OPINION

Forgotten New Arrivals

By Harry M. Covert

While the welcome mat is always out for newcomers in Alexandria there are lots of visitors who are really returnees. Consider the pleasures of dining and shopping up and down historic King Street’s Old Town, visiting the magnificent waterfront.

Then there is the comfortable and happy Del Ray. This is a neighborhood with it’s own main street which enjoys a separate but equal status. Active and proud homeowners who love the small town flavor within a big town.

Of course, Alexandria’s West End is booming too. Not all new arrivals find their return as habitable as others want. It’s not their fault perhaps. Thankfully there are folks who make it their business to be welcome wagons of sorts.

The pitch is this: many “visitors” are those returning to the community after serving jail and prison sentences. They are certainly delighted to be free from the bonds of justice but they face challenges of enormous proportions after penance.

Where to live? Where to work? How to get a job?

It’s not unusual to hear such words as “they got no education, homelessness and hunger. Many but mainly no jobs, family rejections, despair, no education, homelessness and hunger.”

Where to live? Where to work? How to get a job?

As “come heres” or “new arrivals” find joy and comfort in the friendly confines of the celebrated city there is room to welcome and help those “recovering” from “controlled environments.”

Covert Matters

It’s a common comment that many former offenders find their way back to jail cells. The reasons are many but mainly no jobs, family rejections, despair, no education, homelessness and hunger.

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Protecting Digital Property

By Deborah C. Matthews

It is a new world out there. Looking forward, we face a digital frontier with many unknowns. You might know where your digital things are located, but could others find them without your help?

The digital frontier has changed how we access what’s ours. Digital property is often hidden from view. No longer can we simply reach out and touch things. What is digital property?

Digital property is everywhere and what it constitutes is broad – e-mail, texts, social media posts, online accounts, videos, passwords and IDs to access sites, data on shopping, financial and other sites, electronic documents, photo collections, etc. To the dismay of many, your iTunes music collection, downloaded e-books or movies are not included - you purchased only a lifetime license. The licenses typically expire when you die.

To determine how a site or online provider will treat your data in case of death or incapacity, read the Terms of Service to see whether a guardian or your executor may access the data, remove it, or if your account won’t be hidden. One client bought an old-fashioned address book to track accounts and passwords that is kept away from the computer. Another listed all accounts, security questions and current passwords and left it with my office in a sealed envelope with instructions on when and to whom it is to be released. The gold standard, says digital experts Sharon Nelson and John Simek, is keeping data in an encrypted electronic file for security and identity theft reasons. While you can diligently create a comprehensive list, that is not enough. It must be kept current as passwords change and additional accounts are created. Careful consideration must be given to where the list is kept and who is to have access.

Taking the time to prepare an inventory may mean your digital property won’t just disappear from view. Protecting your digital property and other security issues will be addressed at the third annual Senior Law Day. “Staying Safe — Avoiding Scams — Don’t be a Victim!” on Saturday, Oct. 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Alexandria, 2932 King St. This free event is sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association. Register at www.seniorservicesalex.org or by calling 703-836-4414 ext 10.

This was excerpted from an article co-authored by Deborah G. Matthews, Esq., an Old Town Alexandria attorney, with Sharon D. Nelson, Esq. and John W. Simek of Senior Enterprises, Inc., a Fairfax digital forensics, information security and information technology firm, that published in the Virginia Lawyer, July 2013.

Senior Services of Alexandria

Alexandria’s City Hall has welcomed the work of Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR). Not really new-comers because they’ve been involved with people in all of Northern Virginia for years.

The city’s funding enabled OAR to find office space where it’s needed in a big way. One of the city’s largest religious institutions answered their call. Downtown Baptist Church on Washington Street offered facilities where ex-offenders, called clients, meet the pros of OAR. They are counseled and aided in “coming home.” It’s not always easy to find a job but AOR has a mission vital. Many anonymous donors find OAR’s mission vital.

Local companies find ways to put the clients on their payrolls. This takes time. It’s worth the hard work though.

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