

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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MARCH 31, 2016



## And They're Off

Children sprint from the starting line at the 17th annual Easter egg hunt at Lee-Fendall House on Saturday, March 26.

PHOTOS BY RICK MUMFORD/GAZETTE PACKET

Aidan (left) and Nicholas Lapertosa check their toy-filled eggs with their parents, Grace Jimenez and Max Lapertosa.



Olivia Gonzalez poses in her Easter bonnet with the Easter Bunny following the hunt.

## For Whom the Bell Tolls

Michael Conner, former deputy fire chief, dies at 68.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Each October during National Fire Prevention Week, a solemn ceremony takes place at Ivy Hill Cemetery where a Roll Call of the Fallen is taken to honor firefighters who have given their lives protecting the citizens of Alexandria. This year's ceremony will take on new meaning when the toll of a bell rings out for Michael Conner, the former

deputy fire chief whose recruit class first dedicated Ivy Hill's Circle of Honor in 1970.

"Ever since I can remember, I wanted to be a firefighter," Conner told the Gazette Packet following his retirement in 2005. "When I was still in high school and too young to join the department, I started as a volunteer at Station 204. Being assigned to the headquarters opened the door for me to become the city's first paid cadet and led to my career in firefighting."



Michael Conner

SEE FORMER DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF, PAGE 4

## Door to Door

City Council and state legislators examine Alexandria's business woes.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

Over oatmeal, Alexandria's City Council and state legislators did their best to reassure local businesses, distressed by a recent spate of closures in Old Town. The 2016 Legislative Breakfast, hosted by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce on March 29 in a room at the Hotel Monaco, offered local business leaders and professionals an opportunity to catch up with their city and state representatives.

Most of the meeting focused on City Council's role, centering around questions about what the local government plans to do to

help local businesses thrive.

"It is concerning that businesses are closed, and yet a number of those had nothing to do with Alexandria's business climate," said Mayor Allison Silberberg, noting that some were pushed out by the internet while others wanted to retire.

As she'd suggested in the past, Silberberg recommended a coffee meeting with various business leaders in the area and reexamining suggestions from prior economic sustainability reports.

Other members of City Council noted that the businesses that had closed had, in many cases, not made use of various services of

SEE BUSINESS WOES, PAGE 5

## Transitway Plan Branches Out

Council approves West End Transitway after argument over tree canopy.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

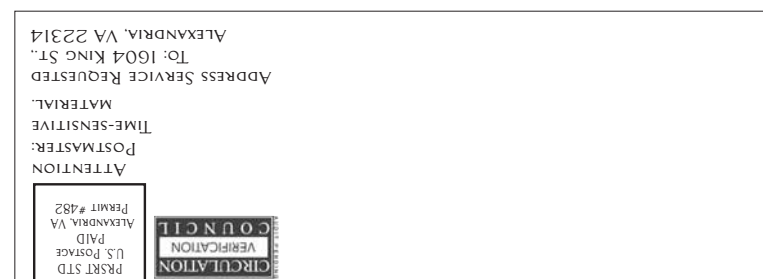
If all goes as planned, implementation is still four years away, but the West End Transitway took a step forward at the March 29 meeting with the City Council unanimously voting in support of guidance for the planning of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route between the Van Dorn Metro Station and the Pentagon.

The \$140 million project will

include bus-only lanes, stations that include real time bus information, and improvements to the safety of the nearby sidewalks. The city plans utilize the BRT implemented on Route 1 in 2014 as a template, with the possibility of the service expanding into a streetcar at a future date.

While the City Council expressed hope that the improvements might also fix traffic prob

SEE TRANSITWAY, PAGE 7





# NEWS



## Torchlight Supports Carpenter's Shelter

TorchLight employees (from left) Heidi Parsont, Julie Lowe, Amy Tsuchitani, Autumn Conrad Schiff, Jennifer Todd, Beth Ranzer and Ilene Hanin spent the day volunteering at Carpenters Shelter, where they prepared and served lunch for the residents.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



TorchLight President and CEO Heidi Parsont (left) presents a check for \$2,500 to Carpenters Shelter Volunteer Coordinator Kelly McDermott. TorchLight, a marketing and communications recruiting firm, is headquartered in Alexandria and the majority of its employees live in Alexandria. See [www.torchlighthire.com](http://www.torchlighthire.com).

## BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com).

Mark Levine, Dr. Samantha Ahdoot and youth clean energy advocates urging Gov. McAuliffe to cut carbon pollution and support a strong Clean Power Plan. Visit [bit.ly/1UCaGTU](http://bit.ly/1UCaGTU) for more.

### IN APRIL

**Spring Clean-Up.** Residents who receive city refuse collection services are eligible to receive Spring Clean-Up on a Saturday in April. Residents are encouraged to clear out household clutter and place unwanted bulky trash and metal items at the curb on appropriate neighborhood collection dates. Visit [alexandriava.gov/RefuseCollection](http://alexandriava.gov/RefuseCollection) for dates and neighborhoods.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 31

**Holiday Lights.** The annual King Street Holiday Lights display will be suspended on March 31. The display will return to King Street the third week of November.

**"Coal Ash Stories."** 7 p.m. at Alexandria Library Beatley Branch, 5005 Duke St. Several Virginia organizations are launching "Coal Ash Stories," a statewide screening tour featuring four short documentary films focused on coal ash waste. Visit [www.coalashchronicles.com/tag/alexandria](http://www.coalashchronicles.com/tag/alexandria) for more.

### SATURDAY/APRIL 2

**Clean Power Plan Rally.** 2-4 p.m. at Alexandria Market Square, 301 King St. Individuals and organizations are joining together to hold a Day of Action in 12 locations across the Commonwealth. Rally and speaker's bureau will feature state Sen. Adam Ebbin, Delegates Alfonso Lopez and

### MONDAY-TUESDAY/APRIL 4-5

**MLK Commemoration.** Virginia Theological Seminary invites the community to its annual commemoration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holy Eucharist: Monday, April 4 at 7 p.m., Immanuel Chapel. Two lectures by Dr. Carl W. Haywood, Director of the Division of Music at Norfolk State University, Tuesday, April 5: 8:15 a.m. in the Chapel and 1 p.m. in the Addison Academic Center. All events will be held on the Seminary campus, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Free, no registration required. Visit [www.vts.edu](http://www.vts.edu) for more.

### MONDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 4-10

**Temporary Closure.** The Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., will be closed for a tile replacement project. If interested in reserving the Center, contact Cheryl Anne Colton at 703-746-5565 or [cheryllanne.colton@alexandriava.gov](mailto:cheryllanne.colton@alexandriava.gov).

### TUESDAY/APRIL 5

**Handing Down Possessions.** 2-4 p.m. at Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Financial Volunteers lead a session discussing best practices and tips for handing down possessions. Free. Visit [bit.ly/VCEFinancePrograms](http://bit.ly/VCEFinancePrograms) for more.

## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

### APRIL

- 4/13/2016.....Real Estate Pullout – New Homes
- 4/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
- 4/27/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools Pullout
- 4/27/2016.....Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts I
- 4/27/2016.....Spring Outlook 2016

### MAY

- 5/4/2016.....McLean Day Pullout
- 5/4/2016.....Mother's Day Dining & Gifts II
- 5/4/2016.....Wellbeing
- Mother's Day is May 8
- 5/11/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
- 5/18/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools, Proms, Summer Planning
- Memorial Day is May 30
- 5/25/2016...Summer Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment

E-mail [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com) for more information.



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# The Anniversary Gala

THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF ALEXANDRIA  
and  
T.C. WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2016

SIX O'CLOCK TO MIDNIGHT  
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