

Shawn Storer shows his pottery at Gifts from the HeART. Storer was a student at Reston Community Center and used the workshop space there to make all his pottery pieces. He said he likes the local aspect of the event. A portion of all proceeds goes to Reston Interfaith.

**Holiday  
Entertainment  
& Gift Guide 2012**

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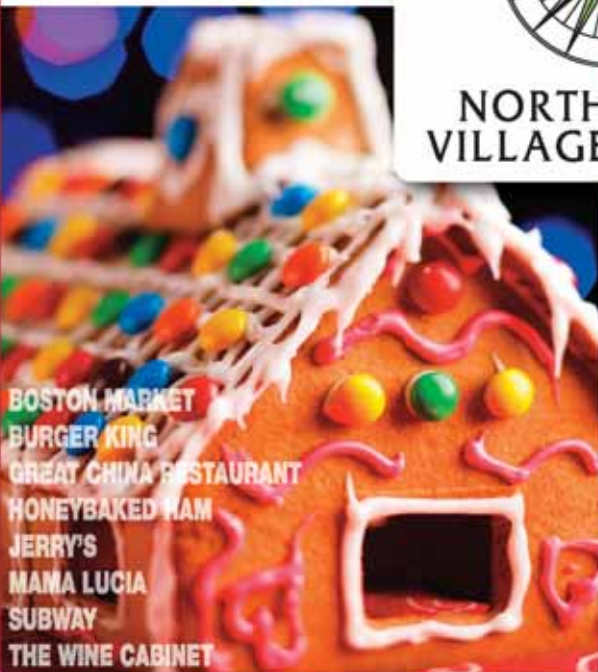
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## 'Jean' Therapy Helps Homeless

**Fairfax County  
kicks off second  
annual Jeans Day  
on Dec. 14.**

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Everyone knows that gene therapy can help scientists treat a number of debilitating diseases, but what about human "jean" therapy?

The homonyms might have more in common than you think, which is why the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed Friday, Dec. 14 "Jeans Day," an innovative approach to alleviating chronic homelessness in Fairfax County.

On Jeans Day 2012, Fairfax County is asking businesses, schools and community residents to pull on a pair of their favorite jeans to demonstrate their support for ending homelessness.

The day of community give-back is hosted by The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Federal Credit Union.

A popular fundraiser for homelessness and other causes nationwide, Jeans Day is a relatively simple idea. Companies go casual for a cause, inviting employees to wear their jeans to work in exchange for a \$5 contribution to fight homelessness. Last year, more than 100 employers representing 3,000 employees participated in the initiative.

"We're proud to partner with the county, through the Office to Prevent & End Homelessness, The Connection Newspapers and Apple Credit Union to provide an opportunity for businesses and their employees to participate in the robust work to end homelessness going on in our community," said Fairfax Chamber President & CEO Jim Corcoran.

"Now, more than ever, we need you to get involved as we move forward with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End



**The Board of Supervisors designated Dec. 14, 2012, as Jeans Day in Fairfax County at their Dec. 4 meeting. (Center) Jim Corcoran, president of The Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, holds the proclamation with Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova.**

Homelessness. Everyone is in need of some type of help at one point in time or another," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. "Now, we need your help and Jeans Day is a great way for you and your business to get involved to prevent and end homelessness in our community as we know it."

Nearly 3,000 children, women and men face homelessness and the threat of severe temperatures and hunger today in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community, according to Dean Klein, executive director of Fairfax County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH).

The majority of people without homes in our community are children and working families.

"In Fairfax County, it's easy to forget that there are homeless families here, homeless children in the schools, and that many people who are homeless here are actually working, but don't make nearly enough money to afford housing," said The Connection Publisher Mary Kimm. "The Connection is committed to raising awareness of homelessness and the need to provide permanent shelter, and to recognizing the good works of individuals and businesses in Northern Virginia."

"I'm excited because Jeans Day is an easy avenue to get employees and their companies, and people of all ages, involved in learning about the challenges and solutions in preventing and ending homelessness," Klein said.

## Board Selects Appointees to Commission

**Bi-partisan group will  
review election process.**

On Tuesday, Dec. 4, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed representatives to the Bi-partisan Election Process Improvement Commission, which was created by the board after long lines were reported across various voting precincts during the most recent election.

The list of appointees consists of two co-chairs; one appointee designated by each supervisor; two appointees designated by the chairman; chairs of both the Republican and Democratic Party of Fairfax County; and representatives from various Fairfax County organizations, including the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, the Fairfax Bar Association, Fairfax County Public Schools Administration, Federation of Citizen's

Association, and disability and minority community representatives.

The purpose of the commission is to review and make recommendations regarding Fairfax County's election process. The commission will concentrate on ways to improve the county's efficiency on Election Day, with a specific focus on addressing wait times, long lines and various voting issues.

"I am pleased to see that the commission is moving forward," Chairman Sharon Bulova said. "It is important that the county identify ways to reduce lines, decrease wait times, and streamline our election process. I am eager to find ways we can improve for future elections."

Bulova recommended the commission begin work in January 2013 after appointments have been made and that recommendations be presented to the Board of Supervisors in May of 2013.

—VICTORIA ROSS



**Athenas Pongo, Ximena Abril and Raoul Pongo helped Milagros Pongo sell her hand-made jewelry and hair ornaments as well as oil paintings.**

## Offering Gifts From the HeART

**Local artists and Reston  
Community Center come  
together for a good cause.**

BY AMIEE FREEMAN  
THE CONNECTION

The Reston Community Center at Lake Anne hosted Gifts from the HeART on Saturday, Dec. 8. Gifts from the HeART featured works from 20 local artists as well as more than 85 pieces of artwork on the walls of the Jo Ann Rose Gallery and pieces in the 3-D case displays. To participate, artists paid an entry fee and also were requested to donate 10 percent of sales to Reston Interfaith.

"This is all about, yes, supporting the artist, but also about supporting the community," said Cheri Danaher, arts education director at RCC. At the start of Saturday's event, \$700 had been collected for Reston Interfaith, with an additional \$300 anticipated to be collected by the end of the event.

In addition to having space for display, RCC offers classes and workshop studios where many of the artists teach classes or refine their skills. "Reston Community Center has great resources in terms of the instructors who offer classes and monitor the open studio times," said Gloria Morrow, exhibit coordinator at RCC. Many of the instructors and their students were showing their own work which they had created at RCC.

Shawn Storer was one of the ceramics class students who was showing his work. Storer's earth-toned pottery bowls were not the standard circular bowl, each had a unique look to them. "I like to make visually striking pottery that is practical, useful, but also artistic. I don't like to just make

cookie-cutter bowls. I like to make something that is a little unique. I call it Mystero's Pottery because I'm a conductor in one of my other lives. I also do a lot of custom work. All of this was made here at RCC. I took some classes here; I use the studios here. Keep it local."

At a nearby table, Milagros Pongo of Reston had some help from her son, Raoul, and daughter, Athenas, and a friend, Ximena Abril. Pongo was offering colorful oil paintings as well as jewelry and felted hair ornaments. "I love Reston," she said. "I love being able to participate in this event and in the Saturday craft shows."

Ilonka Sabic-Lukic, of Reston, who was perusing the tables, said she likes the local aspect of the show. "I just love Reston Community Center. I take classes here whenever I can. I've gotten to know a lot of artists and their work. I like supporting them and the Community Center, and it's especially nice knowing it stays local."

The event has grown since it started in 1999. At that time it was only a Sunday reception with just a handful of artists showing their work, said Danaher. Since then the organizers have coupled the event with Lake Anne's Plaza's "Jingle on the Plaza" holiday celebration. "If we had a bigger space, we could have a bigger show, but we like keeping it here at Lake Anne," said Danaher.

The art pieces will remain on the walls and in the 3-D cases until January. All items are available for sale with a portion of those proceeds going to Reston Interfaith as well.

# OPINION

## Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas

**Many religions enrich Northern Virginia; immigration will lead to the most growth in Catholicism.**

**W**e are a nation of immigrants, to invoke the title of John F. Kennedy's posthumously published book; undeniably a nation descended from immigrants and a nation greatly augmented by immigration.

From this perspective, with the first immigrants motivated by the search for religious freedom, even Christmas is a religious holiday of immigrants.

As this week's main story on immigrants and religion in Northern Virginia explains, the largest number of current immigrants are from Latin America, and they bring with them a

powerful commitment to Christmas through their Catholic faith. In 2010, Fairfax County's Catholic population numbered 184,183, while Protestant adherents numbered 205,556.

Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ on Dec. 25, is one of the two most important Christian religious holidays, along with Easter.

Christmas is also a widely celebrated secular holiday and economic stimulus.

The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah is not one of the most important Jewish religious observances, but it is a celebration that gets added attention from timing. Hanukkah celebrates a great Jewish military victory and the miracle of a one day supply of oil for the temple lasting eight days. Happy Hanukkah to all who are enjoying this holiday, which lasts for eight days and this year began last Saturday evening.

Sikhs celebrated the birthday of their first guru at the end of November. The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) preached that there is only One Universal Creator. Guru Nanak brought a message of love

and equality to his disciples, the Sikhs, (the word Sikh means a disciple or seeker of truth) and urged three things: always remember the creator God (Akaal Purkh), always live a honest life and earn a just living and always share your blessings with less fortunate ones (<http://www.sfova.org/sikhism>).

Buddhists celebrated the day of Buddha's enlightenment on Bodhi Day, Dec. 8 this year (<http://www.ekoji.org>).

Diwali, the major Hindu celebration, commemorated with lights welcoming a hero home, was in November this year. Hindu temples in Fairfax include the Durga Temple (<http://www.durgatemple.org>).

This of course is not an exhaustive list of other religions or of religious holidays in November and December. We welcome letters and comments. Share your religious and holiday traditions. You can submit a letter online at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter).

You can read the stories in our immigration series at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/Immigration](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/Immigration).

EDITORIAL

## Celebrating Diversity Through Culture

BY KENWAL SACHDEVA

IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

**W**hen my brother got married, his wife came to our house. Ours was a joint family with my parents, grandparents, elder brother, his wife, and two sisters. My new sister-in-law was coming from a different state with different family traditions and way of life. Since she was the new member in our family, it was our job to make her feel at home, to make sure she feels comfortable, to help her settle down and become a part of the family, to give her love and affection so that she does not miss her family too much. And we all worked towards making it happen. In turn, she also adapted to our ways and became a lovable part of the family.



So, when people from different countries, diverse cultures, and dissimilar values migrate to United States, they try to adjust and adapt to the new culture. But the onus should also be on American people to welcome them, to make them

comfortable and feel at home.

What do we do to create awareness about different cultures? Unfortunately, I have not seen much effort on the part of the government. People can be so ignorant about different cultures, that they expect same kind of behavior from all in different situations. I would like to see some organizations stepping up and make deliberate efforts to make connections to diverse cultures.

People of different cultures also must advertise and organize events, and invite all to create cultural awareness.

The Sikh foundation of Virginia, the Sikh temple at Ox Road is committed to this cause. We organize a cultural program each year in which more than 100 children and adults participate and perform to

typical Punjabi folk music. We advertise the event in local newspapers and invite people from different faiths. This is an important event to make connections with our extended American family. We have found that many people are interested in learning about different cultures, but do not know where to go and whom to approach. This event generates enough interest and we do get interesting questions to understand our dances and music. Moreover, music knows no language barriers, and everyone enjoy the dances a lot. Cultural events could be a gateway to get to appreciate and celebrate diversity.

*Kenwal Sachdeva of Fairfax Station is a Public Relations Officer for Sikh Foundation of Virginia.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Saving the World, or at Least Fairfax County

To the Editor:

I've lived here my entire life. I've ventured through trails all over Northern Virginia, I've gazed upon the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains, I've sat next to the awesome power that makes up the tidal region of the Potomac River, I've stalked trout lying in a stream bed, slowly making their way up to the surface and back down once again. But time and time again, I have seen people abuse our natural resources. The water that makes up our rivers

and streams is stained heavily with garbage. The forest floors are littered with beer cans, chip bags, those empty bottles no one wanted to carry to the trash bins. We have been given a great privilege; to be able to enjoy the beauty that is the nature which surrounds us. But with this, there has been an unimaginable amount of responsibility cast upon us. We have to, for lack of a better expression, enjoy responsibly. Although this might seem like a Herculean task, it's really

not. All our lives we have been taught to throw our trash into the proper reciprocals, and to dispose of waste correctly; why not take these lessons to the outdoors? If we don't start taking care of our world, the world will stop taking care of us.

I leave you with a quote from one of my best friends, Cecil, "If I can take it in full, I can bring it out empty."

**Hameed Ali Talebian**  
Herndon

## Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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1606 King St.  
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Call: 703-917-6444.  
By e-mail:  
[herndon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:herndon@connectionnewspapers.com)

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## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 12

**Fairfax Christian School Holiday Performance.** 12:30-1:30 p.m., at Fountain Square, 11921 Freedom Drive, Reston. The Fairfax Christian School Music Ensemble spreads holiday cheer in the square. [www.fairfaxchristianschool.com](http://www.fairfaxchristianschool.com).

## FRIDAY/DEC. 14

**Film Screening: Herb and Dorothy.** 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market Street #103, Reston. HERB & DOROTHY tells the extraordinary tale of the Vogels, who filled their one-bedroom New York apartment with more than 4,000 works of art over a 45-year period; refreshments available. [www.restonarts.org](http://www.restonarts.org).

**A Christmas Chaos.** 7:30 p.m., at the Industrial Strength Theater, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. When the Royal Shakespeare Company fails to show up for their performance of A Christmas Carol, a fearless band of hapless actors and technicians try to pull together their own production in a matter of hours. \$15, general admission; \$10, children 10-and-under. [www.eldentstreetplayers.org](http://www.eldentstreetplayers.org).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 15

**Santa's Workshop.** 10 a.m.-noon, at Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. A visit with Santa, crafts and brunch; register by Monday, Dec. 10. \$8 per child; \$4

per adult (if eating brunch). 703-787-7300 or [www.herndon-va.gov](http://www.herndon-va.gov).

**Holiday Open House.** Noon-8 p.m., at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market Street #103, Reston. Come by the gallery and bid on a collection of art and browse the exhibit CAIRNS; complementary refreshments. [www.restonarts.org](http://www.restonarts.org).

**Silent Auction.** 2-4 p.m., at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market Street #103, Reston. Come by the gallery and bid on a collection of art and browse the exhibit CAIRNS; complementary refreshments. [www.restonarts.org](http://www.restonarts.org).

**A Christmas Chaos.** 2:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., at the Industrial Strength Theater, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. When the Royal Shakespeare Company fails to show up for their performance of A Christmas Carol, a fearless band of hapless actors and technicians try to pull together their own production in a matter of hours. \$15, general admission; \$10, children 10-and-under. [www.eldentstreetplayers.org](http://www.eldentstreetplayers.org).

**'Tis the Season Choral Concert.** 4 p.m., at Epiphany Episcopal Church, 3301 Hidden Meadow Drive, Herndon. The Fairfax Choral Society West Campus Youth Choruses will present "'Tis the Season" featuring carols, chorales, and songs of the season. In advance: \$20 for adults; \$10 for students. At the door: \$22 for adults; \$10 for students. 703-642-3277 or [www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org](http://www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org).

**Mercury Rizing.** 7:30 p.m., at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. The new bluegrass band in town brings seasoned veterans onto the scene with both traditional and contemporary bluegrass featuring wood and strings and harmonies. \$12; children 12-

and-under, free. 703-435-8377 or [www.mercuryrizing.com](http://www.mercuryrizing.com).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 16

**Collector's Choice Raffle.** 2 p.m., at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market Street #103, Reston. This fundraiser supports the Greater Reston Arts Center and ticket purchases enter the buyer in an art raffle. \$150; \$125 for GRACE members. [www.restonarts.org](http://www.restonarts.org).

**Reception: Saturday Morning Artists.** 2-4 p.m., at RCC Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Meet four oil and mixed media artists, two South Africans and two Americans, who learned to paint together and, three of them being professionals, set aside time to paint every Saturday morning in the studio of the full-time artist among them. [www.loretta-scott.com](http://www.loretta-scott.com).

**A Christmas Chaos.** 2:30 p.m., at the Industrial Strength Theater, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. When the Royal Shakespeare Company fails to show up for their performance of A Christmas Carol, a fearless band of hapless actors and technicians try to pull together their own production in a matter of hours. \$15, general admission; \$10, children 10-and-under. [www.eldentstreetplayers.org](http://www.eldentstreetplayers.org).

**Peace Service.** 7 p.m., at the Dranesville Church of the Brethren, 11500 Leesburg Pike, Herndon. The congregation will gather to remember the battle and pray for peace; A small exhibit on the battle, including a few artifacts found near the church, will be in the downstairs meeting hall. 703-430-7872 or [www.dranesvillebrethren.org](http://www.dranesvillebrethren.org).

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7



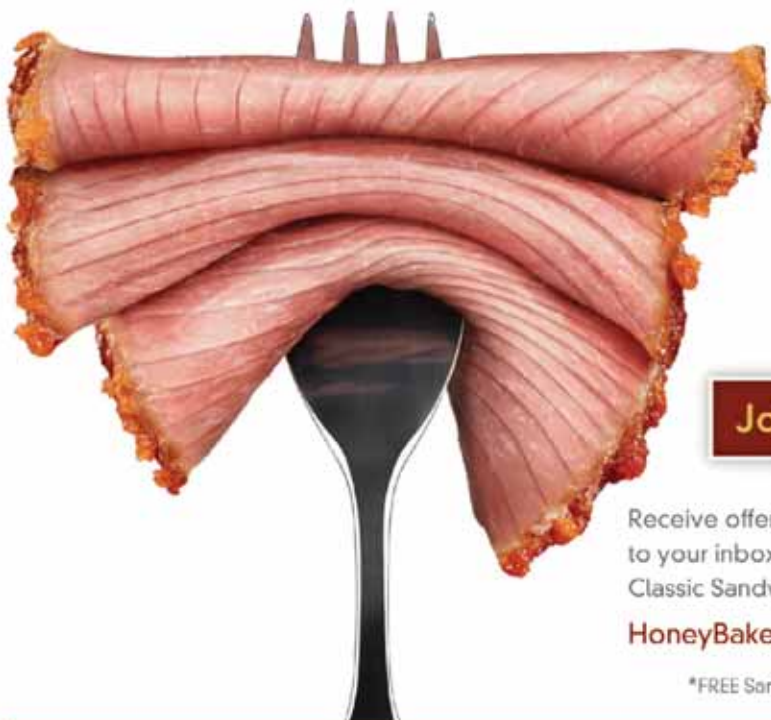
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## Mercury Rizing

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 6

## MONDAY/DEC. 17

**Herndon for the Holidays.** 6-8 p.m., throughout Herndon. Area-wide neighborhood decoration contests for traditional, whimsical, lights and more categories. 703-435-6800 ext. 2084 or [www.herndon-va.gov](http://www.herndon-va.gov).

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 19

**Open Mic Night.** 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 697 Spring St., Herndon. Every Wednesday. Register your band at [BluesSlide@aol.com](mailto:BluesSlide@aol.com) or 703-593-5206. [www.jimmystavern.com](http://www.jimmystavern.com).

## MONDAY/DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve Golf Tournament.** 10 a.m., at the Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. An annual four-person scramble with a cart, range balls, prizes and lunch included; entry deadline in Dec. 21. \$70. 703-471-5769 or [www.herndongolf.com](http://www.herndongolf.com).

**New Year's Eve Celebration.** 7 p.m.-12:30 a.m., at ArtSpace, 750 Center St., Herndon. Family activities, a bonfire from 9-10 p.m., music and refreshment in the gallery starting at 10 p.m. All ages welcome. 703-956-6590 or [www.artspaceherndon.org](http://www.artspaceherndon.org).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 5

**Weekend Bluegrass Concert Series: Danny Paisley.** 7:30 p.m., at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon. Paisley's high lonesome voice fronts the band his father used to lead and the band remains a hallmark of traditional bluegrass since decades past. \$15,



**Pear and Pomegranate, 30x40, by Loretta Scott.**

## New Exhibit: Saturday Morning Artists

Loretta Scott, Trish Everhart, Marann Bonorchis and Vivian Leinio set aside Saturday mornings to paint in Scott's studio. This exhibit, open until Dec. 31 at RCC Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, showcases the work of the four artists' many Saturdays working together. A free artists' reception is on Dec. 16 from 2-4 p.m. 703-476-4500 or [www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com).

adults; children 12-and-under, free. 703-435-8377 or [kd4fue@verizon.net](mailto:kd4fue@verizon.net).

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 16

**Open Mic Night.** 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 697 Spring St., Herndon. Every Wednesday. Register your band at [BluesSlide@aol.com](mailto:BluesSlide@aol.com) or 703-593-5206. [www.jimmystavern.com](http://www.jimmystavern.com).

## ONGOING

**National Realty Toys for Tots/FISH Drop-off.** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at 11890 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Through Dec. 14, drop off new, unwrapped toys in the donation box in the lobby or buy a \$25 gift card through Herndon-Reston FISH for teenagers through age 18 to use for Christmas wishlist items. 571-205-8874.

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# Being Muslim in Fairfax County

Immigrants face the challenge of balancing Islamic faith and American culture.

By AMNA REHMATULLA  
THE CONNECTION

Over the years, Muslims from different countries migrated and settled in the Fairfax County area; however, the children of immigrant parents often struggle the most because they have to balance their Islamic faith along with the influence of American culture.

Sarah Khan has lived in the Springfield area for the past 42 years after coming to America from Pakistan at the age of 11. “In the 1970s, there was one mosque: the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C. Everybody just went to that one. So, as Muslims we were very united.

Nobody fought with one another. There was like 50 to 60 families that used to come to the mosque and everybody got along well,” Khan said. Now there are many mosques in the area such as Dar Al-Hijrah in Falls Church, Darul Huda in Springfield and ADAMS in Sterling, to name a few.

Back when Khan was growing up in the area, nobody knew what Muslims were. “The hardest part was when I was fasting as a young girl and my PE teacher made me run. I told her I was fasting and she didn’t realize what fasting was,” Khan said. When Khan told her teacher she was Muslim, her teacher replied, “What is that?”

Khan admits that it is much easier being muslim in today’s society. “Everybody knows your religion. People respect it. You’re free to do what you want. You don’t have to pretend to be somebody you’re not. You can still be yourself and be accepted,” Khan added.

**SOME MUSLIM PARENTS** turn towards putting their children in Islamic schools to help them retain their Islamic identity. Al-Qalam Academy, located in Springfield, is an all-girls Islamic school from grades fifth through 12th. Girls at the school are taught the core subjects of math, science, English and history in addition to learning Islamic studies, Arabic and the holy Quran.

“It is hard to balance my life socially and religiously,” Samira Sather, a seventh-grader at Al-Qalam Academy said. “I attend lectures in mosques and pray five times a day. Sometimes when I leave the house and one of our prayers pass by, I feel shy to pray in public because I already attract too much attention,” Sather said.

Maryem Ahmed, an eighth-grader at Al-Qalam Academy, is a third generation American who was born in Fairfax County. “I don’t generally call much attention to myself as a Muslim, but some people view me with their perceptions of what a Muslim is because I wear hijab [religious head covering]. And those perceptions are many times misconceptions of who I am,” Ahmed said.

“Sometimes when I meet people for the first time, they seem shocked to hear me speak to them without a foreign accent. It’s like, they see me wearing hijab, and immediately think I come from overseas,” Ahmed said. “Not that there’s anything



Imam Mohamed Magid, executive director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, speaks on the importance of faith in peace Feb. 3, 2011, during the ADAMS commemoration of World Interfaith Harmony Week.

wrong with coming from overseas, but it’s just that they’ve already jumped to the conclusion that I’m not even from America, without even speaking to me,” Ahmed said.

Sather looks up to her mother for wearing the hijab. “I think of my mother and wonder how she goes through it all. She looks different and speaks differently, in addition to being a Muslim. I admit it’s hard to abide by all the rules Islam gives us. I strive to be like my mother because she doesn’t care what anyone else judges her for; she is focused on what God will judge her on,” Sather said.

Ahmed admires her father who works as an engineer at the Department of Defense. She said, “He served as the president of our neighborhood civic association and initiated several activities to make our neighborhood a better place to live,” Ahmed said. She helped her father by handing out civic association newsletters and neighborhood watch schedules to inform her neighbors and help prevent neighborhood crime.

More than 11 years have passed since Sept. 11, 2001; however, Muslims continue to face prejudice. Ahmed experienced an act of injustice not too long ago. “My older sister and I were going to a local restaurant, and there was a man standing outside,” Ahmed said. “As we passed him to go inside I saw him, out of the corner of my eye, spit in our direction, barely missing my shoes. I turned to look at him in surprise. Instead of apologizing, that person simply glared at me with a look of disgust on his face,” Ahmed said.

Abdullah Malik, an African-American who grew up in the Northern Virginia area, was only 16 at the time of 9/11. His younger brother, 13 years old at the time, was framed by his peers at school, in a situation in which they illegally broke into his locker and placed a ticking device mimicking a bomb inside. “This caused the bomb squad to show up to our school, evacuate the entire building of 4,000 students, blow up his entire locker in front of his friends and then proceed to interrogate him for hours,” Malik said.

Similarly, Khan’s children were treated differently after 9/11 at school. People made fun of their names. People also made fun of their background

SEE REBUILDING. PAGE 10

# FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION



The Durga Temple of Virginia, the largest Hindu structure in Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C.



The Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station.

# Dynamic and Diverse

New immigrants bring religious diversity to Fairfax County.

By VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Part four of an ongoing series.

The sight is striking. At the intersection of Hooes Road and Silverbrook Drive, on the dividing line between Lorton and Fairfax Station, is the largest Hindu structure in three states. The Durga Temple of Virginia—with its multi-tiered, bronze-tipped towers—punctuates the traditional suburban vista of neo-colonial homes and new shopping centers.

On Ox Road, neatly tucked between acres of land and upscale neighborhoods, is a large golden dome mounted atop the sprawling gurdwara (place of worship) of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia.

A short distance away is the campus of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple, its clean architectural lines evocative of many Japanese structures.

Near Walney Road in Chantilly, the circular dome and stylized arabesque arches of the Chantilly Mosque is home to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

The East Asian architecture is a powerful visual reminder that Fairfax County has changed.

Julie Knott of Burke, a member of the Accotink Unitarian congregation, said she welcomes the county’s increasingly diverse houses of worship. “Our church is just a mile away from the Sikh temple. We stand for many of the same values. We need to support one another.”

“How welcoming we are to this diversity will say much about how we grow and thrive in the future,” said the Rev. Scott Sammler-

Michaels, senior minister of the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church in Burke.

## Immigration Brings Religious Diversity

In 1970, religious groups in Fairfax County mirrored its highly homogenous demographic composition. More than 93 percent of the county was white and middle-class, and for the most part, adherents of mainline Protestant, Catholic or evangelical Christian churches.

As immigrants flowed into Fairfax County from all parts of the globe in the past four decades, they brought not only cultural diversity but their diverse religious traditions.

A 2012 report on religion and international migration by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life—“Faith on the Move: The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants”—finds that the United States has been the world’s number one destination for Christian immigrants. Of the 43 million foreign-born people living in the U.S. as of 2010, an estimated 32 million (74 percent) are Christian.

“Faith on the Move” draws on a new database created by the Pew Forum that combines hundreds of census, surveys and other sources to shed light on the origins, destinations and religious affiliations of international migrants, according to Jamila Woodson at the Pew Forum.

Other findings show that: Although Protestants currently

outnumber Catholics in the United States, new immigrants, especially those from Central and South America, are overwhelmingly Catholic, suggesting that America is close to becoming a minority Protestant country.

Fairfax County mirrors this national data. The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), a free source of online religious information housed at Pennsylvania State University, tracks such trends. According to the ARDA, in 2010 Fairfax County’s Catholic population numbered 184,183 while mainline, evangelical and black protestant adherents numbered 205,556.

Immigration is leading to an increase in the number of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in the United States, according to the Pew report.

In Fairfax County, the ARDA reports about 11,000 adherents to Buddhism in 2010, the first decade in 30 years the ARDA captured that data. In 2010, the ARDA reports about 6,500 adherents to Hinduism in throughout the county.

According to a 2001 study by the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area Education Fund, surveys of numerous Fairfax County school population records indicate that about 400,000 Muslims live in the greater Washington metropolitan area, which extends from Richmond to Baltimore.

About 150,000 Muslims live in Fairfax, according to the study. Roughly half are native born and half are immigrants or refugees.

According to the league’s report, there are several enclaves of Muslims in Fairfax, wealthy Iranians settled in Great Falls and middle-class Iranians, Pakistani, Afghani and Indians congregated in Springfield and Reston-Herndon. Recent refugees live



Statues of Radha Krishna—the supreme Hindu goddess—at the Durga Temple of Virginia in Fairfax Station.

mostly in the Baileys Crossroads area.

In addition to Muslims, Buddhists and other non-Christian religions, evangelical Christian churches are flourishing in Fairfax County’s suburbs and appeal to many Korean, Chinese and Latino immigrants.

In Chantilly and Centreville, the vast majority of Korean and Chinese immigrants identify as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Independent denominations.

Chantilly Bible Church, started in 1978 by Pastor Steve Austin, is “purposefully a diverse body of believers” that actively reaches out to immigrants in the community.

In addition to English, the world’s most spoken languages of Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish are integral parts of our ministry. The doors of Chantilly Bible Church are open to our changing society. We believe that racial and cultural harmony reveals the reality of new life and unity in Christ,” Austin said.



Anna Song, a music student at George Mason University in Fairfax, plays the violin during Chantilly Bible Church’s Sunday services.



Pastor Lew Whittle and Pastor Isaac Huang of the Chantilly Bible Church, who lead Hispanic and Chinese outreach ministries.

# Bienvenido! Huan yíng! Welcome!

Chantilly Bible Church thrives on diversity by providing outreach to immigrants.

By VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

Pastor Isaac Huang vividly remembers the day he landed in the United States from Taiwan. It was Jan. 7, 1982, and Huang, 25, was looking forward to studying computer science at Old Dominion University. But when he arrived at Norfolk airport, he got a shock.

“We landed during a huge snowstorm, and I had never seen snow before. Snow? What is snow?” Huang said, smiling at the memory. “Remember that Taiwan has a tropical climate, so I was not dressed at all for this cold weather.”

Huang, who left his high-tech job for the seminary in 2000, is now an elder at Chantilly Bible Church, an evangelical Christian church that actively reaches out to Chinese, Latino and Indian immigrants.

**BORN IN TAIWAN** in the 1950s, during a time of brutal religious and political oppression, Huang said he desperately wanted to live in America. In 1949, the Nationalist government had imposed martial law. During nearly 40 years of what is known as “the White Terror,” more than 140,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned and thousands executed for being perceived as anti-Kuomintang or pro-Communist.

“I wanted to live in America; everybody did. I thought it would give me a good future, which I could not have in Taiwan,” Huang said. “I always admired the freedoms here and I appreciated the functioning of the American political system.”

Huang said he grew up in a Christian family that took a “legalistic approach” to understanding the Bible, with many “shall nots.”

“My childhood was filled with physical illnesses and emotional struggles. Even though I attended church every Sunday with my parents, I rarely pondered the meaning of salvation and I did not feel much of God’s love,” he said.

In his junior year of college at Old Dominion

University, that changed when he attended a campus evangelical fellowship meeting.

“During that meeting, I was deeply touched by the message and came to realize, for the first time, that I was a sinner, but Christ died for me and forgave my sin. As I put my trust in Jesus, my life was forever changed by God,” Huang said.

“He and his wife Ramona demonstrate great compassion for Chinese people who need to know Christ,” said Lewis Whittle, pastor to Hispanics and the church’s English as a Second Language director. Whittle said that after 20 years of development, the Chantilly Bible Church’s Chinese ministry now impacts every area of the church program and is the dominant minority in the 34-year-old church.

Since the 1990s, Huang said more than 150 Chinese have been baptized at Chantilly Bible Church. Some have returned to China, Taiwan or their other countries of origin, but many remain at the church.

The church leadership also wanted to have an outreach to the growing Latino community, which was finally launched in 2004 when the Whittles joined the church after serving Hispanics in Los Angeles. As a member of the pastoral staff, Whittle, along with his wife Dianne, has actively engaged the Latino community.

“Our experience in addressing immigrant needs and our progress in welcoming them at the church proves the benefit of diversity,” said Whittle, who has lived in California, Central America and Spain.

In June 2007, Chantilly Bible Church began conversational English classes with volunteer teachers who speak Mandarin and Spanish. Their most recent term, Whittle said, included 128 students from 26 countries. A citizenship class is also part of the program.

Steve Austin, the senior pastor and founder of Chantilly Bible Church, said that the latest cross-cultural ministry to become part of the church focuses on the burgeoning Asian Indian population in Fairfax and Loudoun counties.

SEE CHURCH. PAGE 10



## FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

**A child and her parents during prayer services at the Sikh Foundation of Virginia in Fairfax Station on Thursday, Nov. 14. The Dias where Guru Granth Sahib (the Holy Book) is adorned is called Darbar Sahib (Holy Court).**

PHOTO BY  
ROBBIE HAMMER/  
THE CONNECTION



# Sikhs Bring Foundation of 'Service to Others'

**Fairfax Station temple active in community outreach.**

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n a recent Thursday evening, Ajaib Singh, 78, one of the founding members of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia, politely escorts a visitor to the area where one removes shoes and dons a headscarf.

In the background, the melodic vibrations of a harmonium blend with the sounds of men, women and children chatting as they sit together on mats on the floor. They are chopping large bowls of onions and other vegetables for a communal meal after an outreach service.

"You see, no one is more elevated than any other," said Singh, noting that everyone sits on the floor during communal meals and during worship service.

Singh said that equality and service to others are key tenets of Sikhism, a monotheistic faith. "I like to say we're a grassroots movement," Singh said, smiling.

Ajaib Singh came to the United States as a graduate student to University of California, at Davis, in August of 1958. After completing his Ph.D. studies in chemistry in 1961, he came to the east coast as a research fellow at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

He and Majit Kaur consider themselves proud members of the SFV congregation and proud American citizens. Ajaib said he wants to share the SFV mission with others, to promote respect and understanding of Sikh values.

**ON SATURDAY, NOV. 17,** the Sikh Foundation hosted people from different faiths to share their thoughts on selfless service, what it means in their faith and how they personally pursue it in their lives. The panel included protestant missionaries and a Coptic Christian immigrant from Ethiopia. During the event, the Sikh community also collected dozens of boxes of winter clothes to send to those still suffering from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

"This event will be marked as the beginning of a new era of interfaith efforts followed by many similar projects where the youth of different faiths will work collectively and help the needy," said Surinder Singh, an active member of the foundation.

Although Sikhs do not have a particular day of worship, the Fairfax Station temple holds services on Thursdays and Sundays. A formal gurdwara service includes the singing of hymns and recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib, Sikhism's Holy Scriptures.

The temple is a welcoming home to many immigrants from India as well as those born in the United States, Singh said.

The Fairfax Station gurdwara, like many around the world, includes classrooms, a Langer Hall for community meals, a sanctuary and a community center, which Singh said is a sign of the religion's values of service and equality.

"Sikhism was founded in an area and in a time in which inequality was rampant," said Navdeep Singh, assistant executive director at the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund and a member of the Fairfax Station Temple his entire life. "If you were a woman, you were less than a man. If you were poor you were less than a rich person. Based on what caste you were, that defined your entire life. Sikhism was a rejection of those ideas."

**SINCE THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS** by Islamic extremists, Sikhs sometimes have been mistaken for Muslims, because of their beards and turbans, and have been the target of hate crimes and discrimination. Many American Sikh women dress like other Westerners or wear the salwar kameez, a colorful north Indian garment of a long shirt and loose-fitting pants.

Gurpreet Singh, a member of the Fairfax Station Temple, said most men wearing turbans are Sikhs, not Muslims.

"I remember the bumper stickers that appeared on cars after 9/11. 'I am Sikh. I am American.' But it shouldn't matter whether it's a mosque or a temple. Hate is hate, and it's wrong."

Navdeep Singh said the Sikh community in Fairfax Station was profoundly touched by the outpouring of support from neighboring churches in the wake of the deadly attack on the Wisconsin Sikh Temple on Aug. 5, when a gunman shot and killed six followers. During a candlelight vigil held at the temple, more than 300 people of all faiths gathered for an evening of unity, resilience and hope.

Politicians and police officers, Muslims and Jews, children and seniors stood side by side on the grounds of the temple, holding up candles, murmuring prayers of peace and listening quietly as community leaders promised solidarity with the Sikh community and reflected on the violence in Wisconsin.

"One might say our community should retreat and live in fear," Singh said, "but Sikhs will keep the doors of the gurdwaras open."

For more information on Sikhism, contact Dr. Ajaib Singh of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia at 540-720-5755 or visit [www.sfova.org](http://www.sfova.org).

## Church Attracts Chinese Immigrants

FROM PAGE 9

"Since the arrival and membership of several Indian families in 2007, key leaders like Manoj Mathai and Sujay Phillips have made Chantilly Bible Church the base for a creative outreach to this community. It even touches India through frequent visits that include evangelism and Bible distribution," Austin said.

Whittle said all three of the ministries are an integral part of Chantilly Bible Church, and none plan to become separate churches.

"Chinese, Hispanics and Indians serve alongside North Americans at every level of the church. The children and youth programs are fully integrated. There are immense benefits for these second and third generations. Bicultural couples are comfortable at Chantilly Bible Church, and, as you would expect, mixed marriages are on the rise," Whittle said.

**IN FACT, THE CHURCH ATTRACTS** so many immigrants that they offer headsets during worship services so those who speak limited English can listen to sermons

interpreted in Mandarin or Spanish. And the songs are projected in English with Mandarin translations.

"Being bicultural and bilingual gives you a special joy in life," Whittle said.

Huang said the language outreach is especially critical for older Chinese immigrants.

"As first generation immigrants, we hold on to our Chinese identity. Chinese is still the mother language," he said.

Huang also said there's a more profound reason for interpreting sermons into Mandarin.

"The older Chinese, like me," he said, smiling, "they need to hear the scripture in Mandarin, so it can enter their heart."

Huang said his greatest joy is baptizing fellow Chinese immigrants. "For Chinese immigrants, wherever they come from, church becomes an attraction. They are longing for something they can't have in their homeland. It's a very special moment. This is something people are afraid to do in Hong Kong or Taiwan. . . . I can't express how happy I feel during a baptism," he said.

## Rebuilding the Trust

FROM PAGE 8

even though they had never even been to Pakistan. Some children said, "Oh, you are hiding in the mountains!"

Khan raised her children with the intent that America is their home.

"We are Americans, we are Pakistani-Americans, but that's where the challenge came after 9/11. The kids asked, 'Are we American or are we Pakistani? What are we?' So that was a big thing, a big challenge that came," Khan said.

**KHAN'S NEIGHBOR,** who she had been living next door to for the past 20 years, stopped speaking to her the day after 9/11. Prior to that, the two friends would exchange Christmas and Mother's Day presents. "We basically watched each other's kids," Khan said. However, it took a long time before Khan's neighbor came around and started speaking to her again.

Another thing that came out of 9/11 was that both Muslims and non-Muslims were hurt. "That trust was gone and it takes time

to rebuild that trust. But one good thing that came out of 9/11 was that the younger generation of Muslims started getting very involved politically and socially," Khan said.

Five months after 9/11, Malik started an interfaith dialogue program with a local synagogue and church. "I worked on educating people about our religion and the peace it teaches," Malik said.

Sather has noticed that over the years, people have treated Muslims a little better. "When I attempt to wear the head scarf, people treat me with more respect than when I don't wear it," she said. "Also, as I get older, I realize there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of."

Khan hopes that her future generations take the good from her background as well as their American background and blend the two. "Some of the good things of American culture are honesty, respect, and tolerance for others. Some of the good things of my culture are religion, family values and traditions. The biggest challenge is to make sure that the generations to come have both," Khan said.



# SPORTS



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

**South Lakes' Alex Smurda, top, wrestles Chantilly's Ashkan Mazloom in the seventh-place match of the heavyweight division during the 2012 FinalAutoPrice.com NOVA Classic on Nov. 8.**

## South Lakes Wrestling Finishes 12th, Herndon 23rd at NOVA Classic

The South Lakes wrestling team tied for 12th at the 32-team 2012 FinalAutoPrice.com NOVA Classic Dec. 7 and 8 at Fairfax High School.

South Lakes' Mike Shoenbottom placed third in the 170-pound division, pinning Broad Run's Logan Shain in the third-place match. Josh Forrest took sixth in the 182-pound bracket, Chris Maginniss placed seventh in the 152-pound division with a 9-4 decision against Battlefield's Ray Bernot, and Alex Smurda placed eighth in the heavyweight division.

South Lakes totaled 99 points and finished tied for 12th with Thomas Jefferson. Battlefield won the event with 194.5 points. Centreville and Fauquier tied for second with 180 points. Paul VI finished fourth with 154.5 points, followed by Lake Braddock (151.5), Mount Vernon (135), Annandale (131.5), McLean (115.5) and T.C. Williams (111.5). Edison and South County tied for 10th with 105 points.

Herndon finished 23rd with 58 points. Jared Nielson placed sixth in the 132-pound bracket for the Hornets.

## Herndon Swim and Dive Beats Centreville

The Herndon boys' and girls' swim and drive teams defeated Centreville on Dec. 7.

In the girls' competition, Herndon's Elizabeth McNulty (500 free and 100 breast), Samantha Kenis (200 IM and 100 fly), Kara Joyce (dive) and Jenna Krynicki (100 back) won their individual events. Karly Ginieczki, McNulty, Kenis and Krynicki teamed up to win the 200 medley relay.

In boys' action, Herndon's Jonathan Nguyen (200 and 500 free), Jack VanCamp (200IM and 100 fly) and Chris Fronczak (50 free and 100 free) earned individual wins. The boy's 200 medley relay (Michael Malito, Jason Maccannon, VanCamp, Nathan Williams), 400 free relay (Nguyen, VanCamp, Williams, Fronczak) and 200 free relay (Nguyen, Jonathan Kent, Fronczak, Maccannon) each won.

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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# Local REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

## October, 2012 Top Sales in Great Falls, McLean, Reston, Oakton and Vienna

**4** 3959 Dumbarton Street,  
McLean — \$2,100,000

**8** 10312 Mystic  
Meadow Way,  
Oakton —  
\$1,350,000

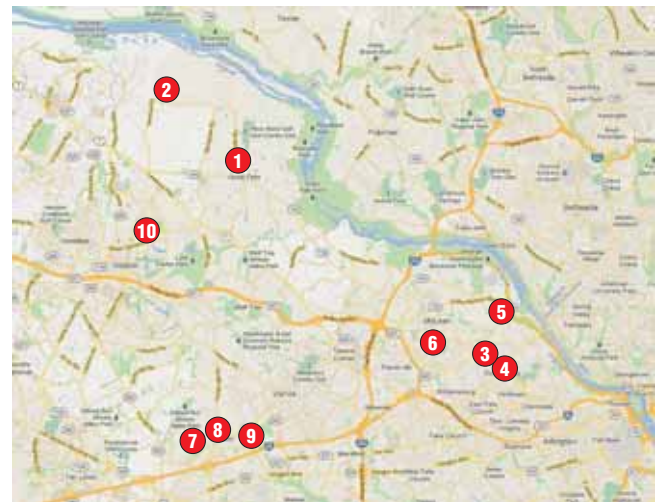
**6** 6825 Rusemont Drive,  
McLean — \$1,690,000

**10** 11576 Lake  
Newport Road,  
Reston —  
\$1,025,000

**9** 9880 Palace  
Green Way,  
Vienna —  
\$1,317,500

Address .....	BR	FB	HB	...	Postal	City	...	Sold Price	....	Type	.....	Lot AC	PostalCode	.....	Subdivision	.....	Date Sold
<b>1</b> 606 DEERFIELD POND CT .....	5	..	7	..	1	...	GREAT FALLS	\$3,000,000	....	Detached	....	1.75	22066	.....	DEERFIELD POND	.....	10/26/12
<b>2</b> 11205 MONTEPELIER RD .....	7	..	7	..	0	...	GREAT FALLS	\$2,800,000	....	Detached	....	5.08	22066	.....	JEFFERSON RUN MANOR	....	10/09/12
<b>3</b> 10690 CHESTERWOOD GLEN LN .....	5	..	5	..	2	...	GREAT FALLS	\$2,150,000	....	Detached	....	1.76	22066	.....	CHESTERWOOD ESTATES	....	10/19/12
<b>4</b> 3959 DUMBARTON ST .....	6	..	6	..	1	...	MCLEAN	\$2,100,000	....	Detached	....	0.44	22101	.....	COUNTRY ACRES	.....	10/09/12
<b>5</b> 1344 KIRBY RD .....	5	..	5	..	1	...	MCLEAN	\$1,815,000	....	Detached	....	0.54	22101	.....	RICHLAND TERRACE	.....	10/25/12
<b>6</b> 6825 ROSEMONT DR .....	6	..	6	..	2	...	MCLEAN	\$1,690,000	....	Detached	....	0.30	22101	.....	ROSEMONT	.....	10/16/12
<b>7</b> 3184 ARIANA DR .....	5	..	4	..	2	...	OAKTON	\$1,420,000	....	Detached	....	1.25	22124	.....	WINDSONG SOUTH	.....	10/01/12
<b>8</b> 10312 MYSTIC MEADOW WAY ..	5	..	4	..	1	...	OAKTON	\$1,350,000	....	Detached	....	2.32	22124	.....	HUNTERBROOKE	.....	10/12/12
<b>9</b> 9880 PALACE GREEN WAY .....	6	..	6	..	1	...	VIENNA	\$1,317,500	....	Detached	....	0.27	22181	...	WILLIAMSBURG COMMONS	..	10/05/12
<b>10</b> 11576 LAKE NEWPORT RD .....	4	..	3	..	1	...	RESTON	\$1,025,000	....	Detached	....	0.48	20194	.....	RESTON	.....	10/12/12

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Experts suggest cleaning carpets and area rugs in a home's family or living room before holiday guests arrive.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CASE DESIGN/REMODELING, INC.

## Preparing Your Home For Holiday Guests

Experts offer checklist for getting a house in tip-top shape.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

In addition to shopping, decorating and attending parties, many are making a mad dash to get their homes ready for the holiday visitors. Take a deep breath: local experts have developed a checklist for creating a guest-ready home.

"Many people feel better about their home when everything is in order and in place," said Steve Magill, a remodeling consultant with fred, the home repair division of Case Design/Remodeling, Inc., and an Oak Hill resident. "It makes the homeowner feel more at ease when minor details are taken care of."

The kitchen is one of the most important rooms in a home, especially during the holiday season. Experts say to make sure your microwave oven, toaster and coffeemaker are in top working condition, or to replace them if necessary.

For extra storage space for cookware, experts suggest installing a pot rack. Also, consider adding extra stools or chairs for guests who like to gather in the kitchen.

Next, survey the living or family room. Experts suggest cleaning carpets or area rugs so that they



**When preparing your home for holiday guests, make sure there is a space near the entrance to collect coats, hats and boots.**

are free of signs of foot traffic. Consider updating the room with holiday home accents or adding new items, as well as accessorizing sofas and chairs with holiday pillows and throws.

"Take a magic eraser to clean up small smudges on walls like around light switches," said Magill, whose firm developed a holiday readiness checklist.

If guests are staying overnight, experts say to make space in a closet or drawer so visitors have a

place to put their clothing. Since not everyone falls asleep at the same time, a bedside clock and reading lamp are helpful accessories.

"Your guest room should be warm and inviting and make your visitors feel as if they are at home," said Magill.

**MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION** by ensuring that all outdoor lighting, including holiday lights, is functioning properly and turned on when it is dark. Outdoor lighting is a key to ensuring safety during the holidays.

Check the front door for signs of wear and consider giving old doors a new coat of paint. "Some of the most impact transformations ... are projects like painting," Paul Zuch of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry said in a statement. In addition, polish and tighten door hardware and oil hinges to prevent squeaking. Considering adding a small rug or welcome mat to the entryway. Establish a place in your home's entrance to collect coats, hats, boots and gloves. Make sure there is extra space and hangers in your coat closet.

"Make sure you think about every room in your home when preparing for the holidays," said Tom Dodd, another fred remodeling consultant. "Thinking about these things ahead of time will help make for an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season."

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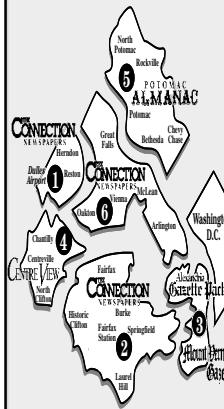
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## Instincts...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

...related to having been diagnosed with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, the terminal/"incurable, but treatable" kind, according to my oncologist. The kind whose median life expectancy at diagnosis is eight months. The kind that John Rhys Davis as Sallah from the 1981 movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark" might have described as "very bad," just as he had described the asps slithering below on the floor of the tomb he and "Indy" had just unearthed. So the news I received in late February, 2009 – such as it was, was never very good. In fact, for an asymptomatic, non-smoking, 54-and-half-year-old male with an immediate-family history of NO cancer, it was, well, "shocking" barely scratches the emotional surface of what I was feeling.

Forty-five months later, I am still dealing with feelings – as in still living, for which I am amazingly fortunate. However, those feelings seem to sometimes have a mind of their own, and accordingly tend to take over and rewire one's brain (figuratively speaking). Moreover, thoughts, actions and behaviors change, and not always for the better, and rarely for the best; most likely a direct result of the cancer's emotional wallop. Thoughts you don't want/never had seep in despite your best attempts at minding them. Behaviors previously uncharacteristic manage to exert more control than you ever imagined. Actions previously unfamiliar cause one to wonder if who you were – pre-cancer, you will ever be again. You don't want to lose yourself inside the whole cancer culture, but being told you're going to die prematurely: in "13 months to two years," has a way of rewriting your record books, whether you intended to or not. Not giving in to this cancer consequence has been my greatest struggle.

Early on, I remember asking my oncologist: "Is it OK to still buy in bulk?" For all you know, based on much of what your doctor is saying, and what you are sensing, your future is tenuous and extremely unpredictable (a version of the humorous advisory to "not buy green bananas"). I mean, the diagnosis is terminal cancer; "HELLO." What are you supposed to think? This is how your mind takes over and you sort of lose it/lose control of it. As former Vice President "Dan" Quayle said in a speech to the United Negro College Fund (not about cancer), "What a terrible thing it is to lose one's mind." Still, it certainly applies.

Another brain drain has to do with specific events scheduled in the future, a future whose guarantee – for me, has been invalidated. I'm watching television during the summer of 2012 and I see ads for Downton Abbey's third season premiere in January, 2013, and instinctively I wonder, will I be alive to see it?

Road projects are another example. At the beginning of the construction of the Intercounty Connector in Maryland (a cross-county highway being built near my house), regularly I would be stuck in the project's related road closures/redesigns and bridge-type flyovers and I would always think to myself: "Am I going to be alive when this project is finished or am I just going to suffer its building pains?"

Next May, the LUNgevity Foundation ([www.LUNgevity.org](http://www.LUNgevity.org)), the largest foundation in the country dedicated to lung cancer research (and on whose Web site my cancer columns are now being posted) will be hosting their annual "Hope Summit" in Washington, D.C. I have been invited to attend and/or speak. My first thought upon receiving the invite: "Am I going to still be alive in May?"

I want to be positive. I am positive. But cancer is a huge negative. It's a constant battle of good versus evil. Sort of like the Indiana Jones movies. But this isn't the movies. This is real. This is cancer, the true definition of "very bad."

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.





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