

Our View

Celebration weekend

It's wonderful to focus on happy occasions rather than tragedies. Fortunately, there was a lot to celebrate in Alexandria this past weekend, as is highlighted in three stories in this week's Alexandria Times.

First, the inaugural graduation ceremony for Alexandria City High School was held on Saturday, see page 1 story, "First ACHS class graduates." It was a long, contentious struggle to remove the name T.C. Williams from the façade of Alexandria's only public high school, a move that we advocated for on these pages dating back to the mid-2010s, and this is the first class to graduate since the name was changed last July.

While the name change does not detract from the many thousands of students who graduated from T.C., there's also no denying that it's special to be the first class graduating from ACHS. Those 809 graduating seniors will long remember this day, and not just as a marker for one of the significant transitions in their lives.

We also celebrate the 16 students within ACHS who graduated from the Certified Nurse Aide Program, a collaboration between ACHS, Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center and George Washington University. The program is part of the Virginia's Governor's Health Sciences Academy, which promotes careers in the health sciences.

These graduates – 14 women and two men – have a head start on good-paying jobs in a high-demand field. We commend them for their hard work and their forward-thinking about career paths at a young age. We also thank Woodbine for its 25 years of serving as a training ground for these fledgling healthcare workers. That is true community partnership!

We also congratulate the Bishop Ireton Class of 2022, which graduated on Saturday at a ceremony held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Last, but not least, we're glad Alexandrians joined in the celebration of the platinum 70th jubilee festivities of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. See page 12 story, "Fit for a queen." Queen Elizabeth is 96 and reportedly in ill health, which makes this jubilee all the more poignant.

This most public of figures has served – the days of monarchs actually reigning were over by the time Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1952 – with decency. She's been a figure of stability in a world that has undergone tremendous upheaval during the last 70 years. One doesn't have to be a monarchist nor an anglophile to appreciate Elizabeth the person.

Perhaps we all feel that we understand her a bit better after watching the Netflix series "The Crown" or "The Queen," a 2006 movie in which the actress Dame Helen Mirren won an academy award for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth. According to Wikipedia, Queen Elizabeth was so impressed by Mirren's portrayal that she extended her an invitation to dinner at Buckingham Palace.

British Actor Sir Michael Caine, in his 1992 autobiography, "What's it all about," describes a dinner he attended in Los Angeles at which Queen Elizabeth was the guest of honor. After a while, the queen became bored by the guest seated next to her, leaned around him and asked Caine to tell her a joke. According to Caine, he bemusedly spent the rest of the evening swapping jokes with Queen Elizabeth.

Our heartiest congratulations all around: to the first graduating class of Alexandria City High School, to the graduates of the Certified Nurses Aid Program, to the Bishop Ireton Class of 2022 and to her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, on jobs well done.

Opinion

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

- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week



PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON

Alexandria resident Lisa Groover poses with a cardboard cutout of Queen Elizabeth II at the neighborhood platinum jubilee celebration.

Your Views

City's priorities are wrong

To the editor:

The recent announcement from the city, "Alexandria Police Department Makes Changes to Service," cryptically titled to obscure the degradation of police services, is disturbing if not worse.

The main priorities of a municipal government are supposed to be public safety and health. Not so in Alexandria, demonstrably. Note the city's strategic priorities for 2022, no mention of such. But plenty of mention of otherwise just causes that city hall perverts to support their ultimate goal: hyperdensification of the already densest city in Virginia.

This is no criticism of the Alexandria Police Department, which is full of dedicated professionals. I attended the Alexandria Citizens Police Academy, something I highly recommend to everyone.

This is a criticism of City Council and city staff. I hear Alexandria's police are one from the bottom in pay for the D.C. metro region, which has something like 13 jurisdictions. Reports are that morale is low in the police department.

Unsurprisingly, former Police Chief

Mike Brown, who was Chief of the California Highway Patrol and Safety Director at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, resigned abruptly. I wonder why?

It was on the heels of council establishing the policing review board. I recommend watching the Agenda Alexandria session on that. It was Brown versus three others and was obviously a stacked deck against the police department.

I recall formerly seeing frequent reports of shots fired, carjackings, purse snatchings and more, which seemed to indicate an increase in crime. Haven't seen any lately. Has the crime situation improved, or is the news being suppressed?

And don't forget the stabbing death of a high school student recently. Our current situation was totally predictable and evitable from the mecca of misplaced priorities and mismanagement at 300 King St.

Hopefully the new city manager can fix this, but it will be an uphill battle for him.

-Brittany Hinkle,
Alexandria