

# commentary

from other pens...

## Capital's neighbor offers layered history

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Near the river, vibrant blue in the late afternoon sun, a sign in an arts center that once was a torpedo factory reads: "If this is Alexandria that must be the Nile."

Six miles up the Potomac, not the Nile — the dome of the U.S. Capitol rises from the skyline, looking just a bit like a Civil War-era hot air balloon straining to take flight.

With outcroppings of every era since the French and Indian War, Virginia's Alexandria is older by half a century than the District of Columbia of which it once was a part. Feeling neglected, it disentangled itself from the district in 1847, rejoining the state of Virginia.

Alexandria is a multilayered place with many points of view. It traded with the world from its riverfront docks and warehouses. Before the Civil War, some of its merchants traded in slaves. It was twice occupied by invading armies.

Though the Egyptian connection crops up from time to time, the origin of the town's name has no link to Egypt's city of Alexander the Great. This Alexandria was named for John Alexander, a practical Scotsman who in 1669 purchased the land on which the village was laid out.

On the top of Shuter's Hill west of the river, overlooking both Old Town and 20th Century suburban development, is a 333-foot tall, tiered monument that reinforces the Egyptian impression while asserting the town's link to George Washington, its most famous son.

The George Washington National Masonic Memorial is a re-creation of the ancient lighthouse at Alexandria, Egypt, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Its museum counts among its treasures a mantle clock from Washington's Mount Vernon plantation.

The clock's hands are said to have been stopped by Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, an Alexandria physician, at the moment of Washington's death on the evening of Dec. 14, 1799. His house still stands on Duke Street.

On a traffic island at Washington and Prince streets, the statue of a Confederate soldier lowers his head, folds his bronze arms, and coolly and deliberately turns his back on Washington D.C.

The stories are told in "A Guide to Historic Alexandria," by William Seale, an Alexandria resident and architectural historian.

Seale recalls that when Union troops occupied the town in May 1861 their commander, a youthful colonel named Elmer Ellsworth had a mission. He was determined to pull down the large Confederate flag he had seen flying over a local hotel all the way from the White House.

Hotelkeeper James Jackson "had pledged to kill any man who attempted to tear it down."

"Boys, I've got the flag," Ellsworth said as he descended from the roof with the banner over his shoulder. "Yea, and I've got you," Jackson replied, and after a scuffle shot and killed him."

Another war was ending in 1917 when work began on a factory designed to produce torpedoes for the U.S. submarine fleet.

Production peaked during World War II, then shut down with the end of the conflict. The fireproof construction proved useful for storage: art works and dinosaur bones from the Smithsonian Institution and even the captured personal papers of Adolf Hitler and his mistress, Eva Braun.

In a slow transformation, art replaced torpedoes. The aptly named Torpedo Factory became a center for working artists, craftsmen, printmakers, photographers and workers in glass and ceramics.

Nancy Reinke, the Torpedo Factory print maker who created the "that must be the Nile" print, says it was inspired by a television reporter's misinformed comment during a long-ago presidential visit to Egypt.

The Egyptian Alexandria is in the western Nile delta but not actually on the Nile. But Reinke figures a little artistic license is allowed.

"If you live in Alexandria, Va. it's pretty funny," she said.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House, Congress and Washington's history for more than 30 years.



## Education proposals focus on needs of child

The House Education Committee received reports from its Accountability and School Finance Subcommittees last week. They focused on the child and we are ready to move forward towards implementation.

Based on determining what is best for children and working toward that goal, the Accountability Subcommittee recommended:

1. The development by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) of a "school readiness definition" and a "school readiness indicator" that will be used for children entering kindergarten in order to help each kindergarten teacher better instruct our children.
  2. The development by state department of education of "skill sets" for reading, writing and mathematics that each child should master upon completion of the third grade;
  3. Setting the goal that 90 percent of all third graders will master the skill sets, as determined by a "third grade accomplishment examination" to be administered at the end of the third grade to determine if a child has learned the skills essential for further progression;
  4. The development of "markers," by local school districts, to measure whether a child is progressing adequately toward acquisition of the skill sets at the end of kindergarten and grade levels one through three, in order to identify children who may be falling behind;
  5. Regular assessments or diagnostic reviews, chosen by the local school district, during kindergarten and first, second, and third grades to determine a child's level of performance;
  6. Locally-developed intervention strategies to help students who need assistance, including a first grade reading intervention; and
  7. Mandatory retention for a child who does not accomplish the district-determined grade-level markers despite intervention.
- The School Finance Subcommittee looked at



**jim morrison**

- capitol review

funding education with a focus on allowing local school districts the ability to determine equitable education and presented the following recommendations:

1. Increase the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) by no less than \$50;
2. Establish a linkage between increases in state aid per pupil and increases in correlation weight;
3. Support the Governor's proposed increase in at-risk weighting from 9 to 10 percent;
4. Increase state support of the four-year-old at-risk program by not less than the \$1.0 million the Governor recommended to expand the program by 436 children;
5. Set the goal for state financial support of special education funding to guarantee in future years the maintenance of the current estimated fiscal year 2002 level of categorical aid for special education excess costs (85.3 percent) and for this amount to be supplemented by the amount of subsequent increases in federal aid for special education, in accord with the objective of reaching 100 percent of the excess costs of providing special education services;
6. View early childhood and early grades, especially K-3, as an education priority in Kansas;
7. Adopt HB 2218, which removes from law a KPERS penalty;
8. Fully fund the National Board Certification Teaching Excellence Awards program by adding \$11,000 to the amount recommended by the Governor for fiscal year 2002; and
9. Request that the House Appropriations Com-

mittee explore the concept of developing a program for a two-year budget cycle for funding public elementary and secondary education.

The Education Committee is drafting legislation according to subcommittee recommendations. You may be interested in visiting the Internet website <http://www.denverpost.com/news/news0217b.htm>.

This is one way private funds may be used to enhance education at the local level and is one of the partners I had lined up two years ago to do even more in Kansas but I was unable to get the Legislature to listen to me. It is a great mechanism for implementing the KAN-ED program.

**NOTE:** It was reiterated by the Education Committee that there is no intention to consolidate any schools in and around the 121st district. I will continue to do all I can to keep our schools funded and open.

Tuesday is the last day for afternoon Committees to meet with Wednesday being the last for morning committees. We will then be full time on the House floor debating legislation passed from committees. Next week the House will take up legislation that has passed the Senate and the Senate will take up legislation that has passed the House. The exchange of legislation is called "turn around."

It may be worth your time to tune your Internet browser to our online audio feed of the House or Senate. <http://www.ink.org/public/legislative/kshouse.ra> is the House link and <http://www.ink.org/public/legislative/kssenate.ra> is the Senate link. Please give me a call if you need my help with anything involving State Government or have information that might help me better communicate our needs to the Legislature. This week will be very busy and rapidly moving so any help you can provide me will be appreciated - prayers included!

*Representative Jim Morrison Kansas Legislature*  
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## I'll make the decision, just give me the facts

In the Vietnam War, General Creighton Abrams commanded the American forces. During a briefing from his subordinates he interrupted them and said, "You people are telling me what you think I want to know. I want to know what is really happening."

Abrams had the authority to make decisions. Abrams was ready to make decisions. What he lacked was facts - the reality of the situation - on which to base his decisions.

My dictionary defines the word fact as, "the state of things as they are; truth." In business, just as on the battlefield, it is imperative to know the facts. Business owners must have the facts and understand them before they can make good decisions.

Charles F. Knight, the highly successful chairman of Emerson Electric learned the value of getting the facts. Knight said, "Every mistake I made - and we all make mistakes - came because I wasn't smart enough to get the facts."

Our knowledge is all of the facts we've learned. While knowledge is necessary for sound decision making, facts alone will not always lead us to good decisions. For example, I know that Nolan Ryan both walked more batters and struck out more batters than any other pitcher in professional baseball. That's a fact. However, it won't help me run a better business.

Since the thrust of this column is business and career building information - not trivia - we'll focus on our mission. Here are some business building facts that will help you become more successful.

- You can focus on price or you can focus on value. You can't focus on both. If you decide to focus on price you must become the low-cost provider. Otherwise, anyone with lower costs - less expenses - can take you out of business by lowering their prices below your costs.

The most profitable focus is the value focus. You can sell high-end or low-end as long as the quality and quantity you offer is balanced by the amount you charge for your products and services.

- If you often have to tell customers "I'm sorry," pretty soon they'll believe you. Apologizing for frequent mistakes doesn't compensate your customers for the inconvenience you've caused.



**don taylor**

- minding your own business

You need to find and eliminate the causes of frequent errors, and then eliminate them. If you make a mistake you should apologize. It's common courtesy, and shows respect to your customer. However, if you have to say, "I'm sorry" very often, your customers will begin to tell others just what a "sorry" business you really have.

- It's not what you know that makes you a success...it's what you do with what you know. Certainly knowledge is valuable. I encourage each of you to keep learning. Proverbs 1:5 says, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning..."

However, knowing and not doing is the pattern of failure. When you learn what needs to be done, do it. Even if you move forward slowly, it's better than standing still.

- Good marketing does not begin with a plan, research or a big budget. Good marketing begins with a target customer in mind.

Here is the sequence. First, zero in on a target

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customer group. Second, find out exactly what they want or need. Third, give it to them. Fourth, follow up with great service. Fifth, constantly promote the advantages and benefits you offer.

- No business ever outgrows the quality of the people who work there. It's been my experience that first-rate employers hire first-rate people; second-rate employers hire third-rate people.

If you can't attract and pay first-rate people, don't expect to be the best. That's a fact.

*Don Taylor is the co-author of Up Against the Wal-Mart. You may write to him in care of Minding Your Own Business, PO Box 67, Amarillo, TX 79105. Column sponsored by Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce Business Development Committee.*

### berry's world



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