Vol. 20. No. 13

Alexandria's only independent hometown newspaper.

MARCH 28, 2024

CANDIDATE PROFILE

McPike runs for second Council term

Affordable housing, budget among incumbent's chief concerns

BY CAITLYN MEISNER

Longtime political operative Kirk McPike, who is gearing up to campaign for a second term on Alexandria's City Council, has enjoyed his role as the candidate and official since being elected in 2021.

"I've come to this job with a long history of dealing with constituents. ... They want a representative to answer a question, take a position [and] to help solve a challenge," McPike said of his role on Council. "It's really gratifying to be the person who gets to talk to a constituent ... [talk] to our city staff to highlight it and then hear back from that constituent."

McPike ran and won his seat on Council in 2021. He was inspired to run because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact on the city.

"You always think about running for office someday," McPike reflected. "But finally, the opportunity aligned and I felt I was the right match for the job. And I'm really glad that I did."

He was serving on the city's Budget and Financial Affairs Advisory Commit-



tee when he decided to run. Knowing Alexandria's budget "inside out," McPike was concerned about a potential crash landing once the pandemic ended.

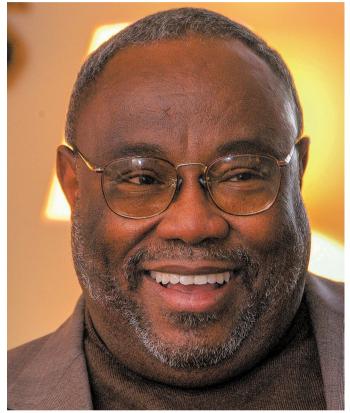
"I also know how the Great Recession had impacted not just our budget, but the residents of the city who depended upon the services that we provided," he said. "I was very concerned that we're going to have a hard landing from the pandemic that would once again put a lot of weight and pressure on people in Alexandria who are holding on to their place in our city by their fingertips."

In addition to the budget and pandemic, McPike cited climate change and affordable housing as his main priorities in 2021 in addition to this cycle.

"I think we've made real

SEE MCPIKE

Euille says payment from Hoffman was a loan



PHOTO/LOUISE KRAFFT

Bill Euille at the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party in December 2003.

City ends arena negotiations

The city announced it has ended negotiations on the Potomac Yard arena and entertainment district in a press release just before 4 p.m. Wednesday. Included in the five-paragraph statement was a video lasting just over three minutes from Mayor Justin Wilson.

"The City of Alexandria will no longer be considering the current proposal and will instead turn our focus to other efforts to bring quality commercial opportunities to the community in the future," Wilson said in the video.

This announcement comes after months of discussions among residents, presentations by the city and battles in the General Assembly over funding, as Wilson highlighted.

"We have come to the conclusion that the General Assembly process is not going to produce a proposal that protects our financial Former mayor expresses embarrassment and regret for 'optics' of FBI probe

BY ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ AND DENISE DUNBAR ALEXANDRIA JOURNALISM PROJECT

Former Mayor Bill Euille sent a statement to the Alexandria Times last week in which he said a \$260,000 check issued to him by leading Alexandria developer Hubert "Jay" Hoffman III, while Euille was mayor, was a loan rather than a gift.

The statement was in response to an investigative story by the Alexandria Journalism Project that ran in the February 15 Alexandria Times. The story detailed the discovery of the check stub from Hoffman and a slip

SEE EUILLE

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Hazel

City's remediation boring machine will be celebrated next month.

Page 16

Urquia Obituary

A longtime ACPS administrator died last month.

Page 20

Home Profile

A home in Old Town holds memories spanning centuries.

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SEE ARENA

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2 | MARCH 28, 2024 **ALEXANDRIA TIMES**

Shop Small This Spring



Our Alexandria real estate experts are sharing some of their favorite local businesses for you to check out this season. We hope you enjoy our selections and won't hesitate to get in touch should you need any additional recommendations or real estate assistance. Happy Spring! compass.com



Pia Taylor pia.taylor@compass.com



Daniela Spigai daniela.spigai@compass.com



Jennifer Halm jennifer.halm@compass.com



The Goodhart Group sue@thegoodhartgroup.com allison@thegoodhartgroup.com

THE VARIETY STORE

"Skip the big box stores and head to The Variety Store in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center on Fort Hunt Road, they will have what you need and a few things you didn't know you needed. Just like a five and dime from years past this little store has a lot of stuff! School supplies, fabric, beautiful notecards, toys and so much more. It's my go to for just about anything. "

Pia Taylor

NEPENTHE - FINE ART GALLERY AND CUSTOM FRAME STORE

"Discover local culture at our vibrant venues. Join us every Thursday for art and cheese events showcasing talented artists. Explore diverse happenings at two locations. Visit their Pop-Up Location at Wine Gallery 108"

— Daniela Spigai

FIBRE SPACE

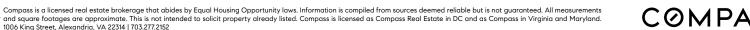
"If you are an avid knitter like me then you will love Fibre Space! They are a local shop specializing in all things knitting as well as crocheting, weaving and spinning. The yarn selection is organized by gauge featuring a carefully curated selection of yarn and fibre from US sources, unique international makers and hard to find hand dyers."

— Jennifer Halm

MONDAY'S CHILD

"Monday's Child, an Old Town staple that has been a shopping destination for children's clothing for 42 years, is our favorite Alexandria boutique because it is a one-stop shop for all children's needs! Their beautiful clothes cater to children from newborn to 14 years old, and they also offer a great selection of baby gifts, baptism gowns, shoes, books, toys, and monogramming."

— The Goodhart Group





WEEKLY BRIEFING

ARENA

FROM | 1

responsibilities and respects our community's values," Wilson said.

As it currently stands, the Sports and Entertainment Authority, which would issue bonds for the project, was not included in the state budget. It's unclear if Gov. Glenn Youngkin will call a special session in the coming months or send down a budget amendment when the Assembly reconvenes next month.

Additionally, several candidates who are running in the Democratic City Council and mayoral primary, scheduled

for June 11, expressed doubt or their opposition to the proposed project. Vice Mayor Amy Jackson, who is running for mayor, is the only current member of City Council who is on the record as opposing the arena.

Jackson said in an interview with the Times just after the Wednesday announcement that the decision to end negotiations is unfortunate, but she didn't think the proposal was ultimately a good fit for the city.

"For me, it just didn't feel right and I couldn't put Alexandria's future at risk," Jackson said to the Times. "Now we're

looking to the future."

Jonathan Huskey, who filed Monday to run for Council, has based his campaign on opposition to the arena, while current councilors John Taylor Chapman and Kirk McPike have expressed doubts but not outright opposition.

Jackson said land surrounding the Potomac Yard Metro station is valuable, and proposed it should be turned into something similar to Fairfax's Mosaic District. She said performing arts venues and hotels are necessary in the area for tourism and promoting the city.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com



St. Paul's Music Concert Series Presents

cories of **Vocal Recital**

with Joélle Harvey, Soprano Saturday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. 228 S. Pitt Street, Alexandria

> For ticket information scan QR code or visit stpaulsalexandria.com



Jonathan Huskey joins Council race

Jonathan Huskey, a Del Ray resident, joined the race for City Council Monday, according to a press release. Huskey is a first-time candidate and is launching his campaign in opposition to the proposed Potomac Yard arena.

"I'm a positive person who's looking for the good in any idea, but when a billionaire asks for billions of dollars to build a mini-city, we all should be very skeptical. Sports



JONATHAN HUSKEY

arenas are bad public investments and this one would be

City launches 275th anniversary celebrations

no different," Husky said in the press release.

Huskey said he and his wife moved to Alexandria in 2012 to raise their family. He is communications director at the State Revenue Alliance, a national group that supports state-based community, labor and policy organizations that advocate for progressive tax policy and additional revenue for community needs.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com

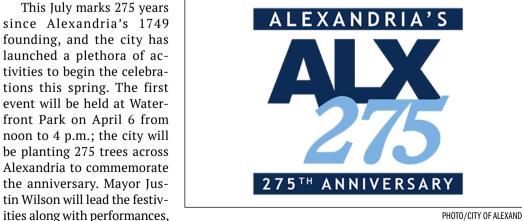
-D This is Jack &-

Sweet as honey, our darling Jack is house hunting this spring for a home to call his own. He is incredibly smart; knows sit and shake, and there's no end to what he's capable of learning. At 50 pounds, Jack is a playful, energetic guy who would do best with a companion who can take him on walks or play with him in the yard. Ask to see his "smiling" photos and be ready to fall in love.

Meet Jack!

AlexandriaAnimals.org 703-746-4774

Sponsored by



PHOTO/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The city will plant 275 trees in honor of its anniversary.

According to a press release, the city is also debuting a new archaeology exhibit on recently uncovered ships at

historical exhibits and ribbon-

cutting ceremonies.

the Robinson Landing Gallery, which will show off some of the historic and public safety vehicles. More information on the

months-long celebration can be found at alexandriava.gov/

-cmeisner@alextimes.com

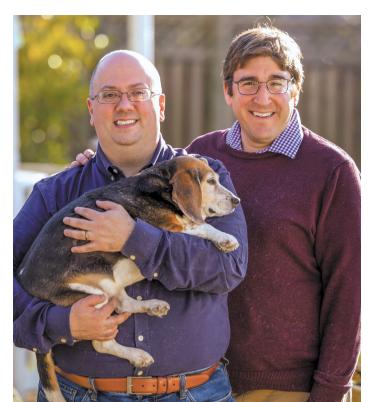


Diann Carlson

TTR Sotheby's International Realty 400 S. Washington Street Old Town 703-628-2440

"Because everyone needs a home."

CANDIDATE PROFILE



PHOTO/JOHN BARTENHAGEN

Kirk McPike with his husband, Jonathan, and their beagle, Punky.

MCPIKE

FROM | 1

progress over the last few years," he said. "I want to be on Council to make sure that implementation goes well.... There's always unfinished work

for any electoral office."

Heading into the 2024 election, McPike's campaign pillars expand upon his 2021 priorities: properly implement Zoning for Housing, continue investing in transit and expand

I want to be on Council to make sure that implementation goes well. ... There's always unfinished work for any electoral office."

> - Kirk McPike, city councilor

commercial tax revenues.

"We have made major investments in transit and traffic improvements over the course of the last Council," he said. "We need to make sure that ... we don't go backwards on free DASH and we continue to make it practically possible to take transit options to get cars off the street."

He said what underlies everything is the budget. McPike said funding for Alexandria City Public Schools remains a top priority of his, and hopes to expand funding in this budget cycle.

"I think that we're going to end up making more investments in the school system in this year's budget," he

said. "We're going to continue ... classroom construction to increase the capacity of our schools. ... We can't continue to do that if we don't ensure that our budget itself is on stable footing."

McPike is doubtful the proposed Potomac Yard arena will progress past the General Assembly, where it has stalled in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee since early March.

"I don't really see this coming out of Richmond in a way that would be acceptable here," McPike said. "But, if there's no arena, we still have the same challenges that we have today. We still have the same increasing reliance on residential property taxes. We still have revenues that are growing slower than inflation."

Many of the issues around the arena that are being raised by residents – traffic, impacts on neighboring communities – were questions McPike has himself, in addition to labor conditions during construction and operation of the facility.

And, McPike said, he wanted Council to ultimately decide the arena's fate.

"It's frustrating to be engaged in a project, the ultimate fate of which wasn't in our hands," he said. "I wanted this project to be approved or to be rejected because of the

SEE MCPIKE

SUPPORT AUTISM RESEARCH AT THE **ACTIVE FOR AUTISM 5K**





Mayor Justin Wilson and Kirk McPike at the 2023 Scottish Walk Christmas Parade.

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503 S Royal Street

503 S Royal Street was listed by another real estate agent.

The listing became stale after two months on the market and little interest from buyers.

Elizabeth Lucchesi and the
LizLuke Team became the
second real estate professional
to list this home and the
FIRST TO GET IT SOLD!



We couldn't be happier with our experience. Elizabeth and her team helped us prepare the house for sale. Everything was scheduled and done on time, making the process smooth and stress-free.

Jason & Yunyun

CANDIDATE PROFILE



PHOTO/KIRK MCPIKE

Kirk McPike with representatives of ALIVE! and Councilor Sarah Bagley at the 2023 Pride Festival at Market Square.

MCPIKE

FROM | 4

concerns that we had, not because the legislature couldn't come to an agreement on how to approach this proposal."

The residential tax burden has been an issue for years in the city. In the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget from City Manager Jim Parajon, the proposed residential tax makes up nearly 37% of the city's revenue.

"We're going to need to find ways to bring new revenue in and that means working with [the] Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, our chamber of commerce, with the state to find businesses that fit Alexandria," McPike said. "You can have something that is mixeduse retail, residential and commercial that produces significantly more tax revenue for the city that provides

needed affordable housing."

He said the city was initially interested in the arena

proposal because it would serve as an anchor for additional economic growth. "Right now we know that restaurants and retail alone

restaurants and retail alone aren't going to do it and the office market in Northern Virginia is very weak," McPike said.

An entertainment-oriented anchor is a likely solution, McPike said, whether or not it's the arena proposal in its current form.

"Finding the right fit can be a challenge," he said. "[It has

to] be big enough to spur the redevelopment, but also manageable if it's just us working with a partner to do it."

And McPike applauded previous efforts made by the city, AEDP and staff to retain and recruit businesses in Alexandria, namely Inova Hospital and the Potomac River Generating Station.

But, not all hope is lost for McPike in terms of economic growth. Despite the challenges, he believes Alexandria is home to dedicated staff and residents who work to make this city better.

"I don't think that the chal-

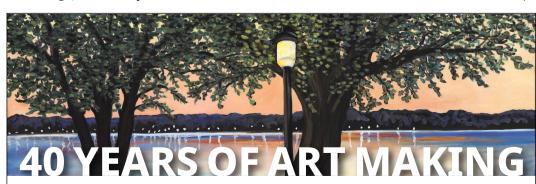
lenges that we have with our revenue ... are insurmountable because this is Alexandria, and we tackle problems all the time," McPike said.

A Dallas, Texas, native, McPike graduated from Southern Methodist University with a bachelor's degree in political science in 2005. He went on to work in Democratic politics, first with the Dallas County Democratic Party, then as chief of staff to then-Texas state Rep. Marc Veasey, who has been a U.S. Congressman since 2013.

McPike has also been

SEE MCPIKE





Kristina Hagman April 4 & 5, 2:00 - 7:00 p.m. | April 6, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. **Torpedo Factory Art Center** | Overlook Room (3rd floor, #325) | 105 North Union St., 22314 kristinahagman.com — @hagmanarts WWW.ALEXTIMES.COM MARCH 28, 2024 | 7



815 RIVERGATE PL* Alexandria, VA 22314



1881 N NASH ST #2004 Arlington, VA 22209



426 N ST ASAPH ST* Alexandria, VA 22314



22 E WINDSOR AVE Alexandria, VA 22301





456 ARGYLE DR* Alexandria, VA 22305



828 SLATERS LN #201 Alexandria, VA 22314



\$2,550,000

\$890,000



\$1.213.000

\$1,585,000

1111 N 19TH ST #2806 Arlington, VA 22209



828 SLATERS LN #402 Alexandria, VA 222314

\$1,150,000



1656 QUAIL HOLLOW CT McLean, VA 22101



\$1,700,000



1111 N 19TH ST #2401* Arlington, VA 22209



\$2,495,000 Alexandria, VA 22314



828 SLATERS LN #303 \$720,000



106 E CUSTIS AVE Alexandria, VA 22314





7028 ELIZABETH DR* McLean, VA 22101



828 SLATERS LN #104 Alexandria, VA 22314



\$825,000



1111 N 19TH ST #2406 Arlington, VA 22209

\$1,625,000



22 BAKERS WALK #406* Alexandria, VA 22314

\$3,525,000



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CANDIDATE PROFILE



We want to help you!



Preschools can apply for a grant at thekathywilsonfoundation.org until May 1, 2024

The Kathy Wilson Foundation is kicking off a new mission this spring. Our Preschool Micro-Grant Program will award \$200 - \$5,000 grants to support preschoolers with special needs and the schools that celebrate their special gifts.

Encourage your preschool to learn more at our website. And please donate to the Kathy Wilson Foundation during **SPRING2ACTION** on April 24th.

The Kathy Wilson Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) under ACT for Alexandria





PHOTO/KIRK MCPIKE

Kirk McPike with members of the Alexandria Fire Department at National Night Out in 2023.

MCPIKE

FROM | 6

campaign manager for other public figures in Texas, including a successful reelection campaign for the openly gay Dallas Sheriff Lupe Valdez in 2007 and an unsuccessful run for the Texas House in 2010 with Loretta Haldenwang.

Thanks to the Victory Fund – a national organization that supports LGBTQ+ candidates that has endorsed McPike twice – he was connected to Adam Ebbin's first campaign for state Senate in December 2010.

McPike said he was immediately welcomed upon arriving in Alexandria; as a closeted gay man in Texas, he never felt "at home" there.

"Shortly after arriving to the city, I realized this is where I wanted to be for the rest of my life," he said, recalling that time of his life. "[This city is] a wonderful, diverse place that tries new things and is forward-looking and willing to say yes to big ideas, and it's a great place."

This is also how he landed

his current gig of 12 years as chief of staff to U.S. Congressman Mark Takano, another openly gay politician from California.

Questions and eyebrows were raised when McPike, in 2021, received hundreds of donations from people living outside of Alexandria.

"The donors from across the country who supported me are people I have worked with throughout my career or went to college with. I have lived in five different cities [and] I've worked in several states," McPike said. "I've worked with candidates and friends in several more, and many of the people who I've worked with have gone on to live in other places."

McPike said when it was time to raise money for his Council bid, he turned to those friends and acquaintances.

"Those are the sorts of people that, when you're a candidate running for office, you go to and say, 'Hey, I'm doing this, you're somebody who cares about me, who knows what I care about, will you support

me?'" he said.

McPike reflected on his tenure as it stands on Council, stating he was proud of his votes for the Zoning for Housing legislation and instituting quarterly town halls.

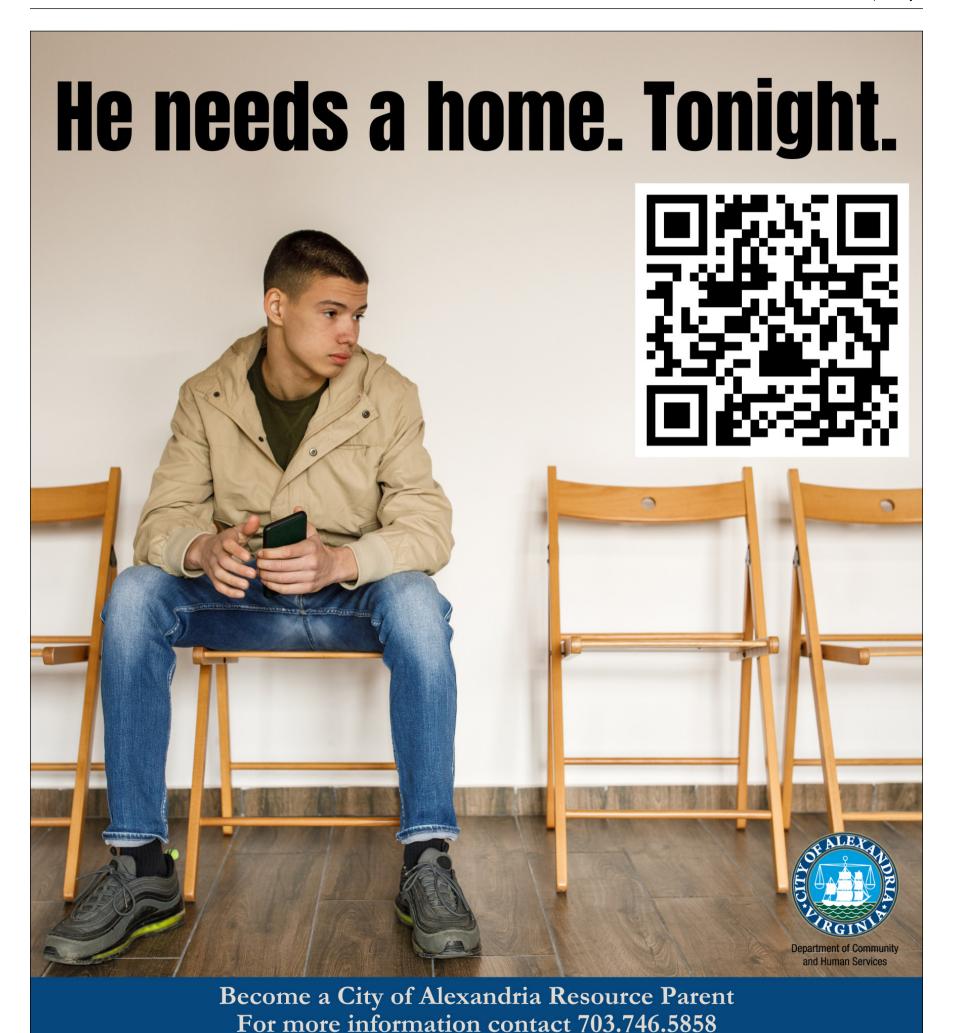
"I'm very gratified to see the success of those town halls and hope that we can find more ways to increase the flow of information in and out between the residents," he said. "This is local government: We live here, we work here. People have no problem asking us questions in the grocery store ... or [when] we're walking down the street to a restaurant."

And, as an Eagle Scout, McPike recognized the constituents and residents of Alexandria matter most.

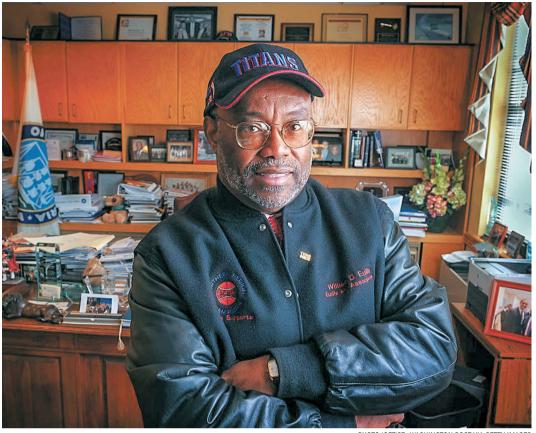
"When you're in charge, you're actually the person that matters the least," he said, reflecting back on his Scout days. "When you're leading, you're trying to solicit input from the people that you're leading, incorporating their thoughts into where you're trying to take the whole."

-cmeisner@alextimes.com

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PHOTO/OFFICE_WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

Bill Euille in front of his old desk in the Alexandria mayoral office. The checkbook register with the check stub of the \$260,000 payment from Hubert "Jay" Hoffman III to Euille was found in the lateral file to the right of the City of Alexandria flag.

EUILLE

showing a corresponding deposit into Euille's personal bank account of \$260,000 on June 18, 2012. To read the full story, see alextimes. com/2024/02/former-mayor-euille-was-focus-of-fbi-probe/

FROM | 1

This payment took place the week following the 2012 Democratic primary for mayor, in which Euille prevailed – all but ensuring that he would remain Alexandria's mayor for the next three years – and during a timeframe when Hoffman had multiple projects worth tens of millions of dollars before City Council.

In the statement, which Euille began with "Dear fellow Alexandrians," he said:

"To be clear, this was a loan that was appropriately supported by a promissory note. Mr. Hoffman and I have been friends since the 1970s, having first met when I graduated from college and returned to Alexandria to begin a career in the construction industry," Euille said in the statement.

Euille also said in the statement that the loan was made because a former business partner had absconded with \$200,000 earlier in 2012, leaving him in need of funds to prevent foreclosure on his home.

"So, I turned to my friend Mr. Hoffman for a loan. The loan was timely repaid in full. I thank Mr. Hoffman for coming to my rescue," Euille said in the statement.

Euille did not respond to several requests from the AJP for further elaboration, including an email in which we asked if he was willing to provide a copy of the promissory note or documentation of the loan repayment.

When the AJP reached Jay Hoffman by phone at his Florida winter residence for the February 15 story, Hoffman did

SEE EUILLE

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Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

ZABRISKIE CHAPEL

3606 Seminary Road / Alexandria, VA

IMMANUEL CHAPEL

3737 Seminary Road/ Alexandria, VA (On the grounds of the Virginia Theological Seminary)

Maundy Thursday - March 28

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II with Choir *Foot washing, and Stripping of the Altar*

Good Friday - March 29

12:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

7:00 p.m. The Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday

Immanuel Chapel

Immanuel Chapel

Immanuel Chapel

Easter Sunday, March 31

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I

Zabriskie Chapel

9:15 a.m. Festival Holy Eucharist Rite II with **Brass**, **Choir**, and **Timpani**

Immanuel Chapel

10:30 a.m. Reception and Children's Easter
Egg Hunt

Chapel grounds

11:15 a.m. Festival Holy Eucharist Rite II with **Brass**, Choir, and Timpani

Immanuel Chapel

12:30 p.m. Reception in the Parlor (found inside of Immanuel Chapel)

Episcopal / Anglican



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Nothing compares to what's next.



1100 Morningside Lane, Alexandria \$1,295,000 Heather Corey +1 703 989 1183



817 Duke Street, Alexandria Under Contract \$1,025,000 Diann Carlson +1 703 628 2440



115 Princess Street, Alexandria \$1,399,000 Phyllis Patterson +1 703 408 4232



118 N West Street, Alexandria Under Contract \$999,900 Phyllis Patterson +1 703 408 4232



1214 Falster Road, Alexandria Under Contract \$875,000 Frida Hopper +1 571 225 1458



701 Swann Avenue #303, Alexandria \$835,000 Ashley Muldoon +1703 431 1705



4504 Ferry Landing Road, Alexandria Just Sold \$851,000 Gina Lee +1703 967 8198

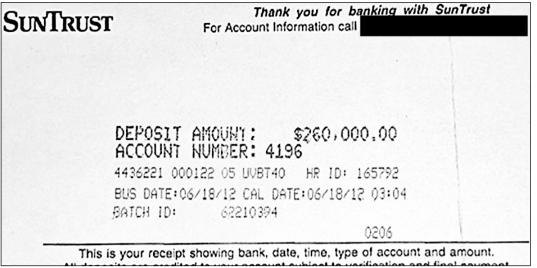


4419 Old Mill Road, Alexandria \$720,000 Gina Lee +1 703 967 8198



501 Slaters Lane #405, Alexandria Under Contract \$499,900 Delaine Campbell +1 703 932 6542

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PHOTO/ALLISON SILBERBERG

The deposit slip showing Euille deposited the \$260,000 payment from Hubert "Jay" Hoffman III into his personal SunTrust bank account.

EUILLE

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not comment on the nature of the payment he made to Euille, or whether it had been repaid.

Hoffman's only comment on the payment was to say, in response to being told that the AJP had talked with Silberberg, "If you've talked to her, then you've got the story. You don't need me."

The AJP learned of another instance of an Alexandria busi-

ness owner making a significantly smaller "loan" of \$1,500 to Euille the next year, in 2013, that this business owner said was not repaid.

A copy of the check written to Euille from this business owner, who the AJP is not naming because they do not do business before City Council, was also in the checkbook register that was discovered in the mayoral office in January 2017 by a volunteer for former

Mayor Allison Silberberg.

"I knew Bill was on rough times," the business owner said in an email to the AJP. "He dropped by my office one day and asked if I could loan him a small amount of money.... I felt bad for him and wrote a check for \$1,500 to him personally. I doubted that I would ever get repaid, but was OK with that."

Financial troubles

There is documentation

Frustrated? Helpless? Stuck?
Tired of overpaying for subpar service?

Let us help! We pride ourselves on transparency, honesty and integrity.
With Ben Nielsen's Alexandria Automotive, you don't have to sacrifice time for safety!

Now offering: "The Nielsen Now" – a complimentary pick up and delivery of your vehicle – and a shuttle service!

I turned to my friend Mr. Hoffman for a loan. The loan was timely repaid in full. I thank Mr. Hoffman for coming to my rescue."

– Bill Euille, former mayor

to support Euille's contention that he was having financial difficulties in 2012, though the amounts involved and timing differ somewhat from his statement.

According to City of Alexandria land use records, Virginia Commerce Bank granted Euille a loan modification, secured by his home, on his original line of credit of \$750,000 on Sept. 6, 2011. The line of credit had a principal balance of \$747,832.18, which the bank reduced all the way down to \$320,282.

A loan modification is granted to individuals experiencing financial hardship who may face foreclosure. Individuals have to provide their bank with proof that payments cannot be made according to the loan's original terms. Modifications are based on income, debt, assets and proof of hardship, according to federal code §1024.41, loss mitigation procedures and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Despite Euille's claim in his

statement printed in the March 21 Alexandria Times that his financial hardship occurred in 2012, evidence suggests that he had financial hardship in 2011, which was addressed by his bank's loan modification and his more than \$400,000 line of credit loan forgiveness in September 2011.

Following the June 18, 2012, payment from Hoffman, Euille then satisfied two loans in just over two months' time: one was for \$50,000 and the other for \$322,450, according to Alexandria land use records. Those loan repayments left his property at 106 E. Nelson Ave. free and clear of any loans or liens.

The City of Alexandria, for tax purposes, assessed Euille's 106 E. Nelson Ave. property in 2012 as having a value of \$1,148,791, according to the City of Alexandria Office of Real Estate Assessments – though these city assessments may not reflect the true sell-

SEE EUILLE

| 1



3021 COLVIN STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

alexandriaautomotive.com

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EUILLE FROM | 12

able value of a property.

Following the September 2011 loan modification and the June 2012 payment from Hoffman, Euille then sold the 106 E. Nelson Ave. house on Sept. 30, 2013, for \$855,000, according to City of Alexandria land use records.

A former senior official in the U.S. Department of Justice, who worked on public corruption cases and agreed to talk to AJP on background for this story, said the transaction between Hoffman and Euille looked like a loan.

"My gut reaction when I first read the article is that it likely was a loan, for a couple of reasons," the former Justice Department official said. "One, it was a very large payment and, two, it was by check. Criminals very rarely write checks to other criminals.... Of course, you would want to verify through investigation that it

was a loan. You would look, for instance, for a promissory note and evidence of repayment of the loan, among other things."

Difficult to prosecute

Transactions of this kind between an elected official and a person who stands to benefit financially from actions by the local official are difficult to prove and prosecute, because it requires a quid pro quo.

"Here's one of the complications: If the mayor was going to take some official action anyway, or if he can claim credibly that whatever he was given didn't affect his official conduct, it may not legally be a bribe, because there is no quid pro quo," the former Justice Department official said. "That is, it would be difficult to prove that something of value was given to the payor in return for some official act."

The former Justice Department official also clarified the roles played by the FBI and the





PHOTOS/ALLISON SILBERBERG

Details from the stub of the \$260,000 check that developer Hubert "Jay" Hoffman III, who is head of the Hoffman Company on Eisenhower Avenue in Alexandria, issued to then-Mayor Bill Euille on June 18, 2012.

U.S. Attorney's Office in public corruption investigations.

"The work [between the FBI and U.S. Attorney's office] is collaborative. Particularly on a public corruption case the work is always collaborative. For instance, the FBI might get a tip. They might open a case. They might do a few interviews, get

some bank records ... but the FBI agent would go to find the U.S. [Attorney] pretty quickly. These are sensitive and difficult cases, and agents and prosecutors would absolutely work closely together throughout the investigation."

At the end of the day, however, the U.S. Attorney's office has the final say in whether to prosecute.

"The U.S. Attorney is the chief law enforcement officer for the district and so the final prosecutive judgment always, always belongs to the U.S. Attorney and not the FBI," the

SEE EUILLE | 14



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| GOOD FRIDAY MARCH 29, 2024 | 12:00 p.m. | Joint Service with Christ Church Held at Christ Church |
|--|------------|---|
| | 5:30 p.m. | Family Stations of the Cross |
| | 7:30 p.m. | Traditional Stations of the Cross |
| EASTER VIGIL SATURDAY MARCH 30, 2024 | 7:30 p.m. | The Great Vigil of Easter |
| EASTER SUNDAY | 6:30 a.m. | Sunrise Service at St. Paul's Cemetery |
| MARCH 31, 2024 | 8:00 a.m. | Traditional Easter Eucharist |
| | 9:00 a.m. | Festival Eucharist with Brass and Children's Sermon |
| | 11:00 a.m. | Festival Eucharist with Brass |
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PHOTO/JAY PALERMINO

Jay Hoffman speaks at the ceremony for the National Science Foundation groundbreaking on Jan. 27, 2014 while then-Mayor Bill Euille waits his turn.



HOTO/IAY PAI FRMINO

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Bill Euille, center, and Jay Hoffman, to Euille's right, at the National Science Building groundbreaking. Two months prior to Euille receiving the check from Hoffman, City Council granted Hoffman's company more than 200,000 additional square feet for the National Science Foundation building, increasing its size by 42%.

EUILLE

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former Justice Department official said.

The reported three-year timeframe for the investigation into the Hoffman payment to Euille is fairly typical, according to the former Justice official.

"There's more crime than there are FBI agents or [Assistant U.S. Attorneys]. And the typical FBI special agent or AUSA will have dozens of open cases. This is not an excuse but an explanation. I think three years is too long, but it often takes that long to finish an investigation and make a prosecutive judgment."

The former official said the decision to prosecute a case requires a federal prosecutor to follow the Department of Justice protocols. Even if the prosecutor has some evidence, that

evidence may not be "conclusive or determinative."

"One requirement is that a prosecutor must have a reasonable probability of conviction," the former Justice Department official said. "And that means evidence that is relevant and admissible to convince a jury unanimously, by proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Properly, that is a tough standard."

The former Justice official added it seems likely that the U.S. Attorney found no federal

violations, or at least none that could be proven.

"It is an excellent U.S. Attorney's Office, and they would not shy away from a difficult case, if they had one," the former Justice official said.

Though it is possible, according to the former official, for federal prosecutors to turn a case back over to state prosecutors if the U.S. Attorney determines they can't prove that

SEE **EUILLE**

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I am deeply embarrassed by this situation and express my remorse for the resulting optics."

- Bill Euille, former mayor

EUILLE

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federal law was broken, that option can be cumbersome.

"Rule 6(e) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure prohibit the disclosure of grand jury information, except in limited and enumerated circumstances," the former Justice Department official said.

For instance, there is an exception to Rule 6(e) that allows a U.S. Attorney to go before a federal judge and ask for an order letting them share federal grand jury information with a state or local prosecutor "if you have a good faith basis to believe you have a violation of state law," the former Justice official said.

But even if the Grand Jury information is turned over by a judge's order to the state, it would be highly unusual for a local prosecutor to prosecute the local mayor.

"That strikes me as an odd and problematic situation," the former Justice official said. "More likely, a local prosecutor would recuse and a local prosecutor from another part of the Commonwealth would take charge of the case. There is no evidence that that happened here."

Alexandria's local prosecutor is Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter, who was initially elected in 2013. Porter said in an email that he was not consulted in 2017 when the payment from Hoffman to Euille was discovered, and that he first learned of it in the AJP story. Because the case was investigated by the federal government, Porter declined to be interviewed for this story.

"For the record, however, my office was never consulted

about this situation and therefore we did not decline to move forward," Porter said in the email.

Virginia code

Alexandria resident John Frost asserted in a letter to the editor that ran in the March 7 Alexandria Times, "Still waiting for Euille's response" that the payment from Hoffman to Euille was both a "breach of trust" and a possible "violation of the Code of Virginia."

"But the fact is that it really doesn't matter what the payment was for. It was a very large financial transaction between a sitting mayor and, as the investigative story pointed out, a major landowner who came before Council to amend numerous special use permits to allow far more density on his land holdings than had been granted previously," Frost said in his letter.

While Frost cited Title 30-108 of the Code of Virginia to support his assertion that the payment was illegal, that section of the code appears to only pertain to members of the Virginia General Assembly.

However, there is a section of Virginia law that applies to conduct by local elected and appointed officials as well as city staff.

Virginia code in § 2.2-3103, in the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, appears to prohibit a sitting mayor, City Councilor or member of city staff from accepting payments from people who do business before local government, whether that payment is in the form of a gift or a loan.

2.2-3103 begins with "No officer or employee of a state

or local governmental or advisory agency shall" and section 5 continues with "Accept any money, loan, gift, favor, service, or business or professional opportunity that reasonably tends to influence him in the performance of his official duties. This subdivision shall not apply to any political contribution actually used for political campaigns or constituent service purposes and reported as required" by state code. (Emphasis added.)

Virginia code provides for civil penalties for violations of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act:

"2.2-3124. Civil penalty from violation of this chapter. A. In addition to any other fine or penalty provided by law, an officer or employee who knowingly violates any provision of §§ 2.2-3103 through 2.2-3112 shall be subject to a civil penalty in an amount equal to the amount of money or thing of value received as a result of such violation."

The code goes on to say enforcement of this code falls to the local commonwealth's attorney.

Additionally, Euille did not disclose the payment from Hoffman in any City Council meeting when Hoffman projects came before Council, nor did he recuse himself from any votes involving Hoffman.

Former City Councilor Frank Fannon, who was on City Council in 2012 when the payment took place, told the AJP that Euille also never disclosed the payment from Hoffman in private to members of City Council.

"No. None of this," Fannon said in an interview. "I know Euille and I know Hoff-



PHOTO/BILL EUILLE VIA FACEBOOK

Bill Euille as mayor.

man, but I never knew of any inside deals."

Euille accepted campaign donations from developers and others who did business before City Council throughout his tenure on City Council and as mayor, according to campaign reports available on the Virginia Public Access Project website.

In his statement that ran in the March 21 Alexandria Times, Euille said his vote was never for sale while in elective office. "I have not and would never accept a payment of any kind from anyone for my vote or support," Euille said in the statement.

Euille concluded his statement with remorse for how the payment appears.

"I am deeply embarrassed by this situation and express my remorse for the resulting optics," Euille said in the statement.

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PHOTO/ALEXRENEW

Hazel''s cutterhead was lifted from the tunnel on March 21.

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Hazel tunnels across the finish line

Significant step in sewer outfall remediation to be celebrated on April 13

BY MARK EATON

Her job is to bore, but Hazel is anything but boring.

Hazel, AlexRenew's 380ton tunnel boring machine, recently completed a 2.2-mile precast concrete tunnel that runs 100 to 130 feet under Southeast Alexandria and the Potomac River. The tunnel is 12 feet wide.

On March 21, Hazel was disassembled and lifted from the tunnel to the surface by a large crane. The tunnel, part of the RiverRenew project, extends from AlexRenew's water treatment facility to an outfall at the foot of Pendleton Street. The tunnel will divert combined sewer overflows during rain storms to the treatment

plant to prevent discharges in the river.

Hazel, more than 150-feetlong when fully assembled, had tunneled six days a week in 24-hour shifts since November 2022 up until her recent dismantlement.

A typical day involved two 10-hour shifts with the remaining time dedicated to maintenance. Hazel's massive cutterhead allowed her to tunnel around 50 to 60 feet every day and up to 130 feet in a single day.

The tunnel is constructed from rings of precast concrete formed in jigsaw piece-like sections that Hazel helped push into place.

Why Hazel?

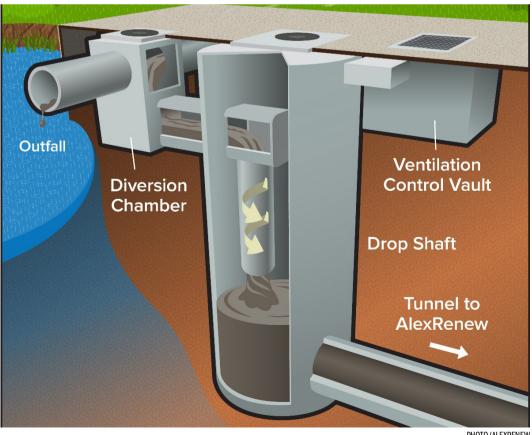
Alexandria's combined sewer system is antiquated and over capacity, such that whenever there is a significant accumulation of rain, the outfalls spill millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac River. The city in 2016 approved plans to address the issue over the next decade, under which it would have begun engineering assessments on the Oronoco Bay outfall, the last of the four, by 2026.

However, under pressure from Republican state lawmakers, whose districts border the Potomac River downstream from Alexandria, the Virginia General Assembly passed bills during its 2017 session, which were signed into law by then-Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat, that required Alexandria to have its aged sewer system outfalls updated by 2025.

In April 2018, the City of Alexandria approved the remediation plan under which

SEE HAZEL

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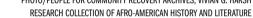
PHOTO/ALEXRENEW

The underground diversion chamber planned for the foot of Pendleton Street.

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PHOTO/ALEXRENEW

Chicago environmentalist Hazel Johnson meets with then Vice President Al Gore.

Hazel in the drop shaft at Pendleton Street.

HAZEL

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the RiverRenew project, and Hazel was born. The plan involved bringing all outfalls together in a unified tunnel at AlexRenew in addition to the construction of a dual use facility for overflow during wet weather conditions. After passage of the remediation plan, City Council then approved a transfer of outfall ownership to AlexRenew with the approval of Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality.

In a tradition that goes

back several hundred years, tunneling and other subsurface equipment was often given female names in honor of Saint Barbara, the patron saint of miners and other underground workers.

Hazel is named after Hazel Johnson, who was known as the "mother of the environmental justice movement." Iohnson worked to improve environment-related health outcomes, particularly cancer and respiratory illnesses, in public housing on Chicago's South Side from the 1970s until her death in 2011.

What comes next

RiverRenew encountered pandemic-related challenges that contributed to project delavs.

"You have issues associated with transportation, supply chain issues." Matt Robertson. AlexRenew's director of communications, said in an interview. "The costs of supplies and construction materials for certain things, like rebar, dramatically increased."

Robertson said Hazel was

built in Germany and the reduced availability of cargo ships because of the war in Ukraine added to the delay.

The General Assembly, without significant resistance or controversy, recently voted to extend RiverRenew's statutorily-mandated completion date from mid-2025 to mid-2026.

RiverRenew's remaining work involves constructing and installing mechanical components including the underground diversion chamber at the foot of Pendleton Street and the pumping facility at Holland Lane.

With the tunnel completed, Robertson addressed Hazel's future.

"The hope is that another group, potentially operating on the East Coast, [will need] a tunneling machine of similar size and will reuse her," Robertson said.

AlexRenew will host an open house at 501 North Union St. on April 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to celebrate Hazel's achievements.

-aboutalexandria@gmail.com



PHOTO/ALEXRENEW

Hazel in the drop shaft at Jones Point before she entered the Potomac River.



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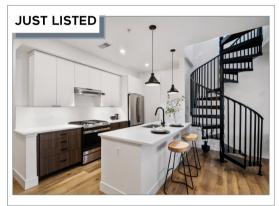
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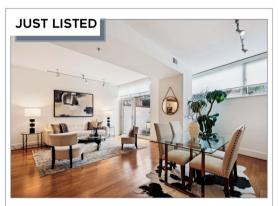




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Shirley Urquia, former ACPS interim superintendent, dies at 92

BY MARK EATON

Shirley Urquia, Ed.D., who had a long career in Alexandria City Public Schools that culminated in the roles of interim superintendent and assistant superintendent in the early 1990s, died February 25. She was 92.

Urquia is warmly recalled as an encouraging mentor by many of her former ACPS colleagues.

Lois Berlin, Ed.D., who like Urquia served as interim ACPS superintendent, described Urquia as approachable and honest.

"When I was a teacher at the Alexandria Developmental Center, she asked me on a visit what I planned to do next," Berlin said in a statement to the Times. "I hadn't really thought about it and she invited me to come talk with her about the possibilities. She was so supportive and convinced me that I should go further. When the Cora Kelly Magnet School Coordinator position became available, she encouraged me to apply."

Retired ACPS administrator Cathy David also emphasized Urquia's mentoring as making a difference in her career.

"I knew Dr. Urquia quite well and admired and respected her very much," David said in an emailed message. "She was the Director of Elementary Education when I taught fifth grade at [William] Ramsay. I always thought of her as a valued mentor – she was the first to urge me to get my administrator's credential and supported me every step of the way."

Retired ACPS teacher and administrator Linda Wilkoff recalled in an interview that early in her teaching career, Urquia would observe her classroom and offer encouragement.

"She would settle in, observe, talk to the kids and say something positive," Wilkoff said. "[Urquia] was authentic and inclusive."

Urquia, a native of Union City, Indiana, graduated from West Side High School. She attended Indiana University where she obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in education and met her future husband Alfred, who was commissioned into the Air Force in 1952.

Urquia taught at elementary schools wherever her husband was stationed, including Montgomery, Alabama; Tokyo, Japan; Honolulu, Hawaii and Wiesbaden, Germany. After finishing their tours of duty, they settled in Alexandria. Urquia then earned her doctorate degree in elementary education at George Washington University.

Urquia joined ACPS in 1966 and taught at Mount Vernon and William Ramsay Elementary Schools. She was an assistant principal at James K. Polk and Stonewall Jackson Elementary Schools and principal of George Mason Elementary School.

She later became ACPS' executive director for elementary education, assistant superintendent programs/staff development and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. She retired from ACPS in 1995.

Urquia was an avid reader, loved to garden, collected antiques and was a talented cook, activities she particularly enjoyed after retiring from ACPS, according to her published obituary. She moved to Richmond in 2021 to be closer to her children.

Retired ACPS teacher Pam Walkup recalled in an interview that while Urquia had citywide responsibilities, she always supported special events at the schools where Walkup worked. She remembers Urquia as an active member of Delta Kappa Gamma, an education honorary society, and as active in promoting the early adoption of computer-based outside school reading programs.

Walkup said that Urquia "... believed in what she was doing and in helping others. She always had a kind word and a smile."

John Porter, the long-time



COURTESY PHOTO

Shirley Urquia, who earned a doctorate in elementary education from George Washington University.

former principal of T.C. Williams High School, now called Alexandria City High School, in an email described Urquia as a highly capable administrator.

"She was [someone] I had many discussions with relative to the focus and direction of staff/professional development once she assumed this important role," Porter said in the email. "She 'knew her stuff' and applied this knowledge throughout her career."

Betty Hobbs, a former ACPS principal and an assistant superintendent in the Arlington County Public Schools, said in a statement that she learned a tremendous amount from Urquia.

"Dr. Urquia was always one of my favorite people! She was so dedicated to her work and made me want to work hard WITH her!" Hobbs said in the statement. "I never felt that I worked FOR her, it was always WITH her! I learned so much from her!"

Urquia was preceded in

death by her parents, John K. Teaford and Selene Brierly Teaford, her husband Col. Alfred P. Urquia and her niece Dana Mc-Clain. She is survived by her sister Joan Teaford Goree, son David C. Urquia (Dorothy Laite Urquia), daughter Cynthia U. Caravati Lake (Kevin Allan Lake), granddaughters Lindsey Urquia and Morgan Urquia Poletti (Caio Poletti), step-granddaughters Jane Lake and Elizabeth Lake, nieces Brigitte de Cambourg, Francoise Urquia, Debbie Lyons and nephew Ray Lyons.

A memorial service was held at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home on March 19. Urquia will be interred next to her husband, Alfred, at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, Urquia's family welcomes donations to the Campagna Center's "Wright to Read" program. Visit their website at campagnacenter.org for donation information.

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city creatives

APRIL 4 • OCTOBER 10

The City Creatives arts section highlights the creative spirit alive and well in Alexandria. From concerts and dance to art shows and everything in between, City Creatives covers the latest happenings in our city's arts scene. The section features profiles on artists and arts organizations, previews of upcoming concerts, gallery openings and a calendar of arts-focused events.

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CLOSE TO HOME





PHOTOS/MARK MUELLER

The Mueller's home on South Royal Street is home to many flags and a beautiful red finish.

The legacy of a historic Old Town home

BY WAFIR SALIH

Wendy and Mark Mueller are seeking to honor their home's African American heritage with a commemorative plaque by a local historical society.

The couple's Old Town home on South Royal Street was once the residence of William Waugh, a 19th century freed African American cooper, a professional in making wooden casks and barrels. The area during that time period was part of the Hayti community, one of the first African American neighborhoods in Alexandria.

Wendy, born in Massachusetts, but a Virginian since age

Real Talk

12, said her dad worked for The Hartford, a Fortune 500 insurance company, which brought its offices to Old Town in the 1980s. It was one of the first major businesses in the area. as larger offices and corporations began to establish their presence.

Mark, a native Texan and seasoned "Army brat," moved 18 times growing up, even

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How to ensure you succeed in getting your dream home. Page 26

Homes

Prepare your yard for spring with these tips. Page 27

Cherry Blossom Women

Women celebrating the region's favorite trees. Page 28



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Times Living

Homes





PHOTOS/MARK MUELLER

The Muellers have celebrated many holidays in their well-decorated dining room.

MUELLER FROM | 21

living in Europe for five years. His mother worked at Christ Church and his dad served in the Army.

In 1995, Wendy and Mark

Spring is in the air!

began their life together in Alexandria, initially residing on Church Street until 1998. Their home overlooked the highway and boasted a clear view, prior to the wall being built that now obstructs the highway view.

"I could do the traffic report from our rooftop patio," Wendy recalled with a laugh.

"We would sometimes at 2 o'clock hear [a crash] and we'd call 911 [to report] a major accident on the inter-

section," Mark added.

From there, the couple moved to South St. Asaph Street where they lived briefly. In 1999, the couple stumbled upon their current house around Thanksgiving.

"It was on the market, and it was empty," Mark said. "We liked the paint color; it was a China white trim. And we're like 'Man, wouldn't it be great if one day we could afford this type of thing?"

The following January, the couple went on a three-week trip, where they toured the Middle East. When they returned, they found the house still on the market and decided to buy it.

"We came back from that trip, and we're like, 'Hey, the house is still on the market. Maybe we can get it,'" Mark said.

When speaking with a realtor prior to purchasing the

property, they learned that the house was home to Waugh in the 19th century.

"The realtor brought it up. She said, 'This is the home of the first freed slave.' ... But she might have been taking her [creative] liberties," Mark said.

McArthur Myers, an Alexandrian citizen and member of the Alexandria African American Heritage Trail Committee, said the Quaker community at the time gave opportunities to free Black Alexandrians.

"The Quakers named it Hayti after Tossaint L'Ouverture [who served] down in the Haiti Revolution, with the concept of giving the Black folks an association and connection to freedom," Myers said.

In the Alexandria Archaeology booklet, "Across the fence but a world apart" by T.B. McCord Jr., a map details

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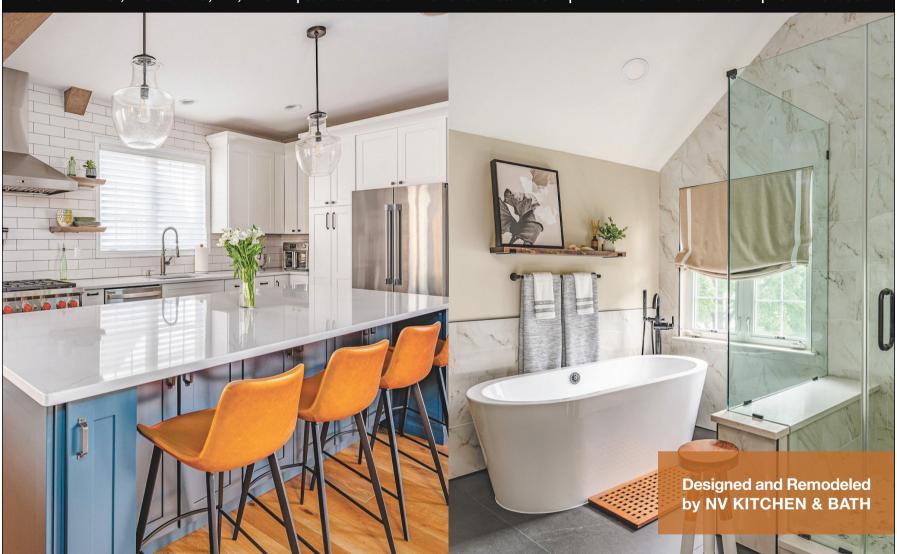
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Times Living

Homes

MUELLER

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the residences of free African Americans that lived on South Royal Street, with Waugh's house placed exactly where the Muellers live. Mark, who has owned the booklet since 2001, said he frequently revisits it.

Myers said the history laid out in the booklet is a testament to how historically rich the house and surrounding neighborhood is.

"Alexandria has always been a cosmopolitan city, you know. To know Alexandria history, you can know American history, because it goes to colonial, pre-revolutionary war, post-revolutionary war, to the Articles of Conflict," Myers said.

Mark discussed the possibility of obtaining a commemorative plaque for homes with significant African Amer-

ican history, given that a new sign was placed recently by the African American Heritage Trail Committee near the neighborhood recognizing the Hayti community.

The facade of the house has a vibrant red finish, showcasing its folk Victorian style. Given the positioning of the house being along the street, the family has a front-row seat to the annual President's Day parade.

The 2,350 square foot layout of the house lends itself to a more lateral space, with less need to go up and down the stairs. When walking in, a small living room on the right greets visitors, with a sprawling wooden staircase on the left that leads to the upstairs section of the home.

Down the hall, there's the dining room, where the couple said they've held many Christmas dinners. The wall by the dining table has a painting of flowers stacked on top of each other, with the detailed texture work of the paint providing a nice 'pop' effect. The piece is by Michigan artist Barbara Spraul, which the couple commissioned after seeing Spraul's work at the Alexandria Art Festival.

The kitchen has a very classic look to it, with its rustic hardwood floors and cherry-stained cupboards.

Beyond the kitchen, the backyard outside boasts a dark blue fountain in the shape of a lion. The backyard is also home to several roses, as well as a garden with a couple of apple and kiwi trees planted. Mark said he's working to install a wall of tomato plants with a telescopic ladder so he can tend to them.

SEE MUELLER

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PHOTO/MARK MUELLER

The outside of the home is adorned with greenery.

Times Living

MUELLER FROM | 24

Descending downstairs into the house, the utility basement houses a laundry room alongside storage space. On the upstairs level, there are four bedrooms, including their daughter's bedroom and the expansive primary bedroom positioned further along the hall.

As the house is undergoing renovations, Mark said he plans to install solar panels on the roof, as well as a car charger in the backyard. By the time he's done, the house will be able to go off-the-grid.

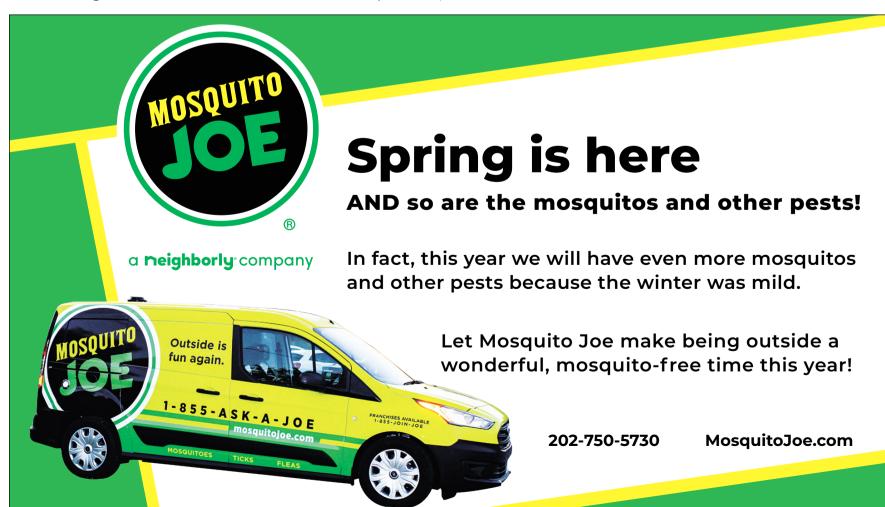
Reflecting on their 24 years of family life in their historic home, Wendy expressed hope for her daughter's future appreciation of her upbringing as she heads to college.

"We're raising our daughter here, and I hope she appreciates it when she looks back," Wendy said.



PHOTO/WAFIR SALIH

- wsalih@alextimes.com The classic kitchen is filled with cherry-stained cupboards.



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Times Living

Homes

Get your dream home in a seller's market

BY DANNY SMITH

In the current low inventory real estate market, competition is intense for desirable homes. Offering more than the asking price is an obvious way to make your offer more likely to be accepted, but here are some additional ways to make your offer more appealing once you find the home of your dreams.

Talk to the listing agent

An extremely important – and often neglected activity that – that your buyer agent can perform for you is talking to the listing agent to determine what's most important to the seller besides price.

A contract involving hundreds of thousands of dollars or more is necessarily detailed, and there are options for addressing many of those

details. Knowing what options are significant to the seller can help craft a contract that will be appealing.

Be quick

Be prepared to make an offer quickly. In this market, some sellers impose a nearterm deadline for receipt of offers. Ask your agent to provide a sample contract so you are already familiar with its content and valuable time is not lost. A preapproval letter from your lender is essential in the current seller's market.

Furthermore, selecting a reputable local lender and involving them in the offer process can help convince the seller of your financial strength.

Eliminate uncertainties

You should eliminate as many seller uncertainties as possible: The seller needs to



DANNY SMITH

assess the probability that the contract they accept is likely to be finalized.

The buyer can eliminate some of that uncertainty by waiving certain contingencies, or conditions that must be satisfied in order to finalize a home purchase. For example, lenders require an appraisal; you may offer to waive the appraisal contingency by agreeing to pay more, if necessary, than the value determined by the appraiser. Also, many sellers are unlikely to accept a

contract contingent on sale of the buyer's existing home.

Waive home inspection

You may offer to waive home inspection after contract ratification. One option is asking the seller to allow a pre-inspection prior to your making an offer. Another option is to include an inspection contingency "for information only." You can then void the contract if you don't like the results or accept fixing any problems after you purchase the property.

Include an escalation clause

Including an escalation clause in your contract is a way to overbid competing offers. The clause states the increment by which you will overbid a higher competing offer up to a specified limit. This provision as well as offering more than the asking price may yield a price exceeding the appraised value, so offering an appraisal gap guarantee to pay the difference is an important discriminator.

Payment options

An offer to pay cash rather than obtaining a mortgage is highly desirable and eliminates the need for a financing contingency, which is typically the most time-consuming element of a home purchase transaction. Of course, the offer should be accompanied by proof of available funds.

Seller closing costs – e.g., fees, document preparation, commissions and inspections – are typically on the order of 6% of the final sale price. Offering to pay some of those costs would certainly appeal to the seller.

Your earnest money deposit provides assurance to the seller that you will not attempt to withdraw your offer in contravention of contract provisions. The typical range for earnest money deposits is 1% to 3% of the offered price. A deposit near the upper end of the range is more appealing than a lower deposit.

Timing

In some cases, the date of final settlement is important. The seller may need extra time to finish vacating the property or to find a suitable next residence. The buyer could offer additional time through a rent back offer or, even better, continued rent-free seller occupancy. Conversely, the seller may want to obtain the proceeds of the sale quickly. Taking the seller's timing needs into consideration can be a strong discriminator.

When you find a home that you simply cannot live without, ask your real estate agent about applying these suggestions to snag your dream home.

The writer is a real estate professional with TTR Sotheby's International Realty in Alexandria.



DANNY SMITH, Realtor®-Alexandria is my Home "White Glove" Services Home Preparation For Sale

- Construction Background
- Construction Buckground
- Decades of Community Service
- Stewardship of Historic Resources





Danny Smith, PhD, PE

Readying your lawn for spring

BY FAMILY FEATURES

As the weather begins to warm and days get longer, it's important to begin preparing your yard for a healthy growing season. While factors like climate, soil type and grass type can all impact how your yard grows, there are a few steps you can take during the spring months to help your lawn thrive.

From dethatching and aerating to fertilizing and mowing, tackling these simple chores can help ensure your vard looks its best and is prepared to fight off seasonal weeds, disease and drought.

Tune your mower

Before it's time for the first mowing of the season, inspect your mower and perform any routine maintenance necessary. That goes beyond sharpening or replacing the blade, and includes changing the oil, spark plugs and filter as well as filling with a fresh tank of gas.

Loosen the thatch laver

While it's important to

avoid working on your lawn until after the final freeze to avoid damaging the grass, raking your yard with a spring tine rake to loosen thatch - the laver of leaves, roots and dead grass that builds up between live grass and soil – before the first mow is equally important. Be sure to rake when the soil is dry; if it's too soft or muddy, you may pull up healthy grass crowns.

Fight compacted soil

If your soil has become compacted – likely the effect of heavy foot traffic - and is too dense for water, air and other nutrients to reach the roots of your grass, aerating can help break it up and reduce thatch.

A core, or plug, aerator can introduce tiny holes into your soil by removing plugs of grass and soil, which lets nutrients more easily reach the roots. An added bonus, the plugs can decompose on top of your grass, supplying more nutrients.

Fill in bare spots

If your lawn is looking sparse, overseeding, which in-



PHOTO/UNSPLASH

After a long winter, get your lawn ready for spring and summer activities.

volves spreading grass seed over your existing lawn, can help fill in bare spots. Be sure to choose the right type of seed for your climate and soil type to ensure proper growth. Applying a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer at the same time can provide additional nutrients that are important for promoting healthy growth.

Start seasonal mowing

When the ground is dry enough and your grass is long enough to require cutting, begin seasonal mowing. Be sure to use proper techniques, including varying your mowing direction each time to avoid creating patterns or ruts. In general, never remove more than one-third of the grass blade at a time.



Have a Home Project, Renovation, or Repair?

Limited equity in your home? We have a solution!

USSFCU's Home Improvement Plus Loan is a fixed rate, closed-end home equity loan designed for homeowners with limited equity who want to increase the value of their current home by making improvements.



Apply to Fund Your Next Home Project! ussfcu.org/H



The Home Improvement Plus Loan product is not currently available in the state of Texas.

APR – Annual Percentage Rate, Loans are subject to careful approach Eaters and of cut refamily a variables in the State of the lowest rate. Home Improvement Plus loan offers liked rates, loan amounts between 57,500 and \$70,000 and repayment terms up to 180-months. A Home Improvement Plus loan with an original balance of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 80%) totals a monthly payment of \$668.96. A flower lampovement Plus loan with an original balance of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 80%) totals a monthly payment of \$668.96. A flower lampovement Plus loans with an original balance of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$669.96. A flower lampovement Plus loans with an original balance of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$70,000 and a 180 –month term with an APR of 8.00% (CIV up to 10%) totals a monthly payment of \$70,000 and a 180 –monthly payment o Federal Credit Union complies with the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 (S.A.F.E. Act). A list of our registered originators can be found by searching for the United States Senate Federal Credit Union by visiting https://nmlsconsumeroccess.org/.

Membership eligibility required. Federally insured by NCUA.

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Times Living

BY GAYLE CONVERSE

Washington, D.C.'s treasured cherry blossoms are the horticultural and diplomatic result of women's efforts; yet, while the Tidal Basin itself rightfully pays homage to famous Americans – including Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Franklin Delano Roosevelt – it recognizes only one woman.

According to the National Park Service, the story of the Basin and its cherry trees begins in 1885 – 20 years following the end of the Civil War – when the National Geographic Society's first female board member, travel writer and District resident Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore (pronounced "Sid-more"), traveled to Japan.

Upon seeing the revered pink and white blossoms in Tokyo, Scidmore pledged to bring cherry trees to Washington, D.C. For two decades, Scidmore approached federal officials, but was consistently foiled by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and its "sturdy, all-American trees" policy.

In 1909, the new Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction showed interest. Scidmore also sent a note outlining her proposal to then-First Lady Helen "Nellie" Louise Herron Taft. On April 7, just two days after Scidmore's note was sent, Helen Taft responded:

"Thank you very much for your suggestion about the cherry trees. I have taken the matter up and am promised the trees, but I thought perhaps it would be best to make an avenue of them, extending down to the turn in the road, as the other part is still too rough to do any planting. Of course, they could not reflect in the



PHOTO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Women of the Cherry Tree Rebellion in 1938.

water, but the effect would be very lovely on the long avenue. Let me know what you think about this.

Sincerely yours, Helen H. Taft"

As a gift of peace and friendship, Tokyo Mayor Yukio Ozaki offered 2,000 cherry trees to the United States. But, after the saplings' arrival in 1910, the U.S. Department of Agriculture discovered the plants were contaminated with imported pests and ordered most of the trees to be burned.

Upon hearing the news, Ozaki shipped 3,020 more trees. After two years of inspecting the new saplings, horticulturalists approved a small planting ceremony on the Basin shoreline. On March 27, 1912, Helen Taft joined the Japanese ambassador's wife, Viscountess Iwa Chinda, to plant the first two samples from the delicate harvest. The National Cherry

Blossom Festival took root in 1935 and has grown from this simple ceremony.

In 1938, plans for the Jefferson Memorial included the removal of nearby trees. On November 18, one day after construction had begun, 50 women chained themselves to a cherry tree at the work site. Then-President Roosevelt ordered the "Cherry Tree Rebellion" to disperse, or its members and the trees would be "uprooted." The protestors gave in.

First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson led projects at the Tidal Basin from 1963 to 1969, which were part of her "Beautification Program," an initiative thought frivolous by her critics. The program was to go hand-in-hand with previous urbanization efforts that caused pollution and fractured communities, according to the National Park Service.

"Though the word beau-

tification makes the concept sound merely cosmetic, it involves much more: clean water, clean air, clean roadsides, safe waste disposal and preservation of valued old landmarks as well as great parks and wilderness areas," Lady Bird said in response. "To me... beautification means our total concern for the physical and human quality we pass on to our children and the future."

Reenacting the role of one of her predecessors in 1912, Johnson teamed with the wife of Japan's ambassador to the United States on April 6, 1965, to plant one of 3,800 cherry trees – a new gift from Japan.

Johnson also inspired the National Park Service to add a quarter-acre garden – which is now called the Floral Library – containing 13,000 tulips at the northeastern edge of the Tidal Basin. Landscape architect Darwina Neal created the design in 1969, mak-

ing her the first woman to produce one of the Basin's foremost characteristics.

Women's history connected in the Tidal Basin also involved large political issues. On May 1, 1971, before an estimated crowd of 50,000 on Tidal Basin land, women of the anti-war group, the "Mayday Tribe," spoke out against women's oppression.

Thanks to dedicated women, the nation's beloved blooms exist today for all to enjoy. The Tidal Basin and its cherry trees have survived politics, protests, pestilence, hacksaws, World War II anti-Japanese sentiment and 1990s rodent attacks.

The writer is a founder of Alexandria Celebrates Women, a nonprofit commemorating the centennial of women's suffrage and highlighting influential women throughout the city's history.

Calendar

Times Living

MARCH 30



CIVIL WAR WOMEN'S DAY

Learn about the dress, skills and contributions made by women during the Civil War through historical interpreters at Fort Ward! Explore the roles of women on the homefront, in camps and the battlefield. Free admission. Weather dependent.

Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Location: Fort Ward Museum
& Historic Site, 4301
W. Braddock Road
Information: alexandriava.
gov/FortWard

MARCH 31



WOMEN MOBILIZE THE COMMUNITY

This is the last day to view the special exhibit Alexandria Hospital: Women Mobilize the Community, which takes a look at health care in the city. Led by Julia Johns in 1872, Alexandria saw its first infirmary. \$3 for adults,

\$1 for children.

Time: 1 to 5 p.m.
Location: The Lyceum,
201 S. Washington St.

Information: alexandriava. gov/Lyceum

APRIL 1



RUBY'S KITCHEN TASTING

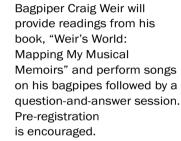
Ruby's Jamaican Kitchen will share dish samples and describe nuances of Jamaican cooking. Registration is required.

Time: 7 to 8 p.m. **Location:** Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St.

Information: mzimmerman@

alexlibraryva.org

LIVE CELTIC MUSIC



Time: 7 to 8:30 p.m. Location: The Lyceum, 201

S. Washington St. **Information:** shop.

alexandriava.gov/Events.aspx

APRIL 3



NATIVE BLOOMS FOR THE SUMMER

Find the best native perennials, plants and grasses that bloom during the summer. Join Master Gardener Elaine Mills as she describes the best plants for the summer months.

Time: 3 to 4 p.m. **Location:** Virtual

Information: swbinvirginia@ gmail.com or cpak@ alexlibraryva.org

APRIL 6



KIDDIE CABARET

Dance until nap time, listening to the latest kiddie favorites. Lunch will be served and children must be accompanied by one parent or guardian. Registration required. \$6 entry. **Time:** 10 a.m. to noon

Location: Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St.

Information: 703-746-5552

SPRING TECH REFRESH

Drop off unwanted, unused pieces of electronics at this recycling event!

Time: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Leonard "Chick"

Armstrong Recreation Center,

25 W. Reed Ave.

Information: 703-745-5554

275TH ANNIVERSARY KICKOFF

Kick off Alexandria's 275th anniversary with a treeplanting event at Windmill Hill Park. Various events and festivities will be held, including historical exhibits, ribbon cuttings and live music.

Time: Noon to 4 p.m. **Location:** Across

Waterfront Park

Information: berkeley.teate@

alexandriava.gov or 703-283-2174

APRIL 8



SOLAR ECLIPSE VIEWING PARTY

Enjoy space-themed activities and watch the eclipse. Viewing glasses will be provided while supplies last. Maximum coverage occurs

at 3:20 p.m.

Time: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. **Location:** Ben Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive **Information:** 703-746-1702

MARIO KART COMPETITION

Show off your Mario Kart skills and compete with kids and teens aged 11 to 18.

Time: 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Location: Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road **Information:** jlambert@

alexlibraryva.org

HOME OF THE WEEK







PHOTOS/ROBERT SMITH

Left: Timeless colonial architecture with mature landscaping. **Middle:** Dining room view of the living room and gas fireplace. **Right:** Renovated kitchen featuring stainless steel appliances and solid maple cabinetry.

Right. Neriovated kitchen leaturing stainless steel appliances and solid maple cabinetry

1930s Rosemont colonial

This brick colonial in Rosemont is perched on the northeast edge of Shuter's Hill with views beyond the Potomac River Valley. Built in the 1930s, it has been remodeled to feature modern conveniences with retained wood floors, radiant heat, solid wood sixpanel doors, elaborate stair spandrels, chair rails and elegant trim. Andersen dou-

ble-hung, double-glazed windows have replaced the originals and the roof has been replaced with upscale architectural shingles complementing the elegant dentil molding eaves and copper downspouts.

The interior of this delightful home has been repainted. Plentiful closets and built-in shelves and cabinets offer extensive display and storage space. Features of the remodeled kitchen include stainless steel appliances, solid maple cabinets, soft-close drawers, ceramic floor tile and Corian counters with spice storage mini-cabinets incorporated into the backsplash. Luxurious extras you will appreciate are the towel warmer in the primary bath, an inviting gas insert fireplace and heated floor in the breakfast area.

Recent functional upgrades promising low maintenance

for years to come include the two-zone furnace, Fujitsu ductless mini-splits, washer and dryer. Massive storage is evident in the high-ceiling, full basement that once served as the owner's mini basketball court! Ample offstreet parking is afforded by the garage and driveway. Access to public transportation includes Metro and passenger rail stations only a few blocks away and multiple free DASH routes.

AT A GLANCE

Address: 2507 King St.,

Alexandria, 22314

Neighborhood: Rosemont

Price: \$1,175,000

Square feet: 2,044

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 2.5

Year built: 1937

Contact:

Danny Smith, Realtor®

TTR Sotheby's

International Realty

400 South Washington St.

Alexandria, 22314

dsmith@TTRSIR.com

703-505-7845

HOMES ADVERTORIAL

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Letters

We support Council's vote

To the editor:

On March 12, at its legislative meeting, City Council joined more than 130 localities across the United States to adopt a resolution supporting national, improved Medicare for All. The resolution affirms the City of Alexandria's support for a single-payer healthcare system and urges Congress to adopt comprehensive universal health coverage.

Why is this important to us? One of us is a volunteer counselor in the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program, i.e., Medicare counseling. The other is a nurse and an advocate for cancer screening, research and treatments. We both work with people who are stuck battling very confusing payment schemes with all the Medicare parts and/or limited networks and denials of coverage, which can be particularly burdensome.

Too many Medicare beneficiaries who have severe or chronic diseases have too much income to qualify for financial assistance, but after paying for housing and food, not enough for costly prescriptions and other medical treatments. To be eligible for Medicaid in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a single person aged 65 or older can have no more than \$2,000 in assets; a couple is allowed \$3,000. Income is limited to 80% of the Federal Poverty Level, which is \$12,048 a year for a single person and \$16,352 for a couple.

In most jurisdictions, those under 65 and eligible for Medicare due to disability are limited to Medicare Advantage plans, which restrict access to providers and too often delay or deny care. In Virginia, those same folks can now purchase a Medigap – Medicare Supplement – Plan but are limited to one plan with fewer benefits than the eight plans available to those over 65.

As currently designed, Medicare does not cover dental, hearing or vision services, all of which are

vital to living a healthy life. Such benefits are essential to everyone, but can be particularly critical to those with severe health conditions. For example, some cancer therapies can result in marked deterioration of dental health, visual toxicities and even loss of hearing.

Also, to the surprise and dismay of many who need it, Medicare does not cover long-term care. This lack of coverage will likely impact us all as the needs of our aging population go unaddressed in the coming decades.

People with health insurance from their employers may need to realize how vulnerable they are to losing coverage and a lack of continuity of care. Marketplace plans for 2024 have a maximum out-ofpocket of \$9,450 for an individual and \$18,900 for a family. How many of us could pay that amount yearly if a family member confronted a long-term illness? All health insurance plans have deductibles and coinsurance that can make getting needed care unaffordable. Even if coinsurance is "only" 20%, that is still a lot of money.

The Medicare for All bills in Congress, House of Representatives 3421 and Senate 1655, would cover all necessary health care without cost sharing at the point of service. The State-Based Universal Health Care, H.R. 6270, bill would provide a mechanism for states and regions to choose to provide this type of coverage. Such legislation would protect many people in our Commonwealth who, even with health insurance. are one accident or serious illness away from bankruptcy. Access to health care is critical. Much like the fire department, we need it to be there when we need it! We can do better.

We applaud Alexandria City Council's support of the Resolution. -Cedar Dvorin, MSW, Alexandria; Caroline Corum, RN, BSN, Arlington

Opinion

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

- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week



The sixth annual temporary public art installation at Waterfront Park in Old Town, called "Interstellar Influencer (Make an Impact)," will be on display until November 2024.

PHOTO/LEE MOODY

Letters

We need an arena referendum

To the editor:

One of the hardest temptations for a local newspaper editor to overcome is crusading journalism and one of the easiest to which to succumb is cheerleading for local business.

Your "Model it for us" editorial from the March 14 edition steers a middle course between these opposing temptations by acknowledging the benefits an entertainment district theoretically could bring while pointing to the "many examples of how the variables used in forecasts can result in wildly different projections – not all of them accurate." The unspoken fear is that arena backers might be biased toward stoking their economic models with rosier assumptions than prudence warrants.

Most small business start-ups have a business plan, sometimes worked out in conjunction with economic development consultants and bank commercial loan officers, but half still fail in their first year and 90% within five years. In the case of the proposed arena, failure means Virginia and Alexandria taxpayers end up on the hook since they own the property in question for which the sports teams are merely tenants.

Sweeteners like promising to convert a thousand housing units to "committed af-

fordable" merely reinforce the fear that this deal isn't as good as it is being made out, so holding out for a better deal might still be a shrewd gambit.

If Arlington County insists on having seats on the arena board, it should also, proportionate to its number of seats versus Alexandria's, share in carrying the cost of the local share of the bonded indebtedness and reaping the purported profits many of us believe are illusory. Arlington having representation is reasonable because its National Landing neighborhood will bear burdens such as traffic.

But more importantly, today's elected officials who vote for this will not likely still be in office when the chickens come home to roost. This is a single, multi-billion dollar investment with long-term consequences which the public will have to bear.

For this reason, both statewide and locally, undertaking this investment should be subject to referendum where the public which will have to bear the long-term costs will give consent of the governed. One criticism of pro-arena advocacy is that it is being run like a campaign.

In a referendum, both sides campaign

SEE **DRUDI**

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Letters

Euille story illuminates need for ethics reform

To the editor:

Thank you for publishing "A statement from Bill Euille" relating to your February 15 article, "Former Mayor Euille was focus of FBI probe" due to a \$260,000 check from a developer deposited into Euille's personal account.

Euille broke his silence to confirm the payment and FBI investigation. He defends against allegations of wrongdoing on the grounds that the \$260,000 payment was for a loan to bail him out of a personal financial crisis due to a partner who "absconded" with over \$200,000 from Euille's "personal bank line of credit."

Putting aside the criminal implications of "absconding" with funds from someone else's personal bank account – and Euille did not mention whether charges against the former partner were ever filed – we are still left with a large developer with sub-

stantial business interests before the city providing \$260,000 to a "desperate" sitting mayor to bail him out of a personal financial crisis.

None of this was disclosed and the former mayor never recused himself from any of the developer's interests before the city. Both should be the minimum ethical expectation, and the loan may have violated Virginia law under these circumstances.

This episode shows that the Alexandria ethics code is too lax. City Hall yawned at the story. Candidates in the upcoming Council election should be asked whether they consider such undisclosed personal loans as appropriate for a city official and how they plan to improve ethics to restore public trust and integrity.

-Frank Putzu, Alexandria

I back anti-arena candidates

To the editor:

I write to publicize support for Amy Jackson for mayor and James Lewis and Charlotte Scherer for City Council. Having weighed the plentiful available information, these three candidates are the only ones who have voiced their opposition to the Potomac Yard arena development, the most important issue facing Alexandrians as we cast our votes in the June 18 primary.

If I am misinformed about the po-

sition of incumbent Council members and others running, I invite them to vigorously memorialize their "no" to the arena in this space and on their campaign websites. Despite the development's current status in the Virginia General Assembly, it is still vitally important that our mayoral and Council candidates fully state their position before May 3, the first day of early voting.

-Alan K. Friedman, Alexandria

I support No Kid Hungry

To the editor:

As a longtime volunteer in Alexandria City Public Schools, I second Sarah Steely of No Kid Hungry Virginia who complemented ACPS breakfasts in her March 14 letter, "Breakfast: Essential for learning" in

the Alexandria Times. Not only are kids warmly greeted every morning, but are then offered a yummy breakfast. It's a great program wrapped in love.

> -Claudia Fletcher, Alexandria

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and the voters decide. If the project turns out to be a fiscal albatross, the

public will bear the costs more willingly having given its consent.

-Dino Drudi, Alexandria Commentary



Poor Robert's Ruminations

The people you meet on vacation

ROB

WHITTLE

BY ROB WHITTLE

This winter, I was fortunate enough to take a vacation to the Midwest. Actually, it was the west coast of Florida, but every person I met there on the golf

course or the pickleball court was from that great section of the country.

In their Midwest twangs with the sharp "Rs" and the friendly tones, it was like this: "Hi. I'm Bob from Iowa." "Barb from Ohio." "Ben from Michigan."

If they weren't Midwesterners, they were from Canada, which, of course, is the

same thing. One conversation with a chap from Ontario went as follows:

Him: Where you from? Me: Alexandria, Virginia. Him: Is that near Lexington?

Me: Kentucky? Him: Yes. Me: Uh, no.

Him: So, how do you like West Virginia?

Me: Virginia.

Him: Aren't you guys the Volunteers?

Me: No. The Cavaliers.

Him: Well, nice to meet you, Bob.

Me: Rob. Sigh.

We had four sets of guests in our condo, prompting my friend Nick to observe that I was more popular in Florida than I was in Alexandria. Cannot argue.

I have made it through a quarter of this column, amazingly, without mentioning the most important thing that occurred on my vacation. I had an eagle on a par four. That's right! Dunked a 7-iron from 140 yards out for a deuce.

My playing companion, Linda, actually saw it go in and jumped into my arms, smothering me with her hug. She looked like Yogi Berra leaping on Don Larsen after the perfect game. Linda is not a small woman, but I was able to stagger to the hole and pluck out my Titleist.

Then there were the spring-breakers. They seemed to head to the beach

in same-sex groups. Girls with the girls. Guys with the guys. I imagine that the evening was their time to mingle. My significant other and I dubbed the girls' gathering place Butt Cheek Beach for obvious reasons. And I mean obvious.

It's amazing that after exposure to this phenomenon – and I do mean exposure – you get inured to it. Just another thong. Ho-hum.

I had an interesting day with a fellow pickleballer who befriended me and asked me to play golf. The buzz around the court was that Steve was an ex-Major League Baseball pitcher. He certainly looked

the part, standing 6'7" and weighing in at 245 pounds. Sure enough, it turned out that he was the No. 1 draft choice of the Yankees in 1977 and had played with Reggie Jackson and Bucky Dent and had been managed by Billy Martin.

He told me some war stories, including an encounter that his wife had sitting in the stands at spring training his rookie year. She reported to Steve that she'd had a lovely afternoon in the stands with a "very nice gentleman, a stranger." She further elaborated that he had a "very lyrical" name: Mickey Mantle. As we say in Petersburg, Steve 'bout fell over.

On the drive home, we stopped in Florence. It being Florence, we decided that an Italian dinner was in order. So we dined at the bar at the Olive Garden. Next to me was a 9-year-old and her mom. The girl, with her braided hair and oversize glasses, was cute as a speckled pup.

She introduced herself as Miracle and it was her birthday. Naturally, I told her about my eagle, which was met with a blank stare. I eyed her complimentary birthday chocolate cake enviously and, receiving no offer, we said our goodbyes. Miracle ... huh.

Did I mention I had an eagle?

The writer is CEO of Williams Whittle Advertising and is the author of two historical novels, "Pointer's War" and "Pointer and the Russian." He can be reached at rwhittle@williamswhittle.com.

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The case of Abbie Williams

THREATENED TO KILL THE CORONE young colored woman living offe street, between Patrick and I ed, yesterday gave birth to an illeg nate child, and was attended by lored midwife named AbbieWillian he head of the child was not proper rmed, and from this and other caus was said it expired as soon as bo r. W. R. Purvis, the coroner, was no ed, and in making an examination scovered that the umbilical cord h seevered that the difficult for a hear so arranged that in time it wou ave proved fatal to the child, while operation had been proper hough performed to insure safety e mother. The doctor having h is suspicions aroused on several oth casions by the apparent death of c red infants from neglect, conclud at this was a case which demand vestigation, and he interrogated t ly understood the modus operandi rted to on such occasions, and being osely pressed by questions from t proner finally said she couldn't s proper many same and commercy well and supposed she had personal supposed she had personally and supposed she had personally and supposed she had personally supposed she rmed her duty satisfactorily. The ctor finally had the woman arrester criminal neglect. Later Willia illiams, son of the accused, learned e interview between his mother a r. Purvis, and becoming exasperated id he would knock the Coroner in t ad with a cobble stone on sight. (er Howson later found the bellico dividual and carried him to the s on house and locked him up. orning Mayor Strauss held him in th m of \$100 to keep the peace for the months. There is every reason believe that the crime with whi e midwife in this case is charged mmitted with impunity in this cit d that the infants whose worldly o er is thus rendered ephemereal a ried at the city's cost, while their in ovident and deprayed parents prov e city night and day leading lives morality, laziness and dishonest n inquest was held this morning ov e remains of the infant referred ove. Dr. W. M. Smith made the a psy. A verdict was rendered to the lowing effect: "The jury render erdict that the child was born des d that there was no foul play, e pt neglect on the part of the mi ife, and recommend that all mi

PHOTO/OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

A story about Abbie Williams from the Dec. 19, 1893, Alexandria Gazette.

The Dec. 19, 1893, edition of the Alexandria Gazette highlighted the case of Abbie Williams. The case involved a Black woman giving birth to a child who died at birth. The coroner, Dr. Purvis, accused the midwife, Williams, who was also Black, with criminal neglect.

A jury acquitted Williams on charges of foul play, but despite the acquittal, the article insisted she had been negligent in her care of the mother and child. The case of Williams shows the intersection of inequalities in segregated Alexandria, where medical practices and care were viewed through a lens prejudiced against women of color, whether as midwives or as patients giving birth.

The Alexandria Gazette noted Dr. Purvis "had his suspicions aroused on several other occasions by the apparent death of colored infants from neglect." At the same time, the coroner noted that "the operation had been properly enough performed to insure safety to the mother."

The article claimed that Dr. Purvis questioned Ms. Williams, or "granny," closely, and when pressed, Abbie Williams "said she couldn't see very well and supposed she had performed her duty satisfactorily." The interroga-

The Dec. 19, 1893, edition the Alexandria Gazette shlighted the case of Abbie lliams. The case involved Black woman giving birth tion angered Ms. Williams' son, William, to the point that he threatened Dr. Purvis, got arrested and had to post \$100 bail.

The Gazette speculated that medical negligence "is committed with impunity in this city." The newspaper's prime complaint was that stillborn African American children:

"are buried at the city's cost, while their improvident and depraved parents prowl the city night and day leading lives of immorality, laziness and dishonesty."

The author gave no other examples of medical negligence by African American practitioners. Nor did it explain what a more qualified medical professional would have done for the unfortunate child in this case, whose skull never fully formed.

The jury's recommendation that "all midwives be required to be registered at the auditor's office" became a reality almost 20 years later, in 1912. Alexandria created a Board of Health and hired a health officer to inspect businesses accused of being unhealthy or unhygienic.

The new office was meant to protect the public in terms of hygiene, sanitation and preventing mass outbreaks of contagious diseases. The Board also regulated the practice of midwifery, requiring all births to be registered, all midwives to pass an examination, and to pay one dollar – equal to \$30.67 in 2024 – to the Commissioner of Revenue.

While well-intentioned, the fees and exam requirements disproportionately burdened women with barriers to wealth and whose knowledge was built on experience rather than schooling. Modern-day readers might ask what the medical options for Williams' former patients were if she wasn't able to practice anymore. On Jan. 5, 1914, the Alexandria Gazette printed a list of registered midwives separated by race. Sixteen white women and eight African American women are listed.

Williams' case was rediscovered by Shay Merker and Julia Walsh as they researched a tour on midwifery in Alexandria.

Historic Alexandria celebrates Women's History Month throughout March. For a listing of virtual events and celebrations, please visit alexandriava.gov/Womens HistoryMonth.

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

Weekly Poll

Last Week

What do you think of the decision by Alexandria's Circuit Court judges to recuse themselves from the Zoning for Housing lawsuit?

60% Local judges should always recuse themselves when residents sue the city.

20% This was a special circumstance.

16% I'm not sure.

4% Judges should never recuse.

This Week

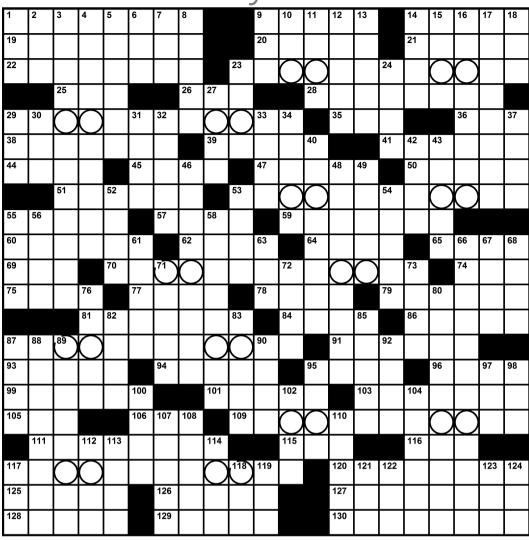
Take the poll at alextimes.com

Do you think the city's sewer outfall remediation efforts should be celebrated?

- A) Yes, they've made a lot of good changes.
- B) No, there's still lots of work to be done.
- C) Maybe, there's been good work, but more to be done.
- D) I'm not sure.

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Weekly Words



DEATH NOTICES

AUDREY R. GALLAGHER (102), of Alexandria,

March 17, 2024

BETTY JEAN CLAYTON MONROE (92), of Alexandria,

March 13, 2024

JOSEPH RAIGER (18), of Alexandria, March 17, 2024

CHARLOTTE REXROAD (85), of Alexandria, March 12, 2024

MICHAEL SNEAD (76), of Alexandria, March 20, 2024

HOLDS MANIACS R I V I E R A O V E R A C T A P I A N I R E N A EGOTRIP TANLINE Solutions from last week CENTHENRYVARIES LACE FROSHSOD E S T A I D E D THEROYALWEARIES EMBED PIES JAKE JAR PJS TWA BAWL MOTEL TORSO M I D SHANIA TRUISM STU UNREPS RAGTAG SHOOCIGGY A S H E N K E Y S D H L G U A C E C O R E S O R T UHOHELM I N B L O S S O M O O E Y N O S E U T M A I N S T RAVESNEAK GOOEY UNEVEN AROMA PAT R I I S T R I C O R N E M I R R A I S A F R I E D R I C E I S I A M E N D L E E S S E A N T T E E I S I A H T E E N A M I S T S YES SAD ZEST

WORDUCKENS by Adam Wagner, edited by Jeff Chen

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SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH EVENT

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RSVP:

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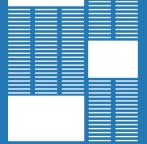


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