

Alexandria Times

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After almost 50 years, it was time for an upgrade

BY KERRY MITCHELL

During the 1970s restoration of Carlyle House, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority installed a state-of-the-art fire suppression system, Halon 1031, which was widely used in museums, telecommunications rooms, data centers and libraries.

Halon came on the market in the 1960s and worked by removing oxygen from the space. Over time scientific evidence indicated the agent was an ozone depleting chemical and by the 1990s the installation of new Halon based systems was banned in the United States.

As we approach Carlyle's 50th anniversary, we have decided to follow in the footsteps of nearby sites like Mount Vernon and Gunston Hall in replacing our Halon system with a Novec System. This system works differently than Halon; instead of removing oxygen it removes the heat from the space.

Once the fire is extinguished the fluid evaporates immediately and leaves no residue. In a 270-year-old building removing an old system and installing a new one has its challenges. During our August closure, Vintage Building has been removing floorboards as well as cutting and drilling

into the plaster to make way for the new system to be installed with the least amount of damage to original framing of the house.

Once the system is installed, Vintage Building will come back to fix the plaster and relay the floorboards. It is also a big job for the staff of Carlyle House as we have packed up, covered and moved collection pieces to ensure their safety during this time.

While the museum is closed for tours during this time, staff is still busy working on various public and school programs to offer in the fall and into 2024. With the work being done inside, we can still offer pro-

gramming outside away from the construction.

On August 26, from noon to 4 p.m. we'll be hosting our free program: The War of 1812 Comes to Alexandria. This will look at Alexandria during the British Occupation in 1814 as well as the Herbert family who was living here at the time. Yoga on the Magnolia Terrace will continue to occupy the Magnolia Terrace four times a week: Tuesday and Thursday at 6 p.m. and Friday and Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Have you ever used the public computer services at an Alexandria Public Library?

55% I have never used them.

29% I have used them once or twice.

13% Yes, I use them often.

3% I thought libraries had books, not computers!

This Week

Take the poll at alextimes.com

Do you like the fact that ACPS starts back to school in the third week of August?

A) Yes, I like an early start.

B) No, I think school should start after Labor Day.

C) I'm not sure.

D) I'm good with either.