Old Town Theater: From Vaudeville to Cinema Draft House

See page 4
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On Cover: Old Town Theater owner Roger Fons proudly invites you for libations and a show.

Publisher Mary and her trusty assistant Lucy on the docks again.

QUOTABLE:

“When an American says that he loves his country, he means not only that he loves the New England hills, the prairies glittering in the sun, the wide and rising plains, the great mountains, and the sea. He means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect.”

—Adlai Stevenson

PUBLISHER’S NOTE

This entry is the last thing I do for every issue, and I am starting to wonder if anyone actually reads these little notes and thoughts I pop into this spot. But just for kicks, and for those of you purists who read publications page by page, here we go. This month I am proud to say we have hit our half-way mark, and it only happened because many generous people have helped get Zebra on its way. Our contributing columnists, writers and photographers have given their valuable time and talents towards creating an innovative niche print product, and our loyal advertisers have given us a strong foundation upon which we can continue to build.

So I guess this is a “thank you” letter—to the many people behind the scenes helping design our pages, scoot us off the presses, and effectively circulate our copies to the shops and restaurants around town. It is also a “thank you” to the many people who have written and called and said that Zebra fills a void, and proves that “print is not dead.”

Welcoming your thoughts and suggestions always, Zebra looks forward to being part of your regular reading list for a long time to come.

Light some fireworks, give a nod to the soldiers and statesmen that continue to preserve our freedom, and enjoy the summer.

Mary Wadland
Publisher

Zebra

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Roger Fons And His Labor Of Love

OLD TOWN THEATER

BY CHUCK HAGEE

In August of 1914 the Richmond Theater opened its doors to the delight of Alexandria residents. It remained a local entertainment center for decades — featuring both movies and live vaudeville.

Then came the Great Depression and, along with the rest of the nation, it fell on hard times. With a change in name from the Richmond to the Old Town Theater it became a bridge between the two world wars of the 20th century and into the Cold War era that followed.

It continued to operate into the late 1970s. But then, the increase of modern theaters in the area, combined with ever evolving television entertainment offerings, took their toll and the Old Town Theater went dark.

In 2002 along came Mark W. Anderson, one of the founders of Washington's Improv Theater on Connecticut Avenue, who took a long-term lease on the building from the Pedas Family Trust, owners of the building, with plans to reopen the theater as a dual entertainment center for both movies and live stage productions. However, after a series of misfires, misjudgments, and financial miscalculations, combined with low attendance, the marquee over 815 and a half King Street in mid 2003 once again advertised what had become its longest playing presentation — “For Lease.”

That's when, for the second time, Roger Fons took center stage. He purchased the building from the Trust for $1.1 million with the intention of returning a local movie house to Old Town Alexandria.

"I had hoped to buy this place in 1999 but the owners didn't want to sell at that time. After Anderson, I offered to buy it again and this time I was successful," Fons said back in 2004 after closing the deal.

Through its various gestations the Old Town Theater had gone from a single screen to a double theater, with the balcony partitioned off. Anderson, among his many renovations, took it back to a single screen venue with a deep stage. Fons has reconfigured it again back to a dual movie venue.

Fons also added a major change in the theater's offering — food and beverages to be enjoyed at each patron's seat. Just behind the front entrance he installed a full service kitchen area with a “Roast N Hold” oven. Each

See OTT on page 5
theater seat has an arm rest capable of holding food and beverages. He also got approval to offer a wide variety of beer and wine selections. One of the summer specialties is a 16-ounce sangria. “I recently had one customer tell me it was the best sangria she had ever had and was worth coming here just for that,” Fons said.

One of his greatest coups was to convince the various motion picture studio agents to allow him to present first run movies. To do that he needed the permission of his closest competitor, the AMC Multiplex on Eisenhower Avenue, since they were less than two miles apart.

“I told the manager what I wanted to do and he had no objections. He just laughed and said, “I don’t think we are any competition to one another. Where do I sign.” And, that put Roger Fons into the movie/entertainment business — his fifth career change since arriving in the Washington Metropolitan Area as a U.S. Army Engineer at Fort Belvoir.

A native of Troy, Michigan, Fons graduated from Michigan State University in 1968 with a degree in Civil Engineering. “Three days after graduating I got this notice from Uncle Sam that starts with “Greetings,” he said sitting at one of the theater mezzanine cocktail tables surrounded by art decorated walls.

“After I was drafted I went to Officer’s Training School and then to flight school at Fort Walters and Fort Rocker. I flew helicopters in Vietnam for about a year and then was stationed at Fort Belvoir as the Commander of a Survey Unit,” Fons explained. After five years of military service he was discharged at the rank of Captain.

“When I left the military I decided I really liked this area so I became an Alexandria resident and went into the used car business. Then I trained myself in the insurance business and became an independent agent representing a variety of companies for 15 years,” Fons said.

While selling insurance, he also got into the building business doing both individual homes and shopping centers. That led him into banking, where he became a mortgage specialist with the now defunct Washington Mutual.

“The recent crash in the mortgage market was not the fault of the banks; it was the fault of the federal government. They fumbled everything through Freddie Mac and Fannie May and then changed the rules so that the banks could not unload their portfolios,” he explained.

It was while he was with Washington Mutual in their Washington Street office that Fons decided to enter the entertainment business by purchasing the Old Town Theater. “I had no experience with the movie business or theaters. And, I have to tell you, this is the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my entire life,” Fons exclaimed.

He arrives at Old Town Theater every morning about 8 a.m. and doesn’t leave until after 6 p.m. on weekdays and “usually 10 or 11 p.m.” on weekends. Films run from 4 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 4 p.m. to midnight Friday, 11:30 a.m. to midnight Saturday, and 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday.

“We change films about every three weeks with two movies running at all times — one upstairs and one downstairs. I usually run the one with the loudest soundtrack up stairs. That way there is little or no impact on the other,” Fons said. The theater seats 200 on the main floor and 135 upstairs.

Old Town Theater is one of the few first run movie theaters in the United States that serves beer and wine. A lot of second run theaters offer that amenity, according to Fons. The food selections include salads, specially prepared sandwiches, popcorn, and his special “Old Town Theater Dogs” with a variety of toppings. There are also sodas and bottled water for those who do not want beer or wine.

In addition to the purchase price of $1.1 million, Fons estimates that he has put “over $1 million into the building” since he purchased it. That includes $250,000 in new HVAC, equipment to do 35 millimeter DVD, a new generation of LCD, a theatrical cinema projector, a new retractable screen, and a 12 by 22 foot stage. “There is always something that needs repair and upkeep as well,” he said.

It was the possibility of offering a cinema draft house coupled with doing something of a business nature in Old Town that made Fons so tenacious about owning the Old Town Theater. “It also seemed like a very good business opportunity,” he said.

“This theater is a very strong amenity for the citizens of Alexandria. It’s up to them if this will continue. If they don’t support it, it will not be here. I need to get 3,000 patrons a month to break even,” Fons stated.

“Right now I’m only getting about one half that amount. These last two months have been the worst in attendance we’ve had since we opened. If I quit, this site will either become another sports bar or condos,” he said.

“Coming here to see a movie and enjoy the food and drinks is the cheapest night out you’re ever going to have,” Fons insisted. “Our movies are only $9 a person and we offer a $2 discount for active military.”

Fons sees a drop in business through-out the upper King Street area, not just with Old Town Theater. “The increased parking costs and the trolley are killing upper King Street. Even the restaurants are hurting,” he said. He attributes this to people riding the free trolley from the King Street Metro Station to the river and back but not getting off to visit the local merchants and eateries.

“When there was more walking traffic everyone benefitted. Plus, the increase in parking fees coupled with the new parking fare machines isn’t helping the situation,” he stated.

An Old Town resident, Fons has two grown children who live in Northern Virginia — a 30-year old son in Falls Church and a 33-year old daughter in Lynchburg. The rest of his family remain Michigan residents.

In addition to himself he has three employees — each of which performs a variety of tasks. “The one thing we all do is run the film projector. Everyone is a projectionist. That’s a must,” he emphasized.

Since Fons acquired the Old Town Theater it has enjoyed its most vibrant renaissance since the golden days of the old Richmond Theater ‘97 years ago. Whether it celebrates its 100th birthday in 2014 is in the hands and desires of the audiences, according to Fons.

For Roger Fons the Old Town Theater is truly a labor of love. Will that love go unrequited with the marquee once again featuring “For Lease?” Only time and local support will tell.
Four Mile Run, the local stream featured in this column last month, has been dramatically transformed during the twentieth century by rapid and dense urbanization. Once brimming with wildlife, the stream has evolved from a natural wetland to a polluted swamp to an unstable suburban flood plain. It has flooded repeatedly along a 2.3-mile stretch of the Arlington-Alexandria border, costing millions of dollars in damage and requiring decisive government action. Today, however, Four Mile Run is undergoing yet another transformation: it will become “a model of urban ecological restoration,” according to the master plan for its revival.

The Early Twentieth Century

In 1927, the National Park and Planning Commission cited the “importance of the Valley of Four Mile Run from the point of view of the natural sciences” in its preliminary plan for a Four Mile Run Parkway between the Potomac River and Lee Highway. That plan never came to fruition. The boundary of the City of Alexandria shifted to Four Mile Run in 1929, encompassing all of Potomac Yard and the Town of Potomac (now Del Ray). Since Arlington had no centralized sewage system until 1937, Four Mile Run was polluted both by trash and raw sewage. In 1969, The Sunday Star published comments from “the wife of a businessman” remembering this area, “the old Arlington area”:

“It was large and swampy. In the evening there was an eerie feeling from the smelly black smoke that used to pour across the stream from the county dump. Cash-burning lumbermen would move through the swamp and babies would jump off the trash to warm themselves at the fire at the dump. It was a mess – the end of the earth.”

Urbanization and Flooding

Just prior to World War II, development in the Four Mile Run area boomed, continuing into the 1960s. Flooding began in the 1940s, with major floods during the 1960s and 1970s, despite the widening of the stream in 1962 and its subsequent dredging twice a year. Since much of the watershed was covered with solid man-made materials, water could not drain and be absorbed naturally, resulting in a large volume of surface water runoff. After Hurricane Agnes in June 1972, damage was estimated at 14 million. The Army Corps of Engineers rebuilt some of the bridges and “channelized” the stream in several areas, securing its banks with riprap.

The U.S. Congress held extensive hearings in 1973 on the Four Mile Run Flood Control Project prior to funding it. Major costs included further widening of the channel and the replacement of two bridges and the railroad trestle and culverts. Largely responsible for the flooding, the culverts ran under the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad tracks at Potomac Yard and greatly restricted the flow of water during storms. When the flood control project began in 1974, it was funded jointly by the federal government, Arlington, Alexandria, and the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad.

“The Beast of Four Mile Run”

Early in the summer of 1974, residents near the Barcroft Recreation Area along Four Mile Run heard the “nightmarish screeches” of the “mystery beast” that viciously attacked cats, dogs, and rabbits, maiming or killing them. Pets and children were kept indoors after dark while Arlington County police and National Zoo officials searched for the creature. The Washington Post quoted Mrs. Zan Morelock of South Randolph Street: “I’m afraid We’re all afraid. That thing kills just for the fun of killing.”

The “beast” was finally captured in mid July, and zoo officials identified it as a male bobcat cat between 10 and 20 pounds. Native to Southeast Asia, civet cats eat birds, small animals, and fruit. Apparently this cat had been someone’s pet, as indicated by the collar marks around its neck.

The Future of Four Mile Run

In 2003, Arlington and Alexandria began working on a plan for the revival of Four Mile Run’s flood plain – from Shirlington Road to the Potomac River. Adopted in March 2006, the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan describes the two jurisdictions’ shared vision:

“Through the sensitive and sustainable integration of natural areas with active urban nodes, the Four Mile Run corridor will be a place along which the communities of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria can gather, recreate and celebrate a shared waterfront legacy.”

Over the next 20 to 30 years, Four Mile Run will bloom once again, adorned with native plants and accented by scenic walkways, bike and pedestrian bridges, trails, sports fields, a promenade, and parks and recreation facilities. Check out The Complete Four Mile Run Restoration Final Master Plan at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission website: http://www.novaregion.org/index.aspx?nid=215

Did you know?

• Four Mile Run flooded more than 80 times between 1965 and 1980.
• Approximately 85 percent of Four Mile Run’s 19.6-square-mile watershed is developed, and almost 40 percent is covered with impervious building materials.

STROLLING BY HISTORY

Captain’s Row

Along the 100 block of Prince Street, between Lee and Union Streets is the section of town known as Captain’s Row, where many sea captains built Federal style houses. Complete with cobblestones and charming architectural details, this is probably one of the most picturesque colonial village blocks anywhere in the United States.

Limited editions of this print are available at Todd Healy’s Studio at 320 King Street in Alexandria, 703-549-7883. Todd is also available for private commissions.
ABC said Friday, June 25 that the actress will reprise the role of Verla Grubbs in a few episodes this September.

A longtime fan of the show, Burnett first appeared as the character, the long-lost daughter of Langley Wallyford, in 1983. She returned in 1995 for the 25th anniversary of the show, and again in 2005 to mark the soap’s 35th year on the air. She also hosted All My Children’s 25th anniversary primetime special. After 41 years on the air, All My Children will air its last show September 23, 2011.

QUOTABLE:

“We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

--Abraham Lincoln

Congratulations! Alexandria’s Garner Girls Graduate Same Year!!

Erin Garner graduated with honors from Radford University with a BS in Criminology, and a minor in Anthropological Sciences. Younger sister Morgan Garner, celebrated her moment of “Pomp and Circumstance” in traditional white cap and gown at Alexandria’s own T.C. Williams.

2011 has certainly been a banner year for the Garner family. Congrats!
Q: I found this old cuckoo in my grandfather’s basement, which seems to be missing some parts. Can these parts be replaced and is the clock worth anything? Also, it appears that a carved wooden bird is broken off the top of the clock case. Can it be replaced?

A: A lot of so-called clock makers do not work on cuckoos, frequently telling customers they are not worth repairing, simply because they are unable or do not know how to fix them. However, I am an expert in cuckoo restoration. I looked at your clock. First, you have a very special clock. It is a pre-WW1 German Quail cuckoo, and is roughly a century old. A Quail cuckoo strikes the sound of a quail, “hoot-hoot-hoot”, once for each quarter of the hour. It hoots one time on the first quarter hour, twice on the half, three times on the third quarter and four times on the hour, after which it then sounds “coo-coo” for the correct number of the hour. Yes, you have some missing parts. One of the cuckoo birds that comes out of the doors is missing, all three of the whistle bellows are cracked with age, one weight is missing, some of the rings and hooks are missing and the clock movement NEEDS to be disassembled and cleaned, and any worn bearings replaced. As to the missing carved bird, I can carve a new bird that will blend into your old case. I would also replace all three of the weights so the clock has a matched set. When this clock is back in perfect condition I would put an insurance value of $2000 on it.

Phil Wadland is a third-generation clockmaker and horologist, residing in Manchester, New Hampshire. If you have questions for the Clockman, email clockman@thezebra.org.
Cast Members of Glee in Northern Virginia

Glee cast members Cory Monteith (Finn Hudson), Naya Rivera (Santana Lopez) and Jenna Ushkowitz (Tina) met with fans at the AT&T store in Potomac Yard to sign autographs and get their pictures taken. This is all part of the Glee Live Tour 2011. Both AT&T and Samsung are associate sponsors of the event. Hundreds waited in 98-degree weather to meet the cast. Radio personalities from Hot 99.5 entertained the crowd in the parking lot. Glee has a very large following and has already won 2 Golden Globe awards.

Signature’s Search for the Next Idol

Signature Theatre is seeking the next “Signature Idol” with the return of their very popular Signature Idol Competition to be held July 23 during the theatre’s annual Target Open House. Audition videos must be submitted in advance by July 11. So if you sing in the car, at parties or even in the shower, you are encouraged to try out. The competition winner will have the opportunity to perform in the “Broadway on the Plaza” finale concert during the open house. Eric Schaeffer, Signature’s artistic director stated, “After the great success we had with last year’s Signature Idol, and all the fun that we had, there was no way we were not bringing this competition back. It provides a wonderful platform for undiscovered talent in a very safe environment.”

Admission to the July 23 open house is free, so come out and audition to be the next idol or to enjoy the vast array of exciting performances, demonstrations, master classes and exhibits that Signature has to offer. For further Target Open House information and Signature Idol rules and guidelines, visit signature-theatre.org.

If you hear a voice within you say “You cannot paint” Then by all means, paint and that voice will be silenced.

— Vincent Van Gogh

Ultimate-Dog-Tease

We can’t help it, but for the second month in a row, we HAVE to make this our pick of the month.

At press time, this video has now gone viral with over 47 million hits. Perhaps the most hysterical and enchanting 83 seconds our staff has ever seen. If you are a dog lover, this is a video not to be missed!

CHECK IT OUT on the HOME PAGE of ZEBRA www.thezebra.org

Mention Zebra for a 10% discount on framing or art during the month of July.
Air Force Cycling Classic in Arlington

Both Clarendon and Crystal City hosted the Air Force Cycling Classic sponsored by the Boeing Company and others. A number of different race categories were held from little kids on tricycle to the most sophisticated Pro/Am National Racing Calendar (NRC) level competition. Premier competitors come from all over the globe to participate in the races. As in past races the United Healthcare team dominated the Men’s Pro/Am races. Thousands turned out in Crystal City and Clarendon to watch the race and cheer for their favorite cyclist. The event was recorded by our local news channel 8 station.

Canadian National Criteria Champion Leah Kirchmann receives check from Brian Morra of Northrup Grumman for the Women’s Pro/Am race.

Dashiel Bushnaq shows off his medal from the kid’s race.

Flora Pelton enjoyed the ride, training wheels and all.

Despite the heat thousands watched the race along Crystal Drive.

On the podium for the 90km Crystal Cup, Men’s Pro/Am Invitational NRC race are Lt. Gen. Darryl Jones (USAF), John Young (CEO Alenia North America Inc), Hilton Clarke (2nd place winner, United Healthcare), Jake Krouh (1st place winner, United Healthcare) Robert Forester (3rd place winner, United Healthcare), Angie Fox (CEO Crystal City BID), Tim Peters (Boeing) and Caitlin Uze (Miss Virginia).

Winners of the Crystal Cup, Women’s Pro/Am NRC on the podium Joelle Numainville (2nd place, Tibco-To the Top team), Leah Kirchmann (1st place, Colavita Forno D’Asolo team) and Lauren Tomayo (3rd place, Peanut Butter & Co Twenty12 team).

Canadian Leah Kirchmann crosses the finish line to win the Crystal City 60km Women’s Pro/Am event.

Start of the 90 km Crystal Cup, Air Force Cycling Classic Men’s Pro/Am NRC Invitational race.

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Canadian Leah Kirchmann crosses the finish line to win the Crystal City 60km Women’s Pro/Am event.

Canadian National Criteria Champion Leah Kirchmann receives check from Brian Morra of Northrup Grumman for the Women’s Pro/Am race.

Dashiel Bushnaq shows off his medal from the kid’s race.

Flora Pelton enjoyed the ride, training wheels and all.

Despite the heat thousands watched the race along Crystal Drive.

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Canadian Leah Kirchmann crosses the finish line to win the Crystal City 60km Women’s Pro/Am event.
Last year, I took some time out to visit my seventy-six year old aunt who depends on Medicare and its benefits to fill her Razadyne ER prescription, a medicine that is used to curb her memory loss. To think that House Republicans are more interested in making cuts and cutting taxing, than making sure that my Aunt, who has been working for forty five years, gets to lock her door at night, take her medicine that is used to curb her memory loss. To think that House Republicans are more interested in cutting taxing, than making sure that my Aunt, who has been working for forty five years, gets to lock her door at night, take her medicine that is used to curb her memory loss. To think that House Republicans are more interested in cutting taxing, than making sure that my Aunt, who has been working for forty five years, gets to lock her door at night, take her medicine that is used to curb her memory loss. To think that House Republicans are more interested in cutting taxing, than making sure that my Aunt, who has been working for forty five years, gets to lock her door at night, take her medicine that is used to curb her memory loss. To think that House Republicans are more interested in cutting taxing, than making sure that my Aunt, who has been working for forty five years, gets to lock her door at night.
DASH Welcomes New Transit Manager

The Alexandria Transit Company recently announced Raymond Mui will serve as the organization’s new transit planning manager, primarily responsible for personnel of BRAC 133, Alexandria’s growing transportation needs,” Mui said.

A recent graduate of Purdue University with a degree in civil engineering, Mui’s duties will also include development of new DASH routes and improvements to current services as a result of multi-year transportation funding approved by the Alexandria City Council in May. “I plan to work with the community, the city and our bus operators as we begin updating our long-range service plan and expanding the system to meet Alexandria’s growing transportation needs,” Mui said.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Taste of Del Ray Winners

On Sunday, June 5, the Del Ray community celebrated with music and festivities and loads of tasty submissions from the neighborhood restaurants. Bravo TV’s Top Chef Carla Hall was on hand to do the official judging, but the “people” had a chance to rate their favorites as well. And the winners are:

- **People’s Choice**
  1st Taquerio Poblano
  2nd Evening Star
  3rd Pork Barrel BBQ

- **Judge’s Choice**
  1st Evening Star
  2nd Del Ray Pizzeria
  3rd Pork Barrel BBQ

On Tuesday, July 12 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, the West End Business Association (WEBA) and Del Ray Business Association (DRBA) will present a joint program entitled “Creating a Business during the Recession.” Speakers will include Mike Anderson, owner of Mango Mike’s; and several other restauranteurs, and Eric Nelson, owner of Artfully Chocolate. The program will be held at the new Pork Barrel BBQ Restaurant at 2312 Mount Vernon Avenue in Alexandria. For further information, telephone 703/772-6716.

**Taste of Del Ray**

Evening Star is presented the Judge’s Choice 1st place award by Bravo TV Top Chef Carla Hall.

Taquerio Poblano took home the first prize as the People’s Choice winner.

**Catch Our Mistakes**

We hope we made mistakes and to make a game of it, we welcome your corrections. Please send noted typos and mistakes to editor@dorotimes.com for a chance to win a $25 gift certificate from an area retailer!

**Landmark Printing**

Discount includes design, printing, copying: black and white and color, business cards, brochures, rubber stamps, signs, banners and more. Offer good through July 15, 2011 and subject to cancellation without notice.

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New Hope Housing Celebrates Community Support

New Hope Housing proudly hosted its annual volunteer recognition event, a celebration of community support, on Thursday, June 16 at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church.

The Kyle Randall Volunteer of the Year Award, given to outstanding New Hope Housing volunteers and civic partners who demonstrate Kyle’s spirit of generosity and commitment, was presented to Andrea Grimaldi. Andrea developed and organized a comprehensive employment “boutique” for New Hope Housing residents complete with professional wardrobe advice, resume-writing support and job application assistance.

Linda Hill received the Jim McConnell Youth Leadership Award, given for exceptional length of service. Linda has been a active volunteer with the Alexandria Community Shelter for 20 years, leading and organizing holiday gift programs with the help of scouts from Cub Scout Pack 614.

Carylin Waterval and members of Girl Scout Troop #479 received the Allie McConnell Youth Service Award for organizing special activities for children at New Hope Housing’s family shelters.

In addition to these three awards, 11 other individuals and groups were given special recognition for their volunteer service over the past year. Pam Michell, Executive Director of New Hope Housing, commented, “We are so fortunate to have the commitment and dedication to helping people in our community demonstrated by Andrea and all of those recognized this evening. Our volunteers demonstrate a sincere commitment to helping others, and we are a stronger community as a result of their support.” Michell also acknowledged the thousands of advocates for New Hope Housing not present who also provide support to help homeless men, women and children shape a new future for themselves and for our community.

New Hope Housing Volunteer Coordinator Chris Bramante added, “Special recognition is also given to the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church for hosting the event, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to dedication to volunteerism and support of the New Hope Housing mission.”

New Hope Housing is an innovative, award-winning agency providing shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing, outreach and support services for homeless families and single adults, in Fairfax County, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, and City of Falls Church. New Hope Housing is committed to finding creative and lasting solutions to end the cycle of homelessness by offering homeless men, women and children the services they need to change their lives and succeed.

In 2010, New Hope Housing served over 1,100 individuals including 170 children. For more information about New Hope Housing, go to www.newhopehousing.org.

QUOTABLE:

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

--Maya Angelou

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW HOPE HOUSING

Assistant District Commissioner for Alexandria and Commissioner for Pack 614 Linda Hill accepts the Jim Lund Award from New Hope Housing’s Life Skills Specialist Christine Trotter for service at the Alexandria Community Shelter.
Patent and Immigration attorney, John Dodds submitted his family’s pack of working dogs:

Hoover Dodd heads up the security detail at the family’s second home in Mexico. He patrols the grounds and catches anything that moves in the garden.

And Lily is the indoor alarm system at the Dodds’ Mexico home, where if she sets off her little alarm, Hoover gets into the act and takes charge.

Thanks to John Dodds for his submission. If you have fun pictures of your dogs hard at work in your life, please send them to mary@thezebra.org. We will be happy to try and get them published as soon as we are able.
While it’s assumed that the little bottles of shampoo, conditioner and hand lotion are free for the taking in hotels, so are the disposable shower caps, shoe polishing sponges, soaps and sewing kits. These items are placed in the room for your convenience and replenished daily if used. So, on the last day of your stay, take them with you. Hotels factor these items in to the price of their rooms. Certainly don’t use these items and then put them back. No one wants to open a sewing kit only to discover all the black thread is missing. If you take or discard the item, the staff then knows to replace it with a new one for the next guest.

Also, when you order room service, you will receive a sampling of small jars of jellies and honey for breakfast and miniature bottles of ketchup, mustard or want to brighten up an otherwise bland morning bagel. Lastly, don’t forget about the slippers! While it is strictly taboo to attempt to sneak out a pair of hotel slippers – even if you are not planning on splashing, cycling or soaking – in a few minutes, a housekeeping porter will deliver a complimentary (free) pair of slippers, sealed in plastic, to your door, for which you should render a customary $2 tip. Most slippers will be white with a skid-proof bottom, one-size-fits-all, some with closed toes, embroidered with the hotel logo on top. But each hotel attempts to make their slippers different, and some, such as New York’s famed Plaza Hotel, in blue with white embroidery, are now collectable’s items. Consummate travelers amass hotel slippers and take pride in wearing them at home, at the gym, local spa or nail salon. Since they are free and disposable, when a pair wears out, toss and grab a new one from your stock. They are equally great to wear on planes, for hospital stays or anytime you are experiencing swelling, and are also a nice treat to have on-hand if a house guest shows up with no slippers. If you want to build your collection quickly, some heavy travelers, especially businessmen, sell them in bulk on eBay, offering a dozen or more for a flat fee. So while the Zebra does not endorse pilfering from hotels, we encourage you to take those items you have rightfully paid for or that have been provided or made available to you as part of a hotel’s guest experience. So no towels, linens or flatware please, but the Bulgari soaps at the Ritz-Carlton are to die for! A single bar costs $27 at Neiman Marcus.
How does one live to a ripe old age and still have a quality life? That question has been around for years, and the answer is constantly changing in our high tech and rapidly moving world. First, all things have to be equal. For example, the pedestrians here in Alexandria had better start to look both ways before they cross the street. I learned how to cross streets in New York and I will tell you: Look both ways! The second issue, other then accidents, is choosing your parents wisely. They must have given you the right DNA and a non-dysfunctional upbringing.

Okay, so what have I learned about living longer. I recall going to one seminar concerning “telomeres,” which basically bind up the ends of our DNA so they can reproduce without being damaged. If our DNA can replicate throughout our life, we will live longer and happier lives. The professor’s theory was that we where filled up with a certain amount of telomeres at the beginning of life, and we wear them out as we proceed through our journey. Of course, the question is begged, what wears them out? According to the professor, it is stress. If you have a death in the family, divorce, etc., you use up your supply of telomeres on a regular basis. Hang out with happy people, and be an optimist! So Alexandrians, stop walking your dog alone and walk with your spouse or friends as well. Get involved with other people; it’s the healthy thing to do.

Also, take the correct vitamins and watch your food intake. Fresh vegetables, organic red meat (yes, vegans you need it for strong bones), fruits, fish and nuts. Avoid all grains and milk products. For the vitamin components, I recommend vitamin D each day unless you play out in the sun. Most all the other vitamins we can get through a balanced diet. Magnesium is a mineral that is coming into focus along with vitamin D, and encourage 800 milligrams a day. Lastly, don’t forget your Omega-3’s! Read up on them, and start a daily regimen as soon as possible.

Now to exercise! Women should do more aerobic workouts. Men, you will need to do more muscle building. For women, the biggest gains are found in resistance training. To help your mental state, you must do something aerobic. Women, you will have less joint problems. And don’t forget to stretch! I would suggest researching the proper exercises for yourself or working with a personal trainer to provide a kick-start. Yes, red wine and chocolate in moderation are good for you. MODERATION FOLKS!

Chiropractic treatments will give you an advantage over others out there, including staving off arthritis.

Finally, you must exercise your mind! Yes, your brain! Don’t retire and go brain-dead. You can help your brain keep alive and well by doing crossword puzzles, going back to school, learning another language or how to play a musical instrument, taking math courses, writing, starting a new job…or stay with your old job. Do whatever it takes to keep your brain active! Stay current with the new literature on living longer. Glean what is necessary from your readings, and don’t go haywire over momentary crazes.

Most importantly, look forward, not backward…unless you want to go that way.

Dr. Robert Knapp constantly strives to improve and update his knowledge in the field of chiropractic medicine; he participates in advanced orthopedic post-graduate courses and numerous seminars across the country. If you have a question for Dr. Knapp, please email him at dr.knapp@bichiropractic.com or call his Alexandria office at 703-623-2202.

**Alexandrians are Living Longer!**

Americans are living longer, but not in every corner of the country. A new study shows that in hundreds of U.S. counties — mostly in the South — life expectancy has fallen. The researchers blamed problems like smoking and obesity are partly to blame. Overall, life expectancy in the U.S. is at an all-time high. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently estimated that a baby born in 2009 could expect to live 78 years and two months.

The counties with the largest increases in male life expectancy were metropolitan areas with high jobs and universities — almost four years in Georgia’s Fulton County (Atlanta) and more than three years in New York City. Washington and nearby Alexandria, Va.

For women, the biggest jumps — 3% years — were in Alexandria and a Wyoming County that includes the affluent Jackson Hole.
A Farewell to Arms

As the outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates prepares to vacate his office on the E-ring in the Pentagon, many of the news reports will be about his successor and how Leon Panetta will fill those big shoes. But I found myself thinking about Gates, this dedicated, humble and extraordinary man. Before he came back to the swamps of Washington, he was relishing life as president of Texas A&M University and enjoying his hard-earned, post-government career. Despite his comfortable twilight job in Texas, he agreed to return to government and tackle the most turbulent, precarious and explosive cabinet position since the Vietnam era.

Not in recent memory has a secretary of defense faced so many problems and issues as the one Gates has faced. Granted, many of his predecessors endured periods of armed conflict, sending young men and women into battle or to a hot spot somewhere in the world, dealing with rising tensions between peer nations, or even facing huge budget-cutting dilemmas. But looking back at the past five years of Gates’ reign as secretary, one has to be impressed and amazed at his skill at the helm of our nation’s defense department.

Let’s take a brief look at what he has faced and his accomplishments.

Despite his policy disagreement on the “Surge” in Iraq, he took the advice of his senior commanders on the “Surge” in Iraq, and led by example with efficiency efforts to only pay for what was important, he courageously stood alongside Chair- man of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen and the commanding officer and fixed the problem with new facilities, services and funding for follow-up programs for our wounded warriors.

When he was traveling and meeting the troops across the globe, he was frequently at military hospitals on evening calls to visit the injured. Equally at ease with heads of state as he is with a soldier at an entry control point or a family member at a town hall meeting whose spouse is deployed, he answered our questions, talked about our missions and soothed our worries. Despite the enormity of his job and the responsibilities he shouldered, this humble man was frequently brought to tears when visiting our troops and their families or in relating the stories of his meetings with them.

Never one to shrink his responsibility, Gates led a campaign to reduce military medical program costs by asking retirees to foot some more of the bill. Although, on the surface, this seemed to run contrary to his pro-troop policies, for one, believe that an increase in Tricare premiums is a small price to pay to cut costs and ensure future benefits for all retirees. He only asked us to do something he felt was right for all concerned, and something he wouldn’t ask unless he too was willing to pitch in himself.

Not only did he shake the military’s wake to the unconventional threats in the world today and led by example with efficiency efforts to only pay for what was important, he courageously stood alongside Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen and told the country that “Don’t Ask – Don’t Tell” didn’t have a place in today’s military. After decades with the CIA and the National Security Council, Gates, who served with gays and lesbians, felt that a new day was dawning for the Department of Defense, too, and it was time to address a basic fact of life. Recognizing that our society continued to function perfectly fine with same sex relationships, it was only just, honest and prudent to let Americans — all Americans — serve their country openly and with pride. He maintained this stance throughout his tenure and weathered the fallout from that decision, exhibiting to all that he was every inch a leader.

There is an old Navy tradition that when someone retires, the ship’s bell is rung, tires, the ship’s bell is rung, announcement of the departing title and the petty officer of the watch announces the departing title over the loud speaker, side boys are stationed at the quarterdeck, and the bo’sn mate pipes the retiree over the side as he or she leaves the ship for the last time.

So, Secretary Gates, in that same Navy tradition, we thank you for a job well done and wish you “fair winds and following seas.”

Now, bo’sn mate, pass the word – “defense, retired, departing” and render honors.

Marcus Fisk is a retired Navy Captain, Naval Academy graduate, sometime actor, sculptor, pick-up soccer player, and playwright. He and his wife Pamela live in Alexandria.
Just the Right “Tempo”

In Alexandria’s West End, at 4231 Duke Street, sits a remarkable dining experience named Tempo Restaurant, just “Tempo” to its friends. A converted Shell gas station, the property was repurposed in 1990 by Serge and Wendy Albert, husband and wife restaurateurs, who wanted to introduce a modern take on Northern Italian cuisine, infused with their French and California upbringing. The result looks like an adorable white beach house with large windows and a small gang plank entrance, reminiscent of seaside bistros where couples might retreat above Malibu and the Pacific Coast Highway.

Once inside, the space is modern and sophisticated, very much a West Coast retreat with knowledgeable staff providing first class service. Achilles, the seasoned maître d’, is the immediate face of the establishment, and you will get to know him well on your regular nights in the dining room or during your drive-bys to pick up take-out, which waits for you at the intimate wine bar within insulated containers stacked in petite purple bags. But I digress.

Tempo’s ultimate distinction is its food, and more than one Alexandria restaurant owner has quietly confided that Tempo is where they go on their nights off, a restaurateur’s restaurant, the ultimate compliment. Classic appetizers range from Carpaccio (sliced tenderloin on a bed of garlic vinaigrette, capers and Parmesan that is utterly detectable) to weekly specials such as Insalata di Spinaci (baby spinach salad tossed with mushrooms, strawberries, apples and warm bacon dressing that should be bottled and sold!). Especially appealing are their array of freshly made, daily soups. Their entrées are spot on in both taste and presentation, but the Capelli d’Angelo Napoletana (very thin egg pasta with tomatoes, garlic and basil) is a perennial favorite along with the Scaloppine di Vitello Rosemary (veal scaloppini with fresh rosemary, cream and Dijon mustard).

Ideal for special occasions as well as the weekly night out, the Alberns finish the meal with decadent desserts that rival the finest French pastry shops, their Grand Marnier Cheesecake topping the list. Tempo is consistent, quality cuisine and casual elegance, a family business that is just the right “tempo” for its Alexandria neighborhood.

Tempo serves lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. For hours and reservations, call (703) 370-7900 or visit temporestaurant.com. Join the tempo eCub online for special discounts.

QUOTABLE:

“And I’m proud to be an American, where at least I know I’m free. And I won’t forget the men who died, who gave that right to me.”

—Lee Greenwood
Did you watch the Royal Wedding? I did, with a cadre of my best friends. The room sounded something like this: “Oh – fabulous dress, who was the designer?” “73 What a fabulous hat, where are her shoes?” “I wonder where they found those fabulous flowers…” “Is it true Kate scented the Cathedral with Jo Malone?” “I wonder what Champagne they’ll be sipping at the reception…”

“Really, Vixen? You’re curious about the reception CHAMPAGNE!?” Yes. I can’t help it. I have an obsessive curiosity about the wines served at momentous occasions. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge served Pol Roger Brut Reserve Non Vintage to their wedding guests at Buckingham Palace.

Pol Roger N/V was an interesting choice for William and Catherine. Pol Roger Champagne was a favorite of Sir Winston Churchill – and to honor his loyalty to the brand, Pol Roger produces a luxury vintage called “Cuvee Sir Winston Churchill” (what Dom Perignon is to Moet and Chandon) – it is bottled only in magnums. So close was the relationship to the former British Prime Minister, that Dom Perignon (Moet Chandon), and Veuve Clicquot. The following Champagne houses have been granted Royal Warrants to supply Champagne to the Royal Family:


It is widely rumored that Wallis Simpson, the American woman who married King Edward VIII, learned but one phrase of Mandarin that was enough to secure the heart of Edward. “Abide me” (I wonder if it was really this simple…)

So, is it longstanding tradition that Pol Roger is served at Royal Weddings? Nope. At the reception for Lady Diana and Prince Charles, Buckingham Palace poured primarily Bollinger – in addition to Krug and Dom Perignon (Moet Chandon), and Veuve Clicquot. The Dom served was incredibly rare – just 99 bottles of 1961 vintage (the year of Lady Diana’s birth, and one of the finest Champagne vintages ever produced) was shipped from Champagne to Buckingham Palace for the reception. All of these 750ml bottles are believed to have been consumed at the source. However, one magnum made its way to auction in 2008, where it was sold for a whopping $11,950.

At Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson’s 1986 wedding, 1973 Krug Grand Cuvée was the choice of Champagne.

And you can pick up a bottle of this vintage for the relatively paltry sum of about $1,000…

Next Month – White House Wines

Cheers! VV

The Vino Vixen™ is a syndicated wine writer whose musings appear in over 25 publications nationwide. She’s also a correspondent on Wine Taste TV (WineTasteTV.com), national and international wine judge, and Wine Critic to WinesToSailOut.com – one of the Internet’s largest (and cheapest) source of fabulous wines. Have a question or wine tip for The Vixen? Email her at VinoVixen@VinoVixen.com.

BY HOLLY BURNETT

The day before, or perhaps even hours before, if you are like me, you clean the house from top to bottom. Like a CSI with a blue light, you carefully scour every inch of the guest room to remove dust bunnies, bad Christmas presents shoved under the bed that you didn’t have the heart to throw away and the spillover of clothing that no longer fits in your closet. Your makeshift storage area must now be deployed for a higher purpose – a guest room! You want guests to know you’ve been anticipating their arrival for weeks, even months, and that you’ve thought of them daily since last you were together. Or, at least, you want them to think this is true.

Hence, you should employ the “revolving frame” trick, a strategically-placed emotional device, guaranteed to make family, friends, and even the crazy housekeeper/sitter who finds her false teeth in a glass at night believe you adore them.

Have an attractive table picture frame on hand, a 5” x 7” preferably. (T.J. Maxx always has a nice selection at more than reasonable prices.) Anything smaller will kill the impact. The frame should allow you to drop a picture in from the top – no dismantling with screws or little metal swivels to hold the backing in place. Next, ensure you have one photograph of each person who may fall out of the sky onto your doorstep. (And it would be optimum if you were in these pictures with them.) Then, load the photos into your frame, placing it in a prominent location in your house – atop a piano, on a foyer table or a fireplace mantle (if the visit is hordernous, too photo into roasting fire upon their departure).

Just before their arrival, place current guest photo in front of the others, and as they enter, you will hear them exclaim, “You have a picture of me!” Works every time. Little do they know who was the “top” photo yesterday.
What a find! Okay, they may seem a tad geeky, but they really work. We have to face facts here: cutting onions makes most of us cry. It’s not the strong odor that does it, but the gas the onion releases when severed. A member of the lily family, the onion itself contains oil, which contains sulfur, and it is an irritant to both our eyes and nostrils. To be specific, cutting an onion arouses a gas contained within it called propenethiol S-oxide, which then couples with enzymes in the onion, producing a sulfur compound. When this upwardly mobile gas encounters the water in our tear ducts, it creates sulfuric acid. OUCH! Then we blink, trying to flush it away, and next you know, we’re crying. FINALLY a SOLUTION! These goggles are air tight and keep your eyes dry as toast no matter how many onions you have to slice and dice. Available for around $20 at numerous locations all over the Internet.

-Mary Wadland

CAT IN A BOX

BY MARYWADLAND

A few weeks ago, a friend asked me to be his designated driver and friend of record (meaning the person who raises her hand when the nurse asks: “Do you have someone with you?”) when he underwent his annual colonoscopy at Inova Alexandria Hospital. Basically, my role was to take him there, sit in the waiting room while the procedure was done, then deliver him home. So there I was, just outside the outpatient suite, reading a book, sitting among a quiet, yet intense, array of people, many of whom, I came to realize, were anxious awaiting news of their loved one’s test results. Some paced; others stared at the same magazine page for close to an hour. While my friend was undergoing this procedure as part of his yearly physical, some of these folks were anticipating, or, rather, dreading bad news. You could see it on their faces – a somber group.

Suddenly, a teenage girl walked in with a little boy who immediately fancied a metal contraption with bells stationed in the corner of the room. He began sliding shapes up and down the brightly painted rods, setting off dingy sounds again and again. I gave him the evil eye, but to no avail. I gave the teenager, his sister I presumed, the same eye, yet she had no intention of stopping him. The entire room was ready to throttle the kid! I know the toy was installed there to occupy children, but really?

This was no place for them or for teenagers who lacked the maturity and sensitivity to acknowledge their surroundings. Had my friend not been ready to return home soon, I would have yanked the mangled, metal mess up and tossed it in the hall. The hospital should remove this ear sore from the waiting room immediately. How insensitive!

Z - HOT SAUCE

PICK OF THE MONTH

BY MARYWADLAND

There is a reason it comes with a little tasting spoon.

It’s hot!

I love hot sauce and this is one of the best. This sauce changed the nickname of one of the regulars at Ramparts to “Hot Lips”. He flipped when I added it to some Au Jus and he dipped his French fry into it. The face he made was priceless.

This hot sauce has a great flavor but you must be judicious with the dose. Don’t treat it like Tabasco. I love adding a touch to some blue cheese dressing for my wings. It also goes great in any other sauce to add a punch.

If you like heat like I do you will love this stuff. But start slow and use the spoon.

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE SADE

Christopher Paul Schewe
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Legal Services
NO CHARGE for First Consultation
32 years experience
Former Alexandria City Attorney

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Cell: 703.869.1441
cpschewe@verizon.net
Independence Day at George Washington’s July 4 Mount Vernon Estate George Washington Parkway 703/780-2000 Alexandria mountvernon.org Historic Mount Vernon salutes our first commander-in-chief with a dazzling display of made-for-daytime fireworks during its annual Independence Day event! Visitors will be treated to spectacular smoke reworks in patriotic colors fired over the Potomac River. New this year – Mount Vernon will have more than 400 bottles of the George Washington Rye Whiskey available for sale beginning at 10:00 a.m. Each 375 ml bottle retails for $95. The whiskey will be available for sale in person only at The Shops at Mount Vernon and the Distillery & Gristmill site, located three miles from the Estate. The special Independence Day event also includes an inspirational naturalization ceremony for 100 new citizens, military reenactments, a special wreath laying ceremony, free birthday cake for all (white supplies last), and a visit from the “first” first couple, “General and Mrs. Washington.” All events are included in regular Estate admission: adults, $15.00; children ages 6-11, $7.00; and children under 5 are admitted free.

Alexandria Symphony Celebrates Alexandria’s Birthday July 9 Oronoco Bay Park 100 Madison Street 703/548-0885 Alexandria garvin@alesymp.org The ASO annual pops concert entitled Dreams of Summer corresponds with Independence Day and is part of the yearly 262nd birthday celebration for the city Alexandria. The orchestra concert is at 8:30 pm, led by Maestro Kim Allen Kluge. The performance will feature hits from blockbuster movies such as E.T., The Extraterrestrial and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, as well as marches by John Philip Sousa and a selection from Gustav Holst’s The Planets. At 9:30 p.m., the orchestra will provide the soundtrack to Alexandria’s spectacular fireworks display with Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture, in addition to cannon support by the U.S. Army Artillery. The goal of this exhibit is to reflect everything that represents the U.S., including the actual artistic materials themselves. Free!

Art & Wine Festval 2011 Alexandria West End July 9-10 Alexandria 703/548-0885 DelRayArtisans.org Del Ray Artisans will be celebrating Independence Day and the month of July with artwork inspired by U.S. people, places and/or things. Artists are asked to create artwork with U.S.-made materials so as to emphasize both the origin of the materials and that we represent a large, important purchasing bloc. The goal of this exhibit is to reflect everything that represents the U.S., including the actual artistic materials themselves. Free!

Holiday cheer paired with warm weather will hit the streets of Old Town when the 2nd Annual Christmas in July Celebration returns to Union Street the weekend of July 15-17, 2011. The event is co-presented by The Christmas Attic and the businesses of Union Street. Approximately 15 retailers and community organizations will host a variety of festive activities either inside stores or on Union Street ranging from pictures with “Summer” Santa & Mrs. Claus, historical tours, holiday trunk shows, food and wine tastings, cookie decorating, story time for tots, ornament making, arts & crafts, ice cream, paint your own nutcracker, green holiday home tips, fashion styling, photo pictures, musical entertainment and much more. The entire weekend will be filled with activities, raffle drawings, shopping/ dining deals and holiday delights for all ages.

Union Street Gives Back: Every year, the Union Street businesses pick a charity organization to support during the event weekend. This year a portion of sales proceeds from the weekend benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic. The Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

For a complete schedule of the weekend’s events, musical entertainment and updates visit www.christmasattic.com or the event page on Facebook.

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150 YEARS ON OUR DOORSTEP

BY CHUCK HAGEE

This past April ushered in the 150th anniversary of the commencement of The Civil War. And, northern Virginians have the majority of the primary venues of that conflict well within driving distance — or in their own backyards.

One of the most famous battle sites and certainly the bloodiest, is less than two hours north on Route 15. The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1-3, 1863. When it ended there were 8,000 dead and more than 22,000 wounded on both sides of the battle. The fields were literally soaked with the blood of both men and horses.

It was the turning point in the war. Confederate troops never again challenged Union troops in the north.

Beginning this year Gettysburg will commemorate this 150th anniversary with special events through 2015. This year marks the 148th anniversary of that historic battle which, if it had been won by Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of the Potomac, would have undoubtedly changed American history and possibly that of the world.

During the weekend of July 1-3 the National Park Service will sponsor walks that follow the course of the Gettysburg battle. There will be reenactments, a series of lectures and a living history encampment. Additional information is available by calling 717-334-1124 or visiting the web site at www.nps.gov/gett.

Other July events focused on The Civil War and easily reachable within driving distance — or in their own backyards — include, but are not limited to the following:

Antietam Salute to Independence Celebration July 2 where the Maryland Symphony Orchestra will offer a two-hour concert followed by fireworks. It commences at 7:30 p.m. at the Antietam National Battlefield Visitors Center, 5831 Dunker Church Road, Sharpsburg, MD. Additional information is available by calling 301-432-7672.

Three perspectives on The Civil War will be presented at the Manassas Museum, 9101 Prince William St., commencing on July 16 and running through September 4. Entitled "Virginia's Civil War" it presents the conflict in northern Virginia, as well as within Alexandria, the District of Columbia, and Maryland. One of the most memorable is the collection of Civil War photographs on display at the Library of Congress in the Thomas Jefferson Building, 1st and C St., NE, Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. or by visiting www.NationalCivilWarMuseum.org.

Closer to home there is a particularly intriguing presentation for those into war intelligence and counter-intelligence. It’s the "Civil War Rangers, Raiders and Spies" presentation on July 31 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, just off Braddock Road past the Pinecrest Shopping Center. Information is available by calling 703-642-5173 or visiting www.green spring.org.

Heading for the beach? That can also include some Civil War history. In Newport News there is the Mariners’ Museum, 100 Museum Drive, featuring the USS Monitor Center which highlights the first confrontation in U.S. Naval history when two ironclad warships faced off. Visit www.MarinersMuseum.org for more information.

On the way, don’t miss the many treasures of the Civil War in the Capital of the Confederacy — Richmond, Virginia. Sites include the American Civil War Center, the Museum of the Confederacy, the home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis known as the White House of the Confederacy, and Monument Avenue with its statues to key personalities of the war.

A little over two hours north, straight up I-270 onto Rt. 15, is the National Civil War Museum at 1 Lincoln Circle, Reservoir Park, Harriungton, PA. Information is available by calling 717-260-1861 or 1-866-Bls-Gray or by visiting www.NationalCivilWarMuseum.org.

The exhibit features photos of soldiers on both sides of the conflict who died during various battles.

Washington and the Alexandria environs are home to numerous historic Civil War sites such as Fort Stevens, Mary Surratt’s Boarding House, Ford’s Theater, Battleground National Cemetery, Fort Ward, Fort Ellsworth, Arlington House, and Freedmen’s Cemetery, to mention only a few.

Maryland Civil War events throughout July include the following: July 2, the Antietam Salute to Independence Celebration at the Antietam National Battlefield Visitors Center July 8-10, the Retreat Through Williamsport at Springield Farm, Cushwa Basin, River Bend Park, July 9-10, A Civil War Encampment at Rose Hill Manor Park in Frederick, and July 16-17 the Battle at Funkstown.

For one of the most intriguing perspectives on the Civil War and the call for secession there is no better place to visit than the West Virginia. Its very existence came about because it refused to join the Confederacy and separated from Virginia. In this case it was not a war of North versus South but rather of East versus West.

When the Confederacy established its capital in Richmond, West Virginia declared its independence from the mother state. There is much to learn of America’s great conflict by visiting Harper’s Ferry and other venues in West Virginia. These are only a few suggestions for combining summer vacation time with one of the most crucial events in American history. There are a host of other sites and events accessible on day trips or extended visits. It’s well worth the time and effort for the whole family.

150 years ago this nation embarked on a war that would test the very premise not only upon which it was founded but also the historical significance of democratic government vested in the hands of the people. It’s outcome would also stand witness to whether or not a conflict of brother against brother could ever be overcome in spirit as well as geography.

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What’s happening with home sales in your neighborhood? Be in the know: watch for this column every month and stay informed of recent home sales in your community. With interest rates at historic lows, now is a great time to buy or sell!

Call Becky today!

Listings courtesy Becky Arnold REALTOR®

See my newest listing...4 East Spring Street, Alexandria, VA 22301!

Looking for a neighborhood with walkability? Walk to the Braddock Road or King Street metro as well as Old Town and Del Ray from this wonderful home in the Heart of Rosemont!

Offered at $579,900.
displacing a local retail

tional chain merchandiser,
renovated to become the
Hallmark store is now being
The former King Street
in the core of Old Town.

Tour buses 
f_i

A block away on the corner
advertises Gossypia located
Amanda Lasker, owner of Gossypia, sees no business
advantage to tour bus passengers.

Frank Kazouch, owner, Whistle Stop Hobbies, has
seen little or no business from the increase in visi-
tors to historic Alexandria.

Alexandria Tourism:
Retail Boom or Bust?

BY CHUCK HAGEE

Alexandria visitors spend $600 million in the city annually. But who really benefits from this cash cow?

That question was left unanswered at the Tourism Marketing Summit held May 19 at the Masonic Temple where Alexan-
dria Mayor William Euille announced the municipality’s support of tourist visits.

“Tourism has been the bright spot in the Alexandria budget,” Euille told the assem-
dbleness of tourism marketers.

“Everything you do to attract more peo-
ple benefits the city,” said Euille, who co-
chair the US Conference of Mayors’ Com-
nitee on Tourism. Introducing Euille at the
Summit luncheon, Alexandria Convention
and Visitors Association (ACVA) President
and CEO Stephanie Brown stated, “Mayor Euille walks the talk supporting tourism.”

That was highlighted by Euille in an-
nouncing that ACVA’s $2.9 million bud-
got been increased by $488,000 in this year’s budget. That bump “is to pay for in-
creased ACVA ads in new markets,” accord-
ing to Euille.

There is little doubt that ACVA’s actions in promoting Alexandria as a tourism des-
tination have benefitted the city revenue coffers. But where has most of that been generated?

Hotel room nights have been running at an average of 70 percent occupancy for the past 12 months with approximately 1.1 million rooms sold over that period, up two percent over the previous year, according to ACVA statistics. Restaurants, for the most part, are benefiting from increased tourism traffic as well.

And then there are the retail merchants.

Here a very different story emerges. Not only from the standpoint of tourists as cus-
tomers but also from changes in local busi-

In her presentation at the Summit, Brown said, “People who love to visit this city are very much like people who live here.” Re-
ally! Not according to a survey of retail merchants throughout Old Town. She also noted, “Statistics show that 36 percent of visitors are less interested in shopping in malls.” Then where are they shopping?

That was the question asked of Old Town merchants. The answer was a mixed bag de-
pending on the product and location of the merchant.

Robert Lorenzen, owner, The Virginia Shop, 104 S. Union St., said, “All they (tour-
ists) are doing is staying and eating. We’ve become the new form of entertainment.

They come in look around and leave.” He

pointed out that if you look at most tour-
-2-
arts walking the streets of Old Town “very few are carrying shopping bags. It’s not hap-
-1-
pening here for Old Town merchants.” The

income of the ACVA to local retail merchants. “I’m not benefiting from their advertising and I’m not sure we need them. With the budget crunch the city can’t afford them,” he said.

On the flip side of the debate, various merchants did see a value to tourism pro-
efits us Tourism is our bread and butter dur-
ning the summer months and the advertising helps,” Threshold stressed.

Amanda Lasker, owner, Gossypia, 325 Cameron St., had a mixed view “Business from tourists is never as good as it is from metro area shoppers. They are the people that keep coming back especially for gifts for special holidays and occasions,” she em-
phazed. “However, since ACVA does push hotels we get spillover from them. And, we have benefitted from the sign on King Street and the ACVA map along with the hotel concierges. But, our real sales are loc-
al,” Lasker said.

The one tourism generator that Lasker saw no value in were the tour buses. “We get no business from tour buses. The only thing they do is go off to have lunch, walk around and get back on,” she insisted.

However, that was not supported by Cherri Hennasy, co-owner, The Christmas Attic, 125 S. Union St. “Tourism is really big for us. We find tourists to be good busi-
ness especially from cherry blossom time through the summer,” she said. “We also get a lot of international tourists that come in groups which must mean they are coming from tour buses — also groups of kids in the evenings. It seems that some of the mer-
chants don’t actually want to cater to tour-
ists.” Hennasy said.

Christmas Attic has changed its marketing strategy to offer many items not just con-
ected with Christmas, including a variety of occasions throughout the year as well as general keepsake items. “But, Christmas or-
naments are still the big seller. Everybody thinks they are the only one who collects ornaments from spots they visit,” she said.

Kate Schlabach, owner, Why Not?, 200 King St., finds tour bus riders a real plus.

“The one thing we have been able to count on lately are the big tour buses. We definite-
ly benefit from them,” she said. “And, thank goodness, because many locals have stopped shopping Old Town due to the new parking fees and those new parking meter stations. The 100 and 200 blocks of King Street used to be free parking — not any more. And, people are getting more tickets because of the confusing agenda. That’s driving them out of Old Town,” Schlabach insisted.

In the opinion of both George J. Vitt-
eri, owner, Raul’s of Old Town, 604 King St. and Frank Kazouch, owner, Whistle Stop Hobbies, 130 S. Royal St., “hotels are the big winners of ACVA advertising cam-
paigns” not the local retail merchant. “The


A sign at the corner of King
and South Royal streets
advertises Gossypia located
a block away on the corner
of Cameron and South Royal streets.

Tour buses fill the Unit
Block of King Street as they
load and unload passengers
in the core of Old Town.
The farm dogs: Cashel (the golden retriever), Angus (the giant schnauzer) and Puck (the black and white Border collie). PHOTO COURTESY OF STUART STONE

One of the best parts about going to my friend’s farm near Shepherd’s Town, West Virginia, was the dogs. Of course, the horses were a big plus and so was the getting-out-of-the-city work...away from the desk! But, no doubt about it, the dogs were near the top of the list of benefits.

Angus (the giant schnauzer), Puck (the black and white Border collie) and Cashel (the golden retriever) were our buddies as my friend and I worked on his barn, the paddock area, the fencing in the fields, the car barn, work shed and the like. They were always nearby, waiting to see if they could entice us to play with them for a few minutes. Petting would do, especially behind the ears, but tossing a stick or a tennis ball was preferred.

Actually, if we were working far from the house, only two of the dogs went with us. Cashel, the only female, stuck close to the house. She’d be on guard, waiting for us after the jobs were done. Angus and Puck went where we went. Unfortunately, they never helped carry the tools, but they did ride in the back of the Khi-no (and not always happy about it). Puck would get on top of the wheelbarrow. It was impossible for us to push it with him aboard. He was possibly the largest lapdog in West Virginia and proud of it. One of the best parts about having a giant schnauzer (and not always happy about it) was the lack of benefit from tourism was even more pronounced in the West End and Del Ray areas. However, several merchants did say they were seeing some benefit from National Harbor visitors coming to Alexandria.

One of the more disturbing factors in Alexandria’s retail merchandising is the continuing loss of small local stores. This was accentuated recently by the closing of the Hallmark store in the 600 block of King Street, reportedly to be replaced by another national chain retailer.

Tourism is a $760 billion industry nation-wide, according to Brown’s Summit presentation. “Alexandria is on track to get one of the largest increases this year,” she noted. How that will translate to the retail business community remains debatable.

QUOTABLE:

“By way of nourishment, not by way of knowledge.”
—Rabbi Isaac the Blind

Anne Alden Kabbalistic Healer
Decisions, Decisions....PC or Mac?

A  s back to school time rolls around, college students prepare for their college lives in different ways. But one common quest they face is finding an answer to the age old question: Mac or PC? Neither operating system is perfect, which causes a dilemma. Having used both systems extensively, here are some of the biggest factors students consider when purchasing a laptop.

Price

You can’t talk about laptops without talking about price. In today’s market, laptops range anywhere from $500 to $5,000. With Apple laptops starting at $999, if your budget doesn’t extend that far then you pretty much have only one option. Once you exceed the $1,000 price range, the choice between the two is fairly game.

Design/Looks

Since its debut in 2008, Apple’s metal unibody design has attracted a loyal following. This design is great if you like it, but if you don’t, Apple has no other option. On the other hand, PCs come in an almost limitless array of colors, sizes and materials. If you don’t like the design or size choices in Apple laptops, you are sure to fall in love with any number of PCs.

Operating System

The biggest difference between a Mac and a PC is that they run on completely different operating systems. Almost everyone is familiar with Windows computers and knows how to use them efficiently. Apple computers are different. Although Apple has made improvements to their system in recent years, some people still find it difficult to switch from a PC to a Mac. One of the biggest complaints is that there is no “right click.” This tends to cause some initial frustration, but it is by no means impossible to make the switch. But expect a bit of a learning curve. Apple does have its advantages in the multimedia sector, running suites like iLife and iWork. This is a major area where Mac’s excel. On the other hand, the majority of computer programs are written for Windows machines and will not run on a Mac unless the user sets up a “virtual desktop,” which defeats the purpose of having a Mac in the first place. As technology advances, more and more software is being written to be comparable with both systems.

Tablets

With the success of the iPad and the avalanche of tablet computers on the market, you may want to think about how to make the most of your computer budget. For the cost of a Mac-Book laptop, you can get both a powerful PC laptop as well as an iPad or other tablet.

Aches and pains?

Stop suffering today!

David Goldhagen is a 17-year-old junior at Ronald Reagan High School in San Antonio. He serves on the student council and is a class officer. A straight-A student, he is ranked #18 in a class of 780.

Ask about our specials!
These furry friends (and many others) are looking for loving homes ...

Baby the Chi - (Female) - Available
Breed: Chihuahua
Age: 5 Months
Weight: 5 Pounds
History: Owner Release
Description: Isn’t she just adorable! Baby came to us from a shelter in West Virginia last year with a badly broken femur. After several surgeries her rear leg was not able to be repaired so it was amputated. Baby is now learning to get around on 3 legs. She is a wonderful little girl. She loves other little dogs but is not good with larger dogs or cats. Due to her tiny size (4lbs) she will not be placed with small children for her safety. She is mostly Housetrained using potty pads. Baby is a itsy bug but will also sound the alarm when someone comes to the door or she sees or hears something that she feels needs attention.

Buddy the Retriever - (Male) - Available
Breed: Retriever Mix
Age: 4 Years
Weight: 63 Pounds
History: Owner Release
Description: Buddy was returned to AFH because his parents went through a divorce. Buddy is now looking for a new home to call his own. He is housebroken and loves people. He’s a great dog that really deserves a permanent loving home. Please come meet him. You won’t be sorry.

Cassie - Chinese Crested - (Female) - Available
Breed: Chinese Crested
Age: 12 Weeks
History: Shelter
Description: Cassie, Charlie and Curly came to AFH with their mom. Cassie is still available for adoption. Curly is such a sweet girl and can’t wait to find her forever home.

Esme (Wren) - (Female) - Available
Breed: Chinese Crested Dog
Age: 12 Months
History: Owner Release
Description: Esme, who was originally from New York, has been returned because she was too active for the family. She is now available for adoption. She is an adorable girl who deserves someone. She is smart too; in less than 24 hours I learned from my foster brothers and sisters. My foster mom and her dogs are teaching me what it is like to be a family dog. In time I am sure I will overcome my fear of people and the outdoors, but I am going to need a family to show me lots of patience. I will need a family to continue my socialization, to teach me that I do not need to be so fearful with strangers. I am going to need someone to keep me on a schedule so that I know what to expect and help me get house trained and crate trained. I am looking for a family with older or no children, as the little kids are very noisy and intimidating for a nervous guy like me. My hopes is that we can have another small dog as they could help show me the ropes.

Jasmine - (Female) - Available
Breed: Chinese Crested Dog
Age: 6 Months
History: Owner Release
Description: Jasmine is a young adult female Chinese Crested. She has been around young children and was trusted alone in the house in her previous home. She is very loving and would love to be in your lap. She is housetrained and just a nice girl.

Killer - (Male) - Available
Breed: Border Collie Mix
Age: 4 Months
History: Shelter
Description: This boy is super sweet. He loves people and gets along great with other dogs. He is good with kids and is very playful. He will be medium sized dog when full grown.

Oscar the Chi - (Female) - Available
Breed: Chihuahua
Age: 6 Years
Weight: 7 Pounds
History: Puppy Mill - Paterson
Description: Hello! My name is Oscar and I am a puredected Chihuahua and weigh only 7 pounds. I was rescued from a place called a puppy mill. I lived in a cage 24/7, I received little to no socialization so I need a lot of patience to understand that people are okay. I just learned what toys are and I LOVE to play with my foster brothers and sisters. My foster mom and her dogs are teaching me what it is like to be a family dog. In time I am sure I will overcome my fear of people and the outdoors, but I am going to need a family to show me lots of patience. I will need a family to continue my socialization, to teach me that I do not need to be so fearful with strangers. I am going to need someone to keep me on a schedule so that I know what to expect and help me get house trained and crate trained. I am looking for a family with older or no children, as the little kids are very noisy and intimidating for a nervous guy like me. I am hoping my family will have another small dog as they could help show me the ropes.

Olivia - (Female) - Available
Breed: Boxer
Age: 2 Years
Breed: Boxer
History: Shelter/Owner Release
Description: This is me! I’m Olivia and am a 2-year old purebred boxer. My family gave me up along with my puppies. I’m very lack basic obedience and leash skills and need AM crate trained, and house trained, but told I probably not a good family dog when full grown. I’m doing so well now. I’m 100% house and crate trained. I’m a good walker on a leash and do very well adjusted and people laugh at me, but I so I need a lot of patience to understand that people are okay. I just learned what toys are and I LOVE to play with my foster brothers and sisters. My foster mom and her dogs are teaching me what it is like to be a family dog. In time I am sure I will overcome my fear of people and the outdoors, but I am going to need a family to show me lots of patience. I will need a family to continue my socialization, to teach me that I do not need to be so fearful with strangers. I am going to need someone to keep me on a schedule so that I know what to expect and help me get house trained and crate trained. I am looking for a family with older or no children, as the little kids are very noisy and intimidating for a nervous guy like me. I am hoping my family will have another small dog as they could help show me the ropes.

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AFH is ALWAYS in need of foster homes!

It is fun and rewarding. Without enough foster homes we can’t save as many pets. Since AFH tries hard to not use boarding facilities, we cannot accept new, deserving animals into our program without ready foster homes. If you are interested in making your home available to a deserving pet, please drop us an email at Foster@aforeverhome.org.

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