

Creating Families with Adoption

NEWS, PAGE 4

Laughter, Chaos and Lots of Heart

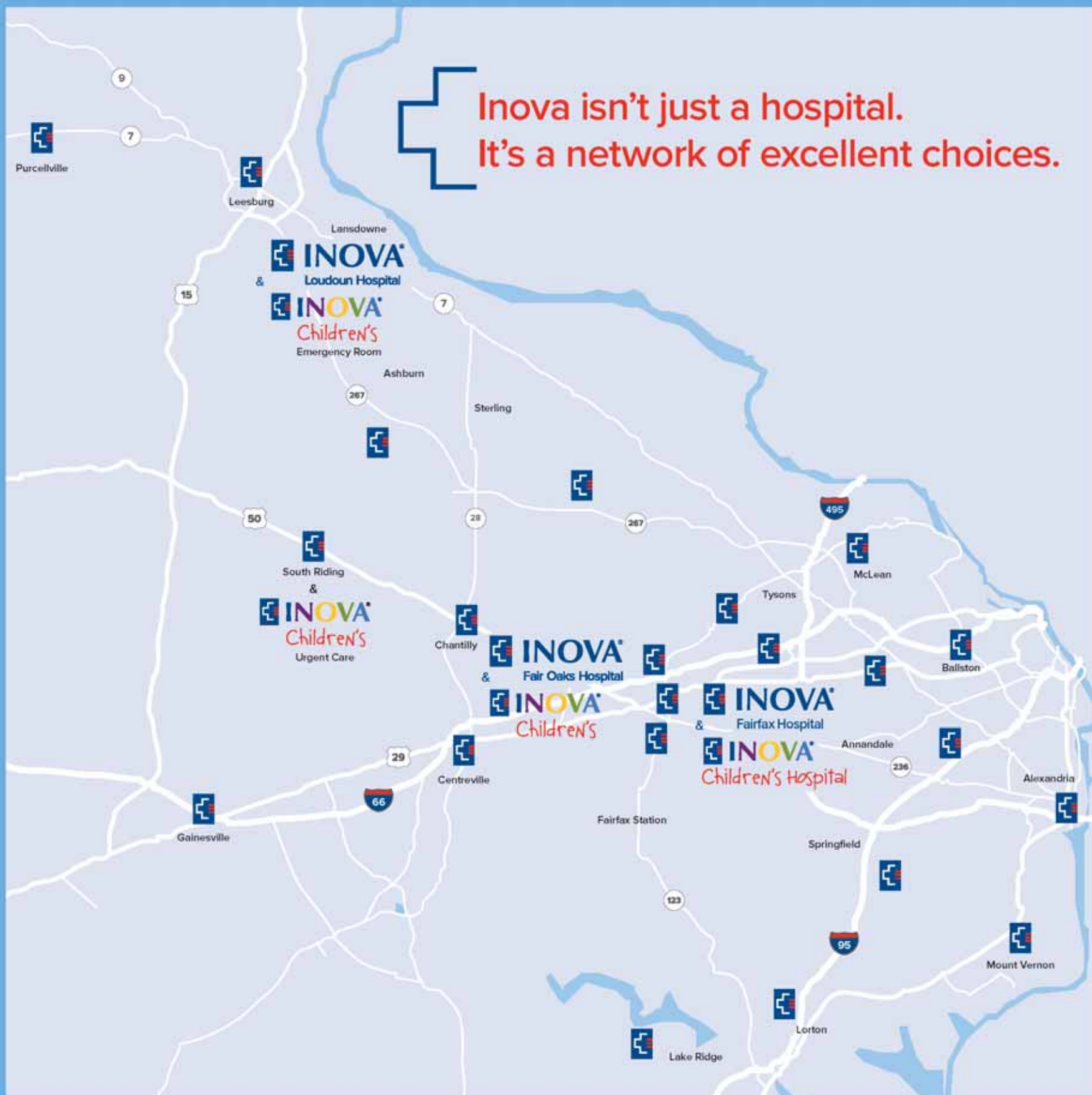
ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10

Portraying Mrs. Bradley and her well-behaved children in 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever' are Porsha Poteet (center) and (from left) Bella Lanoue-Chapman and Noah Tajudeen.



Lunch with Santa, Caroling and Fun

NEWS, PAGE 3



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Lunch with Santa, Caroling and Fun

City of Fairfax rings in the holiday season.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

For festive fun for the whole family, the City of Fairfax is the place to be. It is kicking off the holiday season, the next two weekends, with a sleigh-full of activities to spark the Christmas spirit in people of all ages.

It all begins Saturday, Dec. 5, with the Festival of Lights and Carols. There will be tasty treats, holiday music, visits with Santa and the lighting of the City's official Christmas tree. And sponsoring the whole shebang is the Department of Parks and Recreation.

From 8-11 a.m., the firefighters of Station 3 at 4081 University Drive will hold a pancake breakfast with Santa. Cost is \$5, adults; \$3, children 3-12; free, ages 3 and under. Proceeds benefit the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department.

Or if they prefer, children ages 10 and under may have lunch with Santa at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Tickets are \$6/child (limit of 10 tickets per person) and are available at the Parks and Recreation office at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St.; the Green Acres Center, 4401 Sideburn Road; the Sherwood Community



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Daniels Run Elementary students will sing Christmas carols again this year.

Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway or online at www.fairfaxva.gov. (Parents do not need tickets).

Then from noon-7 p.m., Old Town Square, at the corner of University Drive and North Street, will offer s'mores and cider, a petting zoo, a slide and a variety of Christmas carols. The entertainment lineup is as follows: Noon, the Daniels Run Singers from Daniels Run Elementary; 1 p.m., Fairfax Choral Society Youth Choruses; 1:30 p.m., Girl Scouts Service Troop Unit 55-6; 2:00 p.m., Vienna Falls Chorus; 4 p.m., Mason Some Noise; and 5:30 p.m., the Fairfax Jubil-Aires.

Meanwhile, from 3-5 p.m., parents may take their own photos of their children with Santa in Old Town Hall while the Lanier

Middle School Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Chorus perform.

Then people will gather in Old Town Square at 5:30 p.m. for the Christmas tree lighting ceremony. But that is not all. From 6-7 p.m., attendees may enjoy a candlelit tour of the historic Ratcliffe-Allison House at 10386 Main St.

After that, the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts will sponsor the seventh annual Christmas concert, "A Celtic Christmas with Sior-Óg," at Old Town Hall. Tickets are adults, \$10; children 12 and under, free. For more go to www.fairfaxarts.org.

And the City of Fairfax will continue to be a winter wonderland throughout the holiday season. Both the Old Town Square grounds and the Sherwood Center will

More Holiday Fun

❖ On Sunday, Dec. 6, from noon-4 p.m., visitors may travel back in time to see a Christmas in Camp. It will be at Historic Blenheim and The Civil War Interpretive Center, 3610 Old Lee Highway. For more information, call 703-591-0560.

❖ Also Sunday, Dec. 6 will be a holiday concert of seasonal favorites by the Main Street Community Band. Called "Home for the Holidays," it is slated for 4-5:30 p.m. at Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road. There will be music for the whole family, and attendees are encouraged to help brighten others' holidays by bringing with them a nonperishable food item. All donations will be given to a local food bank to help feed Northern Virginia families in need.

Tickets are free, but people should reserve them early since this event usually attracts a capacity crowd. Ticket requests should be addressed and mailed to The MSCB Holiday Concert Tickets, P.O. Box 1306, Fairfax, VA 22038-1306. Please include a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

❖ On Friday, Dec. 11, will be the Old Town Hall Performance Series featuring Cathedral Brass offering "Holiday Traditions." The free concert begins at 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall. For more information, call 703-352-ARTS.

❖ Sunday, Dec. 13, the Northern Virginia Youth Winds will give a free concert at Woodson High, 9525 Main St. With its members selected by competitive audition, the NVYW Symphonic and Junior Winds are elite, wind bands representing talented musicians from school music programs throughout Northern Virginia.

come alive with animated light displays through Jan. 3, 2016, sponsored by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and Bull Run Festival of Lights. For further information on the Dec. 5 events, call 703-385-7858 or go to www.fairfaxva.gov.

'People Near Us Struggle to Eat'

Our Daily Bread needs community's help for the holidays.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It is tough to be hungry anytime, but especially during the holidays. So Fairfax-based nonprofit Our Daily Bread (ODB) is seeking individuals, families, companies, churches and community groups to sponsor individuals or families for December holiday meals.

Those interested may register at www.ODBFairfax.org. Our Daily Bread's Holiday assistance list includes individuals and families who have been referred because they show demonstrated need and live throughout Fairfax County, including the City of Fairfax.

Also greatly needed are gifts for children under 18, plus corporate sponsorships, cash contributions or donated grocery-store and discount-store gift cards so ODB may dis-



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS

Whetzel

tribute assistance to families who are not matched with sponsors. ODB expects to have some 3,000 households on its assistance list this holiday season and is seeking the community's support to help every household on the list.

"All of us at Our Daily Bread are so grateful to our many community partners who are mobilizing to help our families and the hundreds of caring community members who join in this effort each year," said ODB executive director Lisa Whetzel. "In an area where so many of us have so much bounty, people are often surprised to learn that there are people very near us who may struggle to eat at the holidays, let alone provide a small present to their children."

That is why, she explained, "Our Holiday Sponsor-a-Family Program presents a wonderful opportunity for individuals, families,

businesses and community groups to give in a very special way during the holiday season. We hope the community will come together to make the season brighter for hardworking families who may otherwise go without holiday meals and presents for their children."

LAST YEAR, ODB's Holiday Program served nearly 3,000 individuals and families. The organization is currently receiving hundreds of applications for assistance and expects to serve approximately the same number of households this year, so help from area residents is particularly critical.

"The Holiday Program is possible because of the support and participation of dozens of community organizations and companies, as well as hundreds of local individuals and families," said ODB spokeswoman Heather Webb. "ODB operates it through a

grant from the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, as well as corporate sponsorships and individual donations. Coordinating closely with social workers and community-based organizations who serve families throughout the county, ODB works to ensure that as many eligible residents in need as possible have access to holiday assistance."

ALL YEAR LONG, Our Daily Bread provides short-term, safety net services for Fairfax County residents and empowers them to work toward long-term self-sufficiency. Besides holiday help, ODB provides quali-

fied clients temporary food and emergency financial assistance, back-to-school help, plus financial education and mentoring services. ODB's Naomi Project offers mentoring services for new or expectant mothers, and its Project BRIDGE program helps selected clients achieve self-sufficiency.

To Give

Monetary donations may be made on ODB's web site, www.odbfairfax.org. Checks and gift cards may be mailed or delivered to Our Daily Bread at 4080 Chain Bridge Road, 2nd Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030. For more information about the Holiday Program, contact Our Daily Bread at 703-273-8829 or hpassist@ODBfairfax.org.

THANKFUL FOR ADOPTION

Consider adopting a child from foster care. In Virginia, there are more than 860 children waiting and hoping to be adopted. Many of those children are listed on the Adopt US Kids website which you can find at: adoptuskids.org/states/va/index.aspx

Creating Families with Adoption

Adoptive parents described: 'Grateful. Generous. Awesome.'

BY JOAN BRADY
THE CONNECTION

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. With that in mind, meet two families expanded through adoption; two families whose kids describe their family as "awesome."

The Hagens of Vienna are a family of two parents, Kelly and Scott; three boys, two adopted and one biological; and two family dogs. Appreciative is the word that comes to mind listening to the Hagens talk about their family.

Lewis, 17, describes family priorities. "Somehow we find time to do stuff together. Like eating dinner. I've heard some families don't do that. That's very sad to me."

Spencer, 16, talks of how his brother, James, influences his life. "I know there are a lot of experiences that I get to have because James is so outgoing."

James, 11, appreciates time spent with his dad. "I like working outside with my dad. And, I like that he pays me for it."

Lewis loves having brothers. "You have people who are always there. I play Xbox with them. We talk. We listen to music. It's like having friends that are always there AND they are family." Would be different with sisters? Spencer says, "Well, they would probably make it all about them."

For parents Kelly and Scott Hagen, appreciation extends outside of their immediate family. "We have a lot of special issues in our family and that has made us more open minded about people," says Kelly. "We make fewer assumptions and we listen more."

Meet the Connelly Family

The Connelys have an immediate family that includes two parents, five sons — two



Hagen Family: Scott, Spencer, James, Lewis and Kelly of Vienna

biological, two adopted from Fairfax County foster care, and one foster son — and two cats. They hope to add a therapy dog in the next few months.

Jackson, 8, likes the commotion that a large family brings. "I like having brothers. It's interesting living with a lot of people. It's very loud, which means I'm never bored and I learn a lot about how to be nice."

Anthony, 17, has a deep appreciation for his parents, "Not every family would take in so many kids and do so much for them. My parents make sure to keep things fair and show us a lot of love."

Ben, 15, recognizes all that it means to be a family, "If you are looking for a family, you will find everything and more from the family right here. We are everything you would expect; the good and the bad. We are a real family."

Hunter, also 15, might complain about the noise, and apparently does, all of the time, but he wouldn't change a thing, "When we are at home and I'm trying to get work done and everyone's doing their thing around my area, it drives me crazy. But I wouldn't trade

them in for peace and quiet."

Scott and Megan Connelly have been foster parents to many kids over the years. According to Scott, the "spectacular" success of the foster children they have had over the years, many now grown, as well as the success of their biological and adopted boys is simple. "We make sure they know that we love them, unconditionally, and that we are going to hold them accountable. It takes a few weeks, but then they settle right in."

Megan adds: "One of the things that helps makes our household work is that the kids are flexible and giving. Each time we have added someone new into the mix, they follow the example set and pretty quickly, it's like they were always there."

Nicholas, the Connely's 10-year-old foster son describes his foster parents this way: "They are grateful. They are generous. They are awesome."

Megan Connelly is one of 12 kids, 10 of whom were adopted. Megan says that with their current four, they are only just getting started.



Connely Family: Hunter, Jackson, Ben and Anthony (Foster son, Nicholas, not pictured).



Scott and Megan Connelly.

Photos and bios provided by Fairfax County Department of Family Services

Adame, an energetic 6-year-old boy has a big smile and big heart to match. Keeping Adame engaged will help him remain on task and minimize anxiety for him. A two-parent household, with one parent primarily in the home available to attend to Adame's needs would be ideal, Adame is resilient and would thrive in an adoptive family of his own.



Tim, an active 16-year-old, loves to keep busy. His favorite thing to do is go fishing. He would like a family who is active and loving. He gets along well with young children and has a good sense of humor. He hopes to one day attend a trade school to become a plumber because he feels this would be a great way to become financially stable.



Damon, a kind and thoughtful 14-year-old young man enjoys eating out, watching movies and going to the park. He has discovered rock-collecting and can identify many different kinds of rocks. Damon likes school; he is energetic and loves sports, especially basketball, rollerblading and riding his bike.



Summer, a 15-year-old young lady enjoys hiking and biking outdoors, and loves music and reading. She is self-taught on piano and guitar and can play songs by ear. She would like a family that has a love for music and enjoys being active in the community.



All 860

BY JOAN BRADY

Parental rights terminated. Available for adoption. Floundering in an imperfect system. These words describe many children who are currently living in foster care in Virginia. In Fairfax County, these four children are hoping that this will be the last Thanksgiving spent in foster homes.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe wants those children who are currently available for adoption, adopted into loving homes, and he isn't messing around.

"Let's make it a goal — all of us in this room — that one year from today all 860 of these children will be adopted," McAuliffe recently charged a room full of adoption and foster care professionals at the Connecting Hearts Summit.

Focusing on Virginia is a good start. More than 26,000 young people across the United States age out of foster care each year to futures more likely to include homelessness and hunger than jobs and careers that will pay the bills. All of those young people were once children like the 108,000 currently languishing in foster care. Children who hoped, in vain, that someone would come forward and

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THANKFUL Adoption

FROM PAGE 4

choose them for adoption.

In 2014, McAuliffe elevated the priority of foster care adoption by appointing Debbie Johnson as Virginia's Adoption Champion. An adoptee herself, one of her achievements to-date has been to create Connection Hearts. www.connectingheartsva.org. With Ericca Facetti at the helm, Connecting Hearts works with the Virginia Department of Social Services, local departments of social services as well as local businesses to engage and educate the public about children in foster care who are waiting for adoptive families.

One of Ericca's immediate goals is to get as many of those children as appropriate included in the Adoptuskids/Virginia listings. Currently, of the 860, just 180 are listed. www.adoptuskids.org/states/va/index.aspx

According to the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG), there are 259 children in the DC metro area waiting for adoptive homes. Child Welfare Program Manager, Kamilah Bunn, works tirelessly to bring visibility to foster care adoption in our region. COG's adoption efforts include Wednesday's Child, The PicMe Project, Regional Adoption Events and the Regional Adoption Exchange.

Many children have no problem advocating for themselves. Perhaps one of the more memorable self-advocates was a 10-year old twin, who grabbed his brother, hopped on a stage in downtown DC, grabbed a mic and belted out to the cheering crowd, "WE NEED A FAMILY." Other children are not so forthcoming; They are embarrassed by circumstances that are no fault of their own. They have been disappointed by adults who have said they loved them, but who then turned away. They fear further rejection.

Social workers and other professionals like Kamilah Bunn and Ericca Facetti all work together to protect each child, as they work tirelessly to match children successfully with a small pool of potential adoptive families.

Adoption Expo

What: 2015 Adoption Expo will educate, inspire and celebrate families formed through adoption. Prospective adoptive parents can meet adoption professionals as well as current adoptive and foster parents to learn about foster care adoption and foster parenting.

Cost: Free

When: Dec. 5, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where: 801 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

More: adoptionfosterexpo.org

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OPINION

Celebrate, Shop, Dine Locally

Every day can be “small business day.”

There is a joy to participating in community traditions and celebrations during the holidays, from walking along a sidewalk with the streets decked out for the holidays, to shopping in local stores, to being greeted by someone likely to be the owner of the store, to finding gifts that are not mass-produced.

One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of your shopping in some of the area's locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambiance available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season. Small retail shops are part of defining any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that is otherwise unmatched.

We all benefit when local stores thrive, when local business districts beckon. An effort to support locally owned businesses has resulted in the recognition of Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, also called

Shop Small. This year that day is Nov. 28.

Locally owned retail shops, services, restaurants depend on vibrant local communities to thrive, and communities depend on those businesses as well. Most small, locally owned businesses invest in community, helping to transform our towns and communities with a sense of place.

Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active in fundraising for local charities, advocating for improvements, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores, face tough challenges right now. Competition from big box stores and online sellers makes the holiday shopping season all the more important to locally owned retailers. But local families will literally spend millions of dollars to shop and exchange gifts during the next month in a variety of places.

Everyone will do some of their shopping at the mall. Everyone will shop online. Many will answer the call of the big box. But local shoppers should be sure to do some celebrating, shopping and dining locally. We promise it brings more joy.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

VIEWPOINTS

What are you most thankful for this Thanksgiving?

—ABIGAIL CONSTANTINO



Michael O'Brien, Fairfax

Conor O'Brien, 9, Fairfax

Billy Reilly, Fairfax City

“I'm most thankful for my son Connor.”

Michael O'Brien, Fairfax

“I'm most thankful for my son Connor.”

Conor O'Brien, 9, Fairfax

“I'm most thankful for my new kittens, Mario and Yoshi.”

Billy Reilly, Fairfax City

“Health, happiness and my family.”



Dr. Donna Hurlock, Oakton

“Thankful for my wonderful patients who keep me stimulated everyday and I appreciate that I'm able to help them stay healthy.”

Eddie Camper, Sr., Fairfax

“I'm thankful that I'm alive, and I can be able to get up and walk around right now.”

Mary Camper, Fairfax

“That my husband and I can still walk. I got a cane and he's got crutches. And our family. And Fairfax. It's got everything good in Fairfax. I like it.”

BULLETIN BOARD

MONDAY/DEC. 7

State Sen. David Marsden. 10-11:30 a.m. Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Mason is sponsoring State Senator David Marsden for a discussion on current transportation issues affecting the state, particularly Northern Virginia, including mass transit, high occupancy toll lanes,

and road construction. He represents the 37th district. RSVP to 703-503-3384. olli.gmu.edu.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Children's Behavioral Health. 7:30-9 p.m. WT Woodson High School Library, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Dr. Adelaide Robb, Chief, Psychology and Behavioral Health Department at Children's National Health System

will discuss promising new behavioral research as well as answer questions. Dr. Robb is studying new treatment methods for children and adolescents with depression, ADHD with aggression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. daviesva@gmail.com or cristy@potomaccurrents.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Toy and Food Drop Off. 11 a.m.-3

p.m. Moose Family Center, 9612 Fernedge Lane, Lorton. Share the spirit of the holiday season and bring joy to a local child or teen by donating a new, unwrapped gift or gift card. Find out more at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090e48adaf28ab9-holiday>.

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

ONGOING

Holiday Poinsettia Fundraiser.

Nov. 1-27. Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Robinson's ANGP will be taking orders for poinsettias. All proceeds donated to the ANGP. Poinsettias will be available for pick-up or will be delivered Dec. 3. Visit <http://www.robinsonangp.com/poinsettias.html> for order forms or to pay online.

Blanket and Children's Winter Coat Drive.

Through Dec. 5. Region-wide effort to help more than 4 million refugees fleeing from Syria and Iraq due to ISIL and civil war violence. Gently used blankets and children's winter coats will be collected at various locations throughout Northern Virginia and will be shipped to refugees who have fled to Turkey.

www.helpsyrianrefugees.us

Divorce Care. Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m., Sept. 15 to Dec. 8, 2015 (13 Sessions). This recovery seminar and support group is for those recovering from the pain of separation and divorce. Divorce Care is a nondenominational video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost Christian experts on divorce and recovery topics as seen from a biblical perspective. The video seminars are combined with support group discussions of the materials presented during the video. Divorce Care features include "Facing My Anger," "Facing My Loneliness," "New Relationships," "Kid Care" and "Forgiveness." Childcare can be arranged upon request. To register for Divorce Care, please contact DCE Stacey Crosson at 703-451-5855 or email her at Stacey.crosson@poplc.org.

Grief Share. First and 3rd Mondays, 7-9 p.m., Oct. 5, 2015 to April 4, 2016 (13 Sessions). This recovery seminar and support group is for those needing encouragement for the grief journey. Grief Share is a nondenominational video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost Christian experts on grief and loss. Some topics include: "Is This Normal?," "Challenges of Grief," "The Journey of Grief," "Guilt and Anger," and "What Do I Live For Now?" Childcare can be arranged upon request. To register for Grief Share, please contact DCE Stacey Crosson at 703-451-5855 or email her at Stacey.crosson@poplc.org.

Singers Wanted for the Celebration Singers. The women's show choir is interested in new talent to perform at various Northern Virginia community sites. Practices are Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Burke. Contact Gayle Parsons, 703-644-4485 or email gparsons3@cox.net.

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You may also purchase tickets at Immanuel Christian Bookstore. Call our Christmas Concert Hotline at 703-813-2316 for more information.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON WATER RATE AND PROPOSED 2016 BUDGET

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 17, 2015, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges and its proposed 2016 Budget. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes to the Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges, to be effective April 1, 2016, include the following:

1. An increase in the Availability Charge from \$3,950 to \$4,100†.
2. An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$9,750 to \$10,240.
3. An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,090 to \$1,150†.
4. An increase in the Account Charge from \$36 to \$37.
5. An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$9.80 to \$10.10†.
6. An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$2.55 to \$2.68 per 1,000 gallons of water.
7. An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.55 to \$3.80 per 1,000 gallons of water.
8. An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$50 to \$52.
9. An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
10. A decrease in the Overhead Charge for Labor from 110% to 104%.
11. A decrease in the Overhead Charge for Materials from 25% to 16%.
12. An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$45 to \$46.

†Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is proposing a \$170.4 million budget for calendar year 2016*. Revenues are expected to be \$170.4 million in 2016. Water sales are expected to provide \$147.3 million. Approximately \$23.1 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s -- 2015	2016
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 53,891	\$ 55,581
Power and Utilities	10,677	10,750
Chemicals	6,335	7,857
Purchased Water	6,717	6,090
Supplies and Materials	4,985	5,113
Insurance	1,017	1,050
Fuel	781	880
Postage	637	664
Contractual Services	9,930	10,422
Professional Services	1,146	1,046
Other	2,363	2,447
Sub-Total	98,479	101,900
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(9,669)	(9,616)
Total	\$ 88,810	\$ 92,284

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$41,417,000
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$24,131,000

*Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes to the rates and the 2016 budget can be viewed on our Web site at http://fairfaxwater.org/current/public_hearing_2015_12_17.htm. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Mr. Ken Lasso at 703-289-6194. Interested parties also may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on **Wednesday, December 16, 2015** to be included in the record of the public hearing.

ENTERTAINMENT

Relationships that Are True-to-Life

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax High is the first high school to debut playwright John Cariani's play, "Love/Sick." He considers it an unromantic comedy and the darker cousin to "Almost, Maine," which he also wrote. The audience will see nine vignettes showing two people going through an important stage in their relationship.

The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, Dec. 4-5, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 6, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$8 via www.fxplayers.org and \$10 at the door. There is a cast of 18 and a creative team of 10, and the story is recommended for ages 13 and up because of the subject matter.

"What's so special about this show is that audiences will be able to take a trip down memory lane and see the stages of a relationship play out," explained director Erich DiCenzo. "They'll see both the beauty of the euphoric times, as well as how different individuals respond to the tougher times, too. Cariani shows what it is like to be in love – what happens to people after they say, 'I love you' – and he highlights this in a whimsical and comedic way."

DiCenzo said rehearsals are going well and his cast is progressing nicely. The school's Theater Department created a new motto, "Producing professional theatrical productions through unique educational experiences." And this as-yet unpublished play – which Fairfax is performing with the playwright's special permission – illustrates it.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said DiCenzo. "Cariani held an all-day, private workshop here recently to work one-on-one with the cast and crew. It was breakthrough after breakthrough; the students were suddenly able to look at the script in a different way."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICH DICENZO

"Love/Sick's" cast at a workshop with the playwright: (back row, from left) Director Erich DiCenzo and students Darien Weems, Gulet Isse, Clara Poteet, Bridget Baucum, Katie Ryan, Elijah King, Matthew Velasco, Kyle Huott, Eddie Zakreski, Phoenix Noiwan and playwright John Cariani; and (front row, from left) Rachel Cahoon, assistant director Janey Silas, Renee Rozell, Zion Jang, Molly Berry, Michael Mitchell and Pari Karkehabadi.

AND MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, said DiCenzo, "Cariani gave them permission to make their own acting choices and trust their instincts. And it was a proud moment for me to hear this Tony-nominated, Broadway star say to me how impressed he was with the level of talent and creativity of both our actors and technicians."

Senior Jonah Hurley designed the set; about 30 people worked on it, but there was a core group of six. He is the lead designer, but he incorporated suggestions from his classmates, so it was a collaborative effort.

"We're building a supercenter with different segments of a store, so it'll look like that's where the scenes are taking place," said Hurley. "But the actors will act as if they're in different rooms of a house. The play's overarching theme is supposed to be things happening in everyday life, so this set fits it

and will be a place that's really familiar for the audience."

Junior Eddie Zakreski portrays Keith, a groom who gets cold feet on his wedding day. "He's obsessive, overreacts easily, gets worked up about stuff and freaks out a lot," said Zakreski. "He loves his fiancé, but isn't sure if he'll be the best husband and if this is what he wants for both of them."

Enjoying his role, he said, "It's really fun because of his character development. He's a good combination of someone both serious and comedic. And playing the stereotypical weird guy gives me the freedom to act big, do almost slapstick comedy and be funny in the way I want to be."

Zakreski said all the vignettes will leave the audience wanting more, but still enjoying the show. "Ideally, they'll be thinking about the characters after their scenes have ended and will be wondering what happens next in their lives," he said. "And Cariani's writing style does a good job of expressing human emo-

tions in a simple, yet clear and deep, manner."

Katie Ryan, a senior, plays Jill in the scene, "Forgot," about a couple on the woman's 35th birthday. "Jill's wanted to have kids for a long time, but they've let it slip and she starts yelling at her husband about it," said Ryan. "She's a working woman, while her husband stays home and does the cooking and cleaning. She's the breadwinner and is assertive and driven."

Ryan, too, likes her part. "I've never played someone so energetic in getting her point across – even throwing chairs," she said. "And it's fun to explore why such a polite and professional person would feel the need to be so aggressive and insistent."

She said anyone who has seen "Almost, Maine" will notice similarities in "Love/Sick's" structure and character. "Women, particularly, will like how Cariani writes his female characters and portrays them as driving their scenes more than usual," said Ryan. "Everything he writes is so real and true-to-life, with natural dialogue and raw reactions to real situations, that you almost forget you're watching a play."

JUNIOR KATIE DAVIS portrays Abbie in a scene called "Where Was I?" Abbie is married to a woman named Liz and they have two children. "But Abbie's lost herself in their daily life and tries to find herself with Liz's help," said Davis. "Abbie's just a fireball – uncertain about things, but spontaneous – rushing into things without thinking them through. She's also loving to her wife and kids, But she has extreme emotions, so she also has a dark side and can be harsh with her family, as well."

Davis loves her role because of her character's extremes. "I get to scream onstage, be very dramatic and show the full range of Abbie's emotions," she said. "I admire her spontaneity and it's so much fun to embody it."

Saying there is "so much to love about this show," Davis said, "The ups and downs of life and relationships, and falling in and out of love, are relatable for everyone. Every person in the audience will either know someone like the characters or will be like them. And they'll leave the performance thinking it's amazing because it's so personal."

Children's Classic Comes to Life, and the Story Behind the Madness is Revealed ...

By ABBY MILLS AND MARLENE MIKA
FOR THE CONNECTION

Have you ever had a dream so whimsical that it swept you away to another world? A young girl named Alice has, and we invite you to see her adventures come to life in Sovereign Grace Church (SGC) Youth Drama's production of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland... and the story behind the Madness!"

It's been 150 years since Charles Lutwidge Dodgson – or, perhaps you know him by his pen name Lewis Carroll – published "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

We thought, what better way to commemorate this beloved children's tale than to transcribe the original text into a play that tells the whole tale, and also breaks the "fourth wall" by telling the story behind the madness.

"Few plays allow actors to let loose and be crazy ... this is one of those plays!" said high school senior William Mills, who plays the Mad Hatter and Mr. Dodgson. Senior Jared Okada, who plays the Mouse and Bill the Lizard, said "I love... being able to step into the lives of [others] ... experiencing their realities." What a dreamy reality these creatures have. Hannah Black, the Queen, said "I'm very excited to be able to play such a fantastic character ... experimenting with how I say my lines and how I want the Queen to be por-

trayed is a really fun experience!"

In this, eighth season, the young cast has stepped up to collaborate on everything from sound effects to stage movement, costuming to choreography. "All has to be completed and perfected in a few short months," said Okada. Leah James, the White Rabbit and Caterpillar easily summed up the entire process in these three words, "It's organized chaos!" It is also truly a community theatre, thanks to friends of the cast who've come in to lend their talents to the production. A portion of the proceeds from this play will go to an orphanage school that many of the cast families have been involved with for several years.

We all, at some time, are "looking for a wonderful adventure," said Sophie Bricker, who plays the part



of Alice. So bring your family and let's go on an adventure together on Dec. 3 and 4 at 7 p.m., and Dec. 5 at 1 p.m. Performances will be held in the main auditorium of Sovereign Grace Church, 5200 Ox Rd, Fairfax. Tickets are \$10 for adults; \$8 for children ages 3 - 17. For more information and sneak peak photos go to www.facebook.com/AliceinFairfax.com.

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

DECEMBER

12/2/2015.....Wellbeing
12/9/2015...Holiday Entertainment & Gift Guide II
12/9/2015..HomeLifeStyle; Home for the Holidays
12/16/2015.....A+ Camps & Schools; Holiday Entertainment & Gifts Pages
12/23/2015.....Special Issue – Safe for the Holidays
12/30/2015.....Children's Connection

JANUARY

1/6/2016.....Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions
1/13/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18
1/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
1/27/2016.....Community Guide
1/27/2016.....Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

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- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

Laughter, Chaos and Lots of Heart

CFTC presents 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A hilarious comedy – with or without a meal – that's the City of Fairfax Theatre Company's upcoming production of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever." Presented jointly with Truro Anglican Church, it is slated for Dec. 3, 5 and 6 at the church, and two of the shows will include dinner.

The story is about the six Herdman children, ages 6 to 13, and the havoc they wreak when they take over all the lead roles in their small town's annual Christmas pageant. But it is a comedy, so everything works out in the end – and there are lots of laughter along the way.

"The Herdmans are the worst kids in the history of the world," said assistant director Emily Dillard, a junior at Fairfax High. "They lie, cheat, steal, smoke cigars and take the Lord's name in vain. But one day, they go to church for the free food and get involved in what will ultimately be 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.'"

"I love coming to rehearsals and working with the director," continued Dillard. "And all the people taking part in this production are great and come from many different backgrounds. Everyone should come see this show because it's hilarious and parts of it are relatable to everybody – whether you're church folk, a mom or just a kid trying to be a kid. This was my favorite Christmas story as a kid because these characters are so quirky, but so real, at the same time. And the story really does capture the true meaning of Christmas."

Porsha Poteet, of the City of Fairfax, plays church mom Mrs. Bradley, who is filling in as the pageant's director, for the first time. "She's calm and likes children," said Poteet. "But when the Herdman children take over the pageant, she starts wondering if she can do it. So she gets stressed out, until she decides to make the best of it and work with them."

Poteet says she is having a "fantastic time. I'm the mother of six children, so [being part of the show] is a nice break for me. I enjoy my role's humor and funny lines; and I, too, grew up reading the book and loved it. The way the Herdmans think is the way all children think, and it's really fun to work with the actors playing them."

She said this show "will give the audience a different perspective on the Christmas story. And there's a scene with firemen that'll be really fun for kids to watch."

Preston Cain, 12, a Thoreau Middle seventh-grader, portrays Claude Herdman. "He and his brother Ollie are energetic partners in crime; all the Herdmans are rambunctious and crazy and do things you'd never think of doing," said Preston. "Claude's mischievous and impatient and wants things to go the way he wants them to."

Enjoying his role, Preston said, "I like the stage combat, and it's fun playing Claude because I get to release my inner child and be free without any control. Because the Herdmans' parents are never there, they don't have any supervision and just



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The rowdy and rambunctious Herdman children are (back row, from left) Anna Zakreski, Harry MacInnes, Preston Cain and Aaron Eckloff, and (front, from left) Sarah Zakreski and Donovan Lanoue-Chapman.

TO GO

- ❖ **Thursday, Dec. 3:** dinner, 6:30 p.m.; show, 7:30 p.m. Ticket for both, \$30; reserved seating.
- ❖ **Saturday, Dec. 5:** show, 2 p.m. Adults, \$15; children, \$10. Tickets at door, \$18 and \$13, respectively.
- ❖ **Saturday, Dec. 5,** dinner, 6:30 p.m.; show, 7:30 p.m. Ticket for both, \$30; reserved seating.
- ❖ **Sunday, Dec. 6,** show, 2 p.m. Adults, \$15; children, \$10. Tickets at door, \$18 and \$13.
- ❖ Buy tickets at www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org; click on "upcoming shows." Performances are at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St. (at North Street intersection) in Fairfax.

run wild." But he said the audience will like all the characters, "especially the children, and the show's very kid-friendly."

Playing Charlie Bradley is Fairfax Villa Elementary fifth-grader Noah Tajudeen, 10. "He's an average kid who'll tell on you and call you out for doing something wrong," said Noah. "But he also wants to fit in. However, he doesn't want to be in the pageant; he thinks it's boring, overrated and for younger kids."

It's a cool part, said Noah, because "I get to react a lot and have fun pretending to be hit by the other kids, and I say funny things. This is a family-oriented show for all ages. And although it's a comedy, it also tells a lesson about not judging people."

The cast and crew of about 50, mainly from Fairfax-area schools, have been rehearsing since early September, and director Kirsten Boyd says things are going well. She also praised her assistant director, saying "Emily keeps the energy level up and the cast engaged."

"Ninety people auditioned, and the ones we chose are really talented," said Boyd. "It's challenging to work with so many young actors, but it's exciting to see them growing, and this provides an opportunity for them to start loving theater at a young age."

The scenes take place in the Bradley family's home and in the church during play rehearsals. "And since it's a dinner theater, the actors will use the whole space, so the audience members will feel like they're part of the action," said Boyd. "It's a nice story about the true meaning of Christmas. And it also shows what happens when people in need become part of a community and it changes everyone's hearts for the better."

CALENDAR



Chanticleer, hailed as "the world's reigning male chorus," performs at George Mason's Center for the Arts on Saturday, Nov. 28.

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.

Ongoing

FCPS Art Teachers Exhibition. Nov. 14-Dec. 6. W-16 McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Join for the exhibitions by the FCPS best art teachers. Discover the breadth of talent found in FCPS as you view works by art teachers. The exhibit will feature various media, unified by the artist's passion to educate. workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

Children's Theatre: "The Nutcracker." 1-2:15 p.m. & 3-4:15 p.m. Saturdays, Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Presented by Mestey Films Productions. Playwright Vianlix Mestey produces an original retelling of the favorite holiday story in play form. Running time 75 minutes with one intermission, appropriate for all ages. \$9-\$13. workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

THURSDAY/NOV. 26

Turkey Trot for Parkinson's. 9 a.m. Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. 5K Run/Walk and One-mile gobble wobble to benefit the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. www.WestSpringfieldRunning.com.

SATURDAY/NOV. 28

Workhouse Winter Wonderland. 3-7 p.m. Full campus, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Join and celebrate the holiday season creatively. Get into the holiday spirit by taking a special date or the whole family on a magical sleigh bell ride around our historic campus in horse-drawn carriages. Enjoy delicious holiday treats such as s'mores and roasted chestnuts by the fire. Free. workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

Baby Canvases Five. 7-10 p.m. Olly Olly, 10417 Main St., 2nd Floor, Fairfax. Baby Canvases Five is a one-night event featuring miniature artwork measuring 3" x 3" or smaller by an ever expanding and extraordinary roster of local artists. Free. <http://www.ollyollyart.com/exhibitions>. 703-789-6144.

"A Chanticleer Christmas." 8 p.m. George Mason Center for the Arts, 4373 Pond Drive, Fairfax. An evening of ancient hymns, venerated sacred songs, contemporary classics, gospel spirituals and treasured American and European carols, all performed with Chanticleer's lush harmonies and impeccable technique. \$32-\$54,

half-price for children and youth through grade 12. cfa.gmu.edu. 888-945-2468.

Little Rocky Run First Blood Drive. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Little Rocky Run Recreation Center, 6201 Sandstone Way, Clifton. Find out if you are eligible at <http://www.inova.org/get-involved/blood-donor-services/donate-blood/eligibility-requirements>. Then, email PantherPints@gmail.com to make an appointment.

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

"The Sturgeon Queens." 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Filmmaker Julie Cohen will be on hand following the film for a discussion and Q & A. \$26, includes light brunch. RSVP by Nov. 22. 703-323-0880. www.jccnv.org.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 3-5

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and the Story Behind the Madness. Dec. 3-4, 7 p.m. Dec. 5, 1 p.m. 5200 Ox Road, Fairfax. ale of a dream so whimsical that it transports one to another world, could it have been created by 3 young girls and a math professor? Yes, it's true! Bring your family to see the 150 year old original text come to life, and hear the story... behind the Madness. \$8, \$10. www.facebook/AliceinFairfax.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 4-5

Norwegian Festival/Bazaar. Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Christ Lutheran Church, 3810 Meredith Drive, Fairfax. Fifth year with Norwegian café, Fjord horses, live music, Nordic Dancers, Norwegian food products and goods. Local Nordic artisans. Waffle, krumkake, lefse demos, baked goods and Kransekake sales. Free. www.norwaydc.org. 703-573-5943.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

City of Fairfax Festival of Lights and Carols. 11:30-7 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, 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. SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

for times and locations.

Lunch with Santa. 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Have lunch with Santa. \$6. Parents free. Ages 10 and under. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov for ticket information or call 703-385-7858.

A Celtic Christmas with Sior-Óg. 7:30 p.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts sponsors the seventh annual Christmas concert. Adults \$5.00 and Children 12 and under free. www.fairfaxarts.org.

Advent Coffee Concert. 9:30 a.m. St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The St. Stephens United Methodist Women Maranatha Singers will present an enjoyable morning of holiday music. The theme of the concert will be "A Joyful Noel." Refreshments will be served after the concert. Free.

Horse Society Holiday Procession. 2 p.m. Town of Clifton. Clifton kicks off the holiday season by parading through the town to Lustre's Field for the costume judging and to share refreshments with the town folks who come to admire and "get in the holiday spirit." This year there will be a special appearance by – you guessed it – Santa. <http://clifton-va.com/>.

Clifton Tree Lighting. 6 p.m. Ayre Square. Campfire, marshmallow roast, carols. www.clifton-va.com.

Author Talk and Musical Program. 8 p.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Liel Leibovitz and a musical program, both celebrating the artist Leonard Cohen. Leibovitz's new biography, "A Broken Hallelujah: Rock and Roll, Redemption and the Life of Leonard

Cohen," brings to life the passionate poet-turned-musician and what compels him and his work. \$24, \$20, \$14. www.jccnvarts.org. 703-537-3000.

SATURDAYS/DEC. 5, 12, 19, 26

Children's Theatre: "The Nutcracker." 1-2:15 p.m. 3-4:15 p.m. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Presented by Mestey Films Productions. LIVE onstage! Playwright Vianlix Mestey produces an original re-telling of the favorite holiday story in play form! Running time 75 minutes with one intermission, appropriate for all ages. \$9-\$13. workhousearts.org. 703-585-2900.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5-6

38th Annual Arts and Crafts Show. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Audrey Moore RECenter, 8100 Braddock Road, Burke. Top quality handmade arts and crafts will be offered by nearly 120 of the area's finest artisans selling handmade items and plenty of great gifts to choose from. Visitors will also be able to find clothes, drawings, photography, pottery, ceramics and metal and wood crafted items. Admission is \$2 per person; children ages 12 and under are free.

26th Annual Holiday Model Train Show. Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, noon-4 p.m. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Model and toy trains displays in G, Standard, O, S, Lego, HO, N and Z Gauges. The "Train Doctor" will be available to fix or advise on broken models. Free for museum members. Adults \$5, children \$2. [\[station.org\]\(http://station.org\).](http://www.fairfax-</p>
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SUNDAY/DEC. 6

Children's Christmas Musical. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. A Christmas musical, "An Out of the Box Christmas." www.jccag.org. 703-383-1170.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

Middle School Orchestras. 7 p.m. Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Enjoy selections from the Nutcracker, the Leyden String Serenade and more. Canned food drive to benefit families of FCPS bus drivers. Free. 703-426-2143.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

High School Orchestras. 7 p.m. Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Featuring the music of Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven. Canned food drive to benefit families of FCPS bus drivers. Free. 703-426-2143.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

The Cathedral Bass. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. The Cathedral Brass will celebrate Christmas with a musical holiday journey featuring Anthony DiLorenzo's "The Toymaker," Vince Guaraldi's "Christmas Time is Here," Clay Aiken's "Mary Did You Know?," jazz settings of traditional Christmas carols. livingsaviorlutheran.org. 703-352-1421.



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Robinson to Face Undefeated South County in 6A North Semifinals

Rams RB Foncha rushes for 157 yards, 3 TDs in win over Chantilly.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The Robinson Rams on Saturday afternoon will try to clear their third hurdle in a challenging 2015 postseason. After closing the regular season with a win over Centreville, No. 5 seed Robinson had to face the No. 12 Wildcats in a playoff rematch the following week. The Rams trailed by a touchdown in the fourth quarter, but came back to win 24-21 on a field goal by Nathan Musso with 3 seconds remaining.

On Nov. 20, Robinson needed a 27-yard touchdown pass from Alex Miller to Wes Richmond with 7 seconds remaining to beat No. 13 Chantilly 31-24 in the quarterfinals.

Now, the Rams (9-3) will travel to face undefeated top seed South County (12-0) in the 6A North region semifinals at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 28. It's the first time since 2004 that Robinson has reached the third round of the playoffs. That year, the Rams lost to Landstown in the AAA Division 6 state championship game.

Led by quarterback DeAndre Clayton and



Robinson running back Sean Foncha rushed for 157 yards and three touchdowns during the Rams' 31-24 victory over Chantilly in the 6A North region quarterfinals on Nov. 20.

running back DeMarcus Ramsey, South County features an up-tempo offense that puts pressure on opposing defenses both through the air and on the ground. The Stallions are averaging 43.5 points per contest and have scored 33 or more points in 11 of 12 games. South County defeated West Potomac 42-9 in the quarterfinals on Friday.

How can Robinson slow down South County? From a defensive standpoint, Rams head coach Scott Vossler said it's about getting stops on third and fourth downs.

"You've got to try to get off the field when you get opportunities," Vossler said. "When you get them in third-and-long and fourth-

and-long and have a chance to get off the field, you've got to cash those in."

On offense, Robinson's ground-oriented wing-T attack can help the Rams' cause by chewing up clock and keeping the South County offense off the field.

"To be able to beat SoCo, we have to play physical, fast, and try to limit penalties," Robinson running back Sean Foncha wrote in an email. "It will be very important that we have longer possessions on offense to get our defense time to rest."

Foncha and fellow Robinson running backs Da'Jon Lee and Roman Lowery have come up big in the postseason.

Against Chantilly, Foncha carried 18 times



Robinson running back Da'Jon Lee rushed for 100 yards against Chantilly during the region quarterfinals on Nov. 20.

for 157 yards and three touchdowns. Trailing 14-0, Foncha scored on an 80-yard run with 5:49 remaining in the second quarter.

"When I scored that 80-yard touchdown, I felt like it gave our team life and confidence," Foncha wrote. "We knew we still had a chance to win." Lee carried 14 times for 100 yards against Chantilly, and Lowery had 12 carries for 42 yards. Each of the three running backs scored a touchdown in the playoff opener against Centreville, and Foncha led the way with 107 yards.

The winner of Saturday's South County-Robinson game will face the winner of No. 2 Lake Braddock and No. 3 Westfield in the region championship game.

Lake Braddock Football to Host Westfield

Q&A: RB Atkins commits to Vanderbilt.

The No. 2-seed Lake Braddock football team secured a trip to the 6A North region semifinals, beating No. 7 Battlefield 13-10 on Nov. 20 in Burke.

Two days later, Bruins running back Lamont Atkins made a decision about his football and academic future.

Atkins, a 5-foot-11, 195-pound junior, committed to Vanderbilt University on Sunday. Atkins has been a primary option in the Lake Braddock offense and figures to be a key contributor when Lake Braddock hosts No. 3 Westfield in the 6A North region semifinals at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 28.

It's the third straight season the two teams have met in the region semifinals, with Westfield winning each of the last two years.

Atkins recently participated in a Q&A with The Connection, discussing his commitment to Vanderbilt, Lake Braddock's upcoming matchup with Westfield and his Thanksgiving plans.

Q: You committed to Vanderbilt on Sunday, correct?

Atkins: Yes. I visited for the game Saturday and stayed to meet all the coaches and tour the facilities and campus Sunday. At the end of the day, I committed to the coaching staff.

Q: What made Vanderbilt the right choice for you?

Atkins: I knew Vanderbilt was the right choice for me before I even visited for the

Lake Braddock running back Lamont Atkins recently committed to play football at Vanderbilt University.

PHOTO BY
CRAIG
STERBUTZEL
THE CONNECTION



weekend. They are the No. 15 National University in the nation and [head] coach [Derek] Mason makes academics a top priority for the players. I also enjoyed the personalities of all the coaches. They care for their athletes as they would their own kids. They hold you accountable to being a Vanderbilt man and encourage you to be limitless. I also couldn't pass up an opportunity to compete in the SEC.

Q: For what position did Vanderbilt recruit you?

Atkins: I was recruited to play running back.

Q: Lake Braddock pulled out a 13-10 win

over Battlefield last week in the quarterfinals. How do you feel your team played?

Atkins: Battlefield was a great team and played well on both sides of the ball. I was proud of my entire team because everyone fought hard for four quarters and pulled out a close victory.

Q: Now you face a Westfield program that has beaten Lake Braddock in the region semifinals each of the last two years. What will it take to beat the Bulldogs?

Atkins: Westfield is a great team and they may have the best defense in the state. We have to execute our game plan and play

error-free football to beat them.

Q: You guys will practice on Thanksgiving, correct? What time? How long?

Atkins: Yes, we will practice from 8:30 to 11:30.

Q: What are your plans for Thanksgiving day?

Atkins: After practice, a few of the parents will prepare a real nice brunch for us. It's a privilege to be practicing and having a meal with your team on Thanksgiving because it means your state championship dreams are still there.

Q: What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?

Atkins: I like the fried turkey and my mom's sweet potato pie.

Q: With the football season still going, will you have to make sure you don't eat too much?

Atkins: Don't worry, we have practice at 8:30 Friday morning and I'm sure we will run it off.

Q: Do you or your family participate in any sports-related Thanksgiving traditions?

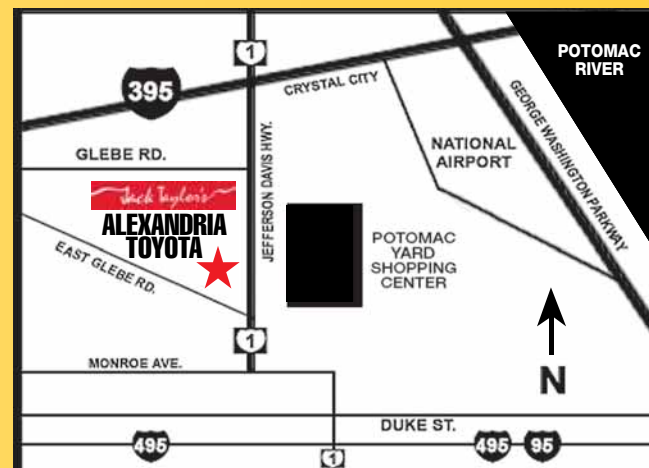
Atkins: We do not. My mom is the varsity team mom and leads most of the preparation for the team brunch. My dad and little brother will be helping her out too, along with a lot of the other families. After practice and the brunch, we're all tired so we normally just hang out around the house and watch movies.

— JON ROETMAN

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OBITUARY

Peggy Jane Magtutu, 77, Dies

Peggy Jane Magtutu (a.k.a. Tu Tu), 77, of Cross Junction, Va., passed away on Monday, Nov. 16 in Blue Ridge Hospice Inpatient Care Center.

She was born March 22, 1938 in Winston Salem, N.C. the daughter of John Bruce and Lydia Milam Craver.

She retired from over 20 years as the secretary in the Main Office at Robinson Secondary School, a job she loved. She moved on to run her own florist Flowers By Tu Tu for several years. She was involved with organizing coffees and luncheons for the ladies of Winchester and was a hospice volunteer. She was a lifetime member of the National Garden Club, an accredited flower show judge, and held the position of National Garden Club Shenandoah District president.

She loved flowers and gardening, shopping, animals of all shapes and sizes, and her family and friends. She is survived by her spouse and the love of her life for the last 57 years, Paul William Magtutu; her children, Kimberly Anne Mary Barr and her husband Stephan of Henderson, Nev. and Sharon Monique Hathaway and her husband Dennis of Burke; grandchildren, Stephan Paul Barr and Marcus Paul Hathaway; great-grandchildren, Keegan Barr and Ryleigh Barr.

FAITH NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Gesher Jewish Day School, 4800 Mattie Moore Court, Fairfax, invites the community to celebrate Chanukah at a Chanukah Lights and Legos Party on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 3-5 p.m. Spin art with dreidels and other crafts; life-size construction toys; latke bar; music, dancing, and singing; a toddler room with PJ Library books about Chanukah. Ages 6 and up can build their own Legos, menorah and dreidel to take home (additional fee). Adults and children 2 years and older \$4; children under 2 free. Legos builders 6 yrs. and up \$12. Space is limited for builders – reserve early. Brownpapertickets.com. www.jccnv.org.

St. Pius X Chapel is offering a Tridentine (Latin) Mass at two locations, in Falls Church at Everly Community Funeral Care, 6161 Leesburg Pike on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 9:30 a.m.; and in Fairfax City at **Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center**, 3740 Old Lee Highway on **Sunday, Dec. 6** at 9:30 a.m. Confessions at 8:30 a.m. 703-425-5735 or www.sspcx.org/en/community/priorities.

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 Paschal Lamb will hold a **Book Reading of "Blessed are You"** from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5. The Paschal Lamb is located at 11214 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Author Melanie Rigney will read from her new book. Free. 703-863-3940.

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.

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Zone 3: The Alexandria Gazette Packet
The Mount Vernon Gazette

Zone 4: Centre View North
Centre View South
Zone 5: The Potomac Almanac
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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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