.

Park in well-lit areas. If your car is in a dark corner, that makes it easier to break into without being seen and it means you have to return to it in the dark after you’ve made purchases.

Don’t leave visible packages or valuables in your car. This is always good advice, but with all the shopping this time of year, it’s easy to forget. If thieves can see something in plain sight, they’re more likely to attempt to take it.

Stay alert. With the frequent crowds at stores at malls, you should be extra vigilant. Do not walk in parking lots while talking on your phone. You may not notice a stranger watching you or approaching to take something if you aren’t paying attention.

If shopping online, avoid entering sensitive information — such as payment information and passwords — into

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websites or apps while connected to public Wi-Fi. Free, public internet is unsecured, making it easier for hackers to obtain your information. If you need to enter sensitive information while logged into a foreign network, use a virtual private network. A VPN can encrypt your information, securing your internet traffic.

Be cautious with links and websites. Ensure that links come from someone you know before you click on them and be on the lookout for suspicious or misspelled web addresses. Scammers often create fake websites that look like popular stores in an attempt to get unaware shoppers to enter their information. Check that the left side of the address bar has a padlock symbol and that the URL starts with "https," which indicates that it is encrypted.

**Home security**

Whether you’re home for the holidays or going out of town, you can take steps to protect yourself and your home. Criminals look for easy opportunities, so make sure you don’t provide one.

Avoid leaving packages and mail unattended. If you are not going to be able to bring them in promptly, network with a friend or neighbor or have items delivered elsewhere. Unattended packages are an easy target for theft and sitting mail is a sign of an unoccupied home.

If you’re going out of town, have someone you trust check on your home periodically. You might consider leaving a car in the driveway or using lights on a timer to help make it appear that someone is home.

Make sure to lock your doors and windows any time you leave the house. This includes the garage. If you have a security system, arm it.

Ensure that all doors and windows are well-lit. A criminal can use a darkened entrance as a way to break in without being seen. Movement-activated lights are one way to help light such areas.

By following these tips, you can minimize the chance that you’ll be a victim of crime this holiday season and all year round. If you need help, the APD non-emergency line is 703-746-4444. For emergencies, call or text 911.

Happy holidays, Alexandria!

The writer is the assistant chief of police at the Alexandria Police Department.

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Holiday hosting hacks

BY FAMILY FEATURES

Entertaining friends and loved ones during the holidays offers an opportunity to slow down from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and make lasting memories. The key is getting ahead of hosting duties so you can be present with family and friends.

Make this season’s holiday hosting effortless and enjoyable with these tips.

**Stick with a simple menu**

There’s no need to create an elaborate menu with complex dishes that take hours to prepare. Instead, build your menu around easy crowd-pleasers. Save the experimenting with new recipes and ingredients for another time when you’re less likely to feel the pressure. Be sure to consider your guests’ likes and dislikes and be conscious of potential dietary restrictions.

**Serve festive beverages**

A beverage station is a fun and unexpected way to infuse some extra holiday cheer into your event. Offer cozy options like hot chocolate and coffee, along with an array of seasonal mix-ins and flavors.

**Plan for entertainment**

When a well-acquainted group gathers, the party has a way of taking on a life of its own. In case of a slow start – or if you’re entertaining different groups of friends who don’t know each other well – it’s a good idea to prepare some options to get guests mingling and engaged. A playlist of holiday music creates a festive atmosphere and planning a few interactive games ahead of time can help break the ice.

**Anticipate guests’ needs**

The secret to great hosting isn’t really a secret at all; it’s simply making sure your guests feel welcome and comfortable. Providing a secure spot for coats and handbags, offering a drink when they arrive and making sure they can find essentials like the restroom may seem obvious, but they’re easily overlooked basics. If you worry you’ll be too busy in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on the meal, recruit a friend or family member to act in your place.
Move-in ready in Olde Bellhaven

1732 Olde Towne Road is an exceptional property you don’t want to miss. With open and light-filled living spaces, four bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths, there is ample room for living, working and enjoying life all under one roof. The main level features a combination living and dining room with fireplace and seated bay window, an updated eat-in kitchen with granite counters, cherry cabinets and new stainless steel appliances. There are three bedrooms and two full baths upstairs. The lower level has a fourth bedroom, a full bath, laundry room and a spacious family room with a cozy gas fireplace. French doors open to a beautifully landscaped backyard with a brick patio and garden.

This property has all new appliances from 2021 and beyond, new main level windows, new recessed lighting and new light fixtures. In the backyard, new landscaping and hardscape was installed, including a custom herringbone brick walkway, maintenance-free turf and a new fence in 2022. The roof was replaced in 2019, the sof-fits were replaced in 2021 and mesh gutter coverings were installed in 2023. Just minutes from Old Town, this fabulous all-brick house is ready to welcome you home!
education opportunities as well as transit improvements. She said this could ultimately create 30,000 jobs and bring up to $12 billion across several decades.

Parajon then detailed the timeline, City Council actions and public engagement process moving forward. He said steps one and two of the process are complete – announcement of the project and the public hearing presentation – and step three commences next year with community engagement and Planning Commission proposals.

These proposals for the Commission include master plan amendments to the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, coordinated development district amendments and development special use permits. This will then be presented to City Council, and if approved, will move the process into the design phase by mid-2024. If that’s approved, by early 2025, the project can break ground.

Landrum also clarified the issue of the Target store on the proposed development site, which had many people frustrated on social media. She said Target’s location was only temporary from the time it was built and these discussions about it moving would have to happen with or without this proposal.

Councilor Canek Aguirre began Council’s questioning by recognizing the odd timing of the announcement in light of the divisive Zoning for Housing vote in November.

“Something that’s going to be very important to me is if we have a tracker,” Aguirre said. “This is something we were kind of missing for Zoning for Housing and I want to include not just everything that the city manager was describing, but if any of us are at events as well... how many emails do we get, how many interactions are we having on social media, how many people have signed up for news alerts. We want to be tracking all of that so we can show the engagement we’re doing.”

Aguirre also asked for a more detailed timeline, infographics and important dates for the General Assembly that align with this project.

Councilor Sarah Bagley mentioned noise as being a potential issue, as the complex will exist next to the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport tarmacs. McPike also requested a Council town hall be scheduled for early January. Vice Mayor Amy Jackson raised the issue of traffic flow through roads, requesting traffic studies of people flowing in and out from Maryland and neighboring jurisdictions.

“If this venue does occur, people will have tickets in hand and then will get really frustrated if there isn’t an easy way to get in and out of our city, and that’s not a good look,” Jackson said. “How are [people] coming from Maryland and back? How are they coming through D.C. and Arlington and back?”

Councilor John Taylor Chapman requested small businesses and businesses surrounding the potential development be met with similar to residents.

The public discussion period then began, and there were a few residents that spoke in opposition to the potential development.

“People in Potomac Yard, who the city invited to move into a brand new, mixed-use neighborhood, and now, via press conference – that they were not invited to – are being asked to put up an arena almost literally in their backyards,” Jonathan Husky, resident of Warwick Village, said. “This is a nasty thing to do to our friends across the river and will undermine a central hub for the region just to perpetuate a filthy competition for sports franchises.”

Adrien Lopez spoke next, who was one of the protestors at the announcement, and has resided in Potomac Yard since 2014.

“The noise pollution, the traffic pollution, the light pollution, the people pollution, the lack of green space no longer make our community livable and the reason we left [Washington,] D.C. to come to Alexandria,” Lopez said. “Potomac Yard was never meant to be an entertainment district.”

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Editorial

The treasure that is Christ Church

This has certainly been a momentous – some might say monumental – last few weeks in Alexandria.

From City Council’s unanimous passage of the divisive Zoning for Housing/All initiative, to the stunning announcement last week that Ted Leonsis plans to move the Washington Wizards and Washington Capitals to Potomac Yard to the abrupt deferral of the controversial 301 N. Fairfax St. redevelopment project, a lot has happened in a short time frame.

We are all bracing ourselves for next year, which promises more of the same. We have the upcoming local elections for mayor, City Council and School Board. The N. Fairfax project will be debated and voted on. Battles are still to be fought over the road narrowing Duke Street in Motion proposal. And we have the national election looming, which has left many careening between fear and outrage.

In the midst of all of this change and strife, we have the consistency of Christ Church.

Alexandria was only 24 years old when Christ Church opened its doors to worshippers. Through the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and Union occupation, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement and the COVID-19 pandemic, Christ Church has been a pillar and a place of solace to congregants and visitors alike.

The church’s colonial architecture is beautiful, its graveyard peaceful. Despite its colonial legacy, Christ Church has also remained relevant during changing times.

Similarly, current Rector Rev. Noelle York-Simmons has sensitively helped her congregation navigate many controversial issues during her seven years at the helm.

It’s fitting that 250 years of prominence in and service to Alexandria have been recognized throughout 2023 with a series of special lectures, performances and gatherings. See our story on page one “Christ Church’s 250th anniversary” for more information.

In our relatively new country, it’s difficult to put 250 years into perspective. We see and marvel at all of the changes that have taken place since 1775. And looking backward 250 years from the establishment of Christ Church, in 1523 the world was in the early years of the Renaissance Era. Newton’s apple was yet to fall; Galileo’s telescope was almost a century distant.

Clearly, a lot can happen in 250 years.

During this holiday season, Christ Church is helping its congregants await the birth of Christ during Advent, while recognizing throughout 2023 with a series of special lectures, performances and gatherings.

Congratulations – and thank you for being a bedrock of Alexandria during good times and bad, during war and peace, through strife and harmony.

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

A blue and pink sunrise over the Potomac River.

Letters

Ever more in the hands of God

To the editor:

This is the Christmas letter I received from my in-laws just a few days ago. It was written by my father-in-law, Bruce King MacLaury, Ph.D., a former president of the Federal Reserve in Minnesota as well as a former president at Brookings Institute for 18 years, and my mother-in-law, Virginia MacLaury.

Our world right now is in dire straits. Some people realize that, and others not so much. This card from my in-laws eloquently says what some think but few dare to say.

“We thought we had left the pandemic behind. But this year was no better, just different: Deaths of innocents by bombs and swords rather than by viruses. Indeed worse: viruses, like volcanoes, are Acts of Nature; Bombs and swords are instruments of Human Nature. So much for notions of “progress” in human history.

Progress is primarily in the eye of the beholder.

Take Artificial Intelligence:

Is it the end of drudgery, or the end of jobs? Is it a spur to creativity, or a destroyer of “truth?” Is it mankind’s cleverest servant, or mankind’s replacement? And whatever happened to American Exceptionalism?

Remember the quaint notion of a City on a Hill? A light or beacon in a dark world? Today, the threat of an authoritarian “Savior” seems as great at home as abroad.

No apologies for the depressing nature of this screed. It reflects the temper of the times, as we try to interpret the nightly news.

For now, the family is an exception – a refuge from the brooding storm. In the micro, we are deeply grateful for our many blessings; In the macro, we are more than ever in the Hands of God."

-Kim Ryan, Alexandria

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

BY ETHAN BOND

I’ve not written one of these before but as I am seething with rage at the moment, it was at the very least cathartic to write this:

President Zelensky comes again to Washington, D.C., much like Sir Winston Churchill did more than half a century ago, to plead the case for his beleaguered nation as it faces an existential threat in the form of unbridled aggression from a far larger foe.

Meanwhile, J.D. Vance and his cohorts within the far-right have orchestrated a disgraceful display of betrayal and short-sightedness. Their refusal to support a crucial ally at its most desperate hour is not just abhorrent—it’s a catalyst for catastrophe.

Let’s dissect the delusion that withholding funds from Ukraine would somehow coerce a negotiated end to the war with Russia. Only the most gullible would truly believe that weakening Ukraine’s defenses would magically lead to peace talks.

The reality? It emboldens Putin, paves the blood-soaked path for Russia to seize more territory and ensures the death toll skyrocket, all while inching perilously closer to NATO’s borders. Ultimately, the U.S. will have to intervene, but this time, the struggle will be fiercer, costlier and more agonizingly difficult to overcome.

Look no further than Tommy Tuberville’s page in the annals of spineless political theater. His misguided focus on stirring the cauldron of “woke-ness” only exposed the current Grand Old Party’s abandonment of national security.

Similarly, Vance and his cronies are on track to become the next protagonists in this tragedy-comedy. They’ve morphed the GOP into a party that has long ago abandoned our national security interests, our military, our intelligence services and the very notion of law and order; instead worshiping a six-times bankrupt, four-times-indicted, twice-impeached, one-term ex-president whose shadow eclipses any principles the party once claimed.

Suppose Vance and his Trumpian lackeys believe that appeasing Vladimir Putin will earn them a return ticket to the White House. In that case, they are playing a treasonous game of geopolitical roulette with the gun held to the head of a key ally who is fighting for its very survival. Even without this shameless act of fealty by Vance, Putin will mobilize his trolls to flood the U.S. with disinformation to sway next year’s elections in favor of his far-right allies.

In the end, the Trump-infested GOP will find itself standing on the wrong side of history, squandering America’s credibility, endangering global security and leaving behind a legacy stained with treachery and opportunistic myopia.

The far-right’s cowardice is not just a betrayal of Ukraine; it’s a betrayal of American values, security and the very essence of moral decency. Their allegiance to a demagogue and their reckless gamble with Ukrainian lives are poised to have repercussions that extend far beyond the confines of partisan politics.

History will not look kindly upon this chapter in the GOP’s descent into moral bankruptcy.

The writer recently returned to the U.S. from Ukraine and continues to be heavily involved in various medical support and research efforts associated with the war.

City Hall Watch

A deal for the ages?

BY BILL ROSSELLO

The proposed Potomac Yard sports and entertainment center may well be a deal for the ages in the Port City. But putting together economic development deals has not exactly been the city’s strength over the years.

In fact, residents have been asking for decades why we have been so unsuccessful at attracting businesses that significantly grow the local economy and reduce residential tax burdens. It’s a reasonable question given the continuing success of our neighbor to the north.

Developments like Pentagon City, Ballston, Clarendon and even the rejuvenation of the long-maligned areas of Rosslyn and Crystal City beat anything Alexandria has done. Add to that Arlington’s successful attraction of corporate headquarters for behemoth companies Boeing, Raytheon, Nestle and Amazon. Heck, Arlington even attracted not one, but two, Apple stores!

Our big economic development “successes” include the Base Realignment and Closures debacle at Mark Center, a monstrous complex built on land removed from the tax rolls. It’s never been full and never fulfilled the city’s economic promises. The Patent and Trademark complex reflected a curious move to attract an agency that pioneered the federal government’s work-from-home trend more than 15 years ago. The pandemic certainly put the final nail in those coffins.

The difference between the two jurisdictions’ economic development performance is reflected in tax rates. Arlington’s has been consistently lower. Our current real property tax rate exceeds theirs by nearly 10%. In just about every other tax or fee category, Arlington’s are lower.

While Arlington was closing deals, Alexandria has been painfully slow to realize the significant economic potential of Potomac Yard, a 300-acre parcel the Washington Post referred to in 1990 as “one of the largest and most valuable unblunted tracts on the East Coast.”

In 1992, the city and residents rejected a plan by former Governor Douglas Wilder and then Washington Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke to build a 78,500-seat stadium. A much more parochial Alexandria was clearly not ready for such a transformational project.

About 15 years later, with the commercial end of the Yard still not built out, we watched as Prince George’s County and the Peterson Companies developed most of the 300-acre National Harbor site with its world class Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, a major casino – for better or worse – and entertainment center and a slew of restaurants and other hotels. It has become a vibrant neighborhood and the go-to destination for companies and nonprofits for their major Washington, D.C.-area events.

Fast forward to today. A unique opportunity has fallen into our laps: The move of two major league sports teams and the development of a world class entertainment center on the edge of town.

The first question we need to answer is whether this holiday gift is a pot of gold or a lump of coal. Negotiated well it could be the former. Accepting the terms as presented, perhaps it would be the latter.

Other key questions to be addressed: Will the project be good for our local businesses? Quite possibly. And since everyone loves their neighborhood, can the city pull this off without fundamentally reducing the quality of life for residents east of Russell Road and along the roads named Glebe? Maybe.

If taxpayers and renters across the city benefit, this may be a big win. But the ultimate questions in the New Year will be these: Do residents have enough confidence in our city officials to do the right thing – and do it the right way? Unlike Arlington, their track record on economic development is dismal. And we shouldn’t count on any governor to negotiate a deal like this on our behalf.

The right formula for City Hall will be to go slow, negotiate hard and smart, be willing to abandon the deal – always a best practice – and, once, truly listen to the whole community on a major change.

At this seasonal time of joy and hope, let’s hope that we have the right officials and candidates next year to make the right decisions on what may be a deal for the ages – or not. Happy Holidays, everyone!

The writer is a civic advocate, management consultant and longtime Alexandria resident.
19th-century New Year’s Eve and Day in Alexandria

New Year’s Day has been celebrated for many years, even before the founding of Alexandria. The adjustment in English-owned lands from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar occurred in 1752, three years after the city’s founding.

In 1752, the calendar had to be corrected by 11 days because the Julian Calendar runs 12 days behind; Sept. 2, 1752, was to be followed by Sept. 14, 1752, to correct the transition from calendars. Before 1752, the official start of the year was March 25, but many in Europe celebrated January 1 as New Year’s Day and it was documented as such in almanacs. With the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar, January 1 became the official start of the New Year.

Just because January 1 was the new official start of the year did not mean the day was celebrated as a holiday. In fact, it wasn’t until 1885 that all federal government employees were given the day off.

In 1860, the Alexandria Gazette described New Year’s Day in New York as, “The only Autumn or Winter Day, that shuts up everything and turns out everybody, that makes it impossible even to print a newspaper the morning after.”

The description of the carnival-like atmosphere contrasted with a more sinister tradition held in Alexandria that year: Hiring Day. The Jan. 14, 1860, edition of the Gazette reprinted an article from the Boston Post, with an account of Hiring Day in “West End … a straggling village, running along the Mount Vernon road.”

On New Year’s Day, West End “is wakened up” according to the author, as those enslaved people deemed surplus to their legal owners were “hired out,” usually for the year, to other people. The author reported that:

“Men hired at from $75 to $110; women from $30 to $75: girls from $15 to $25.”

After the Civil War, African American communities, especially churches, replaced the Hiring Day tradition – which often separated family members – with a happier one. The Methodist tradition of Watch Night, in which congregations worshiped together and “watched” the arrival of the New Year was adopted in 1862 by African American churches as a means of protection as they waited for their Emancipation on Jan. 1, 1863. While Emancipation Day celebrations varied in different locations, resulting in the current celebration of Juneteenth, Watch Night celebrations have been part of New Year’s Eve traditions in African American churches here in Alexandria well into the 21st century.

As we move into 2024, we hope that future traditions continue to emphasize togetherness and community. We wish you all a Happy New Year!

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week
Are you excited about the planned relocation of the Capitals and Wizards to Alexandria?

64% No, it’ll cause traffic and/or noise pollution.
29% Yes, it’s fun and/or good for the economy.
5% I don’t really care.
3% I didn’t know about this move.

This Week
What do you think was the biggest news story in Alexandria this year?

A) Opening the Potomac Yard Metro.
B) Passing Zoning for Housing.
C) Announcing that the Wizards and Capitals are moving here.
D) Opening the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School.
E) Something else.
ALEXANDRIA TIMES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Willingness to Hold a Public Hearing

Find out about:Bikeshare Replacement Station Project VDOT Project No. 9999-100-858, UPC 122950 Federal Project No. CMAQ-5B01(592)

The City of Alexandria is planning to replace 21 Capital Bikeshare stations that are approaching the end of their useful life with new equipment. This will include new docks, platforms, and kiosks. New station equipment will be placed within the footprint of the existing stations. Additionally, new bikes will be purchased for the system.

Review the project information at alexandriava.gov/Bikesharing or at the City of Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, 421 King St, St 235, Alexandria, VA, 22314, tel: 703.746.4025 (TTY 711). Please call ahead to ensure the availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied, the City of Alexandria is willing to hold a Public Hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Sean Martin at Sean.Martin@alexandriava.gov. Please reference “Bikeshare Replacement Station Project” in the subject heading. Alternatively, you may mail comments to Sean Martin, City of Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, 421 King St, Suite 235, Alexandria, VA, 22314. Requests must be received prior to January 11, 2024. If upon receiving public comments it is deemed necessary to hold a public hearing, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be posted. The City of Alexandria ensures nondiscrimination in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For information call 703.746.3140 (TTY 711).

LEGAL NOTICE

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The following request has been received for administrative review and approval.

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

Special Use Permit #2023-00013
2381 Dove Street
Administrative Special Use Permit request for a New Use for an Animal Care with Overnight Accommodations; zoned: OCM(50)/Office Commercial Medium
Applicant: Leanne McRoberts
Business Name: Happy Cat Hotel
Planner: Patrick Silva –patrick.silva@alexandriava.gov

In accordance with Section 11-500 of the Zoning Ordinance, the above listed requests may be approved administratively by the Director of Planning & Zoning. If you have any comments regarding the proposals above, please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the planner listed no later than January 11, 2024.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 2024

The items described below will be heard by the Planning Commission and the City Council on the dates and times listed below. NOTICE: Some of the items listed below may be placed on a Consent Calendar. A consent item will be approved at the beginning of the meeting without discussion unless someone asks that it be taken off the Consent Calendar and considered separately. The Planning Commission reserves the right to re-enter and continue the Public Hearing to a future date. For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/dockets.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024
7:00 PM, CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
301 KING STREET
ROOM 2400
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL
SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2024
9:30 AM, CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
ROOM 2400
301 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

The January 4, 2024, Alexandria Planning Commission Public Hearing is being held in the Council Chamber (301 King Street, Room 2400 Alexandria, Virginia, 22314) and electronically. Members of the Planning Commission and staff are participating in-person. The Planning Commission Public Hearing can be accessed by the public in the City Council Chamber, through the live broadcast on the government channel 70, streaming on the City’s website, and can be accessed via Zoom webinar by the following link:

Planning Commission (Public Hearing Webinar):
The webinar will open at 5:00 p.m. to allow individuals to join prior to the 6:00 p.m. Start of the Planning Commission Public Hearing which is scheduled to start at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Registration Link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DHKhgpwTfk21Q86_ufl71g
Zoom Audio Conference: Dial-in: 301-715-8592
Webinar ID: 957 0145 3218
Password: 093258

City Council (Public Hearing Webinar):
Registration Link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vL3Qj1v8sG9kacX4zxxw
Zoom Audio Conference: Dial-in number: 301-715-8592
Webinar ID: 967 324 6248
Webinar Passcode: 096445

If you use the Zoom Webinar application, please be sure you have updated the application to the latest version for the best results. If you are unable to access the Zoom Webinar, please use the Dial-In number to access the meeting. Public comment will be received at the meetings. The public may submit comments in advance to Department of Planning & Zoning staff at PlanComm@alexandriava.gov for the Planning Commission Hearing, to the City Clerk at CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov for the City Council Hearing; or make public comments on the day of either Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation for the Planning Commission Hearing, contact Lisa Chase at alicia.chase@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.4666, Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made. If you prefer communication in another language, free interpretation and translation services are available to you. Please email LanguageAccess@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.3960.

A Work Session to discuss Alexandria will begin at 6:00 PM in the Council Chamber. Public testimony is not received for Work Sessions.

Special Use Permit #2023-00094
421 Clifford Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit for a temporary trailer; zoned CDD#24/Coordinated Development District. Applicant: Matilde Alvarado
Special Use Permit #2023-00076
404A E Alexandria Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to construct a single-family dwelling on a vacant substandard lot, for a lot without frontage on a public street, and for a parking reduction; zoned: R-2.5-Single and Two-family. Applicant: Eric Teran and Daniela Gross
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10018
Special Use Permit #2023-00093
4898 West Braddock Road – Newport Village II (NVII)
Public Hearing and consideration of requests for: (A) a Development Special Use Permit (with Site Plan) to construct a new multifamily residential building, with Special Use Permits for a maximum allowable floor area ratio of 2.3, a parking reduction, more than three mechanical rooftop penthouses, and an extension in the period in which construction must be commenced under Section 11-418 of the Zoning Ordinance (amending DSUP #2020-10026); and (B) a Special Use Permit for a co-ordinated sign plan; zoned CRMU-H Commercial Residential Mixed Use – High. Applicant UDR Newport Village, LLC, represented by Kenneth W. Wire, Attorney, Wire Gill LLP

Special Use Permit #2023-00097
1601 Mount Vernon Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration to extend the Special Use Permit until December 31, 2045 for the continued use of a nonconforming automobile service station (amending SUP #2010-00051); zoned C1/Commercial low.
Applicant: MVSC, Inc., represented by Lauren G. Riley, attorney

Master Plan Amendment #2023-00006
rezoning #2023-00004
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10011
300 Wythe Street and 600 N. Fairfax Street - The Ladrey
Public Hearing and consideration of requests for (A) amendments to the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan to change the Recommended Height District Limits Map to allow for 85 feet in building height and the Development Summary Table to update the proposed zoning, floor area ratio, height, the Recommended Zoning Map to change from CRMU-X to RMR, and total allowable development; (B) amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone for the site from RC/High density apartment zone to RMR/Residential multifamily zone; (C) a Development Special Use Permit and site plan to construct a 270 unit multifamily affordable building, including special use permits to increase the floor area ratio to 3.0 in the RMR zone, for the utilization of Section 7-700 for bonus density for the provision of affordable housing, and for a parking reduction; zoned RC/High Density Apartment. Applicant: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, by its agent Ladrey Developer LLC, represented by Steven Mikulic, attorney

Master Plan Amendment #2023-00003
Rezoning #2023-00002
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10017
Encroachment #2023-00002
S Alfred Street Townhomes – 816-820 Gibson Street and 608-
614 South Alfred Street
Public Hearing and consideration of requests for (A) an amendment to the Southwest Quadrant Small Area Plan Chapter of the Master Plan through an update to the Southwest Quadrant Land Use Map for the site from Commercial Low to Residential Medium; (B) an amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone for the site from CL/Commercial Low to CRMU-L/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Low); (C) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan with modifications to construct 14 townhouses, including special use permits to increase the floor area ratio to 1.5 in the CRMU-L zone, for the utilization of Section 7-700 for bonus density for the provision of affordable housing, and for land without frontage and modifications to the open space requirement and side yard setbacks; and (D) an Encroachment for three month's time in advance of the Public Hearing. If you are unable to access the Zoom Webinar, please use the Dial-In number to access the meeting. Public comment will be received at the meetings. The public may submit comments in advance to the City Clerk at CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov for the City Council Hearing or make public comments on the day of either Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation for the City Council Public Hearing, contact the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov or at 703.746.4550, Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

Individuals requiring translation services should contact the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov or at 703.746.4550. Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made. Please specify the language for translation when you make the request.

Master Plan Amendment #2023-00002
Rezoning #2023-00003
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10009
301 N Fairfax Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for (A) Amendment to the Old Town Small Area Plan Chapter of the Master Plan through updates to the Land Use map to designate the property as Residential High; (B) amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone for the site from CD/Commercial downtown zone to CRMU-H/Commercial residential mixed use (high); (C) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct a 48-unit multifamily building, including a Special Use Permit to increase the floor area ratio to 2.5 in the CRMU-H zone and a modification to the crown coverage requirement; zoned CD/ Commercial downtown zone. Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC, represented by M. Catharine Puskar, attorney.

LEGAL NOTICE

ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 2024

The item described below will be heard by the City Council on the date and time listed below. For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit www.alexandriava.gov or at 703.746.4550, Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made. Please specify the language for translation when you make the request.

Master Plan Amendment #2023-00002
Rezoning #2023-00003
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10009
301 N Fairfax Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for (A) Amendment to the Old Town Small Area Plan Chapter of the Master Plan through updates to the Land Use map to designate the property as Residential High; (B) amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone for the site from CD/Commercial downtown zone to CRMU-H/Commercial residential mixed use (high); (C) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct a 48-unit multifamily building, including a Special Use Permit to increase the floor area ratio to 2.5 in the CRMU-H zone and a modification to the crown coverage requirement; zoned CD/ Commercial downtown zone. Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC, represented by M. Catharine Puskar, attorney.
Your Style is Unique
I'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

FOR SALE
604 SOUTH LEE STREET
OLD TOWN

Southeast quadrant location with off-street parking in an amazing block of historic homes. Large room sizes like you’re not used to in Old Town! One minute to the waterfront and a stunning view of the Potomac from the primary bedroom suite/in-home office. There are four finished levels – 2,350 SF. A true foyer is welcoming while the gracious living room with fireplace is adjacent to the dining area and galley kitchen. The lower level family room with fireplace is adjacent to the brick Georgetown patio and bedroom and full bath. There is a brand new roof, fresh paint throughout, gleaming hardwood floors and 2-zone heating & cooling. Offered at $1,495,000.

UNDER CONTRACT
8104 EAST BOULEVARD DRIVE
HERBERT SPRINGS

Neighboring Old Town Alexandria in this exclusive and distinctive enclave is this two-year-old, custom build which has been carefully curated with detailed high-end finishes throughout. Here are featured the benefits of modern living with fashionably gracious, classic finishes. The high ceilings, large rooms, millwork, and design details are incomparable, and the sweeping staircase sublime. The great room is the heart of the home, and the kitchen features a Lacanche seven-burner stove and custom solid white oak cabinet millwork. There are four levels with six en-suite bedrooms. The three-season living room features a wood-burning fireplace and television connector. Offered at $5,000,000.

Celebrating 29 Years of service to my clients and my community!

Janet Caterson Price
Alexandria Real Estate Specialist  |  NVAR Lifetime Top Producer
703.622.5984  |  janet@janetpricehomes.com  |  janetpricehomes.com
109 S Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314  |  Equal Housing Opportunity