

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Charlotte Scherer runs for Council

Transparency, housing, public safety among top priorities

BY WAFIR SALIH



CHARLOTTE SCHERER

Charlotte Scherer is knocking on doors and engaging with voters directly, having visited more than 5,000 homes as she runs for City Council for the first time. If elected, she would be the city's first transgender councilor.

She plans on maintaining the same level of direct communication throughout her term if she's elected.

"[Right now] it's voter interaction. And if I'm elected to City Council, that will be constituent interaction," Scherer said. "I tell people I've got a portal on my website: [the] website's going to stay up no matter what happens. If I'm elected to City Council, you can always reach me right through that."

Scherer has opposed the Potomac Yard arena proposal to bring the Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards to Alexandria from the start and expressed skepticism of it coming to fruition.

"I brought up Google Maps not long after the arena [proposal], and I just looked at the map of the area, and I said to my wife: 'I don't see how this happens,'" Scherer said.

She recalled the day Mayor

Justin Wilson took questions from more than 400 residents at a Del Ray Citizens Association meeting in December 2023. The community's concerns touched on the effects the arena would have on transportation, the impact of bringing in 20,000 people for 200 nights a year, parking and how the city and the Commonwealth would pay for the project.

Scherer said she has great respect for Wilson, but disagreed with his response at the meeting.

"His response – and I know he was working in good faith – but his response was: 'We're going to work that out.' And I think that that's just not going to cut it."

Scherer emphasized the need for future projects to prioritize transparency; financial studies and reports should be

SEE **SCHERER**

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PHOTO/LAURA HATCHER

Jason Klimoski of StudioKCA with the new public art piece he co-designed.

Interstellar Influencer makes impact on waterfront

Asteroid replica to remain until November

BY CAITLYN MEISNER

A new public art piece was unveiled last month at Waterfront Park that highlights the region's history from millions of years ago, straying away from the norm of recent art pieces.

Created by Jason Klimoski and Lesley Chang of StudioKCA in New York City, Interstellar Influencer – which will be at Waterfront Park until November – explores the impact of an asteroid that hit 35 million years ago not far from Alexandria, creating the Ches-

apeake Bay watershed.

Klimoski and Chang are a husband and wife duo focused on architecture and design; according to their website, the studio likes to focus on site-specific projects. The firm has won dozens of design awards and placed many public installations across the country and world.

The couple was picked in January 2023 for the March 2024 installation by an Office of the Arts taskforce that has overseen the previous five installations going back to 2017. Based on a portfolio of previous works and a visit to Alexandria, the artist or stu-

dio is chosen and starts the design process.

"It's the same site, Alexandria is the same city, but it's

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The family converts the car shop to luxury senior living.

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CRIME

Crime roundup: Week of April 8

Alexa Dickens, the mother of the Lyles-Crouch Academy student who brought a loaded handgun in a backpack to school on March 1, was arrested and charged Friday with allowing access to firearms by children according to an Alexandria Police Department news release. She was arrested by APD in collaboration with the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney. Dickens is 31 years old and a resident of the city.

The Planet Fitness at 4620 Kenmore Ave. was evacuated around 6 p.m. Saturday due to an emailed bomb threat, according to an ALXNow report. The Alexandria Police Department reported the threat was sent at 4:06 p.m. The building was evacuated and reopened around 8 p.m. Doyle's Outpost, the arcade located adjacent to the gym, was also evacuated, but did not reopen that evening. Oscar Ramos was found guilty of first-degree murder

Monday for a 2015 drive-by shooting that killed an Alexandria man and wounded another, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Ramos was found guilty in federal court for the May 28, 2015, shooting of 50-year-old Pedro Melendez Alvarado; he was also found guilty of assault with intent to kill for wounding 56-year-old Miguel A. Rodriguez Carabantes. Ramos will be sentenced on July 12.

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WEEKLY BRIEFING

Motorcyclist dies in DASH accident

A motorcyclist is dead after crashing into a DASH bus around 5 p.m. on Tuesday on Duke Street in the Landmark area. The DASH

bus driver first reported it via dispatch, stating the motorcyclist was speeding past the bus as it turned onto North Ripley Street.

The motorcyclist was declared dead on the scene and their identity has not yet been released.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com

Spring2ACTion early giving begins

Early giving for this year's Spring2ACTion began Wednesday and runs until April 23, according to a release from ACT for Alexandria. Sp-

ring2ACTion's 24 hours of giving is on April 24; dozens of nonprofit organizations in the city will participate. The goal, as stated on its website, is to

raise \$2 million for the community. More information can be found at spring2action.org/info/faq.

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PHOTO/TIFFANY PACHE

The Alexandria City High School Robotics team has moved onto the world competition.

ACHS Robotics head to Worlds

Alexandria City High School's Robotics team won the FIRST Impact Award Saturday at the District Champion-

ships for the third consecutive year according to a news release. The team will move on to compete at the highest

level, the FIRST Championship Event, in Houston, Texas, from April 17 to April 20.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Charlotte and her wife, Dana Scherer, at the St. Patrick's Day parade.

SCHERER

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conducted before any public announcements moving forward, she said.

"There was like this gravitational pull for this deal, and the feeling of ... '[We] want to bring the Caps and the Wizards here to Alexandria, it's going to bring in how much tax revenue. ... We've got to do whatever it takes to make it happen. Land the deal, we'll work out the details later,'" Scherer said. "I'm generalizing there, but that's a process issue I want to address, because this can never happen again. We need greater transparency."

This election follows Council's unanimous approval of the Zoning for Housing ordinance in November 2023. Before the final vote, Vice Mayor Amy Jackson motioned to defer the amendment on single-family zoning from the package, with Councilor John Chapman backing the motion.

Had she been on Council, Scherer said she would have voted with them to defer.

"I would have voted with Ms. Jackson and [Chapman]

to defer ... as we could have used more thoughtful discussion about those changes," she said.

Scherer cited a study from the Urban Institute, which found that an increase in housing supply had little impact on affordability. Scherer argued that the aim of increasing affordability by allowing duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes in neighborhoods previously zoned for single-family homes would be ineffective due to the high cost of land.

"A developer would have to come in there, buy a residence for \$1.6 million, knock down a \$700,000 house on it, [now] you've got a \$900,000 lot remaining. You put an \$800,000 duplex on it, you've got a \$1.9 million duplex, because \$200,000 goes into marketing, sales and profit, which means that each residence in that duplex is going to retail for \$850,000. That's not affordable. ... Most likely the developer is going to pass on that, and if they're going to knock down a house, they're going to put up a McMansion," Scherer said.

She emphasized public

safety as another critical issue facing the city and said appointing a permanent chief of police would be a top priority.

"[Former Police Chief] Don Hayes did a fantastic job. I don't know if it's going to be the existing interim chief of police or if we're going to do a nationwide search. Leadership begins at the top, so getting that right is crucial," Scherer said.

And, she proposed shifting some officers in the Alexandria Police Department from administrative roles to patrol duties, with incentives for those reassigned.

"Maybe they won't like it. Maybe they will, but we can give them some bonuses to do it. Let's get more community policing happening," she said.

Scherer grew up in Oldsmar, Florida, with her parents and sister. She received her bachelor's degree in history from the New College of Florida in Sarasota, then went on to the University of Florida and received her law degree in 2001.

She entered the Guardian Ad Litem program, which

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CANDIDATE PROFILE

“ [Right now] it’s voter interaction. And if I’m elected to City Council, that will be constituent interaction.”

– Charlotte Scherer,
City Council candidate

SCHERER

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advocates for the interests of abandoned, abused and neglected children. She secured a position as attorney ad litem – someone who is appointed by the court to represent the child’s best interests. Scherer

then worked in the public defender’s office.

Scherer said she was drawn to the Guardian Ad Litem program because she is a survivor of child sexual abuse from the Catholic church.

“I had suffered terrible abuse as a child myself,” Scherer said.

“So that was something I was drawn to, to provide those children with protection that I didn’t receive.”

Scherer said she didn’t speak about the abuse for more than 30 years, and when she opened up, she sought legal representation and reached a settlement with the church, which she said made an attempt to make things right. The settlement helped pay for her transition and allowed her to functionally retire and campaign full-time.

“The settlement’s been useful because it’s given me the opportunity to campaign full time and also to become my true, authentic self, because as you know, I’m transgender. The settlement gave me the ability ... to do what I needed to do to

make changes within and without,” Scherer said.

Scherer arrived in Alexandria in 2011 and commuted to Washington, D.C. for her job in mergers and acquisitions, working on the landmark 2019 Disney and Fox merger for more than two years. Later, she served as a magistrate for Alexandria and likened the role to that of a councilor.

“You have to remain detached, listen to the arguments of the party, make findings and then come to a decision, which is called a ruling. It’s very much like being on the City Council,” Scherer said.

Scherer revealed she grappled with her gender identity since childhood, dating back to the 1980s. She said she immersed herself in her work to distract herself.

“One of the reasons why I put in 70 or 80-hour work weeks is because that would distract me ... from these feelings that never quite went away,” Scherer said. “I would just consume myself with work. Here’s a merger and acquisition. Here’s a case. Here’s a trail section. ... You distract yourself with that. Then, that dysphoria,

that noise in the background, it goes away. But when you’re alone with your thoughts, it can reemerge.”

With the courts closed and work paused during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Scherer said those feelings of dysphoria reemerged in full force. She scheduled an appointment with a gender therapist via Zoom, who confirmed that her lifelong feelings indicated she was transgender.

Scherer described the meeting as a pivotal moment. After the session ended, she sat at her desk for two hours taking it all in, and then her eyes fell on a book on her bookshelf that resonated with her.

“I saw a book on the shelf by Tom Wolfe that said, ‘I Am Charlotte Simmons.’ And it hit me. It was like: ‘OK, I get it. I am Charlotte. I am a woman.’ And in that moment, I became Charlotte,” Scherer said. “I didn’t transform like that. You know, it was not like the ‘Bhagavad Gita.’ ... It’s more my authentic self and my sense of self aligned for the first time so powerfully.”

In 2021, Scherer left law to

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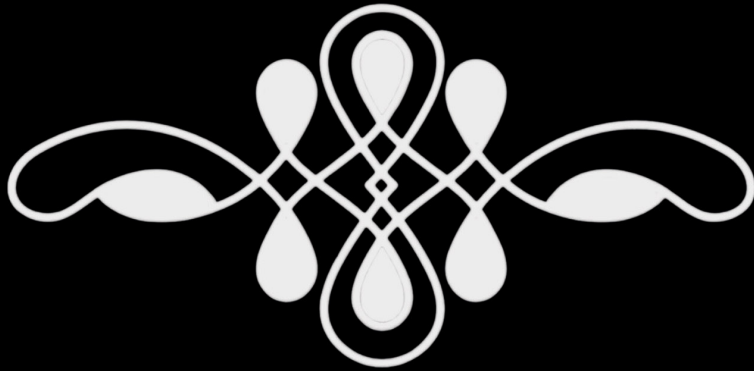
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Charlotte Scherer with friends and supporters in Old Town.

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Charlotte Scherer speaking with a voter at Mount Purrnon Cat Cafe and Wine Bar.



COURTESY PHOTO

Charlotte Scherer delivering the opening remarks at Bet Mishpachah, a synagogue known for its inclusivity towards the LGBTQ+ community, on Transgender Day of Visibility.

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 undergo an intensive transition, which took about two years.
 “In the end, it all worked out so beautifully. It just taught me and reinforced that lesson that, whether it’s on the trail

or in life, you stay on the path, you keep moving forward, you keep calm. You will arrive at a safe place. You will arrive at a safe destination,” Scherer said.
 Scherer, who served on the city’s Commission for Women, recalled when a resolution of

support for abortion providers was brought before the commission, which, according to Scherer, took place about eight months before the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 decision in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case.

The resolution failed initially, but then passed after the Court effectively overturned Roe v. Wade with the Dobbs decision. This eventually led City Council to amend the city’s zoning code to put abortion clinics on the same level as other health care providers.

Scherer said this experience showed her how persistent effort can lead to policy changes over time.

“That planted a seed within me that if you’re patient [and] persistent about it you can make real change,” Scherer said. “What a difference that

makes actually to allow reproductive health clinics to have the same range of options as to location, as any other health care provider in the city.”

Scherer is a member of the Florida Bar, Virginia State Bar, Washington, D.C. Bar and U.S. Supreme Court Bar. She’s an avid reader and likes to go on long hikes in her free time. She lives with her wife of seven years and is pursuing a master’s degree in psychology through Harvard University’s online program with only 12 credits left.

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PHOTO/DENISE DUNBAR

Every 30 minutes for 10 minutes, a system of misting sprinklers activates in “Interstellar Influencer.”

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PUBLIC ART FROM | 1

really been fascinating to see what each [artist] is inspired by and what they’re drawn to and what is the story that they want to help us tell about Alexandria through their public art,” Diane Ruggiero, deputy director of the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities Department, said.

After visiting the waterfront, the couple were particularly interested in the natural environment and how it was shaped, bringing them to research from the United States Geological Survey completed many years ago.

“When we read about this event, we both thought this was a story worth telling visually,” Klimoski wrote in an email to the Times.

In the center of the park is the asteroid replica, standing well above six-feet-tall, with 88 intentionally crafted panels – made to look like the geological features of a real asteroid –

with concentric circles leading to its center and small openings for the 8,000 watt LED lights. The top panels of the piece look burnt and rusted, yet the bottom panels of the replica look like untouched pieces of steel.

The sculpture is a 1:2,000 scaled representation of the asteroid – which was 85 kilometers wide and 1.5 kilometers deep. To create the replica, Klimoski said the pair wanted to fashion the piece out of metal.

“When an asteroid enters our atmosphere, everything besides the metal burns up,” Klimoski said. In addition to stainless steel, water and light were used to constitute the asteroid with the help of torches and hammers.

He said they faced challenges in crafting the replica, particularly with the most unusual aspect of this sculpture: the mist. Every 30 minutes for 10 minutes, a system of misting sprinklers activate and make it look like the asteroid

just hit Earth.

“Using water to give us the ‘heat’ effect made sense because it can be touched without being hot and still look like it just hit,” Klimoski said. “Light lights the mist and the indentations of the steel in the right way to further reinforce the ‘heat’ and provide a level of visual interest at night. ... [It] also provides a way to diffuse the LED lights inside at night.”

Ruggiero said this was a new logistical challenge for the city, as none of the previous five installations have utilized running water.

“We were glad that we were able to make it work because it was a really key part of [Jason’s] vision,” Ruggiero said. “... We know that it’s going to be a huge hit in July and August.”

Klimoski said he hopes people interact with it playfully.

“We love it when a kid or adult will put their hand into

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PHOTO/JORDAN TOVIN

Interstellar Influencer focuses on regional history from 35 million years ago.

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PHOTO/JORDAN TOVIN

Interstellar Influencer is located at 1 Prince St.



PHOTO/JORDAN TOVIN

The new public art sculpture was a popular attraction at Saturday's 275th anniversary celebrations.

PUBLIC ART FROM | 10

the mist and then shout back to their friends and family, 'It's not hot, it's cold!' he said.

Ruggiero said the city has so much recent history, going back 35 million years and searching for local happenings isn't all that common.

"It's going to be a way to inform people about the space that they're in and for those of us that live here, inform us about where we live," Ruggiero said. "This is a great opportunity to tell a story about Alexandria and the region that we don't ... hear a lot about."

And, she said, especially with Alexandria's 275th anniversary celebrations kicking off this month, this will be a great way to look beyond the city's somewhat "recent" history.

"There's a lot of attention

around that, a lot of research being done [and] a lot of information and material that's available about that. Now we get to still talk about history, but a very different time period," Ruggiero said. "Hopefully this will inspire some people to learn a bit more about it."

Ruggiero also noted that similar to past installations, the Office of the Arts will be looking for companion or response art pieces to Interstellar Influencer. Typically, an original piece of art is com-

missioned from a local artist to pair with the installation for a period of time.

The artist for the November installation has already been chosen, but is yet to be announced.

"We feel lucky to have been able to create a piece to add to the legacy of public art in Alexandria, and we hope our work stands as another example of what can be created if a city trusts and supports artists," Klimoski said.

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Obituary

Marian de Chazeau Holmes

Dec. 23, 1937 - March 31, 2024

Marian de Chazeau Holmes, 86, passed away on March 31. Her final days were spent in her home surrounded by three generations of her family, filled with love and laughter. Her four children were at her side when she passed.

After many years of travel as the wife of an Army officer, Marian lived in Northern Virginia for over 50 years. She worked in office/finance management for several local organizations, the last of which was Hartman-Cox Architects. Marian lived a vibrant life defined by her intense love of the arts, travel, theater and holding court with a huge circle of friends. She was passionate about her varied roles at The Little The-



atre of Alexandria. She loved crosswords, books of all varieties and subject matter, Sudoku and jigsaws. Marian was a true polymath, and her seven grandchildren describe their "Grammarian" as beguiling, classy, darling, irrepressible, magnificent, regal and sharp.

She was married to the late Lt. Col. David R. Holmes for 52 years and was partner to the late Robert E. Cope-

land for the last 12 years. Survivors include four children: Melvin Randall Holmes, Rebecca St. Clair Walker, Jessica Holmes and Robert Storey Holmes. She was deeply loved and admired by seven grandchildren and, in her final days, was able to meet and nap with her great-grandson Felix Holmes Martin.

The family wishes to thank Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and Goodwin House Hospice for their compassionate care over the course of her final illness. A celebration of life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to The Little Theatre of Alexandria or St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria.

Honoring a father's legacy

Family helps convert longtime car repair shop into luxury senior apartments

BY JAMES MATHESON

Tony's Auto Service, built on the hard work of an Italian immigrant and the relationships he forged, is being transformed by his family into a different kind of business this summer.

Establishing a community with Alexandrians will remain a primary effort as Alate, a new senior-focused apartment building, replaces its predecessor at the corner of First and Fayette Streets.

Antonio "Tony" Damiani emigrated from Abruzzo, Italy, in 1957 to work as a mechanic and manager of a regional Fiat dealership in Washington, D.C. Unsatisfied, he left Fiat and worked for a one-bay car repair operation in Del Ray.

Tony quickly impressed with a deep knowledge of automobiles and built a reputation in the community as a highly

skilled mechanic who could repair any make and model of vehicle. In May 1968, he opened Tony's Gulf Service on Commonwealth Avenue.

"He had a very loyal customer base. His customers knew they could trust him. His reputation as a hard working and honest mechanic drove the shop's success," Tony's son, David Damiani, said. "He worked to make sure that there was trust and accordingly, he built generations of loyal customers throughout Alexandria and beyond."

While raising his two sons, Anthony and David, and daughter Marylisa, on Fontaine Street in Braddock Heights, Tony also regularly employed family members in the shop on Commonwealth Avenue.

Tony's wife, Donna, did the bookkeeping; his brother-in-law, Fred Acree, drove the tow truck and Tony hired his brother, Gabe, upon his immigration to the United States in the late 1960s.

From the beginning un-



PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

Tony Damiani in full work mode.

til the last payroll, Donna recorded the daily business at Tony's Auto Service from both the shop and home in addition to raising their three children while Tony worked six days a week at the auto shop.

David recalled the family

waiting for Tony every night until 9 p.m. to eat dinner. David said he often fell asleep under the kitchen table and woke up in his bed the next morning for school.

"He was a dynamo and very passionate about building his

business," Tony's other son, Anthony, said.

The grown members of the Damiani family weren't the only ones who worked at the shop. The three Damiani kids

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PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

From left to right: Anthony, Tony and David Damiani dressed for work at the shop.

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PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

Tony's Auto Service storefront.



PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

Tony and David Damiani cleaning out the shop before selling.

DAMIANI FROM | 13

and their cousins made themselves useful by pumping gas, sweeping and doing other odd jobs before graduating to more complicated tasks.

Today, Anthony and David are lawyers in practice together with their firm, Damiani and Damiani, P.C. in Alexandria. Marylisa co-owned Fireflies, a longtime restaurant in Del Ray, and now lives in the

Shenandoah Valley, according to David.

Tony's Auto Service grew rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s. The business moved to First Street in 1978 to accommodate its enlarged client base; it

was there that the business really took off.

David and Anthony said some of their fondest memories from childhood were riding their banana seat bicycles to the shop, pumping gas and interacting with the employees.

"The shop was filled with characters not only from the

neighborhood but from all over the world, including Italy, Greece, Thailand, Afghanistan and Central America," David recalled. "It was a true melting pot. It grew from a somewhat smaller operation to one that had over 30 mechanics and was

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PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

Tony Damiani following his work on presidential inaugurations.

DAMIANI FROM | 14
brimming with energy.”

“The breadth of relationship that Dad built while working at the shop was truly amazing,” Anthony said. “He knew people from NASA. He knew congressmen. He knew politicians. He knew the poorest person down the street. It seemed like he knew everybody.”

According to David, his father had contracts with seemingly all of the letter agencies in the region. The expert mechanic had CIA clearance to enter their headquarters and work on federal vehicles. Tony even inspected the fleets of five different presidential inauguration campaigns and worked on the caisson that was used to transport former President Ronald Reagan’s casket during his 2004 funeral procession.

David said his father would often set up payment plans for customers who could not afford the cost of vehicle repairs based solely on trust. This reputation spread: A car mechanic with both the ability to work on luxury and federal vehicles while simultaneously providing customers with flexibil-

ity in payment options when needed is hard to come by.

The Damianis were a soccer family who regularly traveled up and down the East Coast for tournaments on weekends. The kids would be met with high praise for their father.

“We would be in a tournament in Canada, and someone would run into my dad and be like, ‘Hey, Tony, I got to get the Buick in this spring.’ And these were customers that had relocated to Toronto,” David said. “His customer base was incredible. As people left the D.C. area, many would still regularly bring their cars back to him, even if it meant coming from a long distance.”

Tony was diagnosed with stage four cancer in 2019. He died in 2021 at age 82 from complications. David said that as Tony grew older, his family had been exploring development options for years even before Tony fell ill.

The corner lot that formerly housed Tony’s Auto Service will open as Alate early this summer; currently, there is not a set opening date. The Damianis still own the property and

SEE **DAMIANI** | 18



PHOTOS/BONAVENTURE

Renderings of Alate in Old Town.



PHOTO/THE DAMIANI FAMILY

Tony Damiani featured in Business Week.



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Out of the classroom

Education section

BFCDS math team wins first place



The Burgundy Farm Country Day School Math Team competed in the Northern Virginia MathCounts competition and came in first place in their chapter! Three of the students placed in the top four during the individual competition.

PHOTO/AMBER LOPEZ

DECA students shine in Virginia Beach

Alexandria City High School's DECA students were honored at the Student Leadership Conference in Virginia Beach. Eleven DECA students advanced to the International Stage of the event in Anaheim, California, which recognizes emerging leaders and entrepreneurs

for achievements in marketing, finance, hospitality and management.

- Anait Wilson and Esinam Dedoo: Titans School Store School-Based Enterprise
- Jasmine Bailey: Independent Business Plan
- Parker Graham and Alex Cirimo: Entrepreneurship

Team Decision Making

- Victoria Laschet: Principles of Hospitality
- Carroll Fortune Jr.: Entrepreneurship Series
- Jack Sutherland and Matthew Ralis: Financial Team Decision Making
- Leia Hubbard and Sally Cox: Sales Research Project



PHOTO/MARILYN BOWEN

Students learning about the various summer camps at Fusion.

Fusion gathers for fair

Fusion Academy students and staff gathered recently for a fair highlighting the various opportunities the school offers students in the summer months. Teachers came prepared to generate interest, bringing props and accessories

to their tables to engage the students. From shaking maracas at the Spanish Fiesta table to admiring dice and dragons at the Dungeons and Dragons station, students got a chance to try out the activities they'd be participating in.

Steven Peterson

MAYOR | ALEXANDRIA

Traffic congestion in Alexandria is bad & getting worse, **but how does it effect our schools?**

Retaining quality teachers is tough, since City housing prices are high. Affordable homes aren't readily available here, teachers' commutes are long from reasonably priced housing areas.

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Grace Episcopal's solar eclipse view



PHOTOS/JULIA BYRNES

Grace Episcopal School experienced Monday's historic solar eclipse together on the school blacktop, bringing joy and wonder to students and teachers alike.

ACPS participate in jazz band auditions

Students from Alexandria City Public Schools band program took part in this year's All-Star Jazz Band audition at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School and the All-District Band audition at Hayfield Secondary School. Dozens of students represent schools across the district, including George Washington Middle School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School and Alexandria City High School. Congratulations to all the band students and GW Band Director Rick Seracino, Hammond Band Director Dawn Wilson and ACHS Director of Bands Timothy Grant.



PHOTO/ACPS

Many ACPS students auditioned for the All-Star Jazz Band.

SSSAS celebrates ARTStravaganza

St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School celebrated 21 years of ARTStravaganza last month, which is a full day dedicated to the performing and visual arts. Students attended a variety of interactive arts workshops taught by professional musicians, dancers and artists. They also had a chance to talk to the artists. The school welcomed more than 30 talented artists, musicians, dancers and storytellers. The event concluded with the entire Lower School coming together for a concert.



PHOTO/MANDI SAPP

Students learning how to play ukuleles during ARTStravaganza.

Linder takes field trip



PHOTO/CARLY ROBB

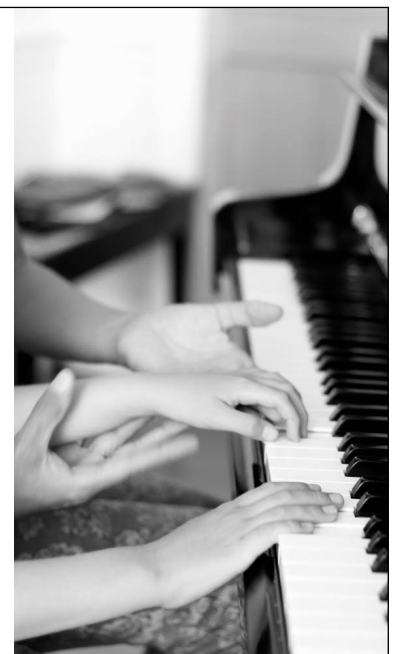
Jackson Arsenault and Malcolm Coon enjoy hands-on learning during a recent field trip to the National Children's Museum.

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PHOTO/BONAVENTURE

Renderings of an aerial view of Alate in Old Town.

DAMIANI

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have partnered with Bonaventure, an Alexandria-based real estate company, for the project.

Bonaventure CEO Dwight Dunton and David grew up alongside each other as life-long Alexandrians. They said they were often in the same house as children due to their mutual friends.

“When I was very young we used to take the car there when the business was actually in Del Ray,” Dunton said. “I’ve been going there since I was a kid.”

Those associated with the new apartment complex said they know there is a large imprint to fill. But the blueprints for Alate, in addition to the emphasis on providing a community that seniors choose out of desire rather than necessity, is motivation as they try to establish a new community, Dunton said.

“Think about some of your family members and think about how their life would be if they got to live here out of choice, rather than waiting for

a long period of time and having to make a decision out of necessity because of medical needs,” Dunton said.

Construction began on Alate in 2022, according to Gretchen Price, assistant project manager at Bonaventure. The 133-unit luxury apartment will feature several amenities, including a restaurant open to the public, a salon, spa, art studio and a kids’ room.

Residents will be offered daily events, have access to dozens of social gathering spaces, are encouraged to come and go as they please and welcome guests as they choose. According to Price, the 92 one-bedroom units and 41 two-bedroom apartments were designed with specific intent to be able to host family, grandchildren and friends.

“That’s what a lot of people are missing in life. They don’t realize that these communities are an option because of what they have to offer,” Dunton said. “They just think, ‘Oh my gosh, I would be going to assisted living, that’d be horrible.’ What we say is these com-

munities are for people living and enjoying their life.”

David said this outcome was always what his parents intended.

“It was always my parents’ dream to develop the property. As the First Street area gentrified over the years – and given its proximity to the Metro and Old Town – it became clear that the property was probably being underutilized as a single-story service business,” David said. “Dad would be absolutely thrilled with the development. Our family is excited that Alate will continue his legacy by offering an incredible service to the community.”

This dream is coming to fruition with a business the family trusts. They remain involved in the development of the property as it nears completion.

“One of the things that we do at Bonaventure is build communities within established communities,” Dunton said. “We wanted to bring something that would be part of the fabric of the community as Tony’s was.”

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Tying the Knot



COURTESY PHOTO

Wendy and Mark Mueller have been together for more than 30 years.

A Virginia Tech love story

Wendy and Mark Mueller's journey from Blacksburg to Old Town

BY CAITLYN MEISNER

Wendy and Mark Mueller were cut from the same cloth despite being from Massachusetts and Texas, respectively.

Having both ended up at Virginia Tech for college, the pair remain a power duo more than 30 years later. They met while taking courses for their hospitality major and became friends with one another. Mark always knew Wendy was the woman for him.

"I saw her across the room [and thought], 'Hmm, OK, I like her,'" Mark said with a laugh.

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Eco Weddings

Learn some tips on lessening your carbon footprint when planning.

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Onstage ALX

What's going on at regional theaters in the month of April.

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Homes

Prepare for extreme weather heading into the spring.

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Tying the Knot

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Wendy in Florida over a spring break trip.

"I went with a group of girlfriends from Virginia Tech and Mark and his friend, they were cruising the state of Florida,"

Wendy recalled, chuckling at the memory.

Mark and Wendy, telling the story at the same time, said Mark bumped into Wendy's group in Fort Lauderdale, Flor-

ida, and hung out with them – even sleeping on the floor of the hotel room.

They both graduated in December 1991, and, from what Mark remembers, the economy was not great for fresh graduates. So, instead of getting a fancy sales and marketing job at a hotel chain, he went to manage a Taco Bell in Richmond.

And thankfully, his college sweetheart got the opportunity to come along for the ride.

"The dean of the [business school] said, 'Hey there's a racquet club in Richmond that needs a wedding and banquets manager. Do you know anyone?'" Mark recalled. "[I said], 'I actually know of the perfect person.'"

Right then and there in a Bob Evans restaurant – or a Cracker Barrel, they couldn't quite remember which country-style restaurant it was – Wendy called the club manager and interviewed for the job soon after.

So, in Richmond, Wendy and Mark lived together as Mark managed the Taco Bell and Wendy was assistant man-

aging the racquet club, coordinating events and weddings. Both said they had demanding schedules, yet were engaged around June 1992.

Their engagement was a bit impromptu, as the James River cruise they booked was a little less spectacular than anticipated. The couple recalled the smell of the refineries on the river and overcooked green beans, which didn't make for much of a romantic setting.

"It was very low budget, and I was like, 'Lord, I got to find a place to propose,'" Mark said, remembering his panic on the boat. "We get off the boat and we're walking in Richmond and right by a warehouse, there's a cobblestone street [and] there's a fountain. ... I was like, 'Thank God for this fountain. I'm not going to propose to her on this dumpship in front of a refinery.'"

From there, the wedding planning kicked off. The couple already knew where they wanted to be married – the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden just outside of Richmond – and

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COURTESY PHOTO

Monte Durham helped Wendy Mueller and her bridesmaids get their hair and makeup done on her wedding day.

Tying the Knot

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set a date for Sept. 11, 1993.

After two years in Richmond, the couple moved up to Woodbridge so Mark could get his master's of business administration from George Mason University and Wendy could transition to working for her family's dental practice, where she continues to work today.

And just one week after Mark started his master's program, the couple was married. They had about 80 people at the wedding in an attempt to keep the ceremony intimate. Wendy, having had contacts in the industry, had a colleague cater and hired other dependable vendors to ensure the day went off without a hitch.

But, as it is with any wedding, there was one hiccup: the band.

Mark swears to this day that the band was "more hungover than I was" following his bachelor party the night before. Thankfully both of

their families are musical or else the dance floor would've been empty.

According to the couple, various family members took over for the band and began playing the instruments as their own. This truly revived the wedding and made the day even more jovial.

Monte Durham, who went on to star in "Say Yes to the Dress, Atlanta" from 2010 to 2020, was also an integral part of the wedding preparations, especially for Wendy and her bridesmaids. Durham was a wedding consultant and was hired by Mark's mother to handle hair and makeup on the day-of.

Wendy and Mark honeymooned in Saint Lucia over Mark's winter break that same year, having expressed interest in visiting various Caribbean countries – which, they've done several times since then. The next winter, in 1994, the couple traveled together to Costa Rica for a three-week study abroad trip.



COURTESY PHOTO

Wendy and Mark Mueller walking down the aisle on their wedding day at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens.

Then, in the summer of 1995, the now-wedded couple moved to Alexandria on Church Street. But, Wendy had her sights set on moving into

the heart of Old Town. "I've always loved coming into town, and my dad's office was here," Wendy recalled; her father's office with The Hart-

ford was located in Old Town starting in the 1980s.

It was a perfect midpoint for

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COURTESY PHOTO

Wendy and Mark's daughter, Natalie, looking at wedding photos of her parents a few years ago.

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Times Living

Tying the Knot

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 both of them commuting wise: Mark was working in Maryland, Wendy in Woodbridge.
 “Finding an apartment then

was difficult,” Mark said. “Every Saturday morning, Wendy’s up at the crack of dawn looking at the newspaper, finding some in Old Town.”
 The couple was able to se-

cure their current house on South Royal Street in 2000 after stumbling upon it during Thanksgiving 1999. They’ve remained in the antique home and are just now start-

ing renovations.
 Since their beautiful wedding in 1993, the couple has traveled the world a few times, welcomed a daughter, Natalie, into the world, hosted two dozen Christmas Eve dinner parties and embedded themselves into the Old Town fabric.

When they were not yet parents, Wendy and Mark spent each Thanksgiving traveling to a new country and part of the world, including more Caribbean islands, Honduras, Mexico, Italy, France and various countries along the way. And, even when Natalie was just a baby, the couple made it their mission to continue traveling with her by their side.

“We’ve always taken

her with us everywhere,” Wendy said.

“She’s been to Rome, she’s been to Paris,” Mark said. “The only way I would do the Disney thing is if it’s Disney Europe. I’m not doing Orlando. ... We did day trips [in France].”

Wendy and Mark reminisced on this specific adventure, allowing Natalie to explore many of the playgrounds that Paris had to offer their then-5-year-old.

Reflecting on their more than 30 years of marriage, they had one piece of advice, jokingly: don’t develop the negatives from your wedding – not having a wedding album may be the secret to a successful marriage.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com



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COURTESY PHOTO

Wendy and Mark Mueller recently at an Eagles concert.

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Tying the Knot

Green weddings: Leave a smaller footprint

BY VANESSA FERRAGUT

We've all heard the phrase "reduce, reuse and recycle," before but how can we incorporate this theme into weddings, to both save money and leave a smaller footprint?

To start, understanding that there is a reason we read this as "reduce, reuse and recycle" – and in that order – is important. The first of the three guiding principles happens to be the most cost-effective, has the least environmental impact and adds the greatest sustainable benefit to your wedding.

Reduce

If you eliminate an item you were considering for the wedding, you won't have to dispose of it afterwards – or pay for it in the first place. Imagine never having to throw something out, ship something back or store it somewhere afterward.

Consider applying the concept of reducing to your catering, florals and giveaways. In catering, consider working with a caterer that buys from local farmers and suppliers to reduce the distance your food has traveled from farm to fork. Choosing a menu of chicken or fish also reduces the resources needed to raise popular meat options like beef. Reducing the number of guests reduces the number of decorations, food, traveling and so many more factors.

Micro weddings have

grown in popularity over the years not just for their budget-conscious offerings, but for the intimacy and warmth they bring to a smaller, cozy setting. Many wedding flowers are shipped from hundreds of miles away, so work with a local florist who is buying from nearby and likely using just as beautiful seasonal flowers. Opting to make a donation to a charity that is near and dear to the hearts of the couple in lieu of a wedding favor is also a great way to give back to the communities you love and share that story with your guests.

Reuse

In weddings, "something borrowed" can be a tradition for some or just a way to include someone who has passed on into the day's ceremonies. If you are working with a decorator or florist that rents out centerpieces and other central-themed decor – instead of selling them to you – you know what you're using can and will be put to use again.

Working with a sustainable venue also supports your goal of a sustainable wedding. Is the venue powered by reusable resources like solar or wind; was it made of recycled/reused content; do they have decor and furniture in-house that you could use, or do they have any sustainability practices in place that compliment your vision?

Ask your caterer to use

glassware and dishware: Reusing these items keeps disposable items out of the landfill. You can also consider wedding invitations embedded with wildflower seeds that can be planted afterwards and add a special touch to your guests' invitations.

Recycle

Although recycling is the last of the guiding principle's most environmentally beneficial options, it is still an essential alternative to the landfill. But recycling isn't just about the end of that product's life cycle: it can be the beginning, too.

For this reason, recycling is twofold. For example, consider wedding invitations, wedding programs or wedding favors made of recycled content or ask that your venue and the caterer recycle after the event. Inquire if your caterer or the



PHOTO/ANNA SHVETS

Green weddings are a great way to lessen your carbon footprint.

venue composts.

And if you must use disposables, consider asking your caterer to use disposables made of compostable materials, and ensure that they are in fact, composting the materials afterwards. Otherwise, if compostable items end up in the landfill, they take just as long

to decompose as any other paper products.

Your special day can be a beautiful way to express your love of each other, and a love of the planet you call home, as you build your lives together.

The writer is a certified wedding planner.

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Onstage, Alexandria: April 2024

BY MARK EDELMAN

April showers may come your way, along with the tail end of those lovely cherry blossoms. In the meantime, these plays are blooming in the coming months all over theaters in the region.

“MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS,” Alexandria Little Theatre, until April 13

Washington, D.C.’s own Ken Ludwig adapted Agatha Christie’s potboiler about a wealthy American businessman discovered dead on the eponymous and opulent Continental sleeper train. If “whodunit?” is a question you enjoy pondering, this plot-twisting masterpiece should be just the thrill ride for you. Tickets at the littletheatre.com.

“AT THE WEDDING,” Studio Theatre, until April 20

Carlo crashes her ex’s wedding with three simple goals: don’t get drunk, don’t make any kids cry and don’t try to win back the bride, no matter how boring the groom is. Studio offers up a new comedy about loneliness, estrangement and a slow-burn romance. Tickets at studiotheatre.org.

“PENELOPE,” Signature Theater, until April 21

Penelope, Odysseus’ wife, is fed up and has some things she wants to say about those 20 years waiting back in Ithaca while hubby got all the ink in Homer’s “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey.” The musical flips the script on the dutiful wife, as Penelope steps out of the background to claim her share of the spotlight. Tickets at sigtheatre.org.

“NANCY,” Mosaic Theater, until April 21

It’s 1985 and two women are hard at work steering their futures: Nancy Reagan using astrology to help guide her hubby’s political career and Esmeralda, a Navajo mother, advocating for her commu-



The cast of ‘Peter Pan’ at the National Theatre.

PHOTO/MATTHEW MURPHY

nity. Their worlds converge when they discover Nancy is a descendant of Pocahontas in this very local play about ancestry and ambition. Tickets at mosaictheater.org.

“HESTER STREET,” Theater J, until April 21

The world premiere of the stage adaptation of Joan Micklin Silver’s 1975 film tells the uplifting tale of a young woman from Eastern Europe who arrives with her little boy in New York City’s Lower East Side circa 1890, where she discovers that her husband, who journeyed ahead of her, has already embraced a new American life she does not understand. Faced with the disintegration of her marriage, Gitl must find her voice, protect her son and redefine herself in this strange land. Tickets at edcjc.org/theatre-j.

“PETER PAN,” The National Theatre, until April 21

If you believe in fairies, you know what to do: clap your hands so Tinkerbell survives, the Lost Boys defeat Captain Hook and the darling children return from Neverland

to their nursery and beloved pooch, Nana. Playwright Larissa FastHorse has adapted this musical chestnut, removing the racist elements and giving Wendy and Tiger Lily their due. And, spoiler alert – Peter is finally played by a boy! Tickets at broadwayatthenational.com.

“ISLANDER,” Olney Theatre Center, until April 28

Only one child lives on tiny Kinnan Island and the Scottish government plans to resettle the rest of the population. But, one day, a baby whale beaches itself and, miraculously, a young girl appears. The two children bond and take us on a magical journey that won the Best Musical award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Tickets at olneytheatre.org.

“A JUMPING OFF POINT,” Round House Theatre, until May 5

A promising Black female writer lands her first deal with HBO, only to be confronted with a white male from her graduate school days who accuses her of stealing his work. Their conflict forces us to consider sources, privilege and who

gets to tell what kind of stories in this incendiary, provocative world premiere. Tickets at roundhousetheatre.org.

“WEBSTER’S BITCH,” The Keegan Theatre, until May 5

Gender and obscenity in the age of social media threatens to bring down that most sacred of institutions: Webster’s Dictionary. Office politics collide with ambition, morality and lexicography in this dark comedy about vulgar words and the people who define them. Tickets at keegantheatre.com.

“MACBETH,” Shakespeare Theatre Co., until May 5

In the theatrical event of the season, “English Patient” star Ray Fiennes and “Game of Thrones” star Indira Varma play the unmentionable Scottish prince and his ruthless mother in a production of the Shakespeare tragedy that’s wowing them in the West End. Performed immersively on a soundstage that formerly housed BET Studios, the Scottish play cautions that our minds may deceive us, but a guilty conscience will undo us all. Tickets

at shakespearetheatre.org.

“UNKNOWN SOLDIER,” Arena Stage, until May 5

The photo of an anonymous recruit, hidden among her grandmother’s keepsakes, sends a woman on a sweeping musical journey to discover the secrets of her family’s past. With Broadway talent and a name producer attached, this one looks like another pre-Broadway transfer. Tickets at arenastage.org.

“LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS,” Ford’s Theatre, until May 18

That big old scary plant returns to Ford’s in this musical theater favorite. Doo wop and Motown infuse a classic boy-meets-girl, boy-introduces-girl-to carnivorous, blood-thirsty plant story with a great score by Disney’s Alan Menken and Howard Ashman. Tickets at fords.org.

“BEAUTY & THE BEAST,” Toby’s Dinner Theatre, until June 16

A tale as old as time. What more can you ask of the Disney juggernaut? The Mouse House’s first Broadway hit, it revitalized not only the Great White Way but big screen animation, too. With a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken and lyrics by Howard Ashman, this production is one for the ages. Tickets at tobysdinnertheatre.com.

“HAIR,” Signature Theatre, until July 7

The American tribal love-rock musical returns in all its psychedelic glory. When some long-haired hippies on the cusp of adulthood cry out for freedom, peace and joy, they are confronted instead with a world thrown into chaos when one of them receives a draft notice for the Vietnam War. Oh, and there’s a love-in, too. Tickets at sigtheatre.org.

The writer is a playwright who loves writing about theater. He is a lifetime member of the Broadway League and a Tony voter.

Preparing for extreme weather

BY FAMILY FEATURES

As one season gives way to another, fluctuating temperatures can lead to extreme weather that puts your personal safety and property at risk. Working ahead to anticipate potential problems and put preventive measures in place can give you peace of mind that you're prepared if disaster strikes.

Create communication plans

Communication is a vital aspect of severe weather planning. If you know a storm is coming, it's a good idea to charge smartphones so you have access to weather alerts and a direct connection to friends, loved ones and emergency personnel, even if you lose power. You may not have internet access after a storm,

so make a list of emergency contacts and save a hard copy in a safe place. If there's a chance you may become separated, help your children memorize your phone number and address.

Practice severe weather drills

As a family, practice how to respond to various weather scenarios. Discuss who is responsible for what and where you'll shelter, if needed. Consider details like who will secure doors and windows and who will be responsible for guiding pets to the shelter area. Drills give you a chance to make adjustments to your plans, and periodic refreshers ensure everyone is prepared to jump into action if a storm hits.

Stay aware

Keeping tabs on approach-

ing severe weather is essential for planning ahead. Heed the advice of local forecasters if extreme weather conditions are developing. Monitor a storm's progress so you can take proper precautions if your home is in its path. You may want to invest in a battery-powered weather radio so you can stay up to date even if you lose power.

Prepare your home

You may not be able to control whether a storm hits your home, but you can take some steps to minimize the harm if it does. Keeping vegetation trimmed and away from the house helps reduce the chance of damage. Ensure windows and doors are sealed and secure any loose items outdoors that may blow in the wind, including fixtures like shutters.

If you're planning home

renovations, or you're in the market for a new home, consider building with disaster-resistant materials. Homes built with insulated concrete forms are less susceptible to high-speed winds and impact from flying debris. ICF block construction means you are protected by layers of insulated expanded polystyrene foam and solid concrete, so in addition to standing up to serious storms, you can expect other benefits like energy efficiency, sound dampening and fire resistance.

Stock up on safety supplies

When a storm is raging, you'll be grateful for a stash of emergency supplies, including batteries, a rechargeable power source, flashlights, a battery-powered weather radio, non-perishable snacks and



PHOTO/PHILIPPE DONN

Prepare your home ahead of spring storms.

water, first aid supplies and at least a couple days' worth of prescription medications. If you have small children, activities like coloring or activity books can help divert their attention from an extended visit to a storm shelter.

HOME OF THE WEEK



PHOTOS/TAMMY LOVERDOS

Left: Beautifully landscaped corner lot. **Middle:** Bead board ceilings and slate flooring. **Right:** Entertainment options galore.

Spacious craftsman in Hollin Hall Village

This home boasts five bedrooms, a den, four full bathrooms and 3,600 square feet on a 0.3-acre, picturesque corner lot in Hollin Hall Village. Step inside and be welcomed by craftsman appeal and classic charm. This home greets you with an open floor plan with newly finished hardwood floors throughout the main and upper levels. The living room

features a gas fireplace, large picture window and space to spread out. The open floor plan leads into a dining and kitchen combination with slate flooring and windows. The chef's kitchen boasts upgraded black stainless KitchenAid and Bosch appliances along with a peninsula perfect for entertaining or family meals. The dining room offers bead board ceilings and

windows surrounding the room and a built-in window seat with custom cushions.

On the main level, there are two spacious bedrooms and a full guest bathroom with a river rock shower. Upstairs, you will find three large bedrooms and a laundry room with a butcher block folding table. The primary suite is your perfect oasis: A pair of walk-in

closets lead into the calming primary bathroom with a soaking tub, double vanities and a glass door shower. The other two bedrooms are spacious with new carpeting and oversized closets. This entire property is an entertaining haven, featuring a spacious family room, two large storage rooms with built-in shelving, a covered front porch and expansive back deck in the fully fenced backyard.

Residence is agent owned.

AT A GLANCE

Address: 7901 Wellington Road, Alexandria, 22308

Neighborhood: Hollin Hall Village

Price: \$1,379,000

Square feet: 3,763

Bedrooms: 5

Bathrooms: 4

Year built: 1955

Contact: Sarah Atkinson

Sarah.Atkinson@cbrealty.com

Cell: 703-967-4475

Office: 703-518-8300

Leslie Atkinson

Leslie.Atkinson@cbmove.com

Cell: 703-967-1471

Office: 703-518-8300

Editorial

Many ways to build community

Real community in today's fractured world is a gift.

We are in an era where working from home has remained the norm for many following the COVID-19 pandemic. Students sit in school cafeterias on their cell phones instead of talking and interacting. Amazingly, a current candidate for Alexandria's City Council even publishes online posts in which he denigrates residents in vulgar terms for holding views on local issues that differ from his.

These are examples of practices and actions that divide, either as unintended byproducts of uncontrollable events, or as deliberate actions. We must do better.

The word community derives from the Latin word "communis," which means "common, public, shared by all or many," according to the New World Encyclopedia. To be in community with others means to share in values, share burdens, share in joys.

Being in community with others is a choice that requires work, just like committing to love someone long-term. Being in community with others does not mean viewing everything similarly or holding the same political opinions, but it does mean treating those with whom we differ with respect.

Three items in this week's Alexandria Times show different facets of community in our city.

The story "Honoring a father's legacy" on page 13 tells of Tony Damiani and the strong sense of community he built at Tony's Auto Service over more than four

decades. Damiani's clients were so loyal that they'd come from Canada to have their vehicles serviced. His extended family worked at the shop, and Damiani fixed vehicles for people who he knew couldn't pay in a timely manner.

Sometimes building community simply stems from caring about others while going about your business.

On page 1, "Interstellar Influencer makes impact on waterfront," describes the exciting and fun new public art installation recently unveiled in Waterfront Park. These public art installations in one of the city's treasured focal points along the Potomac River make people think, are great photo ops and are simply fun.

Community is built when we physically bring people together, residents and visitors alike, by sharing an experience.

And the brief story on page 3, "Spring2Action early giving begins," is about one of Alexandria's finest achievements: the creation of the ACT for Alexandria community foundation. Part of the seed money for ACT for Alexandria was donated by the family of community activist Norma L. Steuerle, who tragically died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

Our city's nonprofits build community by tending to the needs – physical, emotional and spiritual – of our residents.

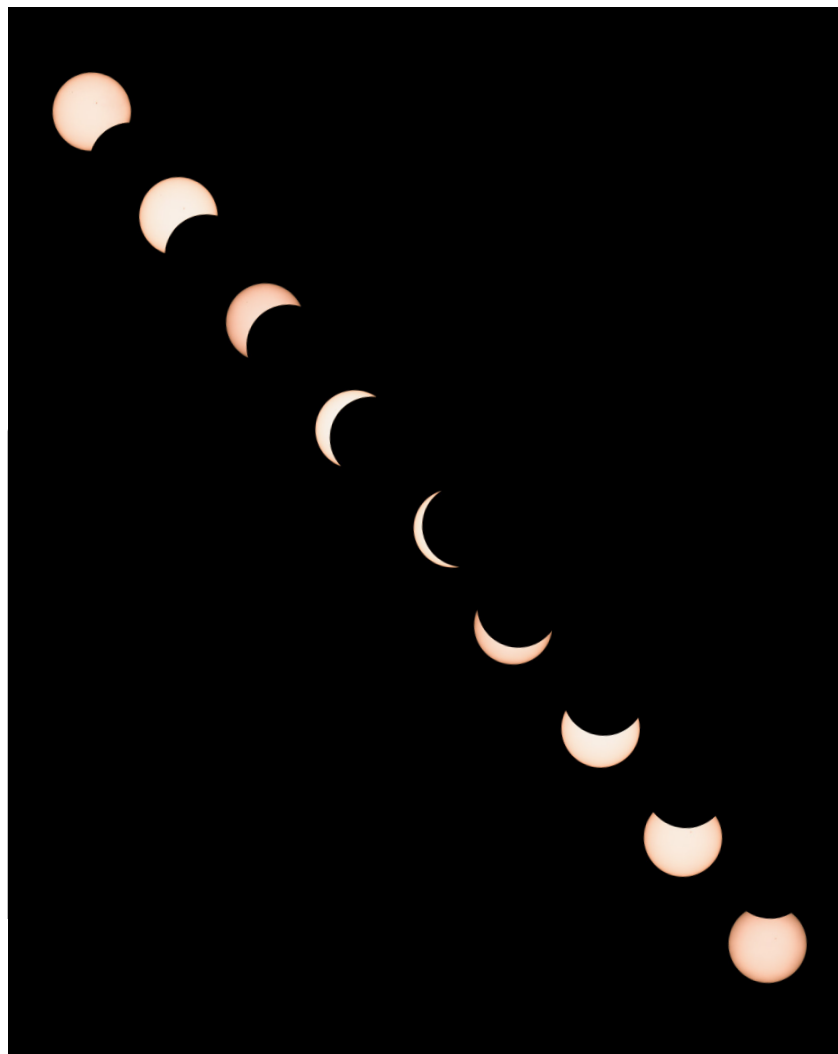
While it may take work, creating a sense of belonging and connection in our community is well worth our efforts.

Opinion

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

- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week



The various stages of the partial solar eclipse taken on Eisenhower Avenue in Alexandria.

PHOTO/YOSBEL GARCIA

Letters

Missed opportunity requires soul searching

To the editor:

As the Monumental Sports & Entertainment deal with Alexandria has officially ended, it is time for our city to reflect on its priorities and how we approach development. The Monumental proposal addressed many of the city's priorities that progressives have been clamoring for: dense housing, a walkable town center with green-spaces, promised union labor for construction,

investments in infrastructure and public transportation and a site for a new public school.

Instead, we are left with an underutilized Metro station, a sprawling shopping center that is mostly empty parking spaces, zero new affordable housing units with Metro access, and a development plan left up to the property owners who

SEE HORNBECK

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Letters

Process matters in decisions

To the editor:

When I first ran for City Council in 1979 I was pretty confident that I understood most of the major issues and had a good feel for the community – I had lived in Alexandria all my life, and still do. The first big campaign event was a forum for all the candidates in one of the active neighborhoods and there were lots of questions about current issues, some controversial and some easy, addressed with “yes or no” answers.

But the first time I was asked about a possible issue that might materialize during the new Council term, I stumbled and fumbled my way through a response that satisfied no one. It was a complete disaster. When it was over, a political mentor pulled me aside and asked if I knew why it had gone so badly.

My response was pretty much the proverbial deer in the headlights, and, in retrospect, that was an insult to deer. So, my friend told me: “You tried to give the answer that you thought people wanted.”

Those few simple words were an inflection point for my political life

and probably for life in general. Trying to tell people what they want to hear ultimately satisfies no one, but what people did want to hear is how I made the decisions that did not always have clear cut answers. How did I gather information? How did I process differing opinions? Who did I listen to?

In short, how did I reach conclusions about issues important to the community without trying to be a hero to some and avoid being an enemy to others? Votes – major or minor – will not always go the way people want, but if they think that it was a vote based on something other than whim and a finger in the air, then I expected the debate on the next controversy would be civil and constructive. It usually was.

Why am I telling you this 45-year-old story about my political enlightenment? Because it leads me to the arena at Potomac Yard debacle – I don’t use that word lightly – and the upcoming mayoral race. More precisely, it is the Democratic

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HORNBECK

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have said not to expect a dense layout. Surprise Alexandria residents, you don’t get much of a say in what is built or how it is built there now.

The arena proposal also provided the city with the opportunity to diversify the tax base, 37% of which is property taxes. This is at a time when major investments need to be made in public education. The School Board has called for an unprecedented increase in funding to Alexandria City Public Schools as they are at or above the recommended student to teacher ratio.

“The city dodged a bullet” letter to the editor from the March 21 Alexandria Times makes a fair point about using the funding allocated to the Monumental project for a new school, but this recommendation is not paired with a mechanism to pay for it. Instead of money from the stadium deal, the burden for funding school construction

and similar projects would now be placed on Alexandria residents through increased property taxes, affecting low and fixed-income residents most adversely.

Some of the fault in the deal’s collapse rests with Ted Leonsis and Gov. Glenn Youngkin, who failed to bring local stakeholders into the process earlier and conduct effective community outreach.

However, the cacophony that local groups injected into civil discourse and our state representatives failing to negotiate a bill representing Alexandria’s priorities bears the bulk of the responsibility. I applaud our mayor for putting partisanship aside and working to get the best deal possible for Alexandria and our Commonwealth. The result is disappointing, and we have many pressing issues the city must address with limited funds, but hey, at least we got a few memes out of it.

-Stephen Hornbeck,
Alexandria



Filling in the Blanks

Volunteering: A feel-good experience

BY MELANIE KAY-WYATT, ED.D.

There’s no greater gift than that of our time, talents and resources. We are reminded of that this month as Alexandria City Public Schools celebrates National Volunteer Month, Public School Volunteer Week and Spring2ACTion, a day of giving.

Volunteers inspire those around them and help bring people together to problem solve and improve the community. They also serve as a powerful force for family and community engagement.

When community members become involved in their schools, more people have a better sense of the total education picture. Active participation within our school division lends itself to a better understanding and trust building as well as a commitment to lend even more support.

Volunteers can be a multifaceted resource in the classroom and throughout the school. In the classroom, volunteers provide extra support, allowing staff the opportunity to work with students who need special assistance. In addition, volunteers in our schools serve as positive role models for youth and help motivate students as they see firsthand how members of their community value education and support their local school. Studies indicate the presence of volunteers in the school community impacts students as they help contribute to improved social skills, positive attendance, grades and test scores, students graduating and finding a career path.

Volunteering truly serves as a way to positively impact the community in which we live and create a sense of unity and pride. Giving one’s time is a great way to share and showcase your strengths, meet new people and share ideas. By giving back to the community, you can also let your children see how volunteering makes a difference and how good it feels to help others and bring about change for the better.

By volunteering in your child’s school, you can make connections with other parents and get to know teachers and staff. It

also offers the opportunity to share with your child school-related experiences; research has shown that schools with a strong volunteer base perform better and that children of a school volunteer realize better grades and test scores.

ACPS encourages and welcomes volunteers in our schools. Volunteers can get involved and make a difference by helping with a wide variety of activities that vary by school. To ensure the safety of our students, staff, and visitors, there are a few steps to complete before beginning your service that can be accessed on our ACPS

Volunteer webpage.

Another way to support our schools and the Alexandria community is through Spring2ACTion, a 24-hour online event, hosted by the community foundation ACT for Alexandria. This event is our chance to celebrate a collective spirit of giving to support programs and organizations that provide equitable opportunities for our children and keep Alexandria the vibrant community it is. While Spring2ACTion is set for April 24 from midnight to 11:59 p.m., early giving began Wednesday and runs through April 23 at 11:59 p.m.

There is a reciprocal effect in giving back to the community in which we live. Volunteering provides an opportunity to make new friends, expand your network and boost social skills. It is a way to build strong ties to the community while learning more about it. That is in part why corporations encourage volunteer efforts among employees as when they give of their time, money and skills, they also help address issues facing our communities.

There are many reasons why everyone should consider volunteering in any way you are able. A benefit directly impacting the volunteer is that the social contact aspect of helping others can have a profound impact on the volunteer’s psychological well-being. Volunteering can provide focus in one’s life, be mentally stimulating and add more zest to living. It simply makes one feel good!

The writer is superintendent of
Alexandria City Public Schools.



**MELANIE
KAY-WYATT, ED.D.**

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Moss Kendrix: An American visionary

A man with a vision, Moss Kendrix, set up a public relations firm, the Moss H. Kendrix Organization, in 1948 to promote a new approach in marketing: appealing to African American consumers with positive and aspirational advertising campaigns, featuring African American models and stars. Placed in African American newspapers and publications, they appealed directly to readers in a new and empowering way.

Through his public relations work, Kendrix helped to change the way African Americans were depicted in the media. In his advertising campaigns, he appealed to mid-century African Americans by reflecting on their re-

ality, where stereotypes or absence had gone before.

The Moss Kendrix Collection includes more than 900 photographs and a wide range of documents including correspondence, scripts, advertisements, press releases, programs, magazines, reports and newspaper clippings from around the country, including Virginia. The collection includes the business archive of public relations firm Moss H. Kendrix Organization and his collection of contemporary news reporting and publications.

The Moss Kendrix Collection was a 2020 honoree in the Virginia Association of Museums' Top 10 Endangered Artifacts.

In spring 2024, the Office

of Historic Alexandria is proud to display the work and story of Moss Kendrix, a pioneer in public relations. His work, to be shown at the Alexandria Black History Museum, will show not only his life as an African American marketing visionary, but also his ads that showcased that the Black experience in America included living life as a family.

His leadership changed African Americans in advertisements from being stereotyped or largely absent to being depicted as a family unit in the same way white families are.

With your support, you will bring his advertisements back to the public and share his incredible story with the community. You



PHOTO/ALEXANDRIA BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM

An advertisement to promote Coca-Cola. Moss Kendrix is pictured in the frame.

can support Historic Alexandria's Moss Kendrix exhibit at the Alexandria Black History Museum by donating at spring2action.org/p2p/350605/historicalexandria

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

SPECK

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primary in June that is likely to determine who will serve for the next three years.

There are two contenders, Alyia Gaskins and Amy Jackson, both women serving on the current City Council, both well-known and experienced and committed to serving. I am supporting Gaskins for the exact reasons I noted above: The importance of reaching a conclusion from a methodical, thorough review of facts and data and that is what is always needed when one wants

to lead Council.

I am not especially precocious, but anyone who has ever served on Council will attest to the fact that at some point during the next three-year term, there will be an important, consequential and controversial issue that no one knew was coming. Six months ago, the idea of a sports arena and entertainment center with the Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards moving here was not on our radar.

Prior to the announcement that the deal was dead, Gaskins wrote that she would continue

to assess all the information, much of which was still yet to be public, and assess the risks, potential return, impact on surrounding neighborhoods and infrastructure remedies before making a final determination.

There is nothing wrong with gathering public opinion and, obviously, listening to your constituents, but when your goal is to give people the answer they want, it only works until there is a larger/louder group wanting a different answer. Alexandria desperately needs new revenue sources that are recurring and signifi-

cant to take pressure off residential taxpayers.

Selecting the next mayor is both a challenge and an opportunity for the voters. The choice is not good versus bad, but about one's judgment and leadership.

There's an old saying in politics that some people run to be something and some people run to do something: Spend a minute talking to Alyia Gaskins and you'll know which one she is.

-David G. Speck, former member, Alexandria City Council

Weekly Poll

Last Week

What do you think is the main reason the arena deal fell through?

- 51% State Sen. Louise Lucas blocked it.**
- 20% It was a bad deal for Alexandria.**
- 18% City and state leaders didn't get resident input before launching it.**
- 9% Monumental didn't really want to leave D.C.**
- 2% I'm not sure.**

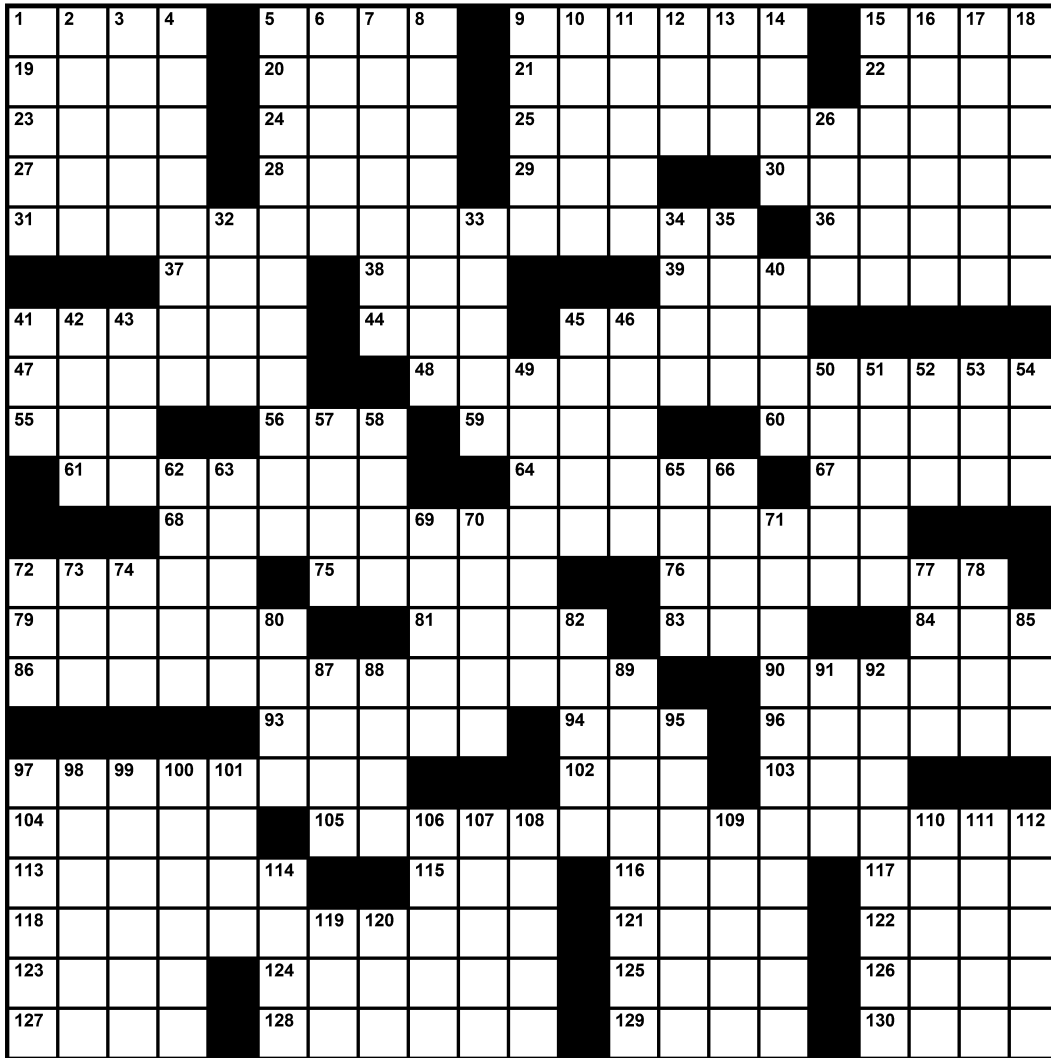
This Week

Take the poll at alextimes.com

Do you plan to visit the new waterfront art exhibit, Interstellar Influencer, that will be in place until November?

- A) Yes, I check out each installation.**
- B) Not sure, but I've seen some others.**
- C) No, I don't go to the waterfront.**
- D) What are you talking about?**

Weekly Words



DEATH NOTICES

MARIAN DE CHAZEAU HOLMES (86), of Alexandria, March 31, 2024

JOHN WILLIAM LOTZGESELL (69), of Alexandria, April 4, 2024

DAVID MILES (75), of Alexandria, March 30, 2024

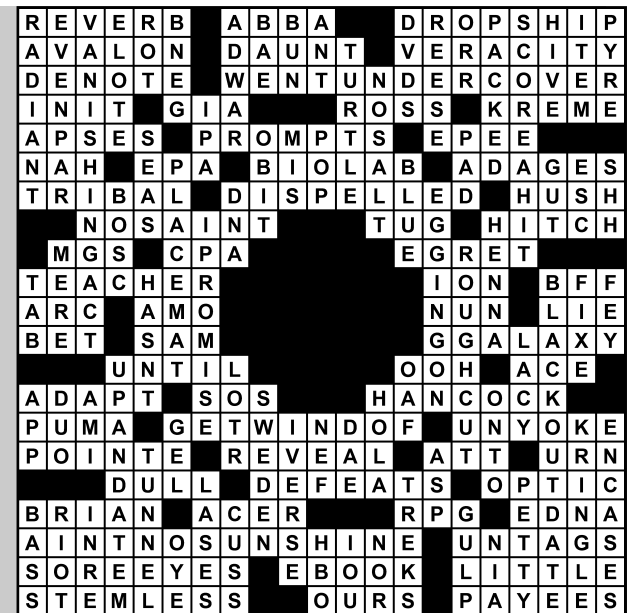
MARION ELAINE MOON (82), of Alexandria, April 1, 2024

DAVID RAY SIMPKINS (92), of Alexandria, April 6, 2024

MARY SLIGER (84), of Alexandria, April 3, 2024

DOLORES ANN WILSON (89), of Alexandria, April 4, 2024

Solutions from last week



IT ALL ADDS UP! by Desiree Penner and Jeff Sinnock, edited by Jeff Chen

ACROSS

- 1 Enjoy some gum
- 5 Cakewalk, in sports
- 9 Best Western competitor
- 15 Mope
- 19 Citizenship ceremony recitation
- 20 Olympics site in 2002
- 21 White House occupants from 2009-2017
- 22 "And furthermore ..."
- 23 Jai ___ (fast-moving court game)
- 24 Banned behavior
- 25 *Earwax, perhaps?
- 27 Buttonhole, for example
- 28 Avian abode
- 29 "The Loco-Motion" singer Little ___
- 30 Nautical chart
- 31 *Eleanor and Chidi on "The Good Place," for one?
- 36 Big battery
- 37 Solo of "Star Wars"
- 38 "Hooray, Jose!"
- 39 Poppycock
- 41 Far from feeble
- 44 A little shut-eye
- 45 Jason's wife, in Greek mythology
- 47 For now
- 48 *What the toddler did when he fell?

- 55 Close friends, in modern slang
- 56 Attorneys' grp.
- 59 Bad look
- 60 "Just Do It" logo
- 61 "Most certainly!"
- 64 Basketball venue
- 67 Joined
- 68 *Limited edition Seinfeld show?
- 72 Check one's math, in a way
- 75 Big name in kitchen wrap
- 76 Skipped seconds, perhaps
- 79 Mint in a tin
- 81 Give off, as an odor
- 83 Actor Cage, familiarly
- 84 Choose
- 86 *Request from an unhappy partner?
- 90 Some lip service?
- 93 Doesn't hold water?
- 94 Afternoon brew
- 96 The end of time?
- 97 "Oh totes, me, too"
- 102 Your, in France
- 103 Add-on charge
- 104 Acrobatically gifted
- 105 *Sleeping Beauty's prince falling into Maleficent's trap?
- 113 Careless
- 115 Issa ___ of "Barbie"
- 116 A real hip dance?

- 117 Forest trail
- 118 *A particular fairy's occupation?
- 121 "House" actor Epps
- 122 Big on
- 123 Clever scheme
- 124 Agree (to)
- 125 Give out, as library books
- 126 Adam and Eve's paradise
- 127 LAX approximations
- 128 Whodunit feature
- 129 Ballpark figs.
- 130 Barely grilled

DOWN

- 1 Breeze along
- 2 "Catwoman" star Berry
- 3 Amazon's business category
- 4 Super-sizzling
- 5 Vice-presidential hopeful
- 6 Plains tribe members
- 7 Superstar's home, often
- 8 Place for a shot in the dark?
- 9 After-bath garments
- 10 Higher than
- 11 Annoyed with
- 12 "American Hustle" actress Adams
- 13 Dance move that exploded in popularity in 2015
- 14 Big brand in laptops
- 15 Royal abode
- 16 They're grumpy, in a

- 17 Regular bar orders
- 18 Knock over
- 26 Roadside dangers in war zones, for short
- 32 Rooftop rooster
- 33 Country between China and India
- 34 "Go back," on an edit menu
- 35 Burns or Frost
- 40 Captures
- 41 Banana Boat tube initials
- 42 Airline seat feature
- 43 All roads lead to this, some say
- 45 "SNL" alum Mike
- 46 "Snowy" marsh bird
- 49 Coffeehouse poet
- 50 Bad, and then some
- 51 It's sportier than a sedan
- 52 Big blows, for short
- 53 Be a consumer
- 54 Degree for a prof
- 57 Containers
- 58 Cambodia's continent
- 62 Ancient sinful city
- 63 Alternative music song, perhaps
- 65 Indian flatbread
- 66 Against
- 69 Homer's language
- 70 Gaza group
- 71 Poker pack
- 72 Car wash item

- 73 Manning who won two Super Bowl MVP awards
- 74 Bread source (Abbr.)
- 77 "Meh"
- 78 Contractor's detail, for short
- 80 "Basket of Bread" painter
- 82 ___-frutti (ice cream flavor)
- 85 "For shame!"
- 87 Arcade game sound
- 88 Problem for some newborns
- 89 Front door security feature
- 91 "Cake Boss" competitor, often
- 92 More heavy-eyed
- 95 Takes for granted
- 97 "Hell is other people" philosopher
- 98 Get too old, as for foster care assistance
- 99 Boozy brunch drink
- 100 High society
- 101 Informal meeting
- 106 Bothered
- 107 Magna cum ___
- 108 Biblical outcast
- 109 Bias
- 110 "A Fish Called ___" (1988 comedy)
- 111 Express aloud
- 112 Cellular device
- 114 Blocked email, often
- 119 Critical hospital dept.
- 120 "Bad Moon Rising" band, in brief

Classifieds

LEGAL NOTICE



Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, held at City Hall, 301 King Street, Council Chamber and on Zoom webinar on Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain ARTICLES II (DEFINITIONS), III (RESIDENTIAL ZONE REGULATIONS), IV (COMMERCIAL, OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES), V (MIXED USE ZONES), VI (SPECIAL AND OVERLAY ZONES), VII (SUPPLEMENTAL ZONE REGULATIONS), Section 8-200 of ARTICLE VIII (OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING), and ARTICLE XI (DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS AND PROCE-

DURES) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment No. 2024-00002 (Implementation Ordinance for Text Amendment No. 2024-00002 related to minor updates to various provisions of the zoning ordinance approved by City Council on March 16, 2024).

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Article XIII (ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment No. 2024-00003 (Implementation Ordinance for Text Amendment No. 2024-00003 related to stormwater and erosion and sediment control approved by City Council on March 16, 2024)

AN ORDINANCE to Increase the Late Payment Penalty on Personal Property Taxes

from 10% if Than 30 Days Late, up to 25% if Paid More than 30 days Past the Due Date.).

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 5-6-233 (STORMWATER UTILITY FEE) of Chapter 6 (WATER AND SEWER) of Article C (STORMWATER UTILITY) of Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES), of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 5-4-1 (DEFINITIONS) and Section 5-4-7 (MINIMUM CRITERIA; CITY HANDBOOK) Chapter 4 (EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL) of Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES), of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

An Ordinance to increase the Ambulance Service Charges by amending Article J (SERVICE CHARGES FOR CITY AMBULANCE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT RESPONSE SERVICES) to Chapter 2 (TAXATION) of Title 3 (FINANCE, TAXATION AND PROCUREMENT)

PUBLIC HEARING on the FY 2025 City Council Preliminary Add/Delete Proposals and the City Manager's proposed amendments to the FY 2025 proposed budget. Budget Adoption is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing of a Second Amendment to a Five-Year License Agreement dated November 1, 2022, between the City of Alexandria, Virginia and Crown Castle Fiber, LLC. to permit Crown Castle to construct and install an additional enterprise fiber route of approximately 600 feet in the City of Alexandria, Virginia's Public Rights-of-Ways.

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUB-

ABC
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority

www.abc.virginia.gov/licenses | 804.213.4400 | 7450 Freight Way - Mechanicsville VA 23116 | PO Box 3250 - Mechanicsville VA 23116

PART 2: POSTING AND PUBLISHING
PUBLISHING NOTICE

Please publish the following item in the **legal notice section** of your newspaper. Please refer to the instructions provided on page 16.

Full name(s) of owner(s): VIE EST BELLE LLC
If general partnership, enter partners' names or name of partnership. If LP, LLP, LLC or corporation, enter name as recorded with the State Corporation Commission. If association or tax-exempt private club, enter name. Only if a sole proprietor, enter first, middle and last name.

Trading as: EDDIE'S LITTLE SHOP + DELI
(trade name)

1406 KING STREET
(Location where business will trade)

ALEXANDRIA
(city/town)

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2715
(county) (state) (zip + 4)

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a OFF PREMISE license
(type[s] of license[s] applied for)

to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

EDWARD MCINTOSH, OWNER
(name and title of owner/partner/officer authorizing advertisement)

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

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received: _____ Referred to: _____ Application fee: _____
Postmarked date: _____ Date referred: _____ License fee: _____
Receipt no.: _____ Region: _____ CBC fee: _____
License no.: _____ Territory no.: _____ Total: _____

(Rev. 03/2023) This is an official state document and all information contained or submitted therein is public information. Refer to Privacy Statement on the bottom of page two regarding personal/tax information. **Part 2: Retail License Application | 23**

ABC
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority

www.abc.virginia.gov/licenses | 804.213.4400 | 7450 Freight Way - Mechanicsville VA 23116 | PO Box 3250 - Mechanicsville VA 23116

PART 2: POSTING AND PUBLISHING
PUBLISHING NOTICE

Please publish the following item in the **legal notice section** of your newspaper. Please refer to the instructions provided on page 16.

Full name(s) of owner(s): RUI Management, LLC
If general partnership, enter partners' names or name of partnership. If LP, LLP, LLC or corporation, enter name as recorded with the State Corporation Commission. If association or tax-exempt private club, enter name. Only if a sole proprietor, enter first, middle and last name.

Trading as: Elançé at Old Town
(trade name)

400 N. Washington St.
(Location where business will trade)

Alexandria
(city/town)

VA 22314-2366
(county) (state) (zip + 4)

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Wine and Beer on and off premises and Mixed Beverage license
(type[s] of license[s] applied for)

to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

William H. Fralin, Jr., Chief Executive Officer
(name and title of owner/partner/officer authorizing advertisement)

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ORDER OF PUBLICATION
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.11, 8-01-316, -317, 20-104

Case No. CJ23000030-00

Augusta Circuit Court

1 East Johnson Street, Staunton VA 24401
ADDRESS OF COURT

[] Commonwealth of Virginia, in re Brandi Renee Campbell v. William Montagu Paffenbarger
[] 8 Cell Sacramento Dr, Apt C, Alexandria VA 1522 Middlebrook Wilkes Road, Middlebrook VA

The object of this suit is to:

It is ORDERED that Brandi Renee Campbell appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before June 3, 2024 at 1pm.

3/26/2024 DATE [Signature] JUDGE () CLERK

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION A True and Correct Copy,
I certify that a certified copy of this Order was:
[] mailed to the defendant
[] posted
[] at courthouse
[] on local public government website
[] on the website of the circuit court clerk
[] provided to NEWSPAPER on _____ DATE _____ by _____ DEPUTY CLERK

TESTE: [Signature] Clerk
Circuit Court
County of Augusta, Virginia

FORM CC-1434 MASTER FINAL 07/15

Classifieds

LICATION. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL (LIMITED COPIES AVAILABLE). If the mayor finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting, this meeting will be continued to the following Saturday. GLORIA SUTTON, CMC, CITY CLERK

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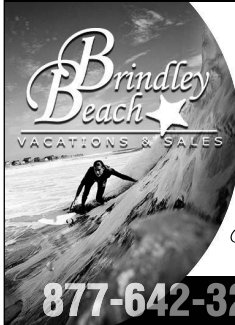
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