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Helping Others Help Themselves

NEWS, PAGE 3

Burke
CONNECTION

From left — ECHO volunteers Pat Norton of Springfield, Eileen McGirl of Burke and Patsy Maddox of Fairfax assess and sort donated kitchenwares.

With or Without Walls

NEWS, PAGE 6

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

VIEWPOINTS, PAGE 4

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PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

(Clockwise from top left) ECHO volunteers Pat Norton of Springfield, Eileen McGirl of Burke, Patsy Maddox of Fairfax and Jean Chandler of Burke assess and sort donated kitchen wares.



LCAC Lead Counselor Loretta Shinol of Springfield has managed cases for the nonprofit for over 20 years.

Helping Others Help Themselves

ECHO steps up holiday giving in Burke and Springfield.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Duane Carlson and his wife Alice are sorting canned goods into a long row of evenly spaced paper bags, each representing a family. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, there's a vibrant energy among volunteers buzzing around the Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO) building in Springfield. The nonprofit basic need for assistance organization is open year-round, and now it has the feeling of Santa's workshop.

Duane, Pastor Emeritus at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springfield, and Alice still volunteer once a week after hatching the idea for ECHO 46 years ago, along with nine other Springfield and Burke churches. Seeing a rapidly growing need in their community for food and basic household items, Duane said the founding philosophy was simple.

"We had the idea that there are always



Duane (left) and Alice (right) Carlson of Springfield had the idea to form ECHO.

people who are interested in helping other people," he said. "Don't expect everybody to be interested because they aren't, that's the way it is. But if you can recruit those people like this, you see them all around here, my goodness what you can do."

With a bench of 400 volunteers and a board of 26 church congregations, you can develop a client base of over 1,500 and move over 200,000 pounds of donated food to those clients in a year. ECHO offers clothing, school supplies and limited financial assistance to families in crisis, but food and basic home goods are their main outreach.

"We service the perennial poor, those people who work contract labor jobs, or are on fixed incomes," said ECHO Executive Director Meg Brantley, "that do OK for most of the year and then something happens, like a terribly cold winter and they let two to three of their electricity bills pile up." The idea is not to create a sustaining dependence; rather offer a life-preserver and a leg up.

ECHO serves all of Burke and Springfield, and Brantley said their demographics have shifted over the decades: "53 percent of our clientele is Hispanic," she said, "then African-American, then people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, a lot of that part of the world."

This year ECHO sent out 1,062 invitations to their eligible client families to receive Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, 339 of those registered for Thanksgiving and 224 families are already set to receive Christmas baskets.

Fran Eck of Springfield has managed the

holiday food basket program for many years. "It's exciting to know that these families are getting something special for the holidays," she said. "It can be stressful, but I enjoy doing it."

The food, clothing and household goods are all donated from the Burke and Springfield communities. "They're so very, very generous, they never not give," said Brantley. "When we're out of something, I swear you just put it up on the electric sign outside and within 24 hours people are donating. We've just come off a huge local scouting drive, which got over 24,000 pounds of food."

Businesses also help quite a bit. The Springfield Chamber of Commerce runs a coat drive for ECHO and the week before Thanksgiving, the Cardinal Forest Giant in Springfield donated 18 cases, or 108 individual pumpkin, sweet potato and apple pies. Another major assistance source is the Burke CROP Walk, a faith-based fundraiser for world hunger and crisis relief, which took place Nov. 23 and donates close to \$10,000 each year to ECHO.

The sign in front of the ECHO building at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield usually lists the food, home or clothing items that are in highest demand for them, but they welcome most donations of time, goods or financial help.

95 Express Lanes Scheduled to Open in December

Beginning next month, a 29-mile stretch of I-95 should look a little different. Existing HOV lanes will change to "Express Lanes," offering drivers with an E-ZPass a less congested alternative. The change affects 95 starting in Stafford County around Garrisonville Road, north to I-395 in Fairfax County by Edsall Road.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) partnered with the Transurban and Fluor-Lane 95 LLC for design and construction of the \$925 million project. Funding came from Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act.

VDOT recently released results from an online survey of 1,200 Northern Virginia drivers conducted last month. They concluded from the sampling that many drivers aren't prepared for the

new lanes to open.

To access the lanes, all cars must have an E-ZPass, the flat, white transponder that sticks to the inside of the windshield.

There are two types of passes available: the E-ZPass pays a toll wirelessly when drivers use the Express Lanes; the E-ZPass



Flex works the same while in toll mode, but can also be switched to HOV mode. With three or more passengers along for the ride, Flex cars travel the lanes toll-free.

The direction of travel on the Express Lanes should be familiar to 95 regulars, continuing on the current HOV schedule. But unlike the current HOV lanes, the Express Lanes will be in effect all day, every day.

Once the lanes pass north of the

Edsall Road area on I-395, the current HOV rules go back into effect. Even with an E-ZPass, cars with fewer than three passengers have to exit during HOV hours.

Drivers can find out more information on where to purchase either kind of E-ZPass, as well as direction reversal schedules and the HOV transition location at the official website: www.95expresslanes.com.

—TIM PETERSON

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VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— TIM PETERSON

Emma Lundy of Burke, first grade at Terra Centre Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my family, God and my swim coaches. My family loves me and they take care of me."



Margaret Colby of Burke, fourth grade at Fairview Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for food, because it's yummy."

Raquel Walker of Burke, first grade at Terra Centre Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my mom and dad because they keep me safe and take care of me."



Sam Walker of Burke, third grade at Terra Centre Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for the toys that I have, because not everyone in the world can get toys."

Minah (left) and Jo Hee Sisco (right) of Fairfax, Minah in third grade at White Oaks Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my family because they take care of me," said Minah.

"I'm thankful because everyone is healthy in the family," said Jo Hee.



SEE VIEWPOINTS, PAGE 5

VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— TIM PETERSON

Tom Verdin of Springfield:

"I'm thankful for my family, my relative health and my eighth grade Civics students at South County Middle School."



Natalie Sullivan of Lorton, freshman at South County High School:

"I'm thankful for my alarm clock; I don't know how I'd wake up without it. And my parents, without them I wouldn't have a home and everything I need. And my teachers, they supply me with knowledge."

Cristian Meneses of Fairfax Station, junior at South County High School:

"I'm thankful for my family, how through tough times they'll always be there."



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Corazon Foley, the founding chairman of the Burke/West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls speaks to supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield).



Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) meets with Corazon Foley and representatives from the Burke/West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls.

With or Without Walls

Seniors in Burke and West Springfield look for more activity space.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Larry Mark is 83, lives in West Springfield and practices tai chi with his wife Mary. They go to a class that meets once a week at the Burke Conservancy on Burke Centre Parkway. "It's interesting," he said. "It helps your balance and strengthens your neck and other muscles. Everybody needs better balance."

Mark also volunteers as the class "monitor." Basically, he takes attendance and reports it to a coordinator. The class costs \$5 for an eight-week session, but he gets a pass on that for monitoring. Volunteers help keep the class cost down; the fees go to Fairfax County to pay the instructors.

This tai chi class is part of the Burke/West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls (BWSSCWoW), an initiative offering a variety of activities for the elderly. In addition to the tai chi, classes include line-dancing, yoga, zumba, Hawaiian hula, self defense, ballroom dancing, walking club, book history, genealogy and outside trips.

The BWSSCWoW is the project of Corazon Foley, a retired Burke resident. She got the idea after driving the 80-year-old women from her church, Church of the Nativity in Burke, to the Lorton Senior Center for Active Adults off Route 1.

"Every time I pick them up," Foley said, "they'd say, 'Oh Cora, why do we have to go all the way over there? Why can't we have something nearer here?'" That was shortly after Foley retired in 2007.

EVEN WITH OVER A DOZEN senior centers around Fairfax County, Foley and the ladies decided they needed a space to be active together that was more local to them. Foley said she approached then-Braddock district Supervisor Sharon Bulova about the feasibility of building a new facility in their district.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Pacita Aguas of Burke came to the Fairfax County Government center to help represent the Burke/West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls.

"The answer was the same," said Foley, "Sorry, Cora, there's no money, nor staff, to get a senior center over here."

Foley started approaching churches and other locations in Burke and West Springfield about opening up space, but didn't get very far without liability coverage from the county. She ended up working with Evan Braff, the Regional Manager for Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services.

Braff suggested a network of sites for activities, following models used in other states, creating a "center without walls." He was able to help Foley get liability cover-

age and soon the BWSSCWoW had homes at Accotink United Universalist Church and the Burke Conservancy in Burke, the Durga Temple in Fairfax Station and Washington Irving Middle School in Springfield, among other locations.

They ran one pilot class in the summer of 2009: line-dancing. Over 70 seniors registered. Mark was there at the beginning. "We expanded in that fall," he said, "and have been expanding ever since then. We have 1,200 to 1,400 names on master list, with around 250 that are registered for 16 classes in different subjects at any one time."

Foley is proud of the opportunities the center offers the swelling senior population. "We provide them with physical fitness, intellectual fitness and social fitness," she said, "to give them life."

The classes have become so popular, however, that they're becoming more and more difficult to get into. Increasing wait lists and the Board of Supervisors' Sept. 9 passage of the FY 2014 Budget Carryover prompted Foley to approach Springfield district Supervisor Pat Herrity about whether some of those funds could be re-programmed to help create a dedicated space for the BWSSCWoW.

Herrity invited Foley to the Fairfax County Government Center on Nov. 13 for a meeting. Foley brought a number of proposals to the table, centered around using the Pohick Regional Library on Sydenstricker Road in Burke as a potential site for the center. She was joined by several Burke seniors including Pacita Aguas of Burke Lake Gardens, who helped Foley start the center.

Citing a library renovation set to begin next year, Foley requested having exercise flooring added to the library's existing large

conference room and to have priority in making reservations for the room. More significantly, she asked that an expansion be built on the back of the library to house many of the center's classes.

HERRITY ACKNOWLEDGED there is a need to help active seniors. But, he said of the Pohick proposal, "If we go this route, does this take the senior center off the table and do you get a half a solution instead of a full solution for Springfield?"

Chris Leonard, Director of Neighborhood and Community Services, was at the meeting as well. He shared county budget documentation dating back to FY 2009 for a new Springfield community center in the "beyond five-year planning stage for construction." That would include a senior center, he said.

"When you're dealing with the budget within Fairfax County, there's over three quarters of a billion dollars of construction needs that are included in that," Leonard continued. "When we talk about senior centers, we talk about the fact that we're competing not only with other human services buildings like community service board facilities and homeless shelters. They're also in competition with libraries and police stations, the same pot of money."

"There are very important things in line here," said Herrity. "This is one of the things in line."

Herrity said the construction plans for the Pohick library have long been finalized, but would look into whether an expansion was feasible. He also agreed to check on getting the conference room floor rug removed and reservation priority for the BWSSCWoW. "I don't know whether that can be done, but that's expanding use of an existing facility and that makes all the sense in the world to me."

Foley and her cadre of seniors left the meeting content their voices had been heard.

VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Most Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— MARISSA BEALE

Young Lee, manager at Smartfix, from Burke:

"I am originally from Korea but currently live in Burke, and I am thankful, first, to God because he offers me everything that I need. I am thankful to him for making me happy every day; he just always helps me."



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Holidays Are About Giving

Give thanks and share; tens of thousands of families around us are in need.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

Surrounded by the bounty in so many neighborhoods in Northern Virginia, many of us see little signs of the massive unmet needs here. But in Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 52,000 of the students are poor enough to re-

ceive free or subsidized meals, a significant measure of poverty.

In Arlington more than 32 percent of the students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals; that's 7,452 students at last count.

EDITORIAL

In Alexandria, 8,582 students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals. That's 60 percent of the 14,222 students enrolled.

These are children who are living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical

bills, car repair, heat and food. These are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school. School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are a few ideas. We will rerun this list again during the holiday, so let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Where to Give Locally

In no particular order:

❖ **Our Daily Bread** — has been serving needy families in Fairfax County for 25 years. The Holiday Program helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children, making last year's holiday season brighter for approximately 3,000 families. For more information on their holiday programs, including how to sponsor a family, go to www.odbfairfax.com/holiday

❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030

❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), working with the Office of Coordinated Services Planning, Fairfax County

Department of Human Services, FISH helps local citizens who are in temporary need of life's basic necessities such as food, clothing, and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880 <http://fairfaxfish.org/>

❖ **Lamb Center**, www.thelambcenter.org, Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178

❖ **Food for Others** distributed more than 2.4 million pounds of free food to families in need in Northern Virginia in the year ending June 30, 2012. The non-profit provides a safety net for people who suddenly face unforeseen emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. www.foodforothers.com

❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others** (ECHO), 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides

food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year. www.echo-inc.org.

❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. Now collecting gift cards and food baskets for Thanksgiving, gifts and food baskets for Christmas, and warm coats. 703-339-8611 www.lortonaction.org.

❖ **12 Ways of Giving:** Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships "12 Ways of Giving" campaign is an annual event that showcases many ways for meaningful, local giving during the holiday season, highlighting nonprofits in Fairfax County. www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org

❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.org

Nurturing Happy Memories

For some, memories of just a few happy moments provide arsenal for enduring.

BY JOAN BRADY

"It's my few happy memories that keep me going," a young woman who had grown up in foster care told me a few months ago.

To be honest, today I'm a little foggy on exactly what her happy memories even were. They weren't monumental experiences or achievements. They were simply moments in time when she felt happy.

One was about being near the water. Another, a meal eaten at a particular restaurant. And another, a time when she felt like she was being heard. A small arsenal of moments that she could dip into, as needed.

I haven't been able to stop thinking about that conversation. I grew up with two loving parents. While no childhood is perfect, I'd say mine was pretty close. What I keep



The importance of happy memories: Joan Brady in a selfie with her siblings, the first photo of just the four of them since childhood.

stored away are my few unhappy memories. Images I trot out when I want to wallow in a little self-pity.

But what if I could hang on to just a few good memories. And they had to be enough to keep me moving forward, from making bad choices, even from killing myself. What would they be?

Well there was my nursery school graduation. Every kid had

to stand up and perform in front of the group of proud parents. Painfully shy and paralyzed by the very idea, I distinctly remember my mother telling me that she had spoken with my teacher and I would be exempt from this particular torture. This one I'd keep as a reminder that I have a mother who had my back then and continues to now.

There was that beautiful spring

day that I walked with her down the streets of New York City, proud to be a recent college grad and excited to be going on job interviews and looking for an apartment. It would be good to hang on to a reminder to appreciate accomplishments and to embrace the next set of goals with enthusiasm.

There was the time a few years ago that my sister and brothers and I took a selfie. It was the first image of just the four of us since we were kids. There was something about that moment, enjoying each other's company and recognizing, that no matter what, these people could be counted on. Yup, definitely a memory worth hanging on to.

And maybe, one would be the moment when I recognized how lucky I am to have a treasure trove of happy memories as deep and as long as my life.

Joan Brady is a professional photographer; mentor and advocate for current and former foster children; volunteer with paws4People, Fairfax Families4Kids, and others; and a resident of Great Falls. Reach her at joan@joanbradyphotography.com

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AREA ROUNDUPS



Suspect

Police Seek Carjacker

Fairfax County police are looking for the man who carjacked a female Friday, Nov. 7, in Fairfax. The incident occurred around 9:50 p.m. in the 3000 block of Nutley Street. Police say the man approached the victim in a shopping center parking lot, drew a handgun and forced her into her own vehicle.

He then made her drive to nearby banks to withdraw money. Finally, the man left the vehicle at the New Carrollton Metro Station. Detectives have a composite sketch of the suspect. He's described as black, in his 20s, about 5 feet 10 inches, and walking with a limp. Police are working with detectives from Metro Transit police who are investigating a similar case in their jurisdiction and believe the same person may be responsible for both crimes.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime solvers at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org, text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call police at 703-691-2131.

Food Drives in Fairfax

Our Daily Bread and Combined Properties are hosting Food Drives at Courthouse Plaza in Fairfax City, every Saturday from now through Dec. 13, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at 10382 Willard Way. A different Fairfax County nonprofit will collect donations of non-perishable food and supplies or grocery gift cards to help feed individuals and families in need during the holiday season.

Organizations that'll benefit from the drives include: FACETS, Marshall Road Elementary Food4Thought Program (weekend food backpacks), Koinonia Foundation, Our Daily Bread, Cunningham Park Elementary School Weekend Backpack Program, Lorton Community Action Center and James Mott Community Assistance Program. For information, visit www.ODB Fairfax.org or contact 703-273-8829 or info@ODB Fairfax.org.

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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COMMUNITY

Proof of Purchase

County-wide nonprofits offer gift ideas and civic engagement.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Over 20 years as manager of Burke Lake Park, Charlie Reagle has seen a lot of benches installed. So many in fact that he's running out of water view locations. And though many people choose to honor deceased family members with a bench, he's had plenty donated in tribute to the living. One pair of sisters gave a bench as a birthday gift to their mother; it had two plaques, one of which was at ground level so the mother's dog could see it.

"Each one, working with a donor, I know the story with it," said Reagle. "Going out, going around the trail, you wind up spending several hours with them over this whole time."

While water view space may be drying up at Burke Lake, there are plenty of scenic plots available throughout the 420-odd parks around Fairfax County. And there's a collaborative effort underway to help populate that with tax-deductible gifts. It's part of the county's Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3) "12 Ways of Giving" initiative.

In this instance, citizens can donate a new bench (around \$2,000 for the installation), adopt an existing bench with a plaque (\$800) or have a two-to-three-inch-calibre landscape tree planted. The donations to the parks go through the nonprofit Fairfax County Park Foundation. OP3 is encouraging the public to help address civic issues by making charitable donations as gifts.

"The idea is it's to be very easy, very engaging," said Wendy Lemieux, a spokesperson with OP3. A single web page is a portal to donate to 12 different organizations that each satisfy a county goal for the environment, education, animals or domestic violence. "As you dive deeper, you can get involved and knock someone off your Christmas list as well," Lemieux said.

Charitable giving has become a major factor in the economy: "Donations, in the country as a whole, are now a \$335 billion enterprise," said Alan Abramson, director of the GMU Center for Nonprofit Management, Philanthropy and Policy.

He cited the latest report from Giving USA, a semi-annual public service analysis.

Abramson attributes a gain in giving over the past several years in part to the regrowth of the economy, but that it's also "a creative time for giving," he said. "With more online giving, more people are thinking about loans instead of gifts. These are new creative approaches to engage people in helping."

Which is where 12 Ways comes in. Now in its fourth year linking citizens with nonprofits and county-wide issues like disadvantaged students from minority groups underperforming in schools, the gift-giving angle is paying off. "We've seen groups have up to a 150 percent increase in giving," said Lemieux.

"We've come to realize that addressing social problems is not just going to be government's responsibility," said Abramson. "We need all sectors, individuals, families and communities coming together if we're going to get something done."

To learn more about the nearly 500 nonprofits registered in Northern Virginia, visit www.connectnorthernvirginia.org.

Opportunities to Help

***Our Daily Bread** has been contracted by Fairfax County to provide holiday assistance with half of the 3,000 referrals of families in need from county social workers.

Gift: \$50 donation for gift cards for clients or adopt a family.

"It's an opportunity to connect people with people," said ODB executive director Lisa Whetzel, "neighbors to neighbors. You see there are people who live around the corner that are living without a lot of the amenities that they live with. It's eye-opening."

♦ REFOREST FAIRFAX AND FAIRFAX RELEAF project to plant trees that maintain canopy cover around the county, help with stormwater management and soil retention. The project is responsible for many of the trees along the Fairfax County Parkway, as well as a big replanting after construction at Bonnie Brae Elementary School.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDY BROMLEY
Ina Fernández, director of the Fairfax County Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services and Fairfax County Police Department Chief Edwin Roessler were at the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting Sept. 23 for the declaration of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Kay Fowler, executive director of Fairfax ReLeaf, plants a tree at South Run Park.

Gift: \$35 donation for multiple native trees in a group planting somewhere in the county.

"Eighty percent plantable space is on private land in Fairfax County," said Jim McGlone, urban forest conservationist of the Virginia Department of Forestry. "Trying to expand or improve the coverage, we really have to engage the public and get individuals planting trees."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELLIOTT RUBINO
Captain II Willie Bailey (left), Erin McMullin with Operation Warm (center) and Niko Chakos with FOCUS North America (right) distributed 2,200 pair of shoes and 2,000 coats Oct. 28 at Fire Station 11 with Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION
Michelle Opdahl (left), Kalle (center) and Tom Bowser (right) enjoy time on a bench at Burke Lake Park.

♦ FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION

Gift: \$2,000 for a new bench or \$800 to adopt an existing bench; \$1,000 for a new tree donation or \$500 to adopt.

"It does keep on giving," said Roberta Longworth, executive director of the Park Foundation. "Our wooden benches are guaranteed for five years and steel for ten."

♦ FRIENDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Gift: Donations of various sizes help with surgeries, medication, collars, tags and the microchip program.

"It's an open access shelter that takes in every animal that comes to the door," said Kristen Auerbach, a spokesperson for the Fairfax

County Animal Shelter. Annually, that number is about 5,000 dogs, cats, reptiles and other furry creatures. "It's the largest jurisdiction in the United States with a placement rate above 90 percent. We're about 95 percent this year."

♦ FAIRFAX LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Gift: Add a book to a specific library's collection, such as the Richard Byrd location, through their Amazon wish list and put the gift recipient's name first on the list to check it out.

"They're supporting the community overall, based on their interests," said Susan Harman, executive director of the Fairfax Library Foundation. "That's helpful, and they can do it from their desktop."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Our Daily Bread volunteers fill food crates at the Complete the Circle collection and distribution event held at Fairfax High School Nov. 9.

♦ FIREFIGHTERS AND FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE: works with churches, shelters and schools to provide toys, coats and shoes to children. Fifteen years ago, the organization helped 50 kids; today they reach over 3,000 in a single donation event, usually held at Fire Station 11 in Alexandria.

Gift: Donations of various sizes help purchase toys, bicycles and coats for children for the holidays.

"With 180 schools in the county, 50 to 70 are coming to us," said Captain II Willie Bailey with the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department. "And one out of four kids living below the poverty line, that's a big need. The station looks like Toys 'R' Us for a few hours."

♦ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES: working with the nonprofit A Way Forward to provide basic house and emergency needs for people leaving shelters to start new homes. The county has offices in 11 locations, including the South County Human Services building.

Gift: Donations of various sizes help purchase goods like bed in a bag, kitchen in a bag, door locks, mattresses, as well as holiday-specific items like toys, games and books.

"We're raising funds to give families the extras they just don't have the money or resources to provide during the holiday season," said Sandy Bromley, Fairfax County-wide domestic violence coordinator, "give victims the chance to really celebrate the holidays."

For the complete 12 Ways of Giving nonprofit list and donation portal, visit http://www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org/news/Ways_to_give_1214.html.

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday.

DECEMBER	Publishing
Wellbeing.....	12/3/14
HomeLifeStyle: Home for the Holidays...	12/10/14
Hanukkah begins December 16.	
★Holiday Entertainment & Gift Guide II..	12/16/14
A+ Camps & Schools.....	12/16/14
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• Centre View	• McLean Connection	• Springfield Connection
• Chantilly Connection	• Mount Vernon Gazette	• Vienna/Oakton Connection

A Holiday Classic Comes to Life

“A Christmas Carol” offers dinner and a play.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A holiday classic comes to life in an intimate, dinner-theater setting when the City of Fairfax Theatre Co. and Truro Anglican Church present “A Christmas Carol.” Guided by the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, Ebenezer Scrooge will take a journey leading to his transformation and redemption.

Show times are Thursday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m., with 6:30 p.m. dinner; Saturday, Dec. 6, at 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. with 6:30 p.m. dinner (limited availability); and Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$10, adults; \$5, students, via www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org, and \$15 and \$10, respectively, at the door. Dinner shows are \$25/ticket, either way. (A special, \$20 family package is offered for the Dec. 6 show at 10 a.m.). Truro is at 10520 Main St. in Fairfax.

The cast and crew of 30 have been rehearsing since September and the actors are ages 8-85. “We have both experienced and new actors,” said Director Kirsten Boyd. “Things are going really well and everyone’s having fun.”

What’s unique about this play, she said, is that the whole room is part of the set. “The actors will be performing in the aisles and onstage, so the audience will feel like they’re part of the story,” said Boyd. “We’ll have an old-fashioned lamp post in the center of the room, and the audience will sing Christmas carols with the cast throughout the show.”

Portraying Scrooge is Truro church member Kevin Gilroy. “He’s deeply flawed and figures out all his faults during the play,” said Gilroy. “He learns who he is and what he wants in life. He’s grumpy and crotchety and has a hard time connecting with people. He’s not receptive to changing until toward the end.”

Gilroy said the role’s draining because “I go through a lot of emotions, but it’s fun to process those feelings. And I’m excited to be the lead because I get to connect with everyone in the audience, all at once. People will enjoy the show because it’s about the true meaning of Christmas, the production is energetic and they’ll have fun singing Christmas carols.”

Fairfax High sophomore Sierra Hoffman is the costume designer and also plays Bob Cratchit’s wife. “She’s a hardworking mother of four, crazy children who bounce off the walls,” said Hoffman. “She’s loving, but also weak emotionally because her family’s poor and has so many problems.”

Hoffman’s enjoying her role because “her family’s fun to be with and she shows many different emotions – happiness, sadness and anger.” She said the audience will appreciate how well the actors work together and “they’re going to love how happy this show makes them feel.”

Portraying the eldest daughter, Martha Cratchit, is Vienna’s Melissa Handel, an eighth-grader at Kilmer Middle School. “She’s 21 and still trying to find herself,” said Handel. “But she’s also very responsible and helps her mom look after the other children. Usually, I play a younger person, but this time I get to play someone older. The hardest part



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMILY DILLARD

(From left) are Mary Walton Petersen, Kevin Gilroy, Rachel Nelson and Sarah Zakreski. Petersen and Nelson portray the ghosts of Christmas Past; Zakreski, the ghost of Christmas Future; and Gilroy, Ebenezer Scrooge.



(From left) Rachel Nelson and Mary Walton Petersen both play the ghost of Christmas Past on alternating nights.

is the language, speaking in old English.”

As for the audience, she said, “They’ll like how we interact with them. We walk around and talk with people, not just with the other characters on stage. Everybody in the cast is very talented, and I think we interpret our characters a bit differently than the audience would expect.”

Herndon’s Meriel Carney is one of three ghost dancers who are in nearly every scene. “We do ballet and contemporary dances, flow the scenes together and enter the stage with the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future,” she said. “We dance either to a live violinist or to singing.”

She and the other dancers choreographed their routines and are having a good time performing together. Carney said the audience will be able to connect with the members of the Cratchit family and understand what they’re feeling.

“The show’s heartwarming,” she said. “Christmas is a time to be with family, and this play shows that, no matter what, you can change if you’re not the person you want to be. And there’s lots of Christmas spirit to get everybody ready for the holidays.”

ENTERTAINMENT



Bring your family along to watch Tchaikovsky’s opulent holiday masterwork, “The Nutcracker,” on Nov. 29-30 at Woodson High School in Fairfax.

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper’s publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 26

Small Wonders. 10:30 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Build your child’s early literacy skills with stories, songs and play! Age 1-2 with adult. 703-249-1520.

THURSDAY/NOV. 27

Thanksgiving Day Church Service. 11 a.m. Christian Science Church, 3725 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Bring family, kids, and friends (before feast and football games) for Bible readings, music, and sharing stories of gratitude and healing. www.thinkdifferentlyfairfax.com

Thanksgiving at Trummer’s. 7134 Main Street, Clifton. Chef Austin Fausett is serving some traditional and some non-traditional fare for a fabulous Thanksgiving feast. Three Courses for \$64. Children 12 and under \$32.

FRIDAY/NOV. 28

Black Friday Holiday Celebration at the Workhouse. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Explore the artwork of nearly 100 artists, join in interactive demonstrations and find that perfect gift while supporting local artists. Festivities will also include Doughnuts with Santa, fine-art projects for children, and holiday music and theatrical performances throughout the day. Free. 703-584-2900. www.workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 29-DEC. 28

Sparkling Wine Tastings. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Paradise Springs Winery, 13219 Yates Ford Road, Clifton. Recurring weekly on Sunday, Friday, Saturday. Taste all three sparklings from Paradise Springs as well as a unique Pineapple Sparkling from Maui. 10% off all sparkling wines purchased for anyone who does the tasting. Admission is \$20/person. Call (703) 830-9463 for more information. No reservations necessary as tastings will be done at our main tasting counter. Ongoing event.

SATURDAY/NOV. 29

Small Business Saturday and Tree Lighting. Tree lighting at 5 p.m. Mosaic District, 2910 District Avenue, Fairfax. Get a head-start on holiday shopping at a mix of small, local retailers, then stay for Mosaic’s holiday tree lighting and sing-along in Strawberry Park. www.mosaicdistrict.com.

Seraphic Fire Christmas: Carols by Candlelight. 8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets: \$30-\$50. Begin celebrating the holiday season with

this revered a cappella ensemble. This critically acclaimed group comes to the Center for the first time to present a dazzling holiday performance — a candlelight Christmas concert with a popular mix of Gregorian chant, carols, motets, and contemporary favorites.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 29-30

“The Nutcracker.” Saturday: 2 & 7 p.m. Sunday: 2 p.m. Woodson High School, 9525 Main Street, Fairfax. Members of the Fairfax Ballet’s Company, along with students from the Russell School of Ballet and special guest artists from around the world, will dance to Tchaikovsky’s opulent holiday masterwork. Group discounts are available for qualifying organizations with 10 or more guests. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-439-9788 for more information. Tickets are available for purchase at <http://fairfaxnutcracker2014.brownpapertickets.com/>. Tickets will also be available at the door beginning one hour before each show.

SUNDAY/NOV. 30

Family Advent Celebration. 4 -5:30 p.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. Make crafts, decorate cookies, and more. Free admission.

MONDAY/DEC. 1

Children’s Performance Series: Mr. Skip. 10:30 a.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Start the week off with Mr. Skip, who is all about music and movement, sings original and classic kids songs like Old MacDonald to the 5 and under crowd. He gets the kids off their seats and moving. Free but donations are accepted. 703-385-2712.

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2-3

Tiny Tots Concert. Tuesday: 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Wednesday: 7 p.m. The Robert E. Lee High School Band and Drama Department announce their annual Tiny Tots Concert featuring favorite children’s characters. Reservations are required for the morning performances but not for the evening performance. Admission is \$2. For information or reservations call 703-971-2229 or email the Lee High School Band at LeeHSBand_TinyTots@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 5-6

Norwegian Holiday Festival. Friday:

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Christ Lutheran Church, 3810 Meredith Drive, Fairfax. The 44th Annual Holiday Festival features Norway's cooking, culture and cool buys. Seven local traditional Nordic handcraft artisans join with their felted figures and tree ornaments, jewelry, needle arts, rosemaking, and weaving. Two days of live music and Nordic Dancing complement the sale of Norwegian sweaters, T-shirts, CDs, books (in English), toys, and linens to name just a few of this year's many unique items for family, friends and home.

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Free Concert. 6:30 p.m. 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Living Savior Lutheran Church (livingsaviorlutheran.org) will host The Cathedral Brass (cathedralbrass.org) for a free concert. The program will feature jazz trumpeter Roger Rossi (formerly of the Army Blues), and will include Antonio DiLorenzo's "Twas the Night Before Christmas," narrated by Alan Cole. Free and open to the public. 703-352-1421.

City of Fairfax Festival of Lights and Carols. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Come enjoy live holiday music, hot cider, s'mores by the Yule log, petting farm, Ferris wheel, caroling and lighting of the Christmas tree in the winter wonderland. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/about-us/special-events/festival-of-lights-and-carols for times and locations.

Plantation Christmas. 2-7 p.m. Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road,



The Robert E. Lee High School Band and Drama Department will have their annual Tiny Tots Concert featuring favorite children's characters. The concert will be held Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. and Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 10 a.m. at Robert E. Lee High School. Reservations are required for the morning performances but not for the evening performance. Admission is \$2. For information or reservations call 703-971-2229 or email the Lee High School Band at LeeHSBand_TinyTots@yahoo.com.

Lorton. 2-7 p.m. Ride in a horse-drawn carriage, sip warm cider by the fire, and sample period food prepared in the hearth kitchen. Return to the 18th century as costumed characters greet you in the house and throughout the grounds. Admission: \$15 adults, \$5 children (6-18).

Shepherd Christmas Showcase. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road,

Burke. Over 30 vendors will be offering a wonderful selection of jewelry, toys, handbags, home decor, kitchen ware, skin care, Christmas decorations and much more. A raffle, cafe and gourmet bake shop will also be featured. For questions or additional information, call 703-323-5400 or email jhwilcox@aol.com.

Art Guild of Clifton's Holiday Art Show and Sale. 2-6 p.m. Clifton Town Meeting Hall, 12641 Chapel

Road, Clifton. Enjoy shopping for quality, original art, made entirely by Clifton artists. Also featuring work of student members and this year's winners of "Reflections" contest. www.artguildofclifton.org

Advent Coffee Concert. 9:30 a.m. St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The Maranatha Singers will present an enjoyable morning of music. The theme of the concert will be "Remembering Christmas." Refreshments served after the concert in the Welcome Center. Everyone is invited to attend. Free.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 6-7

25th Annual Holiday Train Show Festival. Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday: 12-4 p.m. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Model trains on display and running will include Z, N, HO, LEGO, O, Standard and G scales. Door prize drawing for a new Lionel Scout train set. Bring your broken trains to "The Train Doctor." Antique cars on display, weather permitting. Gift shop will be open. Santa may make a visit that weekend. Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-15, \$2; adults 16 and over, \$5. For more information, www.fairfax-station.org, 703-425-9225.

"Christmas in Camp." 12-4 p.m. 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Discuss Civil War-era holiday customs, make Victorian ornaments, and participate in camp drills with Company D, 17th VA Infantry, "Fairfax Rifles" C.S.A. Guided tours of Historic Blenheim House.

Home for the Holidays Concert. 4 p.m. Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. Join the Main Street Community Band for a wintry mix of seasonal and holiday favorites for all ages. Please bring a nonperishable food item to benefit Food for Others- feeding families in Northern Virginia. Admission free, but tickets required. Mail reservations to The Main Street Community Band Holiday Concert Tickets, P.O. Box 1306, Fairfax, VA 22038-1306. Please include a stamped, self-addressed return envelope with your request.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 3-SUNDAY/DEC. 7

Snow Day. 10:30 a.m. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. One cold December morning, a young girl named Skip wakes up to find the entire neighborhood covered in a thick, dazzling blanket of white snow. \$8. 703-967-0437 or www.artsonthehorizon.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 9

Chamber Music in the Old Style. 8 p.m. Harris Theater, GMU, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The event features artists Zino Bogachek, violin, Natasha Bogachek, viola, and Anna Balakarskaia, piano, performing the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schnittke, and Shostakovich. Free.

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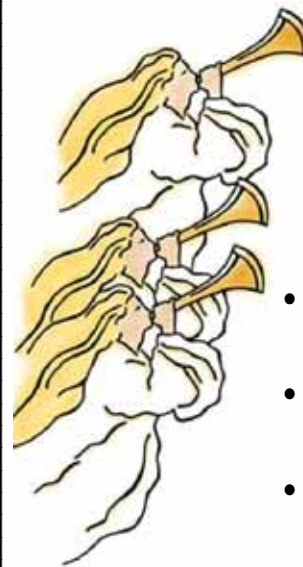
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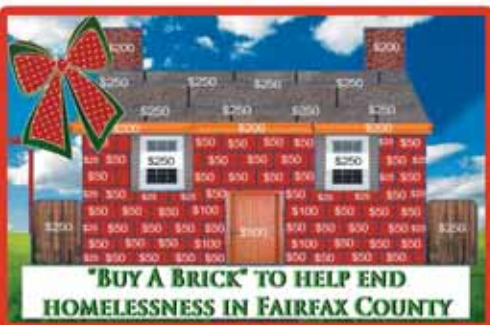
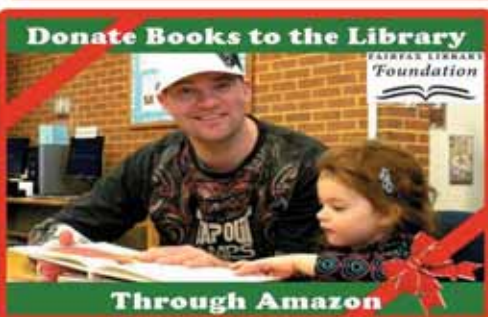


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Thanksgiving Day Service will be held on Nov. 27, 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 5315 Backlick Rd., Springfield, 703-941-7540. Thanksgiving is a time for sharing gratitude and acknowledging God's blessings. The public is invited to join in this day of giving thanks.

Fairfax Baptist Temple Christmas Service, Sunday, Dec. 21, 10 a.m., 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station. Please contact the church office for more information: 703-323-8100, fbt@fbtministries.org

The Fairfax Baptist Temple choir, orchestra and drama team present "Ten Thousand Hallelujahs" a Christmas Musical by Ron & Shelly Hamilton, Sunday evening, Dec. 21, 5 p.m., 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station. Please contact the church office for more information: 703-323-8100, fbt@fbtministries.org

Fairfax Baptist Temple, at the corner of Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Roads, holds a bible study fellowship at 9 a.m. Sundays followed by a 10 a.m. worship service. Nursery care and children's church also provided. 6401 Missionary Lane, Fairfax Station, 703-323-8100 or www.fbtministries.org.

The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

Lord of Life Lutheran offers services at two locations, in Fairfax at 5114 Twinbrook Road and in Clifton at 13421 Twin Lakes Drive. Services in Fairfax are held on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8:30 and 10 a.m. Services in Clifton are held on Sundays at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. 703-323-9500 or www.Lordoflifeva.org.

First Baptist Church of Springfield offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by a 10:30 a.m. worship service at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or www.fbcspRINGfield.org.

Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton, conducts Sunday masses at 7:30 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. It also offers a Saturday vigil at 5:30 p.m. and a Thursday Latin mass at 7 p.m. 703-817-1770 or www.st-andrew.org.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, offers casual worship services on Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m. featuring contemporary music. More traditional services take place on Sunday mornings at 8:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday School is from 9:45-10:45 a.m. for children and adults. The church also offers discussion groups for adults. 703-451-5855 or www.pople.org.

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In October 2014, 38 Burke homes sold between \$683,000-\$128,000.

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6533 NOVAK WOODS CT	4 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	\$683,000	Detached	0.22	22015	WOODED GLEN
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9415 GOLDFIELD LN	4 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	\$670,000	Detached	0.28	22015	INGLEWOOD ESTATES
5203 PINE CROSSING LN	5 ...	4 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$655,000	Detached	0.28	22015	THE PINES
5723 WOODEN HAWK LN	5 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$645,000	Detached	0.20	22015	BURKE CENTRE
9521 ORION CT	4 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$590,000	Detached	0.31	22015	BENT TREE
9520 DEBRA SPRADLIN CT	3 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$549,900	Detached	0.26	22015	CHERRY RUN
9104 LAKE BRADDOCK DR	4 ...	3 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$525,000	Detached	0.32	22015	SIGNAL HILL
5914 FRED'S OAK RD	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$505,900	Detached	0.23	22015	BURKE CENTRE
9903 COFFER WOODS RD	4 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$500,000	Detached	0.24	22015	BURKE CENTRE
6319 ROCKWELL RD	5 ...	3 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$500,000	Detached	0.23	22015	ROLLING VALLEY WEST
10181 MARSHALL POND RD	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$499,900	Detached	0.14	22015	BURKE CENTRE
6210 KERSEY CT	5 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$459,000	Detached	0.22	22015	ROLLING VALLEY WEST
10042 WOOD SORRELS LN	3 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$429,900	Semi-Detached ..	0.11	22015	BURKE CENTRE
10016 PARK WOODS LN	4 ...	2 ...	2	BURKE	.....	\$425,000	Detached	0.10	22015	BURKE CENTRE
5504 BEACONSFIELD CT	4 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$415,000	Townhouse	0.04	22015	LAKE BRADDOCK
9324 BURKE RD	2 ...	1 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$410,000	Detached	0.50	22015	BURKE
5907 APLOMADO DR	3 ...	2 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$409,777	Detached	0.20	22015	CARDINAL ESTATES
5733 WALNUT WOOD LN	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$399,000	Townhouse	0.04	22015	BURKE CENTRE
9681 POINDEXTER CT	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$395,000	Townhouse	0.03	22015	HILLSDALE
9966 HEMLOCK WOODS LN	3 ...	2 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$385,000	Townhouse	0.11	22015	BURKE CENTRE
5807 WALDEN COMMONS CT #127 .	3 ...	2 ...	2	BURKE	.....	\$385,000	Townhouse .....	.....	22015 ...	WALDEN AT BURKE CENTRE
10133 WALNUT WOOD CT	3 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$385,000	Townhouse	0.04	22015	BURKE CENTRE
6101 POND LILY CT	3 ...	2 ...	2	BURKE	\$379,888	Townhouse	0.05	22015	BURKE CENTRE
5619 STILLWATER CT	3 ...	2 ...	2	BURKE	\$377,000	Townhouse	0.03	22015	LAKEPOINTE
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6103 MARTINS LANDING CT	3 ...	3 ...	1	BURKE	\$349,000	Townhouse	0.04	22015	BURKE CENTRE
5811 HIGH BLUFF CT	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$332,900	Townhouse	0.07	22015	BURKE VILLAGE
9252 SPRUCEWOOD RD	3 ...	2 ...	1	BURKE	.....	\$332,000	Townhouse	0.03	22015	KEENE MILL WOODS
5831 COVE LANDING RD #202	2 ...	2 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$235,000	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	22015	BURKE COVE
5801 COVE LANDING RD #201	2 ...	2 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$232,000	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	22015	BURKE COVE
5916 COVE LANDING RD #302	1 ...	1 ...	0	BURKE	.....	\$197,500	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	22015	BURKE COVE
5938 COVE LANDING RD #203A	1 ...	1 ...	0	BURKE	\$180,000	Garden 1-4 Floors	22015	BURKE COVE
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Linda Lau of Fairfax (left) shows off her collection of Victorian Christmas decorations and toys for Mike Deloose of West Springfield (center) and others at the Nov. 23 meeting of the Burke Historical Society.



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax Resident Talks Victorian Christmas at Burke Historical Society

Electricity didn't come to Burke until 1928. That meant no one could power strings of lights to decorate Christmas trees; they had to use real candles and assume the very real fire hazard risk. Fortunately, fireproof fake trees made of goose feathers or chenille had already been around since the 1880s.

Fairfax resident Linda Lau had such a tree on hand as she led a program on Victorian Christmas traditions for the Burke Historical Society (BHS). Lau is the BHS treasurer, a member of the Victorian Society of Falls Church and author and primary researcher for several books on the Victorian period including "Nippon Dolls and Playthings" and "Victorian Falls Church."

A cozy crowd of roughly 40 gathered Nov. 24 at the Abiding Presence Lutheran Church in Burke to hear Lau discuss the development of the Christmas tree and Santa Claus. For example, the first reference to a "Christmas tree" was in 1531, and Woolworth's retail company was the first American merchant to sell glass ornaments. And they

made a killing on the then-status symbols.

One recurring theme was the light-hearted, secular view of the winter holiday in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

"People have this concept of Victorian period people being uptight, rigid," said Lau. "But the evidence we have of their Christmas celebrations doesn't reflect that." Lau presented a slideshow with greeting cards depicting Santa Claus delivering presents while riding a bike, driving a car.

"We see elements of whimsy, oddities, whatever appealed to them, but no angels or halos," said Lau.

Mike Deloose of West Springfield comes to meetings like this one because of the well-curated link to local history. "It's about seeing what other people thought would survive," he said. "People kept these things somewhere, and this group tries to connect where we're at to the last century, and the century before."

—TIM PETERSON



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

From left, rear row - Lexi Rhem, Cayli Dobbs, Roxy King, James Woods, Ben Cherington, Brian Perry, Samantha Horning, Kylie Levy, and Madison Thornton (the MSA cast and director of 'I Never Saw Another Butterfly.')

Area Students Recognized for All-Star Cast

Ben Cherington and Kylie Levy of Metropolitan School of the Arts (MSA) Performing Arts Academy of Lorton, and Alexandria were recently recognized for All-Star Cast by the Virginia Theatre Association Conference for their performances in "I Never Saw Another Butterfly." This was the first time Metropolitan School of the Arts had participated in the conference. Cherington, an 11th grader from Burke, and Levy, a 10th grader from Fairfax, are students at Metropolitan School of the Arts.

Metropolitan School of the Arts (MSA) also earned the 2014 Vir-

ginia Theatre Association Conference award for Best Costume Design and was recognized for Staging, as well as received an honorable mention for Best Play, "I Never Saw Another Butterfly."

"We're so proud of our students and appreciate the accolades from the Virginia Theatre Association," said Melissa Dobbs, president and founder of Metropolitan School of the Arts of Lorton and Alexandria. "We appreciate the support from our MSA families that have helped our performers be the best they can," said Dobbs.

For more information, go to www.metropolitanarts.org.



Ben Cherington of Burke and Kylie Levy of Fairfax, Metropolitan School of the Arts students.

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Thanksgiving Q&A: Bruin QB Edwards Happy to be Practicing.

Lake Braddock will face Westfield in 6A North semifinals Saturday.

Kyle Edwards was a varsity standout for the Lake Braddock football program during his sophomore year, earning second-team all-conference honors as an offensive utility player and safety.

The Bruins won their first 12 games of the 2013 season and were seemingly on their way to the region championship game, leading Westfield by 13 points in the fourth quarter of their semifinal matchup. The Bulldogs came storming back, however, and handed the Bruins a 19-16 season-ending defeat.

This year, Edwards, now a junior, made the move to quarterback, taking over for the graduated Caleb Henderson, a highly recruited signal caller who ended up at the University of North Carolina. It took time for Edwards to get comfortable leading the Lake Braddock offense, but he eventually earned first-team all-conference accolades at his new position.

After playoff victories against Oakton and West Springfield, Edwards and the Lake Braddock Bruins find themselves in a familiar position: preparing to face Westfield in the region semifinals. Kickoff is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 29 at Westfield. The winner will face the winner of the other semifinal matchup between Centreville and Battlefield.

Edwards, who also plays basketball and baseball at Lake Braddock, plans to play football in college. He recently participated in a Q&A via email with The Connection, sharing some insight about his Thanksgiving plans.

Q: What are your plans for Thanksgiving?

Edwards: Obviously, I will be spending a lot of time with my family. Right now it looks like family dinner is at my house, and all the relatives will be over. Should be a great time.

Q: What will the Lake Braddock football team do on Thanksgiving?

Edwards: At Lake Braddock, our tradition is to have a morning practice on Thanksgiving. The breakfast that follows it is legendary and it's really something we as players look forward to and earn.

Q: How does it feel to still be practicing as Thanksgiving comes around?

Edwards: It's something I experienced last year as a sophomore and was lucky to be a part of. It is definitely exciting to have the opportunity again.

***Q: Do you or your family have any**



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Junior quarterback Kyle Edwards and the Lake Braddock football team will face Westfield in the 6A North region semifinals on Saturday.

“At Lake Braddock, our tradition is to have a morning practice on Thanksgiving. The breakfast that follows it is legendary and it's really something we as players look forward to and earn.”

— Kyle Edwards, Lake Braddock QB

annual Thanksgiving traditions?

Edwards: We keep it simple and just enjoy the holiday. Only tradition I can think of is tearing off the wishbone and seeing who gets the bigger half.

Q: Does your family incorporate sports into Thanksgiving? If so, how?

Edwards: I definitely have a sports family. We watch football all day and play around in the backyard with our neighbors and relatives.

Q: What is your favorite thing to eat on Thanksgiving?

Edwards: I have always been a pumpkin pie kind of guy.

Q: Lake Braddock was in this position last year, facing Westfield in the region semifinals. The Bruins lost a late lead and the game. Is there anything you took away from that experience that can help you this time?

Edwards: Well, I think just being on the field and playing against a physical and talented Westfield team gave me a lot of key experience that would then carry over into this year. I think I'll be able to just relax and focus on the game because I have played on a Saturday in front of a few thousand people before. After last year's loss, I learned the importance of finishing games and executing so that has been something Coach [Jim] Poythress harps on all season.

Q: As a quarterback, how do you

feel at this point of the season compared to your season opener against West Potomac when you were making your first start at a new position?

Edwards: Coach Poythress and Coach Quigley have done a great job in helping me grow as a quarterback. The main difference is confidence, but they instilled that in me by letting me mature as a passer, and now we're really spreading the ball around the field through the air. I feel significantly more comfortable in the pocket and with our game plans.

Q: Who is your favorite music artist? Why?

Edwards: Michael Jackson. He has endless hits, and his music is timeless.

Q: What is your favorite movie? Why?

Edwards: “A Few Good Men.” Tom Cruise is one of my favorite actors. This movie made me want to pursue a law degree. It's an iconic movie: “You can't handle the truth!”

Q: Who are your favorite pro sports teams?

Edwards: Redskins and Broncos.

Q: Who are your favorite pro athletes?

Edwards: Peyton Manning and Brett Favre (even though he is retired). I admire how they play the game and their work ethic.

— JON ROETMAN



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Jade Williams and the South County softball team won the VHSL 6A state championship in the spring of 2014.

Headed to Chicago

Jade Williams made an immediate impact with the South County softball program, earning first-team all-district honors as a freshman outfielder in 2013.

Last season, Williams moved to shortstop and came up clutch in the postseason, earning first-team all-region tournament honors as the Stallions captured the 6A North region title and eventually won the program's first state championship. Now a junior, Williams committed in September to play softball at Kent State University, a member of the Mid-American Conference. Williams, who earned second-team all-conference honors as member of the South County field hockey team in the fall, recently participated in a Q&A with The Connection, sharing her Thanksgiving plans.

***Q: What are your plans for Thanksgiving?**

Williams: My family and I are going to Chicago for a big wedding and a family reunion of sorts. I especially look forward to seeing my Grandpa and my cousins.

***Q: You're committed to play softball at Kent State University. What made Kent State the right choice for you?**

Williams: I have wanted to play college softball for as long as I can remember. The Kent State coach got interested in me at a tournament in Colorado. She personally came to watch me several times there and again in Georgia. She invited me to visit Kent State and I loved my time there. Kent has a veteran coaching staff and they play in a competitive DI conference (Mid-American Conference). The campus is beautiful and the academic support for athletes goes above and beyond. My future teammates helped seal the deal.

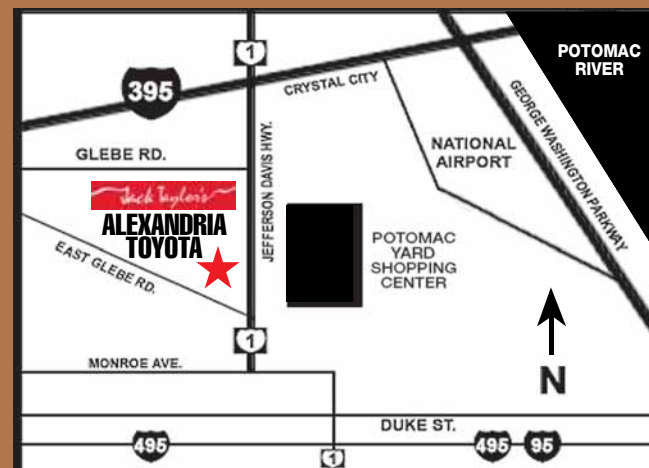
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