Santa surprised children all over Fairfax County by visiting schools on Dec. 13, driving a Fairfax County Police Department motorcycle.

Sleigh Ride

City Stalls Decision On University Drive

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*November 23 to January 8*

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City Stalls Decision on University Drive

Council to Mull Community’s Comments, Get More Information.

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

During November and December, Fairfax City Council held work sessions and community-outreach meetings on the proposed extension of University Drive from Fairfax Boulevard to Eaton Place. The goal was to glean as much information as possible about this project, explain it to the residents and consider their input.

This roadway extension is recommended in the City’s Comprehensive Plan as part of an expanded roadway grid to provide more travel routes and better connectivity within the Northfax area. And the City has already installed $10 million for its construction via federal, Smart Scale funding.

The work would include new sidewalks, on-road bike lanes, lighting, landscaping and the reconstruction of the traffic signal at the intersection of University Drive and Fairfax Boulevard. And at Tuesday night’s (Dec. 13) public hearing, City Council was to vote whether to proceed with this project’s preliminary engineering.

Instead, after 29 residents – the vast majority in opposition – spoke about it, the Council decided it needed more time to consider the community’s comments, see if a grid network in Northfax is really needed and obtain more information about its options.

IT THEN DEFERRED further discussion until Jan. 24. And that date’s significant because three of the Council members – David Meyer, Michael DeMarco and Ellie Schmidt – are running for mayor in the Feb. 7 special election. So their actions concerning this issue could well have an impact on the outcome.

“Is the grid network there still relevant, and do we need the intensity of roads there?” asked Councilman Jeff Greenfield. “I don’t support an extension of University Drive that allows more cars going south on University.”

“We need to sift through the information we’ve received (from the community) and review it,” added Councilwoman Janice Miller. “We need additional information before we decide to accept this grant.”

During the Nov. 1 meeting, Community Development and Planning Director Brooke Hardin said Northfax currently has no internal streets, so all vehicle trips there happen on Chain Bridge Road, Eaton Place or Fairfax Boulevard. “There are about 700,000 square feet of office space, 282 hotel rooms and 1.5 million square feet of commercial space in this area – and all that traffic relies on three roads.”

He said the road extension would be two lanes, with turn lanes on each side leading to Eaton and Fairfax Boulevard. And there could either be a median or a roundabout centrally located between those two streets.

The planned roadway alignment would travel through part of the existing Fairfax Shopping Center and car dealership, so $75 million of the project total would be for right-of-way acquisition from two, private property owners. And once the City signs a project agreement with VDOT, the state will reimburse all further design costs.

According to a September traffic study, on northbound University Drive at Fairfax Boulevard, all the turn movements would see additional vehicle queuing, but the only significant increase would be for right turns in the afternoon rush.

To address safety issues on University Drive, the City has already installed ad

See University Drive. Page 5

‘Just Pause and Don’t Do It’

'Passionate sentiment on both sides of the issue.

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

The City’s proposal to extend University Drive has sparked strong feelings in Fairfax residents. They spoke both for and against it at the Nov. 1 community outreach meeting and before the Nov. 8 City Council meeting. But most of the speakers during Tuesday night’s public hearing were firmly opposed.

“It will have an adverse effect on the University Drive neighborhood,” said Diane Henn. “It will turn our neighborhood street into a highway and a shortcut for north-south commuters.”

“University is a narrow, residential road, and this extension would endanger people’s lives,” said Robert Orr. “People cross University to get to Van Dyke Park or the Sherwood Center, all the time.” Matt Baird said the extra traffic would drive down their property values, and he also worried about the children playing along University and people walking their dogs there.

In November, University Drive resident Bob Kemp said traffic’s already increased in that area. “I estimate an accident happens there once a month,” he said. “People blow through the stop sign in my section of the road, so there’s a safety concern. And this will bring even more traffic. Many homeowners have several cars which have to be parked on the street and will be hit.”

However, neighbor Betsy Bicknell favored the extension. “I’d love an alternative route to head north on [Route] 123,” she said. “I support this to encourage better redevelopment in the Fairfax Shopping Center to increase our tax base.”

Tom Ross wanted it for economic reasons “so the homeowners don’t have to pay higher property taxes or receive reduced City services. This roadway is critical to ensuring Northfax’s future success to provide the type of economic development the City desperately needs. There’d be cut-through traffic, but ways to minimize it and slow it down.”

Yet noting the other redevelopment projects already happening in the City, Chris Dominic said 1,500 more cars on University Drive would be a huge impact. And Audrey Sandhusen was “deeply concerned about the gridlock that already occurs at University Drive and Fairfax Boulevard, especially at rush hour. I can’t see putting a main road through that shopping center and moving where the gridlock occurs.”

Agreeing, Virginia Gerard said, “People can’t get through Eaton [Place] now to get to 123 at rush hour. You can’t turn left at Fairfax Boulevard and University. And half the time, you can’t turn left onto [Route] 50 to get to University Drive, so you’ll have traffic backing up. It’s going to be worse than it is now at some of those intersections.”

Kelly Schultz said the project will yield more cars on Fairfax Boulevard, University and Eaton and “there’d be delays on Eaton. The costs would outweigh the very limited benefits.” And former City Mayor John Mason urged the Council not to make a hasty decision “until a workable plan is in place.”

University Drive resident Karen Vincent said that road is their neighborhood drive. “There’s speeding and no

See Residents. Page 5
University Drive
Decision Postponed

FROM PAGE 3

The way University intersects with Eaton “problematic. We don’t want to do something that makes traffic worse. I’d be hard-pressed to give an affirmative vote to move forward with this project because the overall approach to the Northfax site hasn’t yet been decided.” Councilwoman Ellie Schmidt asked if on-street parking could go on the new stretch of University. “Possibly, if the roundabout’s not there,” replied Transportation Director Wendy Block Sanford. “And it can’t be near the intersections with Eaton Place and Fairfax Boulevard.”

“Tall Oaks is conveniently located just one mile from the Wiehle Avenue Metro Station (Silver Line).”

The Fairfax is like a cruise ship.

—Colonel Philip (Phil) J. Saulnier, USA, Retired and Judith (Judy) Saulnier, Residents at The Fairfax for 3.5 Years

“There are many reasons that we moved to The Fairfax. The beautiful and spacious grounds, the activities, medical care, not having to cook anymore... The Fairfax is like a cruise ship—you have everything available to you. Most important was the true financial value of the LifeCare program as well as the potential tax advantages available to us. It was the smartest lifestyle and financial decision we ever made.”

Visit TheFairfaxRetirement.com for more information or call to schedule a personalized tour today.

The City’s future land-use plan for Northfax.
Residents Debate University Drive Extension

Improving mobility by car seems contrary to the objective of a walkable center.

Meanwhile, representing Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth, Douglas Stewart urged the City to proceed with the project. “[It] has significant benefits for smart growth, traffic circulation and economic development in Fairfax City,” he said. “The University Drive extension is central to the creation of a street grid for Northfax … and more compact, walkable blocks [there].”

Stewart called receiving Smart Scale funding for this project, with no local matching funds required, a “victory” for the City. “There’s a great need for infrastructure improvements and a scarcity of available funds,” he said. “To cancel the project and return these funds would be, in our view, fiscally irresponsible. We’re also concerned about the message this would send to the state and whether it could negatively affect the City’s ability to compete for future transportation funds.”

But most of Tuesday night’s speakers said the project wasn’t worth doing. “It’ll be difficult crossing a two-lane road,” said Al Goring. “And a 25-30-percent increase in traffic isn’t insignificant.” Rob Higginbotham said University shouldn’t be a cut-through to Eaton and I-66, and Council should eliminate the plan’s road connection to Eaton.

Nancy Young said the University/Ford Road intersection has a three-way stop that drivers ignore. “I walk my dog into the park daily and children cross there to get to the park and schools,” she said. “And people already go through the stop sign there; it’s very dangerous.”

To prevent cut-through traffic, said Alan Souder, “Think only right turns entering and exiting [the shopping center]. This proposal is premature and not ready for discussion.”

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To prevent cut-through traffic, said Alan Souder, “Think only right turns entering and exiting [the shopping center]. This proposal is premature and not ready for primetime.” And Hal Creel said working with the community first, devising a plan and then seeking funding would have been better.

Agreeing, Nancy Wylie told the Council, “You’re voting on this extension to promote the shopping center, but I haven’t heard the plan for that center. And what are the benefits in extending this road? What I’ve heard tonight is ‘danger,’ so just pause and don’t do it.”

From Page 3
History in Police Reform Part 2

Civilian Review Panel — and they said it couldn’t be done ….

Last week, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to establish a Civilian Review Panel, part of a two-pronged concept of independent oversight of law enforcement recommended unanimously by the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission.

On Sept. 20, 2016, the board voted to establish the Office of the Independent Auditor, the other piece of oversight. The two branches of oversight would not overlap.

The Independent Police Auditor will report directly to the Board of Supervisors and provide oversight in cases of police use of force that lead to serious injury or death, including officer-involved shootings. The Civilian Review Panel will respond to community concerns or complaints about alleged incidents of abuse of authority by FCPD by reviewing the investigations conducted by the department.

The vote by the Board of Supervisors for the Office of Auditor was unanimous, and for the Civilian Review Panel, 9-1, indicating the strong commitment to independent oversight and the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission. The experiences from other communities with civilian oversight have shown that strong, independent oversight builds legitimacy and public trust through increased police transparency and accountability to the public served. Oversight provides a meaningful forum or the public and forms a crucial bridge between the public and the police. Increased transparency, trust, and communication between the police and the public can lead to greater community cooperation in achieving the ultimate goal of decreased crime and increased public safety.

This very positive outcome seemed nearly impossible in the wake of the death of John Geer in August 2013, shot by then Fairfax Police Chief Adam Torres while standing unarmed in the doorway to his own home. Officials had long opposed consideration of a Civilian Review Panel.

Board of Supervisor Chairman Sharon Bulova deserves tremendous kudos, first for establishing the Ad Hoc Commission in the wake of public outrage over the shooting and the blackout of information that followed, and then for her unwavering support of the recommendations that emerged.

In voting for the Civilian Review Panel, Supervisor Linda Smyth said: “We all know it’s time to put this in place. This is what the public has really asked us to do.”

John Cook (R-Braddock), chairman of the Public Safety Committee, has been relentless in moving the recommendations forward for discussion and approval by the board. Having both the auditor and the panel approved in 2016 is no small accomplishment.

The recommendations for oversight also have the enthusiastic support of Police Chief Edwin Roessler, whose support overall for change in the FCPD has been admirable and essential.

Every member of the Board of Supervisors deserves credit for engaging on the details and supporting recommendations of the commission.

Other changes brought about by the Ad Hoc Commission’s recommendations include the implementation of Diversion First, which provides treatment rather than jail for nonviolent people with mental illness, resulting in some 350 diversions from potential criminal arrest, and in police transporting more than 1,000 people in mental health crisis to the Merrifield Center for treatment; an emphasis on de-escalation and on crisis intervention training; the revamping of the order of officer training to emphasize the role of policing in a democracy and the sanctity of life ahead of firearms training; and the significant amendment of General Order 540 on the use of force. The FCPD has been a leading force in these changes, and its leadership has played a pivotal role in seeking out and implementing best practices.

There are still miles to go, but evidence is that county and police leadership are prepared to traverse those miles.

— Mary Kimm

mkkimm@ConnectionNewspapers.com

Mary Kimm served on the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission and continues to advocate for ongoing implementation.

SoberRide Safety Net for Holiday Celebrations

The annual Holiday SoberRide program, offering free rides home to locals over 21 who have been celebrating with alcohol, will operate between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. each evening between Friday, Dec. 16, 2016 and Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period. SoberRide is organized by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program. Area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-3517X11 for a no-cost (up to $30 fare), safe way home. Last December, nearly 1,500 people took advantage of the program.

More information about WRAP’s SoberRide initiative can be found at www.soberride.com.

Letters to the Editor

Focusing on People Rather Than PR

To the Editor:

I was disturbed by Fairfax County’s recent series on the Adult Detention Center (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news2/a-look-inside-the-jail-how-the-sheriffs-office-manages-inmate-housing/).

The first installment in the series paints a cheerful picture of the facility, with rehabilitation, religious services, and sunny rooms for inmates suffering from mental illnesses, helmed by “Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, a longtime mental health advocate.” Yet two different mentally ill individuals have been killed by sheriff’s deputies under her watch, with no consequences for the deaths.

On Feb. 3, 2015, Natasha McKenna, a 37-year-old African-American mother, was tasered four times by six sheriff’s deputies while in custody at the Adult Detention Center. She was naked, shackled, and wearing a spit mask on her face. Her last words were, “You promised me you wouldn’t kill me.” She became comatose, and subsequently died on Feb. 8, 2015. Commonwealth Attorney Ray Morrogh declined to press any charges against the deputies, and Kincaid kept them on staff. And so McKenna’s family has not seen any justice for the death of their daughter and mother.

On Aug. 15, 2016, one of the same sheriff’s deputies, Patrick McPartlin, also shot and killed Jovany Martinez, a 29-year-old Latino man, outside of the Inova Fairfax Hospital where he had just been released. Again, no charges have been filed.

Various initiatives claim to improve Fairfax policing and incarceration practices, including Diversion First and the Civilian Review Board. However, neither of these initiatives makes real substantive change. The Diversion First program is underfunded, understaffed, and only available at the discretion of the police, rather than based on any neutral assessment process.

Despite this, Police Chief Ed Roessler admits that “The majority of our use-of-force incidents are with those suffering mental health crisis”. The Civilian Review Board has no power to investigate, ask direct questions, or engage in any disciplinary process, but rather can only make recommendations to the Chief of Police, who may then choose to respond or ignore those recommendations.

Given the toothless responses to the deaths of Natasha McKenna and Jovany Martinez, and the public outrage in Fairfax County’s series, it’s difficult to avoid the conclusion that this propaganda is meant to distract the public of Fairfax County from the real and dangerous problems facing people of color and people with mental illnesses in our policing system.


The Washington Post reports that “more than 40 percent of of use-of-force cases [by Fairfax County Police] involved African Americans, who make up only 8 percent of the county’s population.”

Karen Wolf
Fairfax
Save the Date!

Fairfax Salvation Army
Women’s Auxiliary
37th Annual Fashion Show/Fundraiser
March 24, 2017
at the Waterford at Fair Oaks
Contact: Angela Ganey
angelaganey@verizon.net

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FREE!!
20 oz. Soda
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With this Coupon.
Good
11/27–12/21/16

WOW!!
The Famous Combo
FOR ONLY $18.00!!!
Includes: 2 Admissions, 2 Medium Drinks & 1 Large Popcorn! (You Save $6.00)
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Good
11/27–12/21/16

With this Coupon, not valid with any other offer, one per person per visit.
On Saturday Dec.17 the Fishburne Military School will host an Education Fair from 9 - 1 p.m. at the Marriott at Oak Fair 11787 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Fishburne Military School invites students and their families to stop by to learn more about a military school education. Admission: Free.
www.fishburne.org

Post Free Bingo (with breaks for smoking friends). 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, $1,000 jackpot.


First Sunday Jazz Brunch 11 - 2 p.m. Recurring monthly on the 1st Sunday at Bazin’s on Church 111 Church St N.W., Vienna. Enjoy brunch accompanied by the soft jazz sounds of Virginia Music Adventures. Visit: http://www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-2328/THURSDAY/DEC. 15

random event dates info

THURSDAY/DEC. 15
$5 Jewelry and Accessory Sale INOWA Fair Oaks Hospital Auxiliary is $4 - 4 p.m. In the Hospital Atrium 3600 Joseph Siewick Dr, Fairfax. All proceeds benefit Inova Fair Oaks Hospital. This sale is Open to the Public. Credit Card or Cash will be accepted.

THURSDAY/DEC. 15
Two Percent Teen Pregnancy Center Holiday Kick Off Event 6 - 11 p.m. The Bungalow Airhouse 2840 Prince William Pkwy, Woodbridge. Be ready for an evening filled with food, drinks, music, dancing, and vendors for those last minute Holiday gifts, desserts, games, silent auction and so much more. Dress is Black tie/Holiday best. Perfect for date night or just an evening with the family. Tickets are available at https://www.eventnation.co/event/TPPHoliday

To learn more about this new teen pregnancy initiative visit Two Percent Project’s website at www.twopercenproject.org or contact them via email at teempregnancyresource@gmail.com

Family Fun Movie Nights - The Secret Life of Pets 7 p.m. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Looking for something FREE and fun for your family to do on a Friday night? How about a family-friendly movie on the new state-of-the-art big screen? Each movie is rated PG. An adult must accompany anyone under the age of 14. “Beekeeper” Food Drive at Family Fun Nights. Bitterpath is a volunteer-based organization that identifies and addresses the unmet fundamental needs of Fairfax area residents. Food can be dropped off at the Sherwood Center on the evening of the Family Fun Nights between 7 - 9 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17
Fishburne Education Fair 9 - 1 p.m. Marriott at Oak Fair 11787 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Fishburne Military School comes to Fairfax. FMS invites students and their families to stop by to learn more about the benefits of a military school education. Admission: Free.
www.fishburne.org

Celtic Holiday Concert & Candlelight Carols 4:30 p.m. St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 6509 Sylmarstrick Road, Burke. Celtic musicians playing hammered dulcimer, accordion, harp-guitar, Irish flute, guitar, with the St. Andrew’s choir. Reception follows;
SUNDAY/DEC. 18
Christmas Bird Count 7 a.m. – noon. Birders of all skill levels are invited to participate in the 35th Annual Manassas Bull Run Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV). Cost: Free. www.asnv.org
Special Holiday Service at Historic Pohick Episcopal Church 10 a.m. 9301 Richmond Hwy Lorton. This service originated in Victorian England in the 1880s as a series of scripture readings interspersed with Advent and Christmas carols, hymns and choral anthems, tracing God’s love from the creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden, through the annunciation and birth of the Christ Child. http://www.pohick.org/

MONDAY/DEC. 19
Bob Brown Puppets Holiday Show 10:30 a.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Dr, Fairfax. Join the City of Fairfax every Monday morning at 10:30am for Puppet Monday. Funday Monday will offer a variety of children’s activities and entertainment in Old Town Hall. Admission: Free & Parking. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. 703-385-2355; www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20
Fairfax High School Winter Concert 7 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3951 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Fairfax High School Choral and Orchestra Department presents a performance of Christmas tunes. Bring an unwrapped gift for a child to donate to the Toys for Tots drive. Cost: Free. 703-219-2355; fhschorus.net

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 21
Person Centered Dementia Care 1 p.m. Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax. Keeping their current abilities in mind, join us for this free class to learn ways to keep your loved one active and engaged in personalized activities. Contact Christi Clark, christi.clark@insightmcc.org, 703-204-4664, InsightMCC.org.
Blue Christmas at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church 7:30 p.m. 8508 Hooes Road, Springfield. A Blue Christmas service is a special time when we can remove ourselves from the hustle of Christmas and share some quiet time for reflection. It is especially dedicated to those who may not enjoy the season or find joy in this season because of loss or illness or depression. Do you feel more like sitting in a chair than celebrating and partaking? Maybe this is the first Christmas after losing someone significant in your life or having gone through significant life changes. The Blue Christmas service is for you. It is a time of reflection with music, candles, and prayer to help us get through the darkest night of the year. Cost: Free. 703-451-8223. sydenstrickerumc.org

Plan Ahead Events
SATURDAY/DEC. 31
New Year’s Eve Tennis Party 7 p.m.: 12:30 a.m. Fairfax Racquet Club 9860 Lee Highway, Fairfax. The Fairfax Racquet Club invites you to play singles/doubles tennis with all levels welcome to participate. ATLAA is offering healthy dinner, soft drinks, and a Champagne Toast for New Year. You may bring your own beer/wine if you would prefer to do so.

SUNDAY/DEC. 25
5th Annual Christmas Day Giving Back Event 1-5 p.m. Kilroy’s Ravensworth Shopping Center 5236 Port Royal Road, Springfield. Volunteers needed, join us in saying thank you to our veterans and deployed service members for their service and sacrifices. We will be packing care packages and letters to our veterans. www.americasodonatapalooza.org

Santa surprised children all over Fairfax County by visiting schools on Dec. 13, driving a Fairfax County Police Department motorcycle.

Sleigh Ride
Mounted FCPD officers escort Santa to Fairfax County Public Schools.
Open Floorplan Eases Entertaining

Open house helps homeowners looking for ideas.

By John Byrd

It’s one thing to talk a good game; quite another to put your ideas to the test by inviting a long list of perceptive critics to inspect your wares.

“We like to see how well our plans work first hand whenever we can,” Bob Gallagher said, as he describes a holiday tour his home remodeling firm held at one of this client’s homes last Saturday.

“Our designers spend a lot of time conferring with clients on specific needs and learning from case histories — but what really counts is seeing your plan in action. A holiday tour is a test drive, but it’s also a chance to explore ideas, brainstorm on breaking trends — and just enjoy being around people who are enjoying what we create.”

Case in point, the Arlington home of Steve and Louise Brooks.

Two years ago, the Brooks hired Sun Design to convert the primary living area of their raised rambler into space that would serve a multitude of purposes, including a place for frequent gatherings of friends and family.

Last weekend, the remodeler hosted an open house for anyone who wanted to see first hand whenever we can,” Bob Gallagher said, as he describes a holiday tour his home remodeling firm held at one of this client’s homes last Saturday.

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Last weekend, the remodeler hosted an open house for anyone who wanted to see how their freshly-minted new space plan would perform under real life home entertainment conditions.

There were about 50 visitors in all. Standing in one corner, one could see fluidly organic pockets of revelers — but all flows smoothly, a far cry from the past.

In the past, one’s guests were usually in another room.

The original small kitchen with its adjacent living room and dining room actually felt crowded whenever the head-count exceeded six or seven.

The eight-foot ceiling and small-scale windows didn’t help either; ditto, the “builder grade” interior finishes and restricted space-use options.

“We’re a host site for our church, so we wanted a place that would allow us to comfortably meet with friends,” said Louise Brooks. “We just weren’t at all sure how to make that happen within our existing floor plan.”

Fortunately, Gallagher and team knew the answer. They converted a 12-foot section of the existing living room into a new space that would allow for well-articulated activity zones integrated into a visually distinctive spatial continuum.

The result feels generously-sized, yet unified.

To effect the changes Brooks sought, Sun Design concentrated on strategic improvements inside the envelope of the existing structure: a nearly 800-square-foot great room was formed by eliminating walls separating the kitchen, dining room, living room and foyer; to create the 14-foot cathedral ceiling, the new interior incorporated a self-supporting attic.

The changes increased natural light. A south-facing trapezoidal-shaped window in the dining room provides a hilltop view of the neighborhood.

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A granite-surfaced food preparation island and dining counter now facilitates the easy circulation needed for entertaining; the “built-in” was custom-designed to support a wide-range of storage, cooking and clean-up requirements.

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The plan also increased natural light. A south-facing trapezoidal-shaped window provides a hilltop view of the neighborhood. Distinctive finish work details delineate key activity zones within a warmly cohesive ambiance that features sight-lines in all directions.

Meanwhile, back at the tour, Bob Gallagher is talking to a drop-in guest about how the new space is used on an everyday basis.

“It works extremely well,” he said. “The open plan allows people to happily pursue different tasks within the same continuum without loss of personal space. You have privacy, but you’re in eye-contact. It’s a very popular trend.”

Gallagher also stresses the value of an open house to homeowners looking for ideas.

“We’ve been doing tours of newly remodeled homes for about 10 years,” he said. “We’ve found that the open houses often become neighborhood meet-up opportunities where people naturally start exploring matters of mutual interest.”

Sun Design Remodeling frequently sponsors tours of recently remodeled homes as well as workshops on home remodeling topics. Headquartered in Burke, the firm recently has a second office in McLean. For information, call 703-425-5588 or visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

John Byrd (byrdmatx@gmail.com) has been writing about home improvement for 30 years.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
Police Chief's Cruiser Hit by Drunken Driver

By Fallon Forbush
The Connection

Fairfax County Police Department Chief Col. Edwin Roessler Jr. was rear-ended by a drunken driver in Centreville on Monday night, Dec. 12.

Roessler experienced minor injuries and was taken to Inova Fair Oaks Hospital for evaluation and treatment. He was released later in the night and was back to work the following morning.

A 40-year-old Centreville woman, who was driving the Nissan SUV that struck Roessler’s unmarked police cruiser, a 2017 Ford Explorer, was arrested at the scene. A passenger in her SUV, a 48-year-old man, was released at the scene of the accident. The driver was taken to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center in Fairfax where she was charged with a DWI. She was released the following morning on Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Roessler was driving southbound on Lee Highway around 8:40 p.m. when he stopped for a red light at the intersection of Stone Road when he was struck.

While he was waiting for the traffic light to turn green, he was thinking about getting home to eat dinner and later going to pick up one of his children from the airport who was flying home for the holidays, Roessler said at a press conference the following afternoon.

“It was a very long day … That’s all I was thinking about and the next thing I know, I’m being jolted real hard,” he said. “It took me a few seconds to realize that I was just rear-ended at full speed while I was stopped in traffic waiting for the light.”

He immediately approached the SUV to see if the driver and her passenger were OK. “I went and checked on them and asked them if they were injured,” he said. “They said, ‘No.’”

He then reported the crash to dispatchers.

It was then that he started experiencing a headache and pain in his back and legs. He told reporters that he had replacement surgery on his left hip on Aug. 30 and was afraid that he was experiencing complications.

“I was kind of in shock,” he said. “I didn’t feel anything and as I sat [in the cruiser] … I started getting a headache, and my back started tightening and my legs started cramping.”

Though he feels “very sore,” he thanked God that he was OK. “The X-rays were good, CAT scan’s good … just glad for my health.”

He said that it could have been a different story had he not worn his seatbelt.

“If I wasn’t buckled in, I don’t think I would be here,” he said.

He had serious words for drivers, especially during the holidays when there are parties and festivities going on.

“Drinking and driving don’t mix … Spend a little money and plan,” he said. “Take a taxi. Don’t get behind a wheel. You’re going to kill someone.”
Suhad Keblawi received the Cueing Leadership Award at the National Cued Speech Association 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner. This award is given for leadership in activities that impact the use and awareness of Cued Speech.

Keblawi, of Fairfax, has been cueing for more than 30 years with her deaf son. In the spring of 1984 her late husband, Dr. Feisal Keblawi, met Dr. Cornett and became excited about beginning Cued Speech with their 4 year old son. Dr. Cornett invited them to his home on a Saturday so Suhad could learn about cueing. He showed them numerous videos; one showed a mother cueing as she asked her young son if he wanted Mozzarella and Parmesan on his pasta.

Right then and there Suhad decided: “Yes! That’s it. I want to be able to do that with Nabeel.” Nabeel loved cheeses and had a very discriminating taste for them, and Suhad knew that with Cued Speech she could tell him all the names of cheeses he liked instead of just signing yellow or white cheese.

Later, Nabeel became an avid reader and excelled in his schooling. A favorite memory is Nabeel as young teen sitting with his dad and discussing the subject of quantum physics after reading the book Timeline. Feisal assisted Dr. Cornett in the development of Arabic Cued Speech; Suhad later completed it and updated the chart, created follow up materials and mentored other families in its use.

Suhad has become a valued professional in multiple roles locally and at the state and national levels. For more than 20 years, she has been the Lead Cued Language Transliterator for the Fairfax County Public Schools. She is a NCSA-Certified Instructor (InsCert) and a Trainer with Language Matters, Inc. She is a presenter at a variety of conferences, as well as a consultant and mentor to the United States and taught Cued American English classes at Northern VA Community College and currently teaches at other community venues. She is the Virginia state grant coordinator for securing funds for ongoing transliterator training. She is an NCSA Board Member and a 50th Anniversary committee member. Suhad is a leader and model who inspires, comforts, and brings the Cued Speech community together.

Cued Speech is a mode of communication that provides full access to the spoken language for children who are deaf. The NCSA champions effective communication, language development and literacy through the use of Cued Speech. As an organization, they believe that every child who is deaf and hard of hearing should have full access to the language of the home.
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