Former aide in midst of controversy, again

Jewish patron at Bar Chinois handed pro-Palestinian note on his check
BY DENISE DUNBAR

When Ran Yaniv sat down at his outside table at Washington, D.C.’s Bar Chinois on November 14, he expected a nice, relaxing meal before walking to Union Station to catch a train. What he got was bad service and an offensive note on his check.

Yaniv, who is Jewish, viewed the note – which read “Free Palestine” with a heart and the words “Thank You” – as anti-Semitic. Almost two months later, Yaniv is still upset.

His server that day was Cassidy Ketchem, who previously worked as an aide to Elizabeth Bennett-Parker when Bennett-Parker was Alexandria’s vice mayor. In August 2020, Ketchem was arrested and charged with assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest during a Black Lives Matter protest that turned destructive.

According to an August 2020 WTOP report, the other 40 people arrested during the BLM protest had their charges immediately dropped; Ketchem’s was the only case that proceeded. Court records show that the charges against Ketchem went through the legal process for almost two years before the prosecutor declined to proceed just a few days prior to her scheduled trial date in late July 2022. Bennett-Parker defended Ketchem’s actions at the time.

The public pages of Ketchem’s Instagram and Facebook pages both contain the statement, “My opinions are my own and not the views of my employer.”

Expecting a nice meal

Yaniv had come to the district from his Boston-area home for the Nov. 14, 2023, “March for Israel,” which was attended by “tens of thousands” of people, according to the Associated Press. He was wearing a t-shirt with both American and Israeli flags and the words, “I stand with Israel” – though the shirt was initially covered by a jacket he kept on while sitting at his outside table.

“The march was very peaceful,” Yaniv recalled. “It was pretty uplifting for people who are experiencing what I’m experiencing right now [following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel].”

Yaniv had a few hours to spend until the departure time of his train to New York, where he was going for business, which is how he ended up at Bar Chinois.

“I looked for a bar or a restaurant to eat something

New owners for an old restaurant

ARP to maintain Royal Restaurant’s charm, menu mainstays while modernizing
BY LEXIE JORDAN

After nearly 120 years of being one of Old Town’s great family owned businesses, The Royal Restaurant has been sold to Alexandria Restaurant Partners and Sloan Hospitality.

“IT was a very difficult decision to make,” Demetry Pikrallidas, a trustee and family member of the late owner, said. “There was no need to sell, but I didn’t think we’d find another group like Alexandria Restaurant Partners.”

Alexandria Restaurant Partners has made a name for themselves locally with their ownership and management of a handful of Old Town favorites: Ada’s on the River, Mia’s Kitchen, Barca Pier and Wine Bar, Theismann’s and The Majestic.

Royal’s history

In 1904, Gus Pikrallidas opened the Royal Cafe on Royal Street next to the Alexandria hands.
New Year,
New Home Trends

Our Alexandria real estate experts are sharing some of their predictions for 2024 home trends. We hope you enjoy our selections and won’t hesitate to get in touch should you need any additional recommendations or real estate assistance.

compass.com

THE COLOR BLUE

“Blue - Embracing Tranquility and Sophistication From Benjamin Moore’s bright “Blue Nova” to Sherwin-Williams’ softer “Upward,” the color blue evokes feelings of tranquility, trust, and sophistication and is poised to dominate in 2024. From serene wall tones to stylish decor accents, blue will set the trend for a calming and timeless ambiance in homes.”

— Pia Taylor

JAPANDI STYLE

“While we do love lots of color, we are predicting to see increased popularity in Japandi style. Japandi style is a blend of Scandinavian design and traditional Japanese design that creates a warm, welcoming feel. Think clean lines, calming, mostly neutral colors, lots of texture and natural materials.”

— Jennifer Halm

MAIN LEVEL BEDROOM AND BATH

“We feel that the home trend for 2024 is having a main level bedroom and a full bathroom. This also ties in with building an auxiliary dwelling unit (ADU). Aging in place or having a relative age in place seems to be a popular trend, and I think this trend will be on the rise in 2024”

— Homes of Alexandria

ECO-FRIENDLY FEATURES

“In 2024, The Goodhart Group predicts sustainable and eco-friendly features will be a major home trend. Homebuyers are increasingly seeking energy-efficient appliances, solar panels, and environmentally friendly materials. Additionally, smart home technology that enhances convenience and security is expected to become even more integrated into everyday living spaces.”

— The Goodhart Group
Man shot at Duke Street McDonald’s

On Dec. 27, 2023, a man was shot in the leg in a McDonald’s bathroom at 5311 Duke St., according to a city notification and press release. The Alexandria Police Department wrote in the release the male individuals knew each other and were engaged in a fight when APD was notified. Two alarms were activated around 6:15 p.m., according to the police scanner. The victim sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported for medical treatment. Information on the suspect was not released. Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the APD non-emergency line at 703-746-4444.

Sheriff’s deputy now Falls Church police chief

Shahram Fard, current chief deputy of the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office, will become chief of the Falls Church Police Department starting January 22, according to a Falls Church city press release. Fard has served in Alexandria for 25 years and currently leads the judicial and field operations bureau. Falls Church conducted a national search upon the announcement of Chief Mary Gavin’s retirement, which took effect Monday.

"Joining the Falls Church Police Department team is an absolute thrill and a privilege. I am excited to contribute and help uphold the tradition of excellence they are known for locally and nationally. I am eagerly looking forward to collaborating with everyone in the city of Falls Church community to provide exceptional public safety services," Fard said in the press release.

New parking enforcement contractor begins

The Alexandria Police Department has begun a pilot program with a third-party vendor to provide parking enforcement in Old Town, according to a city release. Reimagine Parking has been hired to supplement the city’s existing parking enforcement services and are authorized to issue citations. The vendor will not be able to handle issues of towing, vehicle relocation or booting and will wear visible attire to show they are contractors. Personnel officially began on Dec. 27, 2023, and will conduct enforcement Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Those with questions or concerns can call 703-746-4800.

K-9 Axl to receive donated body armor

APD’s K-9 Axl will receive a bullet and stab protective vest due to a donation from a Massachusetts nonprofit, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., according to a city press release. The announcement was made on Dec. 15, 2023, and delivery is expected eight to 10 weeks from then. The nonprofit provides vests and other assistance to law enforcement dogs and related agencies. Each vest has a value of $1,800, weighs an average of 4.5 pounds and comes with a five-year warranty. Those interested in learning more about the nonprofit and its work can visit vik9s.org.

Charlotte Scherer enters Council race

Former Alexandria magistrate and longtime city resident Charlotte Scherer announced her Democratic bid for City Council at Tuesday’s Alexandria Democratic Committee meeting, according to a press release. Scherer shared her campaign priorities, which include safe neighborhoods, improving local schools, affordable housing, healthcare access, sustainable development and government transparency. Scherer is currently pursuing a graduate degree in psychology from the Division of Continuing Education at Harvard University and has previously worked as an assistant public defender and a trial lawyer. She resides in Old Town with her wife, Dana Scherer.

WEEKLY BRIEFING

- New Year’s Evolution

Start your new year with a new addition to your household. Meet young Zeus, a 35 pound dream of a dog, who is sweet, social and talented. Zeus loves other dogs, knows how to sit, stay and shake and is ready to learn more from his new human. Start a new routine in 2024, adopt a pet; the best gift you can give yourself.

~ Thank You ~
AlexandriaAnimals.org
703-746-4774
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Old Town
“Because everyone needs a home.”
Samuel W. Tucker, an Alexandria native and namesake of Samuel W. Tucker Elementary, will be honored with a historical marker in Emporia, Virginia, in the near future according to a press release from Rodney Pierce, the marker’s applicant. Tucker worked as the only Black lawyer in Greensville County from 1946 to the 1960s. He graduated from Armstrong High School in Washington, D.C., because he was unable to attend any high schools in Alexandria, as they were segregated. Tucker served in World War II and moved to Emporia after returning from the war. He created the law firm, Hill, Tucker and Marsh, in Richmond in the mid-1960s and was a prolific civil rights attorney. He died in 1990 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Pierce said funding has not yet been secured for the marker, but efforts are ongoing.

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The Del Ray Business Association presented its annual Star Awards on Dec. 18, 2023, according to a press release. Here are the winners.

• Outstanding Small Business Owners: Jenna Gotch, Passionately Pets; Amy Eggers, Coldwell Banker Realty.
• Outstanding City/Government Service: Elsie Akinbobola, director of Mount Vernon Recreation Center.
• Outstanding Citizen: Brian Danza, race director of Alexandria Turkey Trot.

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The polls will close Tuesday evening for the District A School Board seat that was vacated by former Board member Willie F. Bailey on Nov. 30, 2023. Gina Baum and Tim Beaty are running for the seat. For more information on the candidates, you can visit Alexandria City High School’s student-run newspaper, The Theogony, for a voter guide, or listen to the “Liberally Social” podcast, which interviewed both candidates on two separate episodes.

Polls have extended hours on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and people may register to vote on the day-of. Visit alexandriava.gov/elections for complete information or email voters@alexandriava.gov or call 703-746-4050 to reach the city’s Office of Voter Registration & Elections.
Yaniv said he went inside and asked for a manager, took his suitcase and started walking toward Union Station. But he was still seething over the incident.

The response

“I didn’t know what to do,” Yaniv said. “But I was very, very upset. After a few minutes, I called the restaurant and asked for this supposed owner. Apparently she was there and she was attending the bar.”

The person Yaniv said he spoke with was Margaux Donati, who is listed on LinkedIn as the general manager of Bar Chinois.

“She seemed to know what happened, but she said, ‘Oh, I’m busy at the bar right now.’ But I asked, ‘Do you think it’s acceptable? A customer of yours sits down and has a meal and gets this check with po-
I’m a U.S. citizen. I’ve kind of read what the U.S. is about so I don’t need a lecture. She also said, ‘And I’m not going to tell my employees what to say or not to say,’” Yaniv said.

Yaniv contends that speech can be free, but still have consequences.

“I suggest she goes and looks up what free speech actually means,” Yaniv said.

Yaniv said the whole incident, Ketchem’s action and the response of Bar Chinois’ general manager, left him feeling threatened and vulnerable.

“[Ketchem] decided to express her opinion with my check. But as soon as she professed someone or decided that this is more than a customer, then what else is she going to do? She’s handling my food. She’s handling my drink. I don’t know what else she might decide to do,” Yaniv said. “I don’t feel safe at that point.”

Yaniv said he hung up dissatisfied with his conversation with Donati, got on his train and was en route to New York when he got a text message from Dean Mosones and Mark Minicucci, who are co-owners of Bar Chinois. Mosones and Minicucci apologized in the text and said they wanted to speak with Yaniv.

They talked later that night after Yaniv arrived in New York in what Yaniv described as a cordial conversation.

“When I explained my vulnerability, I didn’t feel safe; how offensive I find it if you think about what happened October 7. How the Jewish people are feeling right now, etcetera. They again expressed that they don’t agree with what happened.

“They said to me, ‘We are going to have a meeting tomorrow and we are going to let her go because we don’t think that’s acceptable,’” Yaniv said. “I’m not out for revenge. I thought that they should not be keeping her as someone who provides service to their customers.”

Yaniv said he thanked Mosones and Minicucci for their responsiveness and pledged not to make a fuss about the incident.

“But it bugged me that I actually didn’t know if they just sweet talked me or what,” Yaniv said. “So a month later I called the restaurant and asked for her. And they said, ‘Oh, she’s here but she’s busy.’ I went, ‘That’s weird.’ Obviously, they did not do anything.”

Yaniv sent a text message to Mosones and Minicucci expressing his disappointment.

“Mosones tried calling me and I didn’t want to answer,” Yaniv said. “He left me a voicemail that said something like, ‘We had a meeting. We decided not to take action. Call me and I will explain more.’ I wrote him, ‘Please don’t waste any more of my time.’”

Mosones confirmed in a text exchange and phone conversation with the Times that he and Minicucci did engage with Yaniv after the incident and that, in the end, they did not fire Ketchem for her action.

Mosones emailed the following statement to the Times:

“As a business with Asian American and Jewish co-owners, diversity and inclusiveness are core values of our restaurant. We obviously take this incident very seriously and immediately apologized to the guest and suspended Cassidy without pay. After further conversations with the guest, Cassidy and our entire staff, we chose to turn this into a teaching moment by reinforcing our commitment to providing an inclusive and respectful environment for all our guests and staff.”

Ketchem did not respond to a direct message to her Facebook page asking for comment for this story.

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City Hall. It was a breakfast and lunch spot that featured a versatile selection of American, Italian and Greek food. After successfully running the restaurant for nearly 50 years, Pikrallidas was joined by his nephew, Charlie Euripides. Euripides immigrated from Cyprus to the United States in 1951 and immediately joined his uncle in the family business. Euripides studied at George Washington University while helping his uncle at The Royal. In 1954, Euripides went to serve in the United States Navy during the Korean War where he was a translator. Upon Euripides’ arrival back in the U.S., he decided he would take over for his uncle full time at The Royal instead of going back to school.

In 1964, the city urbanized the area around city hall; therefore, forcing The Royal Cafe to relocate so the new city square and fountain could be built. The Royal relocated to N. St. Asaph Street, where it later became known as The Royal Restaurant. Euripides ran the family business for the next 57 years and became a beloved member of the Alexandria community. Per The Royal website, in 2018, “Euripides was named a Living Legend in Alexandria for his contributions to the Alexandria community.”

During his time as owner of The Royal, Euripides made it a priority to give back. He would sponsor T.C. Williams High School – now known as Alexandria City High School – students in their mission to gain U.S. citizenship. He would also donate meals to veterans via his service with the American Legion Post 24 in Old Town.

Euripides’ charm and hospitality was not only seen through his service, but also in his daily interactions with his customers.

“...I knew Uncle Charlie was popular but I didn’t realize how deep the love for him was.”

– Demetry Pikrallidas
customers and friends.

"Uncle Charlie would see someone in the parking lot and he knew what that person wanted," Pikrallidas said, recalling the fond memories.

Because of this charm, Pikrallidas noted how "at least 75%, maybe more" of the customers that visit The Royal are returning customers, some of which even have items on the menu named after them.

**The sale**

On April 14, 2022, Charlie Euripides passed away.

"I knew Uncle Charlie was popular but I didn’t realize how deep the love for him was," Pikrallidas said. "[On his last day in the restaurant], customers came up to him, men and women hugging him, kissing his forehead, telling him they love him."

The Royal community was devastated at the loss, and questions were raised as to what would happen to the "best breakfast spot in Old Town."

Upon his passing, family members took over, continuing Euripides’ legacy; however, the next generation had their own careers to attend to, which made it difficult for them to shoulder the responsibilities of an owner.

Pikrallidas noted how the beneficiaries were able to keep the restaurant profitable, and because of that, they were in no rush to sell.

"In my 58 years, this was one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever had to make," Pikrallidas said, recalling the battle he went through when deciding if they should sell and to whom.

But, upon meeting with owners of Alexandria Restaurant Partners and Matt Sloan from Sloan Hospitality – the group that partnered with Alexandria Restaurant Partners in the purchase – Pikrallidas knew his uncle’s legacy was in good hands.

"[ARP and Sloan Hospitality] spent hours talking about the history of The Royal with family members and myself. I’ve never seen anything like it, they really dove deep," Pikrallidas said.

The deal took roughly four to six months to complete, and on Oct. 17, 2023, Alexandria Restaurant Partners and Sloan Hospitality took ownership of The Royal.

Sloan said that the selling of the Royal has been well received by the community.

"What the family has built is really important to us," Sloan said. "With a loyal community there’s bound to be a lot of love."

**Upcoming changes**

Both Sloan and Pikrallidas made it clear that maintaining the image, name and reputation of The Royal is a priority in the change of ownership.

"We didn’t remove a single thing from the walls – that includes the office. There’s still a picture of me there from when I was 21 years old," Pikrallidas laughed.

Sloan said there will be a few changes in the ownership change, including a new dinner menu. The new ownership will also be adding a new patio to welcome outdoor seating. The business model will also change from a solely breakfast and lunch menu to all-day dining “in the near future.”

"We plan to make some improvements to the space while keeping the warm and welcoming feel of The Royal," Sloan said.

Sloan also mentioned the key in this change will be engagement with long-time customers.

"[We will] listen to our regulars and listen to their feedback. What the family has built is really important to us," Sloan said. "We’ll keep going with what’s been great."

lexiejordan@gmail.com

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**ROYAL SALE**

**FROM**

**7**

**COURTESY PHOTO**

The Royal Restaurant’s timeless interior.

**COURTESY PHOTO**

Charlie Euripides and his wife Barbara Euripides dining with a young Demetry Pikrallidas.
Sculptor chosen to create new public art

DeWitt Godfrey to create display for South Circle Park

BY DYLAN JAFFE

Sculptor DeWitt Godfrey has been chosen as the artist for a public art piece at South Circle Park, a new park coming to Alexandria at the corner of Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane.

Godfrey will work alongside landscape architects and project developers to create a sculpture that fosters a sense of community within the park. The city’s Office of the Arts commissioned a public art piece for the site with funds from previous developer contributions, as the park is city-owned.

Diane Ruggiero, the deputy director of recreation, parks and cultural activities for the city, said the process for choosing the installation and artist is meticulous. Ruggiero said once an installation project is approved by the Arts Commission and City Council, a Public Art Project Task Force is created to discuss project goals, timelines and a budget.

Artists, before they are reviewed by the task force, are recruited in a variety of ways. Often, the city either utilizes a competition, a pre-qualified artist list, a curatorial process – where the artists’ previous works are on display to be judged – or invites specific artists to be considered for the piece based on if their artwork aligns with the aesthetic of the installation. The task force selects a finalist by reviewing artist’s qualifications based on criteria outlined in the approved plan.

If multiple finalists are selected, each candidate must go through interviews or are paid a stipend to develop a concept proposal and present it to the project task force. The task force then sends their selection to the Arts Commission and reviews the artist’s idea. If approved, it will be signed off as the final design and the artist is then responsible for creating the piece to meet the project deadline. Then, finally, the arts office, the artist and relevant city departments will arrange for installation of the piece onsite.

“The whole point of public art is that it’s for the public, right?” Ruggiero said. “It’s in these public spaces. In order for the community to feel connected to that space in that artwork, they need to have a role in determining how it gets there.”

Godfrey, a Hamilton, New York, native, inherited his interests in art and sculpting from his father, an architect, and was certain he wanted to make a career out of it at a young age. He earned his bachelor’s degree in art at Yale University and now teaches art classes at Colgate University – a liberal arts college in his hometown – where many of his students have taken his public art class.

DeWitt Godfrey has built many public displays of art for various organizations.
DeWitt Godfrey is an artist from Hamilton, New York, and has been commissioned to work on a public art display in Alexandria.

PUBLIC ART FROM | 9

his students go on to attend architecture schools, according to Godfrey.

“There’s a human kind of interaction in architecture,” Godfrey said. “In art, you don’t always have that kind of physical and psychological relationship to the way you do with the physical environment. I think that’s something I’ve always been interested in and working at that scale.”

Godfrey predicts he will be able to complete and present his design by early 2024, but is unsure when the project will be completed.

According to the artist, he did not have that much experience in sculpting prior to taking a class during his time at Yale. He took a lot of inspiration from his professor and admired her way of teaching the class through simple prompts that enabled creativity to shine through.

“The one I remember most clearly was to change an object by wrapping it,” Godfrey said. “I think because I didn’t know anything about sculpture or about art. ... I was able to kind of really embrace this and listen and respond to what was being asked of me. It was this very open territory that I found interesting from the very beginning and so that’s when I thought I wanted to try to be an artist.”

According to Ruggiero, Godfrey was chosen for the project due to his expertise in sculpting real life objects. The task force believed he was able to work with the complicated area and fit the desired aesthetic for this specific project. South Circle Park will be a four-story elevated urban project, including a plaza with stairs and elevators that lead up to a green space. The artwork will be viewed from multiple different angles at all times.

This project will be different from previous ones as the park has yet to be finished, so it is up in the air as to how the art installation will fit into this puzzle.

“The project that [Godfrey] is working on is a little bit different for us, because we are working side-by-side with a developer on this because while it’ll be a public park, it’s the developer who’s designing and building the park for the city,” Ruggiero said.

His inspirations derive from natural geometry and intricate objects such as seashells, seed pods and honeycombs. According to Godfrey, the project is still very early in the process and the team is unsure of what specifically will be designed. Nonetheless, Godfrey has worked alongside landscape architects to confirm where the piece will be installed at the park and what the size of it will be.

“Part of the goal of the art is to create a marker or a signal. If you’re several blocks away, you can kind of maybe see the sculpture stick in the distance and it’ll draw you down there to explore what else is available,” Godfrey said.

“[The installation] will help create a sense of place, so that when people are saying, ‘Meet me on the corner,’ it’s kind of like, ‘Meet me at this artwork.’” Ruggiero said.

The city’s creative departments continue to work with Godfrey and other architects in order to deliver a piece that benefits the public and enhances the community. First steps of the project and design pitches will be released to the public in early 2024.

-djaffe@alextimes.com

The official renderings of the new South Circle Park.
BY FAMILY FEATURES

A home’s exterior is often the first thing guests or potential buyers see, meaning its curb appeal can have a significant impact on making a good first impression. Whether refreshing or renovating your home, staying current with exterior trends can help make a statement, increase your home’s value and enhance the comfort of your living space.

Connections with nature

Connecting people more closely with nature and natural elements, biophilic design can lead to increased well-being and productivity. Growing wellness and environmental concerns are driving demand for outdoor living space improvements and integration of nature in design, including elements like green roofs, living walls and large windows.

You can create dramatic outdoor spaces by contrasting light and dark colors. For example, matte black can be paired with materials like brick, stone, shingles and wood for an eye-catching twist. Bold, earthy tones such as navy blue, forest green, dark brown and red can also be combined with nature-inspired materials for organic texture and warmth. Other trending colors for 2024 include vivid teal and aqua blue, which can induce a sense of serenity.

High-performance siding

As climate change continues to intensify and lead to severe weather, there is a growing need for high-performance, weather-resistant building products. Homeowners continue to favor resilient materials that require less maintenance or replacement such as recycled vinyl, engineered wood and fiber cement, which maintain beauty and function.

Working outdoor spaces

Focused on creating seamless connections between interior and exterior spaces, this evolution in outdoor design includes integration of outdoor kitchens and living areas. Elements such as fire pits, pizza ovens, outdoor entertainment and games can be incorporated to personalize the space and provide a unique entertaining hub. Using cohesive materials and textures that can withstand the elements and flow from indoors to outdoors, such as stone veneer, can help elevate the space and further tie it to the home’s interior.

Mixed materials and textures

Blending various textures, finishes and materials on a home’s facade can create a unique, visually dynamic look. Using a combination of materials like brick and vinyl siding or stone and wood can add depth and visual interest.

New takes on tradition

A versatile design approach allows a home to transcend trends, ensuring its relevance and appeal over an extended period of time. In 2024, look for a rise in classic design trends featuring elements such as vertical siding, crisp white trim and other modernized traditional styles as well as a shift away from minimalism that incorporates more nostalgic, personal touches to home exteriors, ushering in more of a transitional style.

More homes in 2024 may have mixed siding materials to add depth to the exterior.
ICE SKATING AT CAMERON RUN
On weekends and holidays until February 25, join Cameron Park to skate in the winter weather. Enjoy outdoor time with s’mores and hot chocolate with fun for the family. Tickets are available online. Admission to the Winter Village is separate.
Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Location: Cameron Run Regional Park, 4001 Eisenhower Ave.
Information: Cameron@NVRPA.org or 703-960-0767

STILLNESS WORKSHOP
Engage in interactive discussions on stillness, learn practical tips for cultivating stillness, get exercises to create a personalized plan and more with this stillness workshop.
Time: 1 to 3 p.m.

COMEDY OPEN MIC MONDAYS
Watch professional and new comics present old and new material. Located in the upstairs bar. Free entry. Recurs each Monday in January.
Time: 7 to 9 p.m.
Location: Alexandria Bier Garden, 710 King St.
Information: alexandriabiergarden.com

DUNCAN LITERARY SOCIETY
Join the “anti-book club” every second Thursday of the month to discuss everything and anything literary. Friends of Duncan Library provides snacks. Registration encouraged.
Time: 7 to 9 p.m.
Location: Del Ray Boccato, 2400 Mount Vernon Ave.
Information: alexlibraryva.org/event/9792420

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Welcome to The Venue. Middle: Large modern kitchen with center island. Right: Open floor plan with Potomac River views.

Corner residence at The Venue
This corner Venue unit features both southern and eastern exposures, large windows and views of the Potomac River. Three bedrooms plus a den and 2.5 bathrooms give you the ultimate in contemporary comfort. Enter through a foyer that opens into the open plan living/dining and kitchen area. The primary bedroom suite is a retreat in itself, complete with a walk-in closet and a spa-inspired bath. The den works well as an office, television room or yoga studio. Practically new, this condo ensures modern comfort and convenience. Other highlights of the unit include two parking spaces, recessed lighting and modern fixtures. World-class amenities include a concierge, modern lobby area, fully equipped fitness center and a rooftop oasis with an outdoor kitchen, lounge area and clubroom with bar.
The location is unbeatable: Just a block to the waterfront and located in the new Arts district in Old Town. It’s close to vibrant King Street with its local shops and restaurants and just a short drive to Potomac Yard, National Landing, Amazon’s new HQ2, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Commuting is a breeze with Braddock Road Metro only 0.9 miles away. Convenient to major commuting routes.

HOMES ADVERTORIAL

AT A GLANCE
Address: 925 N. Fairfax St.
#701, Alexandria 22314
Neighborhood: Old Town
Price: $1,785,000
Square feet: 1,760
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2.5
Year built: 2020
Contact: Heather Corey
TTR Sotheby’s International Realty, Old Town
hcorey@ttrsir.com
ttrsir.com
703-989-1183
703-310-6800
New Year’s resolutions for you and your dog

BY KIM GILLIAM

With the new year, you likely have resolutions in mind for how you are going to start things off right or maybe take some significant steps in your life.

Here are some resolutions to help improve your dog’s quality of life and your own.

Make exercise fun
Commit to taking your dog on one long walk each day. This can be a good excuse to explore a new part of town together, getting you both up from the couch while providing valuable bonding time and stress relief.

Bad weather? Run your pup up and down the stairs, over an indoor obstacle course or have them search for treats around the house or find an indoor dog-friendly option like a home improvement store or the Torpedo Factory.

Daily brushing
You wouldn’t go days without brushing your own hair, so how about grooming your dog daily this year? It sounds like a pain, but brushing removes excess fur, reduces the amount you find on clothes and furniture and distributes oils to keep the coat shiny and healthy. Plus, it’s a great way to show your dog love and attention.

Learn new tricks
Mental stimulation is critical to keeping your pup out of trouble and reduces cognitive deterioration in aging dogs. Pick a few new tricks for your dog to learn this year and practice these along with ones they already know to keep their mind active. Similarly, you could take a class together like agility, nose work or rally obedience!

Try fostering
Shelter and rescue dogs need loving homes to provide safe and temporary living arrangements. It helps reduce overcrowding and opens up space for another animal to be saved. More importantly, fostering helps prepare animals for adoption by giving them a chance to live in a home where they can fully express their personality, work to overcome fears and/or recover from trauma. Your pup could show them the ropes.

Check on their health
Can you feel your dog’s ribs when you press lightly while running fingers over their midsection? If not, they may need to drop a few pounds – in 2023, 56% of dogs in the United States were considered overweight according to the American Kennel Club. Confirm your dog is eating the correct serving size for their ideal weight and not what they weigh now.

Get organized
Make sure to stop handing out table scraps and choose healthier snack options such as carrots, apples or homemade treats. Also, brushing your dog’s teeth a minimum of three times a week is important to remove plaque and prevent tartar.

Get a pet portrait
Schedule a photo shoot with your pet. It may sound crazy, but if you’ve never done this before, know that you will treasure these photos for a lifetime.

Schedule fun for your pup
Just like we may set out to make new friends or socialize more often, dogs need their own circle of buddies too. Make time for weekly play dates this year. You can also plan an adventure with your pup, including going on a hike, visiting a national park or taking a road trip to a dog-friendly town.

Plan ahead
While we always hope for the best, it’s important to plan for the worst such as unexpected illnesses or injury. Look at available pet insurance plans and think through where you and your pet could stay in an emergency or who could take care of your pet if you were unable to for any length of time.

Pets are often overlooked as people make New Year’s resolutions, but we hope you agree that the love and joy they provide daily means their health and happiness should be among this year’s top priorities.

The writer co-owns Frolick Dogs, a canine sports club in Alexandria.
Editorial

What’s in store in ‘24?

The year 2024 has a nice ring to it. It rolls off the tongue. Of course, 2020 also had a nice sound, but, sadly, that year didn’t turn out so great.

We are looking forward to 2024 for a variety of reasons. The first is that 2024 is the 20th year of the Alexandria Times. On the top left side of our front page, you will see that it says “Vol. 20, No. 1” – the first issue of our 20th year.

Our staff is meeting this week to map out the ways in which we will celebrate 20 years of bringing you Alexandria’s news. Look for periodic features that spotlight specific years and stories that we’ve covered.

We may run “best of” photo spreads, pages of ads that have won awards as well as highlight our special readers and advertisers. We start today by sending a special “thank you” to McEnearney Associates and Christine Garner, both of whom have been with the Times from the start and to whom we are deeply grateful.

This is, of course, also an election year, not just nationally, but also locally. Our first local election is actually next week – on January 9. It’s a special election for the School Board seat that was vacated last year by Willie Bailey. Gina Baum and Tim Beaty are the two candidates for this seat.

Nationwide, the biggest focus will be on the congressional and presidential contests. Mark your calendars for March 5, the presidential primary in Virginia.

Remember, these primaries are open, meaning anyone can vote in the primary of any party to help choose that party’s nominee. If there’s a particular candidate that you prefer, or that you’d rather not win Virginia’s primary, you have the opportunity to vote for someone else. Don’t be afraid to cross party lines in a primary.

And, of course, we have our local elections in Alexandria for mayor, City Council and School Board. The contests for all three promise to be spirited and meaningful.

There’s disgruntlement among many Alexandria residents about major decisions taken by City Council in recent years, ranging from locating the Potomac Yard Metro on ancient wetlands to the recent Zoning for Housing initiative.

Remember, it takes four people on the dais to change the city’s direction. Yet as of now, there are not even four candidates who have declared for City Council or mayor who are on record as opposing those and other density-centric initiatives.

Bluntly, individuals and groups who oppose the status quo need to “put up or shut up” by finding credible opposition candidates to run in the Democratic primary. For better or worse in this one-party dominated city, the Democratic primary, which will take place on June 18, will select our next City Council and mayor.

We will be introducing other interesting wrinkles in coming weeks, including a new “Ride Along” series profiling ordinary Alexandrians who have interesting vocations. We will also continue our in-depth coverage of both new and on-going issues.

Stay tuned!

Opinion

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

Photo of the Week

An Alexandria fable

To the editor:

Once upon a time in the kingdom of Alexandria, there was a parcel of land, known as 301 N. Fairfax St. This parcel was located in a very historic neighborhood and for many years had provided office space for people who lived in and around the community.

The residents who lived around this parcel were very nice people. Many had bought their homes because of the charm and small scale of the historic district neighborhood. Over time, the kingdom had studied and planned and then zoned this parcel of land as a commercial use and then later, they further protected it by placing it in the waterfront overlay district. Many, many people over the years had worked together, developing plans and zoning requirements for this parcel of land and the whole neighborhood happily coexisted.

Knowing that the kingdom Council members were eager for any residential use, the developer concocted a plan to sway Council into approving his proposal. The developer asked that the parcel be zoned commercial residential mixed-use high and he be granted a 2.5 FAR.

Now everyone knows under the clear language of the zoning code that the CRMU-H only allows a 2.5 FAR if you are a mixed use. For all residential use, the highest FAR is 1.25; however the developer knew that some of the Council members often ignored the zoning code requirements – and rather than reading the clear language of the code themselves, they pretended that it was too complicated to understand and needed further legal “interpretation” so as to support development at all costs.

The developer could not accomplish this under the current well-planned zoning, so he decided to fit a much larger structure on the property by demanding a rezoning. The developer had a problem however. His proposal was so out of proportion that no zone could accommodate the density, or floor area ratio, he wanted.

And, of course, we have our local elections in Alexandria for mayor, City Council and School Board. The contests for all three promise to be spirited and meaningful.

The kind neighbors watched with disbelief because even with the illegal FAR grant the developer

Letters

SEE BEACH

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.
Letters

Vote for Gina Baum

To the editor:

Being a lifelong educator, and the former principal of Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy from 2004 to 2023, I wholeheartedly endorse Gina Baum for School Board in the special election being held in District A on January 9.

Both of her sons attended and matriculated from Lyles-Crouch, and Gina was always involved in her children’s education. I found her to be knowledgeable and adament about best instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. She was active in the Parent Teacher Association and community events. She has continued her advocacy today while her youngest is a senior at Alexandria City High School.

Gina has been through many iterations of the constantly evolving ACPS system at multiple levels. She has inside knowledge about ACPS – knowledge that would be beneficial to the School Board. In addition, Gina exhibits a solid commitment to civic duty, a commitment instilled in her at a young age by her parents, themselves lifelong educators.

Gina cares deeply about people and her community. Her experience with Alexandria’s city government in and of itself offers a different perspective to the School Board. Her commitment to ACPS is second to none. Parents, teachers, and staff can rest assured that their collective voices will be heard with Gina Baum on the School Board.

Vote for Gina Baum on January 9. She is the voice of education and our community.

-Patricia Zissios, Ph.D.
former Lyles-Crouch principal

BEACH

could still not fit his massive project on the parcel! To further mock the kingdom’s well established zoning plans for this parcel, the developer further demanded five modifications to allow his building to be erected.

The people in the kingdom were shocked at the audacity of the developer and quickly organized to protect their neighborhood, the historic district and their kingdom.

The developer next tried to ram the proposal through the Board of Architectural Review, but the BAR is smart and they looked at the mass and scale and sent the developer back to the drawing board. The developer refused to reduce the mass and scale and after two unsuccessful attempts with the smart BAR, he refused to continue to work with the BAR on his concept plan and walked away.

Confronted with a code that stated one thing and the developer demanding another, the neighbors sought out the Planning Director’s opinion on the illegal rezoning classification, paid $500 and filed a formal opinion request, but the Planning Director refused to answer their question.

The developer next went to the Planning Commission, whose chair berated the BAR for doing their job of considering mass and scale, which is within the BAR’s purview. The chair also refused to acknowledge the four not three votes, watch the tape of the vote to recommend denial of the rezoning. He then signed an erroneously worded resolution to Council.

The concerned neighbors were undaunted by the Commission chair’s actions and bravely went into the community and gathered the signatures of 89 property owners within 500 feet of the parcel to formally protest what could be called the greedy attempt to ruin the kingdom.

Stunned by the audacity of the good neighbors to file a protest and the expressed concerns of one of the wise kingdom Council members, the developer postponed the hearing a month and began further appeals to the kingdom Council members to approve the too-dense project.

Alas, dear reader, I am unable to tell you the ending of this tale as it will be decided on January 20 at the kingdom Council meeting. If you wish to help your neighbors, please attend the meeting and speak. Please write Council and please vote this November for only kingdom rulers that support neighborhood and historic preservation.

The end (or not).

-Barbara Beach,
Alexandria

Commentary

Zoning for Housing: An afterword

BY MARK EATON

There are important takeaways from the Zoning for Housing debate that should not be lost in the collective exhalation of relief, or disappointment, after City Council’s unanimous November 2023 vote to adopt ZFH. Our tendency is to move on to the next topic, for example, the proposed Potomac Yard sports and entertainment complex, but ZFH deserves reflection.

At times, ZFH involved people intensely talking past each other. An anti-ZFH argument was the city’s small area plans collectively authorize a maximum of 40,000 additional housing units, which translates to a population increase of 80,000 residents, or about half again today’s population of 158,000. ZFH critics said this will create unsustainable pressure on infrastructure and lead to an unlivable city.

Advocates for ZFH and city officials countered that infrastructure improvement planning was part of the small area plan process, that ZFH creates a modest number of “net new units” or housing units in addition to those previously approved and the maximum number of units authorized in the small area plans will never be built.

Both ways of thinking cannot be correct. If the sum of the housing units authorized in the small area plans represents more than the whole of what would or could be built, there should be an understandable public written explanation of why that is so.

Much of the ZFH controversy involved predictions or apprehensions about additional housing and the quality of life in the single-family zones. Many people reacted by envisioning changes to their neighborhoods. Those interested in a deep data dive should read the consultant’s economic report that formed the basis for the Planning & Zoning Department’s projections of ZFH-generated housing units.

The report identifies the property price points at which duplex and fourplex projects are economically feasible.

It estimates a possible redevelopment of 5% of properties in the single-family zones and can be found on the ZFH section of the city’s website, but it takes digging to find it.

The housing debate, which included residents saying that they were unaware of the proposed changes until late in the process, showed that fire hose-style information delivery of putting everything of possible relevance on the city’s website has its limitations. An old-fashioned citywide mailing in July describing ZFH’s essential recommendations would have been a useful alert that something important was coming.

Some argued that ZFH should have been delayed because there was insufficient time to review the draft text amendments to the zoning code. I practiced law for more than 30 years and am no more prepared to review zoning code amendments than I am to read a novel in Norwegian.

However, there is a community interest in knowing that the text amendments accurately align with what Council approved.

The text amendments were reviewed by the City Attorney’s office, but a review of the changes by outside experts – for example, an Alexandria Bar Association committee – would ensure that what was passed is accurately reflected in the zoning code without ambiguities or inconsistencies.

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Enforcing prohibition in ALX

This month marks the 11th anniversary of the celebration of Dry January, first promoted by Alcohol Change UK, a charity calling attention to the social and medical effects of alcohol. Between 1919 and 1933, every January in the United States was supposed to be Dry January, as the 18th Amendment, often called Prohibition, was the law of the land. Not all Alexandrians willingly participated.

Prohibition in Virginia started even earlier than the national ban on manufacturing, selling and transporting alcohol. Virginia’s statewide ban went into effect on Nov. 1, 1916, despite Alexandria voters voting against the 1914 referendum on the prohibition of alcohol by a three-to-one ratio.

The ban hurt a large part of the city’s economy, as nearly 40 businesses in Alexandria were registered as alcohol producers or vendors when the law went into effect. One of the largest employers in the city at the time was Portner’s Brewery.

The Virginia alcohol ban created a demand for liquor imported from Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Alexandria’s proximity to the state line made its shores a hive of police activity enforcing the ban. A city whose history and economy were so intertwined with the sale and production of alcohol never relinquished its demand for liquor.

After the national ban, police and prohibition agents, often known as “still busters” found their services demanded both in Alexandria and Fairfax County. One prominent raid in October 1921 discovered a 20-gallon still in a home across the street from Alexandria City Jail. That December, Alexandria police officers Patrick Magner and Haywood Durrer, federal prohibition agent J.J. Hudgings and Fairfax County Constable Frederick Wease showed off 11 stills seized in one week.

Legally enforced Dry January ended before January 1934, as the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment after its passage in February 1933 and ratification by the required number of states in December of that year.

Virginia ratified the Amendment in October of that year and ended its own prohibition on the manufacture, sale and transportation of alcohol that same month. The need for still busters suddenly vanished.

The writer is a former lawyer, member of the Alexandria School Board from 1997 to 2006, and English teacher from 2007 to 2021 at T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. He can be reached at aboutalexandria@gmail.com and free subscriptions to his newsletter are available at https://aboutalexandria.substack.com/.

Weekly Poll

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

9% Opening the Potomac Yard Metro.
31% Passing Zoning for Housing.
52% Announcing that the Wizards and Capitals are moving here.
1% Opening the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School.
7% Something else.

This Week

Have you ever dined at Royal Restaurant?

A) Yes, frequently.
B) Yes, I’ve been there.
C) No.
D) I’m not familiar with Royal Restaurant.
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LEGAL NOTICE

Board of Architectural Review
LEGAL NOTICE
OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, room 2400, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 on the following applications:

BAR#2023-00371 OHAD Request for alterations at 329 N Washington Street Applicant: Hershel Kleinberg, Lisa Cohen

BAR#2023-00527 OHAD Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for alterations at 115 S Union Street Applicant: Jeremy Morrison

BAR#2023-00528 OHAD Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for partial demolition/encapsulation at 115 S Union Street Applicant: Jeremy Morrison

BAR#2023-00529 OHAD Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 221 S West Street Applicant: Moore Construction Group, LLC

BAR#2023-00530 OHAD Request for alterations at 221 S West Street Applicant: Moore Construction Group, LLC

BAR#2023-00531 OHAD Request for alterations at 210 Duke Street Applicant: Jelks H. Cabaniss III

BAR#2023-00532 OHAD Request for alterations at 923 S Alfred Street Applicant: Erick Min

BAR#2023-00533 OHAD Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 923 S Alfred Street Applicant: Erick Min

BAR#2023-00534 OHAD Request for alterations at 215 N Payne Street Applicant: 215 NP SPE LLC

Legal Training for BAR Members

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Lanning Blaser at lanning.blaser@alexandriavirginia.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Alicia.Chase@alexandriavirginia.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711. If you prefer communication in another language, free interpretation and translation services are available to you. Please email LanguageAccess@alexandriavirginia.gov or call 703.746.3960.

For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit alexandriavirginia.gov/dockets.

LEGAL NOTICE

Truist Bank, located at 233 S. Van Dorn Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, is in possession of assets owned by the following decedent, Willem H. Daniels, who at the time of his death was domiciled outside of Virginia. In accordance with Va. Code Ann. § 64.2-609(A), Truist Bank hereby gives public notice of its intention to deliver the decedent’s assets to the Personal Representative of decedent’s estate, Chris Horner, who has qualified as Personal Representative in accordance with the law of the decedent’s domicile. Delivery is to be made after the lapse of thirty (30) days from the completion of due publication of this notice, pursuant to the Code, once a week for four successive weeks. Inquiries, including any notice of the appointment of a personal representative for decedent in Virginia or legal notice of any lien or encumbrance upon decedent’s assets, should be directed to Truist Bank at the address above.

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341 S Fayette Street*
Old Town Village
Sold $1,255,000

301 S Henry Street
Old Town Village
Sold $1,125,000

925 N Fairfax Street, #209*
The Venue
Sold $1,020,000

320 S West Street, #210
The Duke
Sold $865,000

1420 Roundhouse Lane
Old Town Village
Sold $773,000

625 Slaters Lane, #G-103*
Towngate North
Sold $770,000

505 E Braddock Road, #718
Colecroft Station
Sold $610,000

1250 S Washington St. #818*
Porto Vecchio
Sold $470,000

801 N Pitt Street, #1008
Port Royal
Sold $296,000

4507 34th Street S
Fairlington Commons
Sold $538,500

711 McKenzie Avenue*
Potomac Yard
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*Represented the Buyer/Tenant

Should you be considering a move in 2024, feel free to contact me to discuss how I can help you achieve your goals.

Lisa Groover

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groover@mcenearney.com | lisagroover.com

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