



The Lady Bird Special

In 1964 the Beatles appeared on The Ed Sullivan show, Sidney Portier became the first black actor to win an Academy Award, and Sarah Palin was born. Barry Goldwater challenged Lyndon Johnson for the Presidency, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, and Martin Luther King received the Nobel Peace Prize. Lady Bird Johnson also became the first First Lady to campaign solo.

President Johnson, a Texan, signed the Civil Rights Act into law on July 2, 1964. In Virginia Byrd Democrats fumed. In Alexandria State Delegate James Thomson,

and he is white. He is emphatically not the target at which [Virginia's] Constitutional Convention of 1902 was aiming. He is the victim, as it were, of a ricochet. Mr. Pickens illustrates that civil rights are not only Negroes' rights."

Such civil rights stresses, coupled with the President's declared War on Poverty, convinced Lady Bird Johnson to schedule a four-day, eight-State, 1600-mile, campaign tour. The train, known as The Lady Bird Special, left Alexandria's Union Station on October 6. The Democratic National Committee "chose Alexandria as the jump-off point [because] it was a quaint southern city."

"I took my wife across the Potomac to the Alexandria, Virginia, railroad station," Johnson wrote in *The Vantage Point*. "I spoke briefly to the thousands who had assembled there. But it was Lady Bird's gentle words that moved the listeners and set the tone for her entire remarkable trip. I wanted to tell you that to this President and his wife the South is a respected and valued and beloved part of this country."

The Alexandria Gazette continued, "She found, she said, that there is 'more love than hate' in the southland and commended the mass of people for the observance of Civil Rights laws."

Mrs. Hale Boggs (LA) and Mrs. Donald Russell (SC) co-chaired the vote-seeking event. Lady Bird's message was heartfelt. "Seek the ties that bind us together rather than the tensions that pull us apart."

Not all news was glum. Lady Bird touted local accomplishments as well as her husband's. For example in June 1960 State Senator LeRoy Bendheim, formerly Mayor Bendheim successfully integrated Alexandria's chain lunch counters: G.C. Murphy's and Waffle Shop. Public housing however did not integrate until March 1965.

"Up to [1965], the races were separated," The Washington Post reported, "since the city's public housing program began 24

years ago. Alexandria has about 950 units, slightly more than half occupied by Negro families." Today the city's Braddock/Parker Gray public housing projects remain 91.2% black.

In 1964 Lyndon Johnson and running mate Hubert Humphrey received 61% of the popular vote including Alexandria's. Johnson dubbed his wife "America's greatest campaigner." Of the 486 electoral votes, he credited Lady Bird with the eight-States' 86.

"I knew the Civil Rights Act was right and I didn't mind saying so," Lady Bird said, "but I also loved the South and didn't want it used as the whipping boy of the Democratic Party."

Lyndon Johnson ascended to the Presidency following the November 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He is the only President to take the oath of office from a female official, federal Judge Sarah T. Hughes. The Johnson family retired from Presidential politics in 1968.

In Reply

If the mailbag is any indicator, my January column "The More Things Change, The More They Remain the Same" reverberated. For those who inquired regarding research, I suggest five Washington Post articles: "Alexandria Slum Block Probe Set" (1968), "Renewal Muller in Alexandria" (1973), "Schools: No longer Separate But Still Unequal" (1979), "Alexandria Blacks List Grievances" (1983) and "N. Va. Blacks Differ on Ward Elections" (1983).

Highlights (1968): "The Alexandria City Council has ordered City Manager Hair to investigate...the 1000 block of Queen Street. Mrs. [Elsie] Taylor, a Hopkins House worker, repeated demands made in an [earlier] petition asking that the block be 'cleaned up.' [She] described it as the 'worst' in the city and charged that illegal sales of whiskey and narcotics take place there."

Highlights (1973): "The crumbling



Senator Byrd's son-in-law expressed the organization's concern. Blacks no longer were controlled. Café sit-ins (CORE) and voter registration drives (NAACP) were becoming routine.

As significantly, incumbent City Councilman John Pickens failed to pay his poll tax.

"Mr. Pickens is a man of substance," The Washington Post reported. "He is a graduate of Harvard Law School, he is an experienced politician, he is a Democrat,

MARCH 27-APRIL 11

Blossoms by Bike River Ride
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
 Time: 1 pm-4 pm
 Location: Bike and Roll One Wales Alley, Alexandria VA 22314
 Admission: \$42

Now for 2010! Bike and Roll Alexandria will offer our Blossoms by Bike River Ride during the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Celebrate the arrival of spring and see the natural beauty of our Nation's Capital at its peak. Ride along the Mount Vernon Trail and into DC and view the sea of pink and white blossoms along the Potomac River and up close along the Tidal Basin. Blossoms by Bike River Ride is a moderate level ride and is recommended for those 13 years or above.

ON GOING EVENTS

Old Town Farmers Market

Recurring weekly on Saturday
 Time: 5 am-10 am
 Location: Market Square - 301 King Street
 Phone: (703) 838-4343
 Admission: Free!
 The nation's oldest farmers market offers a variety of vendors, including baked goods, cut flowers, live plants, and crafts.

Go "Behind the Counter" at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum

Recurring monthly on the 3rd Saturday
 Time: 9 am-10:30 am
 Location: Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105-107 South Fairfax St.
 Phone: (703) 838-3852
 Admission: \$25 pp, Reservations Required
 The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum is now offering up-close and highly informative guided tours once a month with its new "Behind the Counter" tours. This is your chance to truly explore this Alexandria treasure first established in 1792. Witness the evolution of the Stabler-Leadbeater pharmaceutical business through the museum's buildings and collection. Examine the objects, archival materials, and the building itself - by going behind the counter! Reservations are required, and the tour price of \$25 per person also includes a light breakfast. Because of the exclusive access, tours are limited to no more than 12 people. The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum has a spectacular collection of archival materials, including journals, letters and diaries, prescription and formula books, ledgers, orders and invoices. The names of famous customers appear in the documents, including Martha Washington, James Monroe, Nelly Custis and Robert E. Lee.

THROUGH MARCH 13
"Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art" Exhibition

Recurring daily
 Time: 10 am-4 pm
 Location: Alexandria Black History Museum 902 Wythe Street
 Phone: (703) 838-4356
 Admission: \$2
 Explore the history of coiled basketry in Africa and America with this traveling exhibition from the Museum for African Art.

"Grass Roots" traces the evolution of an ancient art while examining rice-growing societies which, through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, exported their cultures to America. The exhibition features baskets from the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia as well as from diverse regions of Africa, and artifacts, such as basketmaking tools and rice cultivation relics.

THROUGH MARCH 20

"Chicago"
 Recurring daily
 Time: Wed - Sat at 8 pm & Sun at 3 pm
 Location: The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Walfax Street
 Phone: (703) 683-0496
 Admission: \$19.50-\$22.50

It's the 1920s in Chicago - a town crazy over jazz and cold-blooded murder. Follow the story of two women - Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly - who are engaged in a continual game of one-upmanship as they try to plan their futures - from behind bars! They plot and scheme, they sing and dance, they use their considerable charms to sway public opinion in their favor. Based on the 1926 play by a reporter about actual criminals and crimes. See the musical that holds the record for Broadway's longest-running revival and inspired the Academy Award-winning movie!

THROUGH APRIL 26

"Tavern Toddlers"
 Recurring weekly on Monday
 Time: 10:30 am-12 pm
 Location: Gadsby's Tavern Museum 134 North Royal Street
 Phone: (703) 838-4242
 Admission: \$7 for group of 3

A special program for toddlers (walkers through 36 months) and their caregivers! Tavern Toddlers features a weekly open playtime in Gadsby's historic ballroom Mondays, excluding Federal holidays, any time between 10:30 a.m. and noon. Themes change monthly. \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, or purchase a 5-week pass for \$30.

THROUGH MAY 31

"Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts" Exhibition
 Recurring daily
 Time: 10 am-5 pm
 Location: Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum 201 South Washington Street
 Phone: (703) 838-4994 or (703) 746-4994
 Admission: \$2

This new exhibition blends historical photographs, artifacts and reflections to tell the story of Girl Scouting in the Washington metro area. "Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts" features a collection of Girl Scout uniforms from the 1910s, 1930s and 1960s, Brownie items from as early as 1937, a display of cookie fundraising materials, and extensive camping and hiking exhibits highlighted by a tent and official Girl Scout gear, including a canteen, collapsible cup, compass and more.

THROUGH OCTOBER 31
National Treasure Tours at Mount Vernon

Recurring daily

A BIT OF HISTORY FROM PAGE 6

buildings at the intersection of Princess and Payne Streets are partially boarded. But as in thousands of similar communities trying to decide what to do about deteriorating neighborhoods, city leaders are embroiled in debate. In what amounts to an intragovernmental power struggle, the independent Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority has challenged the idea that upgrading housing means moving poor people out and middle income in. "It's old fashion urban renewal," said ARHA Chairman A. Melvin Miller. "The motives of people who believe in mixed neighborhoods are good ones," said Bernard Friedan, director of the Harvard-Massachusetts Institute of Technology Joint Center for Urban Studies. "They feel the poor need to be educated

and determined alumnae failed to rename George Washington Middle School in 1979.

Highlights (1979): "Theories about [academic] discrepancies abound, but the most common hypothesis is that black students are not being pushed by their parents to study. Civil rights leaders and educators counter that motivation probably is related to economic conditions rather than race."

Highlights (1983): "[A. Melvin Miller] criticized some council members for advocating public housing alternatives: such as dispersing low-income families in apartments throughout the city and issuing housing vouchers, much like food stamps, to subsidize rents for the poor. Throughout his remarks, parts of the audience cheered and shook placards with painted slogans such as 'We Shall Not Be Moved.'"

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by having middle-income persons near them to set a good example. Opponents point out that income mixing is expensive to implement, since the city must provide incentives, and that its effectiveness has never been proven." In 1973 the Braddock/Parker-Gray neighborhood was called Potomac East, a proximate reference to the Town of Potomac [Del Ray]. The name Parker-Gray did not become popular until 1984; after the School Board voted to close Parker-Gray Middle School

Highlights (1983): "In Alexandria, Ulysses Calhoun, the president of the Alexandria NAACP, gave the plan for promoting ward elections a weak endorsement because of what Calhoun said is a widespread migration of whites into black areas just west of Old Town. There are few remaining black communities large enough to elect blacks if ward elections are held."

The Alexandria Library has *The Washington Post* on microfiche.

Time: 9:30 am-4:00 pm
 Location: Mount Vernon: George Washington's Estate & Gardens Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway
 Phone: (703) 780-2000
 Admission: \$5 in addition to admission
 Purchase a "National Treasure Tour" to take an hour-long walking tour that includes behind-the-scenes information about areas where "National Treasure 2: Book of Secrets" filming took place and how these locations were used during George Washington's time. The tour includes the mysterious basement, usually closed to the public! These popular tours sell out quickly so please plan ahead! Purchasing tickets online is recommended.



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