



# Fairfax Station Clifton & Lorton

HomeLifeStyle

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## Swim Teams Make Toys for Tots Splash

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Commission  
Recommendations:  
88 Percent Implemented

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Surviving Brain Injury

NEWS, PAGE 12

The South County and West Springfield High School varsity Swim & Dive teams participated in the South Run RECenter Toys for Tots campaign prior to their meet against each other on Dec. 10.



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

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## Free Holiday Cab Rides Help Prevent Drunk Driving

Combating that holiday period which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says is a "dangerous time to be on the road due to a high number of drunk drivers behind the wheel," a local nonprofit organization will offer free cab rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during the winter holidays.

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), operates the annual Holiday SoberRide program 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.

During the evening hours, between Dec. 16 and Jan. 1, Washington-metropolitan area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free

SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI and be afforded a no-cost (up to \$30 fare), safe way home.

"Last December, nearly 1,500 (1,456) Greater Washington residents did the right thing and availed themselves of this lifesaving service rather than possibly driving home impaired," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's president. "For SoberRide's hours of operation during just last New Year's Eve, alone, such ridership (580) translated into the removal of a would-be drunk driver from our shared roadways every 49-seconds."

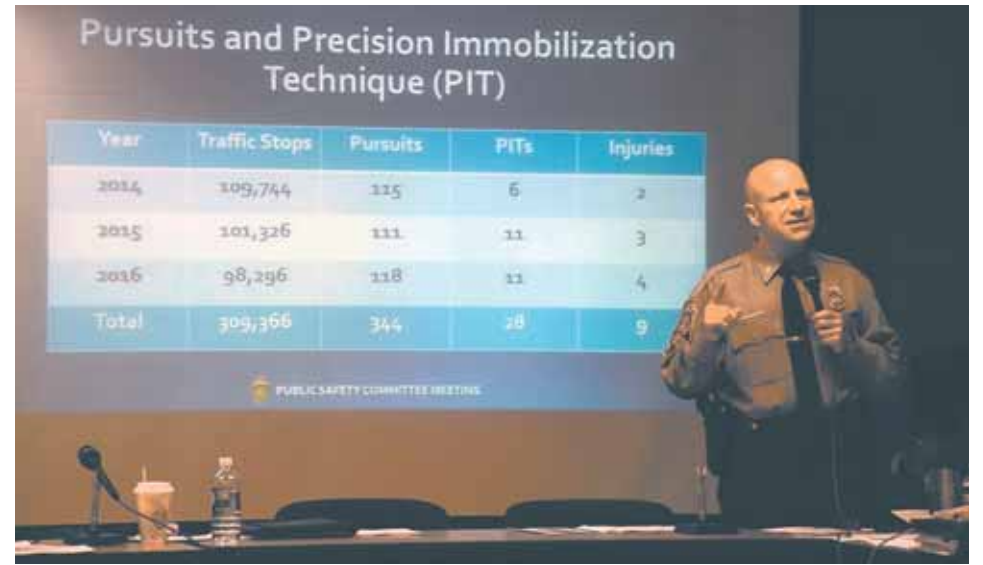
Since 1993, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 65,385 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide initiative can be found at [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com).





A Dec. 13 presentation from Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting subcommittee chair Shirley Ginwright (right), marked the last subcommittee to be heard by the supervisors.



PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Police Chief Edwin Roessler presents an update to the Public Safety Committee on the Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT) still allowed to be implemented by FCPD.

## Ad Hoc Commission Recommendations: 88 Percent Implemented

Public Safety Committee hears from Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting subcommittee chair.

BY TIM PETERSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is well on its way to implementing all recommendations from the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission. At the Dec. 13 meeting of the board's Public Safety Committee, they announced 88 percent of the commission recommendations have been implemented or are soon to be so.

"I am proud that 178 of 202 recommendations have been approved in just over a year," Chairman Sharon Bulova said in a statement. "The Board of Supervisors, Police Department and county staff have been moving with deliberate speed to transform these recommendations into actionable policies. By launching Diversion First, establishing the Office of Police Auditor, creating a Civilian Review Panel, hiring a civilian FCPD Public Affairs Director and applying new standards regarding release of information, just to name a few, Fairfax County has made great strides toward enhancing trust in and increasing transparency of Fairfax County Government."

**BULOVA LAUNCHED** the commission in response to public concern and growing distrust of police over the 2013 shooting death of Springfield resident John Geer by Fairfax County Police officer Adam Torres.

Fairfax County Police and the supervisors didn't release case information for more than a year after Geer's death, even to his family. A wrongful death civil suit filed by the family and a court order finally forced the release of investigation files and Torres' name.

Torres was fired in July 2015 and indicted by a grand jury for murder in August 2015, an historic first charge of that kind for any Fairfax County officer. He pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and was released in June of this year, after he received credit for time served for a 12-month sentence.

### Status of Ad Hoc Commission Recommendations

Fairfax County released these totals, as of Dec. 12, 2016:

**119 (58.9 percent)** Recommendations are **Implemented** or **Implemented as Modified**

- ❖ 39 Communications
- ❖ 54 Use of Force
- ❖ 10 Diversity, Recruitment and Vetting
- ❖ 8 Mental Health and CIT
- ❖ 8 Independent Oversight and Investigations

**59 (29.2 percent)** Recommendations are **In Progress** (Recommendation accepted and in the implementation process)

- ❖ 11 Communications
- ❖ 3 Use of Force
- ❖ 4 Diversity, Recruitment and Vetting
- ❖ 13 Mental Health and CIT
- ❖ 28 Independent Oversight and Investigations

**16 (7.9 percent)** Recommendations are **Under Review** (Recommendation needs more review or approval by the Board of Supervisors before the implementation process can begin)

- ❖ 1 Communications
- ❖ 7 Use of Force
- ❖ 0 Diversity, Recruitment and Vetting
- ❖ 5 Mental Health and CIT
- ❖ 3 Independent Oversight and Investigations

**8 (4 percent)** Recommendations are **Not Implemented**

- ❖ 1 Communications
- ❖ 4 Use of Force
- ❖ 0 Diversity, Recruitment and Vetting
- ❖ 0 Mental Health and CIT
- ❖ 3 Independent Oversight and Investigations

The Public Safety Committee has been reviewing the recommendations from each subcommittee of the Ad Hoc Commission over the last several months, including Use of Force, Communications, Mental Health, Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting, and Independent Investigations and Oversight.

Michael Hershman, chair of the Ad Hoc Commission, said in a statement, "I not only look back on our work as very pertinent given today's national attention on policing and community relations, but am encouraged by the seriousness with which the Board of Supervisors have addressed our many recommendations. Through a series of committee meetings and hearings focusing on our recommendations, the board has displayed a professional and bipartisan effort to make a very good police department into a model for the rest of the country."

A presentation from Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting subcommittee chair Shirley Ginwright, president of the Fairfax County chapter of the NAACP, on Tuesday, Dec. 13, marked the last subcommittee to be heard by the supervisors.

**"What I have seen is community members, leaders and police department working together."**

— Shirley Ginwright

"In some fashion we've touched each one of them," said Public Safety committee chair supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock).

Ginwright gave brief updates on the status of the subcommittee's 14 recommendations with Fairfax County Police.

"I have to thank them for doing the most critical pieces of our recommendations first," Ginwright said.

Among those implemented are "collaborate and build recruitment-oriented partnerships" (number 5) and "establish a diversity goal for each commander" (number 10).

Less than half of that subcommittee's recommendations are still in progress, said Ginwright.

"We realize there is more that needs to be done, but we started," Ginwright said in a statement. "I applaud the Board of Supervisors for establishing the Ad Hoc Commission, listening to and understanding the cries of the community for changes, and taking some hard hits to get it done. What I have seen is community members, leaders and police department working together."

Cook acknowledged that a number of the Ad Hoc commission's recommendations were directed towards the Sheriff's Office and Commonwealth's Attorney, who don't report directly to the Board of Supervisors.

But, Cook said, the board is reaching out to them regarding those recommendations and inviting them to present and field questions related to the recommendations at the Public Safety Committee Meeting in March, 2017.

Among those recommendations still under review, a number relate to body cameras.

**CHIEF EDWIN ROESSLER** said the cost for cameras has been coming down as the number of vendors in the market increases.

Roessler cautioned the board to learn from the mistakes of other jurisdictions around the United States that have hastily implemented body camera programs without properly budgeting or planning to manage them.

Cook said the Jan. 31, 2017 Public Safety Committee meeting has already been reserved for a deeper discussion of body cameras.

A progress report of where different recommendations from the Ad Hoc Commission are in the process of implementation is available online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission/progressreport.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission/progressreport.htm). A copy of the commission's final report to the board of supervisors is available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/pdf/adhoc-final-10.8.15.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/pdf/adhoc-final-10.8.15.pdf).

# Distance Learning

Clifton resident's pursuit of Pluto's secrets.

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON  
THE CONNECTION

About a decade ago, the public found out that Pluto was no longer considered one of the nine major planets in the solar system. In 2006, the International Astronomical Union demoted the small planet, the furthest of the nine away from the sun, to "dwarf planet" status, citing Pluto's size and location as the reason for its revised status.

Clifton scientist Dr. Michael Summers, also a professor of Planetary Science and Astronomy at George Mason University, said he still considers Pluto one of the nine major planets in the solar system. One of the foremost experts on Pluto, Summers is part of the New Horizon mission team, which has spent the last decade designing, preparing and maneuvering a space probe for the first ever close-up observation of Pluto.

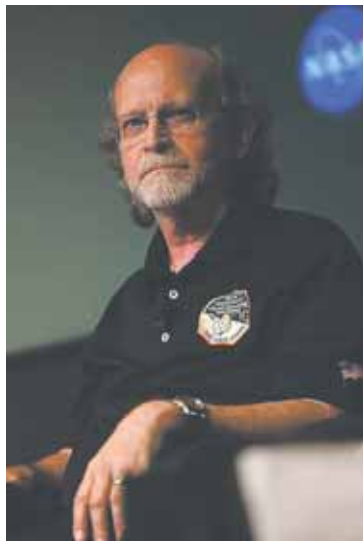
"In its basic form, a space probe is an independent robotic vehicle carrying a set of instruments that is launched via high power rocket into deep space," Summers said. "It communicates with ground control by radio communications. Typically, a spacecraft has onboard computers controlling activities, but its activities can be controlled by scientists on Earth if that is needed."

**SUMMERS' ROLE** on the mission team is far from over, despite the probe's having passed by Pluto last year.

"My role on the team has been in planning and carrying out atmospheric science observations and analysis," he said. "Pluto has a very complex atmosphere, much more complex and difficult to understand than we expected. So I spent many of the early years helping to plan the atmospheric science observations, then years of modeling Pluto's atmosphere in order to make baseline predictions for the team. After the launch we had to put together a detailed encounter plan. Throughout this mission I've been the Deputy Lead of the Atmospheric Science Theme Team."

Summers and his 23 other team members launched the probe from Cape Canaveral on Jan. 19, 2006. However, it didn't reach fly by Pluto until nearly a decade later. The length of the mission speaks to how far away Pluto is from Earth, especially considering that New Horizons was launched at a speed of 38,000 miles per hour.

"By the time I flew home to Clifton from Cape Canaveral after the launch, the probe had passed the orbit of the moon," Summers recalled. "A month later, it had passed Mars' orbit, so that gives you an idea just how far away Pluto really is. We were actually able to cut the time of the trip by directing the spacecraft to a close flyby of the planet Jupiter in February 2007. We used Jupiter's gravity to slingshot the spacecraft, speeding it up, but, even so, it took us until



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Dr. Michael Summers

July 14, 2015 to get to Pluto. And, New Horizons was the fastest spacecraft ever launched from Earth."

In the time it took the probe to reach Pluto's orbit, two members of the original team died, and a couple others moved on to different positions. Still, Pluto's distance wasn't the only factor that made the mission so complicated.

"There are actually numerous space probes, called satellites, in Earth's orbit that operate pretty much the same way as New Horizons," Summer said, "but deep space missions are much, much more difficult for many reasons. Just one example is the time delay for communication. For the New Horizons spacecraft at Pluto, the time delay for radio signals to get to Earth was about four and a half hours. So any signal sent from the spacecraft took that long to get to us to let us know what was going on with the mission."

The New Horizons mission provided the first images of Pluto that humans had ever seen — resulting in groundbreaking discoveries that refuted previous assumptions about Pluto's terrain, atmosphere, interior, and its five moons.

"We were incredibly surprised to see what we did see on Pluto," Summers said. "We expected it to be cold and dead — much like the Earth's moon — but it really was a geologically active and diverse place."

He added that while the other eight planets are categorized into two classes — terrestrial and gas giants — Pluto, as a dwarf ice planet, is in a third class of its own.

While it's still impossible to conclude anything about living creatures on Pluto, Summers said that Pluto certainly contains enough natural resources to support life.

"We're finding out that many of the most interesting places in the solar system are out there in the region of Pluto's orbit," he said. "There are 100,000 objects like Pluto, called Kuiper Belt objects, in that region of our solar system. We know they exist, and that they have enormous amounts of water and other resources. Utilizing all those resources will be crucial for the future of



Dr. Michael Summers speaking at a NASA press conference about the New Horizon mission.

humanity's exploration of deep space. We found that Pluto has an ocean of water below an ice crust that we think is about six miles thick. There may be more liquid water inside Pluto than in all of Earth's oceans combined. And, of course, there has to be the energy inside Pluto to keep all that water in liquid form. Energy, raw materials and liquid water are all required for life, and Pluto has plenty of them."

**THE SMALL SIZE** of Pluto, with a diameter less than 20 percent of Earth's, does not mean that Pluto is in any way less interesting as a planet.

"There have been so many discoveries, it's almost exhausting to see something new every time we study the observations," he said. "We are having to rewrite planetary textbooks, and write the first books ever on dwarf ice planets. What we learn doesn't just help us understand Pluto, it also helps us understand the other planets and even the Earth. The New Horizons mission changed how we think about the solar system. We've even found dried up lakes on the surface of Pluto and evidence of climate change. It's a very complicated world out there."

While experts sift through all the discoveries, the New Horizons spacecraft continues to work for its creators. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) approved a detour for the space probe to check out a neighbor, relatively speaking, of Pluto.

"We are flying by another dwarf ice planet in about two years from now," Summers said. "It's a complete bonus. We knew it was a possibility, but the spacecraft is completely healthy and has plenty of fuel and energy on board, so we decided to propose to NASA to continue the mission and fly by another dwarf planet that was near the spacecraft's trajectory. It will reach that body on New Year's Day, 2019. What we know is that this object very small and may be more rocky and metallic than Pluto. We don't know

whether or not it has an atmosphere."

Summers was studying Pluto long before New Horizons first began its journey more than a decade ago. He began his research on Pluto in graduate school at Caltech in 1982, and, in the late 1990s, he and his fellow future New Horizons mission colleagues began planning for a Pluto mission to propose to NASA. And, long before he studied the solar system in any official capacity, Summers was just a boy in western Kentucky whose interest in outer space piqued during America's space race with Russia.

"I've been interested in space since I was 7 years old when my parents gave me my first telescope," he said. "I was able to see four of the major planets even with such a small telescope, including Saturn with its rings, so that hooked me on astronomy."

In addition to conducting his own research on Pluto, he also works with George Mason University students who are doing research about the planet.

**ADAM JACOBS**, a Ph.D. student in physics and also Summers' research assistant, said that Summers has certainly influenced his course of study.

"Dr. Summers is my dissertation research advisor," Jacobs said. "Working with him is definitely a privilege. As a young scientist, it is critical that you get guidance and advice from an experienced scientist that not only knows their stuff but also is approachable and great at communicating ideas and goals. I found this with him. The other interesting thing that I get to be exposed to is the work dynamic and pace of a NASA science team. When the New Horizons data started coming, the culmination of so much hard work, patience, frustration, and entire careers even, started to come together. I'm not part of the team, but being able to witness just glimpses of that is exciting and a testament to the modern scientific process."

Jacobs said that although he may not end

SEE EXPLORING, PAGE 7



## FAITH

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.

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

**The Guhyasamaja Buddhist Center**, 10875 Main St., Fairfax City provides free classes to both newcomers and advanced practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism.

The center emphasizes working with the mind and learning how to understand the workings of the mind, overcoming inner causes of suffering, while cultivating causes of happiness. Under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the center is a place of study, contemplation and meditation. Visit <http://www.guhyasamaja.org> for more information.

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

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

**Clifton Presbyterian Church**, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. and Cup of Fellowship at 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided from 9:45-11:15 a.m. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

**St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church**, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton, conducts Sunday masses at 7:30 a.m., 8:45 a.m., Latin mass at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

It also offers a Saturday vigil at 5:30 p.m. and a Thursday Latin mass at 7 p.m. Additional mass offered Monday-Friday at 6:30 a.m. (except on Federal holidays) and 8:45 a.m. 703-817-1770 or www.st-andrew.org.

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

**RCIA, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**, is for people interested in becoming Catholic or learning about the Catholic Church.

RCIA classes are held on Tuesdays beginning September 15 and continuing through April. The classes are usually from 7:30 pm until 9:00 pm and they meet in the Guadalupe Room in the Parish Hall, 3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. A group will begin meeting every Wednesday starting September. Sessions are in the Old Parish Hall. All are welcome. Contact Carolyn Smith at 703-273-5369 or carolynsmith.stleos@gmail.com.

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# OPINION

## 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 voice or forum for 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 Officer 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.

#### EDITORIAL

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

tose, 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. This is despite the fact that 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 ques-

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

MKIMM@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 Project. Area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI 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](http://www.soberride.com).

tions, or engage in any disciplinary process, but rather can only make recommendations to the Chief of Police, who may then chose to respond or ignore those recommendations.

Given the toothless responses to the deaths of Natasha McKenna and Jovany Martinez, and the positive spin 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.

(<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2016/feb/16/diversion-first-program-launched/>)

and 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."

Until the county and the sheriff's office focus on people rather than PR, we will see more of these tragic encounters with law enforcement.

**Karen Wolf**  
Fairfax

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pluto: In a class of its own.

# Exploring Pluto's Secrets

FROM PAGE 4

up devoting his career to planetary sciences specifically, he said it quickly became obvious to him how incredibly important it is for the government and experts to pursue planetary research.

"When the New Horizons spacecraft finally reached Pluto, huge amounts of data started being beamed back to Earth," he said. "We're now starting to form the right questions so that we can understand how planetary atmospheres behave in general, including Earth's atmosphere and climate."

Summers has spent more than 30 years poring over Pluto, and his work is nowhere near done. The years that Summers and his

colleagues have devoted to Pluto have produced just as many questions as it has conclusions.

"Many Pluto mysteries that came out of this mission," Summers said. "For example, what is the internal heat source? There must be an energy source that we just haven't identified. Elements of the atmosphere out there were much more unusual than we expected, and there were just so many things we'd never seen before. Recently, we finally got all the data back from the spacecraft, and I can tell you that we will be studying this information for years. Hundreds of scientific papers will come out of this mission. It's a scientific bonanza in a way."

## Dominion Reminds Customers to be Aware of Utility Scams

Last year, scammers contacted nearly 2,800 Dominion Virginia Power customers, demanding fraudulent payments totaling more than \$1.2 million. Hundreds of customers fell victim, paying nearly \$200,000 in response to threats of immediate disconnection of electric service.

"While we are working in concert with law enforcement to identify, track and stop these scams, it's important for customers to recognize the red flags," said Marc Gaudette, director-Corporate Security, Safety & Health. "Unfortunately, the scammers frequently target the elderly, non-English-speaking communities and businesses during their busy times and use caller ID spoofing software so a customer thinks Dominion is calling."

"There are two clear signs that there's a scammer on the other end of that phone call that you can easily spot," said Becky Merritt, vice president, Customer Service. "First, we would never threaten a customer, even if their account is past due. Second, we would never insist on one specific, immediate form of payment—there are a number of options available to customers, including in-person at a verified payment location, se-

cure payment through their online account, or our third-party payment processing vendor."

Customers are reminded to do the following:

- % Ask questions and verify what you are hearing by checking your online account or hanging up and then calling us at 866-DOM-HELP. If an account is overdue, we provide multiple communications in writing and offers a payment plan before disconnection occurs.

- % Remember that we do not require payment over the phone and never demand immediate payment of cash, PayPal, any prepaid debit card such as 'MoneyPak/Green Dot', or any gift card to avoid disconnection. Payment by phone is available through BillMatrix at 1-800-573-1147. (Note: customers will never be contacted directly by BillMatrix requiring payment.)

- % Collect information from the scammer including the caller's name, any phone numbers or other details before hanging up and reporting to local law enforcement.

For other tips about how to avoid scams, visit [www.dom.com/scams](http://www.dom.com/scams).

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# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Send notes to the Connection at [connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/) or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication at noon. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

## ONGOING

**Springfield Town Center Toy Drive** through Dec. 24 located at 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Springfield Town Center is partnering with America's Adopt A Soldier Foundation to sponsor a Toy Drive to gather new toys to be donated to children undergoing treatment at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Please bring new toys to the bin located next to Guest Services, on the Lower Level near Starbucks to donate and bring joy to a child struggling with illness during this Holiday Season.

6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield.

**Burke Farmers Market** will be open Saturdays 8 a.m. - noon until December 17, 2016 <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/pdf/producechart.pdf>

**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 Funday Monday. Funday Monday will offer a variety of children's activities and entertainment in Old Town Hall. Admission: Free. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. 703-385-7858

[www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)

**'Storytime & Craft' at Lucy Activewear** Every Friday in December at 10:30 a.m. Lucy Activewear 11899 Grand Commons Avenue, Fairfax. An opportunity to get holiday shopping done in peace. Lucy Activewear will be hosting 'Storytime & Craft.' This event is appropriate for ages 3-8. Please sign up.

**Bull Run Festival of Lights and Holiday Village** Nov. 23 - Jan. 8 7700 Bull Run Dr. Centreville. Every year from Thanksgiving until just after New Year's Day the Bull Run Festival of Lights will be in session. A 2.5 mile stretch will be illuminated by holiday light displays. The festival happens annually at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville, Virginia. Drive the festival route from the comfort of your car; turn out your headlights and just follow the magical glow. After viewing the lights, bring your family and friends to the holiday village to enjoy rides, refreshments, and of course, photos with Santa Claus. The cost of driving through the light show is Mon-Thurs, \$15 per car ; Fri-Sun & Holidays, \$20 per car (vans w/ 15-34 people and motorcoaches cost extra - visit website for details) Want to avoid the crowds? Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are our busiest nights. Please take advantage of the Monday through Thursday discounted price and avoid a long wait.

**Children's Theatre: "A Magical Christmas"** Saturdays through Dec. 22, 1 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. A children's theatre performance for the holidays. There's something not right in the town of Believe. Santa hasn't stopped there for many years; in fact he doesn't even know the place exists! Joy's grandfather decides to do something about it and make sure that this year's Christmas will be the most magical ever. Appropriate for all ages. Concessions available in lobby before the performance and at intermission. Cost: \$8 children, \$12 adults. [workhousearts.org](http://workhousearts.org) Cost: \$8 children, \$12 adults.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HUB THEATRE

**Rex Dougherty and Daven Ralston in Hub Theatre's production of 'The Magi.' Performances will take place from Dec. 2-18 at The New School, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. Show times: Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets: \$20-\$30. Call 1-800-494-8497 or visit [www.thehubtheatre.org](http://www.thehubtheatre.org)**



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**On Saturday Dec.17 the Fishburne Military School will host an Education Fair from 9 - 1 p.m. at the Marriott at Fair Oaks 11787 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, Fairfax. Fishburne Military School invites students and their families to stop by to learn more about the benefits of a military school education. Admission: Free. [www.fishburne.org](http://www.fishburne.org)**

**Senior Line Dancing** 1 - 2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Ct, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8 week session. [barbriba@hotmail.com](mailto:barbriba@hotmail.com) 703-524-3739

**Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting.** 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. [fairfaxrotary.org](http://fairfaxrotary.org).

**Carolina Shag.** Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. [nvshag.org](http://nvshag.org).

**FUN-Exercise.** Thursdays, noon-12:50 p.m. Grace Presbyterian Church Family Room, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Inova certified exercise instructor leads a moderate level exercise class with music and current events conversation. Muscle, Balance, Strength Training using stretch bands and weights both standing and seated exercises. Instructor donation is \$5. [moorefitt@yahoo.com](mailto:moorefitt@yahoo.com) or 703-499-6133.

**EXERCISE PROGRAM** Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Rd. Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

**Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe).**

Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. [RSVP.Naama.Gold@jccnv.org](mailto:RSVP.Naama.Gold@jccnv.org).

**Smoke 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. [www.fairfaxvd.com](http://www.fairfaxvd.com). 703-273-3638.

**English Conversation Groups** weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: <https://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp>

**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 Adventure. Visit: <http://www.fxva.com/listing/bazins-on-church/1686/>

**Stories From Strawberry Park** 10 - 11 a.m. Tuesdays in Mosaic - Strawberry Park 2910 District Avenue, Fairfax. Enjoy a live interactive performance each week



PHOTO BY CHIP GERTZOG/COURTESY OF PROVIDENCE PLAYERS

**The Herdman kids in Providence Players production of 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.' From left — front: Jack Wright who plays Ralph, Aerial Indirisano as Ollie, Nora Rice who plays Imogene; back - Gavin Friel as Claude, Erika Friel who plays, Gladys, Kashvi Ramani as Loretta. Shows will take place from Dec. 9 to Dec. 18 at James Lee Community Center Theater, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 2 p.m. matinees on Dec. 17 and 18, 2016. Tickets on-line at [www.providenceplayers.org](http://www.providenceplayers.org) or call 703-425-6782.**

taught by a group of unique storytellers. For ages 10 and under. Held outside in Strawberry Park. In inclement weather and October through April, storytime will be held in Angelika Film Center. Recurring weekly on Tuesday. Visit: <http://www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/>

## THURSDAY/DEC. 15

**\$5 Jewelry and Accessory Sale** INOVA Fair Oaks Hospital Auxiliary 8 - 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.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 16

**Two Percent Teen Pregnancy Center Holiday Kick Off Event** 6 - 11 p.m. The Bungalow Alehouse 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 girls. 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.twopercentproject.org](http://www.twopercentproject.org) or contact them via email at

[teenpregnancyresource@gmail.com](mailto:teenpregnancyresource@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.

"Britepaths" Food Drive at Family Fun Nights. Britepaths 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 Fair Oaks 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](http://www.fishburne.org)

**Celtic Holiday Concert & Candlelight Carols** 4:30 p.m. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Celtic musicians playing hammered dulcimer, accordion, harp-guitar, Irish flute, guitar; with the St. Andrew's choirs. Reception follows;

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

childcare provided. Admission: Free. 703-455-2500. [www.standrews.net](http://www.standrews.net)  
**Christmas, Candles, and a Chorus** - The City of Fairfax Band & The Fairfax Choral Society Ticket holders will be admitted, starting at 6:15 p.m. After 6:45 p.m. non-ticket holders will be admitted to take unclaimed seats. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Get your tickets early for Fairfax's most popular holiday concert, presented free by the City of Fairfax Band and the Fairfax Choral Society Adult Chorus. This annual tradition entertains capacity crowds with sacred and secular musical offerings that make Christmas in Fairfax special. Pre-concert activities include a chance for kids to give Santa Claus their last-minute Christmas lists. Admission: Free, but tickets are required - and they go fast. Visit [fairfaxband.org](http://fairfaxband.org)

## 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.audubonva.org](http://www.audubonva.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 Funday 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. 703-385-7858 [www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts)

## TUESDAY/DEC. 20

**Fairfax High School Winter Concert** 7 p.m. Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax. Fairfax High School Choral and Orchestra Department present 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](http://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](mailto:christi.clark@insightmcc.org), 703-204-4664, [InsightMCC.org](http://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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Santa, Mrs. Claus, Frosty and reindeer were joined by Fairfax County supervisors and Police Department motorcycle officers after visiting schools around the county as part of a toy donation campaign on Dec. 13.**

## Sleigh Ride

**Mounted FCPD officers escort Santa to Fairfax County Public Schools.**



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

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

celebrating and partying? 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](http://Sydenstrickerumc.org)

## Plan Ahead Events

**SATURDAY/DEC. 31-  
 SUN/JAN. 1, 12:30 A.M.**

**Atlaa 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.

## TUESDAY/JAN. 3

**S.T.E.A.M.** 2 p.m. Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Each month we will focus on one of these

## SUNDAY/DEC. 25

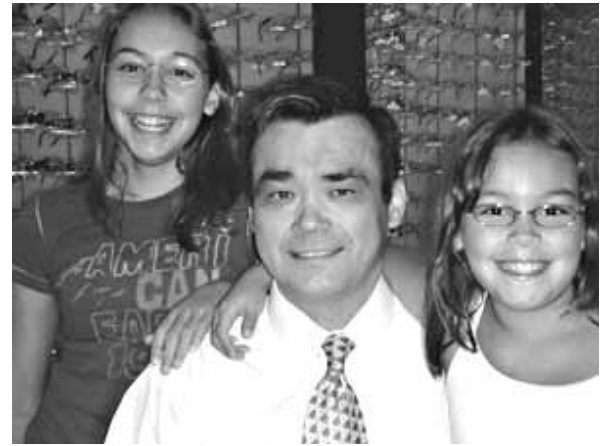
**5th Annual Christmas Day Giving Back Event** 1 - 5 p.m. Kilroys Ravensworth Shopping Center 5236 Port Royal Road, Springfield. Volunteers needed join us in saying thank you to our veterans and deployed service members for their service and sacrifices. We will be packing care packages and letters to our veterans. [www.americasadoptsoldier.org](http://www.americasadoptsoldier.org)

subjects with stories and activities appropriate for preschoolers. Age 4-5 with adult. Visit: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/bc/>

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 4

**Read Build Play** 10:30 a.m. Let's read a story, build with DUPLOs, and play with friends! Have fun with your little one while building early literacy skills. Age 3-5 with adult child minder. Visit: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/bc/>

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PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

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



Steve and Louise Brooks of Arlington wanted a primary living area that would serve a multitude of purposes, including a place for frequent gatherings of friends and family. A new space plan introduced by Sun Design Remodeling proved out in a holiday fete for 50 guests held this past Saturday.

## 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 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



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.

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 way. In fact, Gallagher notes that there's been something of a revolution in how homeowners are now configuring living space: Emergent interior design styles now allow for well-articulated activity zones integrated into a visually distinctive spatial continuum. "The end 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 seldom-used attic.

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.

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



The new makeover features well-defined appreciably private activity zones within a warm ambiance that affords sight-lines in all directions.

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](http://www.SunDesignInc.com).

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



# Police Chief's Cruiser Hit by Drunken Driver

BY FALLON FORBUSH  
THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax 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,



**FCPD Chief Col. Edwin Roessler Jr. spoke about the accident at a press conference the following afternoon at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax on Tuesday, Dec. 13. He had strong words for drivers: "Drinking and driving don't mix ... Spend a little money and plan. Take a taxi. Don't get behind a wheel. You're going to kill someone."**

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."



**FCPD Chief Col. Edwin Roessler Junior's unmarked police cruiser, a 2017 Ford Explorer, was rear-ended.**



**According to police, a Centreville woman's Nissan SUV struck Roessler while he was stopped at a red light at the intersection of Lee Highway and Stone Road in Centreville.**

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1/11/2017.....HomeLifeStyle  
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1/25/2017.....Winter Fun, Food, Arts &  
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# Surviving Brain Injury

New book shares stories of strength and inspiration.

BY RIKKI GEORGE  
THE CONNECTION

A new resource is available to those who've been touched by traumatic brain injury (TBI) called "Surviving Brain Injury: Stories of Strength and Inspiration" by Amy Zellmer.

A collection of 90 stories, mostly by TBI survivors, "Surviving Brain Injury" personalizes life's trajectory after a blast to the head, a fall or stroke.

It is a resource for providers, caretakers and a growing population of TBIs, according to Alexandrian Toni Popkin, one of the contributing writers. About 2.5 million Americans annually will enter the world of TBI, which is often misunderstood, undiagnosed and overlooked in severity.

"Your identity flips," said Popkin, who suffered four car crashes over the years and a concussion due to a fall in 2016.

Popkin, who lives alone, relies on a full-service dog named Bud and the kindness of others to help her get through the day. Her essay "Ten Things I Learned to Help Someone with a TBI" offers practical advice for friends and family. Ask, for example, "Do you have any upcoming doctor appointments I can drive you to?" Call and say, "I'm on my way to the grocery store .... What else do you need?"

For Popkin, keys to her survival are practical assistance and greater awareness of TBI. She's an advocate, something she never thought she'd be in her entire life. She pays attention to things now, like snow hindering streets, she speaks out, writes op-eds and organizes events, like the one held in November at the Marina Towers in Alexandria to launch "Surviving Brain Injury."

Others joining Popkin at the November book launch told similar stories of TBI symptoms: headaches, fatigue, depression and short-term memory loss. But no story is alike because the brain is as uniquely complex as is the rehabilitation and recovery process.

Derek O'Neal, also from Alexandria, discovered music therapy and relied on the love of his wife and five children as forces behind his survival. O'Neal described himself as an

overachiever: a well-educated man, a Desert Storm veteran, a vice president at an automotive group in Michigan looking for the next step up. And then in 2004, a deer ran into his car.

"You can never get back to what you were," O'Neal said. "I put things in verse and tune to help me remember things." And he counts on songs like "Life is a song worth singing" by Johnny Mathis to keep him motivated. O'Neal is now a board member of the Brain Injury Association of Virginia and practiced as a paralegal after his car accident.

The will and ability to give back seems to be a part of the cathartic way to heal for O'Neal, Popkin and both Molly Raymond of Fairfax Station and Danielle Houston Karst of Burke, who also spoke



PHOTO BY RIKKI GEORGE/GAZETTE PACKET

From left: Danielle Houston Karst (kneeling), Molly Raymond, Toni Popkin, Bud (Popkin's service dog) and Derek O'Neal at the November launch of "Surviving Brain Injury" hosted by Brain Injury Services.

"Your identity flips."

— Toni Popkin, "Surviving Brain Injury" contributing writer

at the book launch.

"[The car] accident took everything," said Raymond, formerly a registered nurse for 26 years who lost her math and speech abilities for more

than two years. "It is a huge thing for me to help others." She has turned adversity around to help injured veterans with her adaptive sports program, No Boundaries: Changing Disabilities into Abilities of Our Heroes. She announced at the book launch that she

had two daughters with her husband and 70 sons from her eight-year program.

Karst, a TBI survivor since 1997 (she was 16 at the time), brings insight to the TBI experience with her blog TBItriumphs.com.

For those who may need help: "Just call," said Karen Luffred, chief operating officer of Brain Injury Services, a local nonprofit committed to empowering TBI survivors on their journey of recovery. "Don't be alone. We can put you in the community," she said.

"Surviving Brain Injury: Stories of Strength and Inspiration" by Amy Sellmer. Published and copyright 2016 by Amy Zellmer. 357 pages.

## Statistics

TBIs (traumatic brain injury) occurring in Virginia annually is 28,000.

Disabled as a result of brain injury in:

❖ City of Alexandria: 3,191

❖ Arlington County: 4,694

❖ Fairfax County: 22,587

SOURCE: BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA



PHOTO BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

The South County and West Springfield High School varsity Swim & Dive teams participated in the South Run RECenter Toys for Tots campaign prior to their meet against each other on Dec. 10.

## Swim Teams Make Toys for Tots Splash

The South County and West Springfield High School varsity Swim & Dive teams donated gifts for the South Run RECenter Toys for Tots campaign prior to their meet against each other on Dec. 10.

RECenter Fitness Coordinator Laurie Strickland said she came in the morning of Dec. 12 to see the toy drive bins overflowing, with toys stacked on the floor and under the nearby table.

Strickland estimated between 500 and 550 toys were collected as part of the drive, which began Nov. 21.

"I'm very happy [about the drive]," she said, adding that the total was an improvement over last year. South County head coach Tom Verdin said there was definitely more participation from his squad over 2015.

The two teams gave together last year as well, as their dual meet coincided with the end of South Run's toy drive.

—TIM PETERSON



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Firefighter Dave Saunders, with his 14-year-old son and chief elf Hunter Saunders, pose with a child from the county's Head Start program during the annual Firefighters and Friends toy distribution day Dec. 11 at Station 11.

## To the Rescue

Firefighters and Friends collects toys for area children.

Christmas arrived early for more than 250 children from local Head Start programs as they picked out toys and visited with Santa during the annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue toy drive distribution day Dec. 11 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.

"We distributed over 3,000 toys to 80 schools, shelters and nonprofits in Fairfax County," said Capt. Willie Bailey, who founded the toy drive 17 years ago. "Prior to the distribution to school rep-

resentatives, we escorted and gave toys to local preschool kids."

Bailey said that 550 new coats were also given out to children in need. "In addition to the toys and coats, we gave out over 100 new bikes and 400 books," he noted.

Volunteers included members of the Forestdale Elementary School Student Council, firefighter Dave Saunders and his son Hunter as Santa and his elf and Caring Angels Therapy Dogs and their handlers.

—JEANNE THEISMANN



12

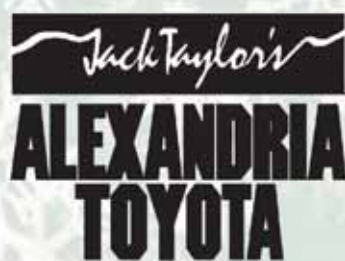
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According to the Lease by and between Karen Andrews (of unit 3123) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: exercise bike, furniture, boxes, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday December 16, 2016 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

According to the Lease by and between Lina Chovil (of unit 4075) and TKG-StorageMart and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage unit, the manager has cut the lock on their unit and upon cursory inspection the unit was found to contain: bags, suitcases, boxes, clothes, sewing machine, ect. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of on Friday December 16, 2016 @ 12:00pm at 11325 Lee Hwy Fairfax VA 22030 to satisfy owner's lien in accordance with state statutes.

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# BULLETIN BOARD

Send notes to the Connection at [connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/) or call 703-778-9411. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 25

### 5th Annual Christmas Day Giving Back

**Event 1** - 5 p.m. Kilroys 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.americasadoptsoldier.org](http://www.americasadoptsoldier.org)

## TUESDAY JAN. 24

### ESL Classes Begin on January 24 in Fairfax and Clifton

Lord of Life Lutheran Church will offer beginning, intermediate and advanced ESL classes at their Fairfax and Clifton locations. The course will take place between January 24 and April 6, 2017 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church located in Fairfax at 5114 Twinbrook Road and in Clifton at 13421 Twin Lakes Drive. The registration deadline is Thursday, January 19, 2017. There is a registration fee of \$15 and the text book costs \$25. For more information, please visit: [www.lordoflifeva.org](http://www.lordoflifeva.org) or call (703) 323-9500.

## ONGOING

**Reminder Crime Prevention** – Please contact the Fairfax County Police Department at 703-691-2131 (non-emergency) to report ANY suspicious activity, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem at the time. It is better if police reports can be called in while the suspicious activity is in progress to the extent possible.

### Volunteers Needed as Drivers & Office Workers

Drivers are needed for trips Monday - Friday to medical appointments and Companion Shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50+ and who no longer drive. Office Workers are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday - Friday) of individuals requesting

## SCHOOL NOTES

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

**Katherine Hough**, Fairfax Station, has been awarded the Boeing Scholarship for outstanding academic achievement in the Volgenau School of Engineering at George Mason University.

**Vocal musicians from 12 Fairfax County public schools** have been named to the Virginia Honors Choir for 2016. This select choir is open only to the top 125 singers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career. Thirty-one Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students were selected for the choir, and five students were named as alternates. The choir will perform at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) convention to be held at the Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Nov. 17-19. FCPS students named to the 2016 Virginia Honors Choir include the following students from our area schools: **Woodson High School:** Megan Humes, Caroline Grass, Jacob Lamb, Lucas Valdes, and Marc Manaloto and **Hayfield Secondary School:** Jessica Pressley.

**Jonathan Whittington**, Kathryn Herring, Emma Zettlemoyer, of Springfield; **Bridget Ray and Kirsten Chase**, of Burke; received \$2,000 scholarships from the Scholarship for Military Children Program in July 2016.

**Jane Gibbins-Harding**, of Springfield, was named to the dean's list at Bethany College for spring 2016.

U.S. Air Force Airman **Brian A. Zamfino** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Zamfino is the son of Joanne and Joseph Zamfino of Springfield. He is a 2015 graduate of West Springfield High School.

**Thomas Miskimins**, of Fairfax, graduated with a master of arts, in Spring 2016 from the University of New Haven.

rides and match an available driver for each request. If you can volunteer your time, please contact the SCFB office at 703-323-4788.

**Four Free Private Well Owner Webinars to be Held in October** one-hour webinars for household water well owners will be held in October on the subjects of addressing methane, iron and manganese, fluoride, and water treatment system maintenance by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA). To register visit: <http://www.wellowner.org/well-owner-webinars/>

### Basic Disaster Response Skills Free

**Training** Monday Nov. 7 at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy. There are two sessions each week on Mondays and Wednesdays that run until December 7. The class is 28 hours in length, plus the final practical exercise. CERT training is free of charge and basic gear is provided. The minimum requirements to participate in CERT training at any level is that residents be 16 years of age or older, and either be a Fairfax County resident, or work in the county. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/cert/cert.htm>

### Burke Lake Seniors Golf League seeks

members. Interested golfers are invited to join the Burke Lake Seniors Golf League. Must be 55 and older, enjoy playing golf, meeting new people and having an all-around good time. Reserved tee times on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Par 3 Burke Lake Golf Course on Ox Road. Annual dues for the season – April 1 through October 31 – are \$20 plus green fees. For more information, call Charlie Ryan 703-690-4227.

### The Northern Virginia Long Term Care

**Ombudsman Program** needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov). Also visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/litombudsman/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/litombudsman/)

**Jordan Ecker**, of Fairfax, is on the spring 2016 dean's list at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

**Caroline Dickson**, of Fairfax, is on the spring 2016 dean's list at the University of Maine-Orono.

Allison Righter Moore, and Sarah Ann Hughes Cushing-Spiller, of Springfield, is on the dean's list at Hollins University, for the 2016 spring semester.

**James Butler**, a Lake Braddock Secondary School graduate, was inducted into the Naval Academy Class of 2020 on June 30, 2016.

**Kyle Austin Walsh**, of Fairfax, and **Abigail Lynn Lackey**, of Springfield, were named to the honors list for the 2016 spring 2016 semester at Averett University in Danville.

**Katherine Marie Hough**, of Fairfax Station, is on the dean's list at George Mason University for spring 2016.

**Anna Kormis**, of Springfield, graduated from Emory and Henry College in spring 2016.

**Kyle Austin Walsh**, of Fairfax, graduated from Averett University in June 2016. was among the 261 students to receive diplomas during Averett University's May 7 Commencement.

**Megan R. Seymour**, **Megan F. Cummins**, **Thomas S. Cohen**, of Fairfax, **Joshua D. Harlowe**, **Samantha E. Kinde**, **Melissa A. Schwartz**, of Springfield; **Sean C. Baird**, of Fairfax Station; graduated from Boston University in spring 2016.

**Helene J. Decosse**, **Alexis J. Fahrney**, **Jessica M. Ochoa**, of Fairfax, are on the dean's list at Boston University for spring 2016.

**Seth Lehman**, **Thet San**, of Fairfax, graduated from Furman University in spring 2016.

**Luke Hartman**, **Natalie Heinitz**, of Springfield, graduated from Manhattan College in spring 2016.

**Maria Larrazabal Carrillo**, of Fairfax is on the dean's list for May 2016 at Iowa State.

**Kayse McGough** of Fairfax is on the dean's list for May 2016 at St. Mary's College.

**Jared Rondeau** of Clifton, graduated May 2016 Triple Major in Physics, Mathematics, and Chemistry from Emory and Henry College.

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