

Accomplishments and Events Recreation and Cultural Activities



Museum Educator Ruth Reeder describes a cistern to local school children who visited the Jamieson Bakery archaeological site. The bakery was discovered during construction of the Queen's Row townhouses and public parking garage at Queen and North Lee Streets.

Recreation Center Renovations

The \$9.3 million renovation of Lee Center, which houses the administrative offices of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Fire Training Offices, and the Adult Day Care Program, was completed during FY 1998. Modifications were made to the performing arts auditorium, including improved seating for wheelchair accessibility. Renovated restrooms now accommodate people with disabilities. Plans for construction of an expanded William Ramsay Recreation Center on Sanger Avenue were developed during FY 1998. City Council included the \$3 million project in the approved FY 1999-2004 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The design plan approved by the Park and Recreation Commission includes a large game room, a computer lab, a regulation-size gymnasium with spectator seating, an arts and crafts room and a dance studio. This 18,000- square-foot, multi-generational center is expected to open in 2000.

Cameron Station Parks

City Council in February approved plans for development of two parks at Cameron Station. Construction is expected to be completed by FY 2000. City Council approved the design for the 50.4-acre Ben Brenman Park (formerly the East End Park) in June. City Council in 1997 reserved space at the park for a 32,000-square-foot, multi-generational recreation center and in May 1998 set aside \$20,000 for the project beginning in FY 2003. Improvements to Ben Brenman Park include: a regulation soccer field; a softball field; a Little League baseball field; a park entry facility with restrooms and concessions; a network of pedestrian and bike trails, including a pedestrian bridge across Holmes Run; an urban plaza; picnic areas and a lake overlook with open spaces. City Council will consider a special use permit for the 11.6-acre West End Park in the fall. This park includes a lighted softball field with a youth soccer field overlaid on the outfield, a playground area, a tennis/basketball court, volleyball courts, and picnic areas and trails. An elementary school is proposed in the western part of Cameron Station, and plans include joint City/School use of portions of the West End Park.

Alexandria's 250th Anniversary

City Council appointed 23 local citizens to the Ad Hoc City of Alexandria 250th Anniversary Commission, which is working on community activities and events celebrating the City's 250th birthday in 1999. The celebration will begin with fireworks and First Night activities on December 31 and continue throughout 1999.



Estelle Brenman and City Manager Vola Lawson listen as Mayor Kerry J. Donley points to improvements planned for the Ben Brenman Park on Duke Street. The park is named for her late husband and West End activist Ben Brenman.

Major Exhibitions

In FY 1998, The Lyceum and the Alexandria Black History Resource Center presented major exhibitions. At The Lyceum, an exhibit, "Commonwealth and Community: The Jewish Experience in Virginia", chronicled the trials and triumphs of Jews from their arrival at Jamestown in the sixteenth century. A new permanent exhibit at the Black History Resource Center tells the story of the origins and growth of Alexandria's African American business community. Education programs being designed in conjunction with the business exhibition will center on Virginia's Standards of Learning. The Center also inaugurated bus tours of important sites in Alexandria's African American history. Also, members of the Friends of the Freedman's Contraband Cemetery continued to research the records of the Cemetery which is thought to be the final resting place of as many as 1,879 former slaves who fled the South after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Antranig Dance Ensemble of New York entertains at the Armenian Festival, one of several sponsored each year by the City to celebrate Alexandria's ethnic diversity.



Virginia Civil War Trails

Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site participated in the Virginia Civil War Trails project to promote Civil War history to regional, national and international audiences. Fort Ward was one of more than 200 Virginia sites to be featured.

Electronic Library Services

The Alexandria Library upgraded its on-line catalog to operate on the World Wide Web, making it available for use 24 hours a day from home, school or business. Library card holders can search the Library's holdings, reserve and renew books, and search an electronic index of more than 3,000 magazine titles. The full text of more than 1,400 articles may be viewed on-line, printed or downloaded to the user's computer. More than 20 on-line reference services are also available in each of the Library's three branches. At Lloyd House, the history branch of the Alexandria Library, librarians began digitizing plans, blueprints, photographs, maps and other documents related to more than 200 historic buildings in Old Town Alexandria. The Library's searchable database is located on the Internet at (www.alexandria.lib.va.us).