



Great Falls CONNECTION

From left: Taylor Maguire, Jessilyn Conicelli, Julie Casso, Alexa Gianoplus and Theresa Ryan collected the gifts in Great Falls for recipient organizations to collect the following day.



Wish List Project Grows

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

PAGE 8

Commission Recommendations: 88 Percent Implemented

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Storefronts String Up the Lights in Great Falls

NEWS, PAGE 8

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

PHOTO COURTESY OF LISSA PEREZ

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Sold

LO9611115 - \$850,000 - Brambleton
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Range, Quartz Counters, 2 Fireplaces, 2-Built-In
Wine Fridges, Custom Home Theater w/
Whole Home Audio. Exterior Landscaping w/
Lighting & Irrigation System. 3-Car Garage



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LO9587027 - \$850,000 - Leesburg
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Chef's Kitchen Includes GE Appliances and
everything you could possibly want.



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12202 Dorrance Ct: 3 BR, 2.5 BA
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Join us Monday January 9th at our
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Event at The Old Brogue in Great Falls.
We will be raising funds for
Navy Seal Foundation

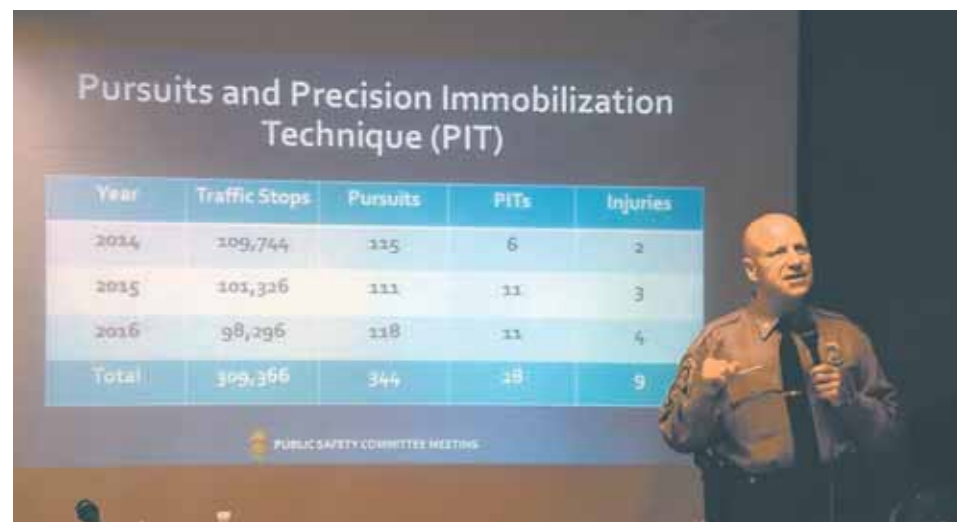
* The Old Brogue is located at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Walker Rd. in Great Falls.
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A Dec. 13 presentation from Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting subcommittee chair Shirley Ginwright (right), marked 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. 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.



From left: Caitlyn Shumadine, Christie Shumadine, Eleni Gianoplus and Lissa Perez all wore red T-shirts at the project's drop-off event.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LISSA PEREZ



From left: Avery Perez, Alden McNulty and Brenna Smith work the "thank you" table that offered donors hot chocolate and cookies at the drop-off event.

Reach of The Wish List Project Grows

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

A group of 225 donors and 40 volunteers came together to make Christmas possible for more than 350 people who could not afford the luxury of celebrations this season.

The Wish List Project was started in 1999 to help make the holidays a little brighter for those in need. In its first year, the project helped 10 families, including 47 individuals staying at the Embry Rucker Community Shelter in Reston.

Now in its 17th year, the project has expanded to support those in need at Aldrin Elementary School in Reston and Herndon Elementary School and Hutchison Elementary School in Herndon, as well as seven other local charities.

"You wouldn't believe what people have done," says Christie Shumadine, co-chair of the project.

Donors paid the entire Christmas expenses for two families from the schools, including the family of a 9-year-old who has been hospitalized with leukemia since August, according to Shumadine.

For a little boy who asked for a baseball

glove, donors put together a gift basket with not only what he asked for, but also Washington Nationals tickets and team paraphernalia.

"It kind of grew and grew and grew," says Shumadine. "It was just a little community event where we went into the homeless shelters and said 'Give us your wish list,' and we've expanded."

THE PROJECT uses SignUpGenius, an online organization tool, to provide information to donors about who is wishing for what. Donors can then sign up to buy for a recipient.

All donations were then dropped off at The Wish List Project's Co-Chair Lissa Perez's home in Great Falls on Dec. 10. School counselors, social workers and shelter directors can then collect the gifts—tagged and wrapped—the following day.

"You know a little bit about the person you're buying for," says Shumadine. "You know their name and their age and they put out the things that they want."

Some of the wishes that are submitted are bare bones.

"It's like kids just saying, 'I just want shampoo and a winter coat,'" says

Shumadine. "And then we have to go back and we say, 'OK, that's a need, but you also have to give us some wants.' And they come back with the most humble requests."

While preparing for the projects drop off event this month, Shumadine received affirmation for helping organize the project.

When she was in line to check out with over \$500 worth of presents for this year's list using donor money, a cashier was curious who she was shopping for.

"When I tell her it's The Wish List Project," she goes, 'I know your charity,'" says Shumadine.

The 18-year-old cashier then told Shumadine how she was familiar with the project's work. In year's past, the cashier was taking refuge in a homeless shelter. She left by the time the holidays rolled around, but her roommate stayed behind in the shelter over Christmas. That year, the project gave presents to those in the shelter, including her roommate.

The cashier shared with Shumadine how the generosity made her friend's Christmas that year and how she couldn't believe that people cared for her.

The cashier then volunteered to buy clothes and toys for a baby who was on the list.

MORE MEMBERS of the community kept coming forward to help.

For a community service project, sixth graders from the Great Falls Elementary School built and assembled 21 bikes. The teachers reached out to Shumadine and asked if she could use the bikes to make some wishes come true. The students even delivered them to the recipients.

"Can you believe that?" says Shumadine. "It was amazing."

The Wish List Project had committed to make five "transition kits" for shelters to provide to families to help them prepare to move out of homeless shelters and into permanent housing.

"These kits are like \$300 to \$400 and have sheets, towels, bath mats, pots and pans, glassware ... all of the basics," Shumadine says.

In the end, the project funded 30 kits. "We kept upping the number because the community kept responding," she says.

Shumadine hopes to extend the project even further to do collections throughout the year and help those in need year-round.

"We hope to extend the Wish List Project and say it's not just for Christmas anymore," she says.

Large-Scale Photography Exhibit Opens at MPA@ChainBridge

The McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) officially opened its new location, MPA@ChainBridge, with its inaugural exhibit, *Moving Through: Works by David A. Douglas*. Showcasing large-scale landscape art, the exhibit opened Dec. 8, 2016 and runs through Jan. 21, 2017. The exhibit is open to the public Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Located in the Chain Bridge Corner Shopping Center in the space between CVS and Kazan Restaurant, MPA@ChainBridge features an exhibition gallery as well as an art education space. MPA, in residence at the McLean Community Center (MCC) for more than 25 years, must relocate temporarily while the MCC undergoes a major renovation in spring, 2017. Until then, MPA's existing galleries and DuVal Studio in the MCC



Moving Through: Works by David A. Douglas is the first exhibit featured at MPA's second location, MPA@ChainBridge.

(MPA@MCC) will remain open and active. Once the renovation begins, MPA@ChainBridge will serve as MPA's primary gallery, classroom and office space for

about two years.

Moving Through: Works by David A. Douglas is the first exhibit featured at MPA's second location, MPA@ChainBridge. Working

at the intersection of drawing, painting and photography, David A. Douglas creates large-scale works that explore the power of place. Depicting personally significant landscapes on a monumental scale, Douglas offers the viewer the opportunity to enter the works on their own terms and experience the highly charged potency that lies within the ordinary moment. To learn more about Douglas' work, visit <http://davidadouglas.com>.

McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) is one of the mid-Atlantic region's most respected contemporary visual arts organizations. MPA provides a number of high-quality educational programs, art classes, and exhibitions including: MPAartfest; art courses and a summer STEAM camp; various art exhibitions showcasing the work of emerging and accomplished artists; and ArtReach, an award-winning program serving students in grades K - 12, seniors, and people with special needs. For more information, visit www.mpaart.org

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

FAITH

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday at noon.

Chabad Tysons Jewish Center is hosting a Chanukah Wonderland Dec. 25 till Dec. 30 in Vienna at 226 W. Maple Ave. from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. every day and a Menorah lighting at the first night Vienna.

Christmas Eve Service - Charles Wesley UMC, "The Hunger Church," 6817 Dean Dr., McLean is inviting community to join them in a service of carols and candlelight - something for the whole family, Dec. 24, 7 p.m. www.thehungerchurch.org

The Church of the Good Shepherd, a United Methodist church in Vienna, will celebrate Christmas Eve

with three worship services on Saturday, Dec. 24 and one worship service on Christmas morning. The community is invited to all services at the church, located at 2351 Hunter Mill Road.

At 5 p.m. there will be the **Children's Christmas Eve Service** that includes a giant felt board. As children come in, we will pass out pieces of the Nativity story and will do the felt board together with music, said pastor Eric Song. Communion and candlelight services will be held at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. (child care provided for the 7:30 p.m. service). Christmas morning services with communion will be held at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 25.

The Church of the Good Shepherd will celebrate its 50th anniversary in

2017. For more information, visit the church website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com or at www.Facebook.com/GoodShepherdVienna or follow at www.twitter.com/goodshepherdva.

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church at the intersection of Lewinsville and Brook Roads in McLean, just a mile west of Tysons, invites you for a casual Saturday Service at 5 p.m., followed by conversation and fellowship or for Sunday Services at 8 a.m. or 10 a.m. Sunday School for Youth and Children takes place during the 10 a.m. Service. Look for our Pumpkin Patch this October, and check www.stthomasmcleanva.org for Special Events and Services through the year. St.

Thomas' Episcopal Church, 8991 Brook Road, McLean, 703-442-0330.

Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna offers a monthly Healing Eucharist with the Laying on of Hands and Anointing for Healing (first Sunday of the month, 5 p.m. at St. Mary's Chapel.. The Healing Ministry is led by the Rev. Valerie Hayes and Alexandra MacCracken and includes a team of lay healers who have gone through intentional training and formation. Questions? Please contact the Rev. Valerie Hayes at vhayes@holycorforter.com.

Yoga Class with a Christian Focus is held Saturdays, 3-4 p.m.,

McGill Hall or the Library at the Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. This group is suitable for those with beginner and/or intermediate yoga experience. Dress comfortably and bring a mat. Feel free to bring a towel, block(s) or strap if you have them. Questions? Please contact the Church Office at 703-938-6521.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers musical, educational, outreach and fellowship ministries in addition to worship services, including an 8 a.m. worship service without music and a 10 a.m. worship service with nursery care available during the summer. 703-759-2082.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

History Alive at Great Falls Senior Center

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) will have Mary Ann Jung, award-winning actress, Smithsonian scholar, writer and director recreate Julia Child, an American chef, author and television personality who brought French cuisine to the American public with her debut cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, at the Jan. 17 event. Jung researches and writes her own scripts and performs in the authentic costumes, accents and characters' eras. She has appeared on CNN, the Today Show and Good Morning America. She has been a lead actress and director of Renaissance History and Shakespearean Language at the Maryland Renaissance for more than 34 years. She performed as Queen Bess and was director with the Florida Renaissance Festival from 1994-2006; she was also director of Street Theater and Family Performances for Artscape.

The event sponsor is the Great Falls Area Ministries, formerly the Great Falls Ecumenical Council, whose mission is to love God and one another, to serve others, to worship together and to support one another spiritually.

The Jan. 17 event will be held at The Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike from 10 a.m. to 12; light refreshments will be served. Space is limited and reservations are a must. Contact Polly Fitzgerald at pollyfitz1@verizon.net or call 703-759-4345.

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Our beautiful assisted living and memory care residence is well on its way toward completion! We can't wait to officially open our doors to welcome residents, their families and friends. To those who have already chosen to entrust us with the care of loved ones, thank you. To those we haven't met yet, we look forward to the time when we do. Our own families make our hearts full, but we have plenty of room for yours. Stop in for a visit, and tell us what you need to help keep the seniors you love safe, secure, well, and most of all, happy. *We're eager to deliver on our promise to love and care for them as we do our own.*



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OPINION

Congress Coming Together To Find and Fund Faster Cures

BY BARBARA COMSTOCK
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (R-IO)



On Dec. 8, I joined with a bipartisan group of House and Senate members, and the Speaker of the House, as the Speaker signed the 21st Century Cures Act. It was a joyful occasion as we concluded this year's session with what I believe is one of the most important and game-changing pieces of legislation passed this year. It was signed into law days later by the President and supported by more than 700 research, doctor and patient advocacy groups and provides \$4.8 billion in new research investments to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

COMMENTARY

At the ceremony, Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander recounted the testimony of Dr. Francis Collins, director of the NIH, who has highlighted the new, exciting cures possible within the next 10 years: an artificial pancreas to help people with diabetes; medicine to limit the effects of Alzheimer's; a vaccine for Zika; a vaccine for HIV; a vaccine for the flu; the use of regenerative medicine using our own cells to restore a damaged heart; and non-addictive pain medicines that will help curb opioid addiction.

Imagine how different our health care system could be with these innovations. It is no wonder that Dr. Collins calls NIH the "National Institute of Hope." In Loudoun County, so many of us have seen that hope in the inspirational advocacy work of families such as Mark and Ellyn Miller, who lost their daughter, Gabriella,

to cancer, and Chris and Roya Giordano, who lost their son, Mathias. The 21st Century Cures Act honors their efforts with \$1.8 billion for cancer research, which will support the Cancer Moonshot initiative.

Currently, there are only 500 treatments for 10,000 known diseases. With the mapping of the human genome and advances over the past several decades, we have more genetic clues about cancer and other diseases. But we still need to remove barriers to increase research collaboration, identify diseases earlier through personalized medicine, reform the FDA and modernize clinical trials, and remove unnecessary regulation for developing new medical apps. This legislation does this and streamlines the entire biomedical ecosystem.

With the 21st Century Cures Act now law, many of NIH's initiatives will be enhanced — such as the BRAIN Initiative that will help in fighting diseases like Alzheimer's. The bill will also concentrate funding on NIH's Precision Medicine Initiative that will focus research dollars on genetic, lifestyle and environmental variations of disease.

The Inova Schar Cancer Institute in Fairfax is one of the premier cancer centers in our region that can be part of this new era of innovation. Last month, they announced a new research partnership with the University of Virginia to develop the Global Genomics and Bioinformatics Research Institute, located at the Inova Center for Personalized Health in Fairfax.

I joined our private and public advocates at the announcement where they explained the mission: "The institute will recruit researchers, scientists and investigators who will engage in collaborative research focused on genomics, functional biology, bioinformatics, biologically driven engineering, precision medicine, translational research, development of targeted therapeutics and commercialization of new discoveries." This partnership will also work to achieve designation by the National Cancer Institute as a Comprehensive Cancer Center and establish a regional campus of the UVA School of Medicine at Inova. More partnerships are anticipated, as well as support from my former colleagues in the General Assembly, led by Speaker Bill Howell. As Todd Stottlemeyer, CEO of the Inova Center for Personalized Health, said, "This new partnership will further expand Inova's ground-breaking research in precision medicine and help us to realize the promise of personalized health."

While the legislation advances research and medical breakthroughs and provides for reforms and investments for faster cures and treatments, it also incorporates provisions we had passed to reform our mental health system and fight against the heroin and the opioid epidemic, which was recently declared a Public Health Emergency in Virginia.

This is just the beginning of what will be a new chapter in medical innovation. Virginia can play a critical and lifesaving role in bringing faster cures and treatments to patients plagued with these cruel diseases. We in Congress must continue to be partners by seeking the best policies and investments that allow this innovation to soar.

Fairfax Police Reform Is Well Underway

BY PHILLIP NIEDZIELSKI-
EICHNER

I endorse the Connection Newspaper's recent editorial on the progress Fairfax County has made implementing the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, on which I had the honor of serving as chairman of the Use of Force Subcommittee. I have had the opportunity to interact with many members of the Fairfax Police Department, ranging from commanders to precinct-level supervisors and officers, all of whom I hold in high regard. We have a fine police department that we are fortunate to have protecting us day-in and day-out.

While the August 2013 shooting death of John Geer was the catalyst for the commission's forma-

tion, our charge was to assess the Department's performance against national best practices. As we executed against this charge, we identified both areas for improvement and mechanisms we believed would strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the department.

Forming a commission is a time-honored tool by public officials to delay action — or avoid it altogether — since there are always significant barriers to achieving change to deep-rooted organizational practices, traditions and culture. I commend both the Fairfax Board of Supervisors and the Police Department, particularly its chief and command leadership, with ensuring that the Police Commission's work is not sitting on the shelf gathering dust.

With my seven-month commis-

sion experience and a year's worth of persistent focus on implementation alongside a dedicated subset of fellow commissioners, I can state without reservation that both the letter and spirit of the commission's recommendations have been embraced by Fairfax County.

Fairfax County is well on the way toward approving and implementing the preponderance of the commission's recommendations. Of note in this regard are the following:

❖ The two-pronged approach to independent Police Department oversight advocated by the commission and recently approved by the Board of Supervisors is significant in light of historical resistance to civilian review of police actions.

❖ The changes directed by the supervisors and Chief Roessler with regard to the Police

Department's openness and transparency are substantial and have already helped regain the public trust lost, in part, because of the dismal handling of the Geer case.

❖ The county's investment in Diversion First, which provides treatment rather than jail for non-violent people with mental illness, and broad-based police officer training in crisis intervention techniques, are already paying dividends. Those with mental illness are being treated with greater sensitivity to their affliction, easing the potential for unnecessary suffering, while also reducing the potential for officer injuries and the need for the use of force. Ultimately, this will also help insure a more effective use of tax dollars.

As important and forward lean

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 7

Great Falls
CONNECTION

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OPINION

Police Reform Underway

FROM PAGE 6

ing as these steps are, I believe the recrafting and rewriting of the Police Department's Use of Force policy, also known as General Order 540, warrants particular note. The new Use of Force policy encompasses the commission recommendations, which also incorporated use-of-force recommendations made by the independent Police Executive Research Forum. It gives emphasis to the sanctity of human life, dignity and liberty of all persons as its overarching value or driving theme; and it calls for de-escalation as the strategy of first resort when confronted with a threat rather than the use of deadly force.

Every member of the Fairfax Police Department, from command leadership to police officer will receive training under General Order 540 by the end of January, 2017. Police officer performance will be assessed against the standards set in this policy, while recruitment and vetting of police officer candidates will focus on the abilities and temperament that comport with the values captured therein.

I encourage everyone who is in-

terested to review the Police Commission recommendations progress report at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecommission/progressreport.htm>. In summary, you will find that 178 of the 202 recommendations (88 percent) have been approved and are either in process of being implemented or have already been implemented; 15 (7.4 percent) are still under review; and 9 (4.5 percent) have been rejected.

The evidence so far is that the deep-rooted change of the nature and spirit advocated by the commission is more achievable now than even the most optimistic expected.

This noted, I caution that the transformative progress I have observed can only be sustained over time with the continued county and Police Department leadership commitment, the active involvement of the police rank and file officers and most critically continued community participation, monitoring and oversight.

Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner served as chairman of the Use of Force Subcommittee of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, and continues service on the Implementation Committee.

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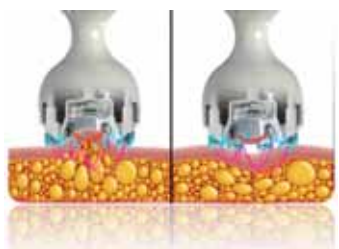
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HOLIDAY



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS FOUNDATION

Mookie's BBQ joint on Walker Road is in the running for Best Storefront.

L'Auberge Chez Francois restaurant on Springvale Road has been nominated in this year's contest.

Storefronts String Up the Lights in Great Falls

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Judges for the Great Falls Holiday Decorating Contest will be driving around on Wednesday, Dec. 21, night to look at Christmas lights to determine who has the best.

The judges for this year's contest were selected for their involvement in the community. The three judges are: Teresa Nassif, president of the Great Falls Friends and Neighbors Foundation; Julie Casso, executive director of The Arts of Great Falls; and

Dawn McPhee, secretary of the Great Falls Citizens Association.

"I'm a big light person, says Julie Casso. "My husband and I just put 1,000 lights on our Christmas tree, so I'm definitely a person who's all about the lights."

She can't speak for the other judges, but she is especially drawn to white lights and twinkle lights with bulbs that flash randomly. "They look like diamonds," she says.

The Celebrate Great Falls Foundation's annual contest was conceived by two board members, Katie Simmons Hickey and Bev Lane. They noticed that several local busi-

nesses put a lot of time and effort into decorating their buildings and wanted to encourage more to participate in displaying festive decorations, according to Erin Lobato, the foundation's director.

"It's the type of activity that brings the community together and makes people think about their neighbors," Casso says. "It makes it fun to drive around and look at Christmas lights. It's a little more small town-ish than the metropolitan area that we live outside."

This year, in addition to "Best Storefront," a "Best Neighbor/Neighborhood" category

has been added to get even more residents involved.

The contest's previous winners have been the Falls Salon (2013), Friends of the Great Falls Library (2013), the Great Falls Fire Department (2014) and the Great Falls Auto and Great Falls Fire Department (2015).

Since Nov. 25, nominations could be submitted on the foundation's website. Winners will be announced on Dec. 22 and will receive \$200.

Readers can see the winning submissions in the next issue of the Great Falls Connection where they will be featured in an ad.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Send announcements to connectionnewspapers.com/calendar/. Deadline is Friday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Ongoing Contemplative Candlelight Service St. John's Episcopal Church, located at 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. One mile east of Beltway Exit 44. Experience God in word, chant, and silence and pray by lighting a candle. No evening services on December 25 or January 1. www.stjohnsmclean.org

CHO Food, New Toy, and Bike Drive Nov. 1 - Dec. 31 at various locations around Vienna. Dish soap, canned fruit, chili, canned beef stew, diapers and wipes, canned salmon, Spam, tuna, tomato sauce, and laundry detergent are in particular need. CHO requests that no food be expired.

December Artist Showcase Dec 1 - Dec. 31 Broadway Gallery Fine Art and Custom Framing 1025-J Seneca Road, Great Falls. Broadway Gallery will host a showcase featuring new works from several artists that will include include abstracts, landscapes, seascapes, and photography.

Winter Walk of Lights at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens open every day through Jan. 8, 2017. Open Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, too. The walk of lights runs daily from 5:30 - 10 p.m. Last tickets sold at 9:30 p.m. This family-friendly six-week winter wonderland of spectacle is only a few years old but has garnered a loyal following from throughout the Northern Virginia area, particularly Vienna and its environs. To buy timed tickets online: <https://www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights>

Fishing Rod Rentals 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Rentals available during visitor center hours. Fishing tackle and live bait are available for purchase. Reservations required for group rentals. \$6/rental (2hr max). Valid driver's license

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens becomes ablaze with a half-a-million colorful sparkling lights in its annual Winter Walk of Lights, beginning on Friday, Nov. 18, 2016, through Jan. 8, 2017.

PHOTO BY
DONNA MANZ/
THE CONNECTION



required. Our rod/reel combinations are perfect for beginners and children. A Virginia or Maryland freshwater fishing license is required for persons 16 years or older. The park does not sell fishing licenses. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/

Great Falls Studios Virtual Gallery Open online 24/7 at <http://www.greatfallsstudios.com/copy-of-virtual-gallery> for the month of October. The gallery features the member artists participating in the Great Falls Studios 2016 Art Tour. During the month of October, in the Large Meeting room at the Great Falls Community Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, GF, member artists participating in the Art Tour are on display. The exhibit will be open during regular library hours.

Colvin Run Mill open 11 - 4 p.m. daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin

Run Rd, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors. Winter Hours: January & February, 11am-4pm, last tour 3pm. Admission to park is FREE except for some special events.

SATURDAY/DEC. 24

Children's Christmas Eve Service 5 p.m. The Church of the Good Shepherd, United Methodist Church 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The Children's Christmas Eve Service includes a giant felt board. As children come in, we will pass out pieces of the Nativity story and will do the felt board together with music, said pastor Eric Song.

Communion and candlelight services will be held at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. Child care will be provided for the 7:30 p.m. service.

Family Christmas Eve Service 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Come enjoy a family-friendly Christmas Eve worship service that includes our children's nativity pageant and the congregational singing of many wonderful carols. AndrewChapelUMC.org

SUNDAY/DEC. 25

Christmas Morning Service 10:15 a.m. The Church of the Good Shepherd, United Methodist Church 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The Church of the Good Shepherd will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2017. www.GoodShepherdVA.com

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 28

Romanian Holiday Traditions 7 - 9 p.m. The Patriot Hall - American Legion Post 180, 330 Central Street North, Vienna. Admission: \$10 - 35. Caroling on Christmas and New Year is the most wonderful and colorful manifestation of the Romanian folk traditions. This is a time of year filled with unique and ancient rituals and customs celebrating the birth of Christ and the arrival of a new year. This show will highlight the traditional carols, dances, songs and wishes for prosperity and rich harvest, one could hear in Romania's towns and villages and will also include the famous Goat and Bear dances. This is a charitable event. All proceeds from this event will be donated to Mr. Ionel Popescu, a member of the group "Folclor," who was diagnosed two months ago with colon cancer. Since the doctors gave Neelu the terrible diagnosis he has not been able to work, leaving his five-month pregnant wife, as the only source of income in the family. For more information or to make a direct donation please visit: <https://www.youcaring.com/ionel-popescu-663992>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

New Years Eve 2017 10 - 2 a.m. at Greenhouse Bistro 2070 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. There will be DJs, live performances, party favors, complimentary champagne toast at midnight. Advanced tickets available for a limited time. Admission: \$40

Plan Ahead Great Falls

SATURDAY/JAN. 7

The Capitol Steps at The Alden 8 p.m. 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101. To recover from this off-the-

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR.
PAGE 9

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

wall election cycle, remain calm and walk, do not run, to The Alden and shelter-in-place with these master political satirists. \$50/\$35 MCC tax district residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org.

SUNDAY/JAN.8

Concert: Opera Celebration 4 - 6 p.m. Saint Francis Episcopal Church 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The new year is the traditional time to revel in the beauty of the voice. Beloved Amadeus pianist-in-residence Frank Conlon brings together spectacular talent in solos and ensembles, as well as his incomparable storytelling. Cost: Season pass \$150 or \$30 at the door. Visit: <http://amadeusconcerts.com/>

SUNDAY/ JAN. 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration at The Alden Center: Chuck D 2 p.m. 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101. Best known as leader and co-founder of the legendary rap group, Public Enemy, Chuck D redefined rap music and hip hop culture with the release of Public Enemy's explosive debut album, "Yo Bum Rush The Show," in 1987. Speaker subject to change. Cost: \$20/\$10 MCC tax district residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC

Chuck D will be the featured speaker at the McLean Community Center's (MCC) annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration. The celebration takes place Sunday Jan. 15 at 2 p.m. Best known as leader and co-founder of the legendary rap group, Public Enemy, Chuck D redefined rap music and hip hop culture with the release of Public Enemy's explosive debut album, "Yo Bum Rush The Show," in 1987. Speaker subject to change. Cost: \$20/\$10 MCC tax district residents. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org.

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GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ❖ DECEMBER 21-27, 2016 ❖ 9

Holiday Grief

Workshop helps others deal with loss.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The holiday season is bittersweet for Jeanne Rorke. The days leading up to Christmas are filled with memories of her parents. Her mother committed suicide when Rorke was 12, and her father died on Christmas Eve eight years ago.

"No one really helped me through the grieving process," said Rorke, recalling her mother's death. "My family was like, 'Don't talk about it.' ... My Christmases have always been kind of sad ... even though I put on a happy face for my family."

Roarke joined about two dozen others at a workshop on handling grief during the holidays called, "Facing the Empty Chair: Surviving the Holidays after Losing a Loved One" at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. From those who are preparing to celebrate a first Christmas without a loved one to those who've been grieving for decades, participants shared experiences, supported each other and gained tools for surviving the season while facing the reality of the empty chair in which their loved one once sat.

"The holidays can be time of longing for those who've lost someone," said Carey Gauzens, a licensed clinical social worker at the Center for Pastoral Counseling of Virginia in McLean. "The holidays are a time when you reflect on family, and it's hard for someone who's aware that that person isn't there."

At the workshop, Gauzens clarified some of the misinformation surrounding grief, especially during the holidays. "First and most important, is that normal grieving is really hard for most people. Some people believe the myth that grief lasts only for a few months, but it's hard to measure your healing because it's an up and down process, not a smooth, straight line."

Throughout the process, and particularly during the holidays, being able to tap into a source of strength other than oneself is a factor that Gauzen underscores: "It's important to have a support group, friends, a therapist."

Finding someone who is also grieving can



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAREY GAUZENS

Carey Gauzens of the the Center for Pastoral Counseling of Virginia in McLean, led a workshop on grieving during the holidays at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria.

be particularly helpful. For example, when Beverly Bell's husband died nine years ago following an extended illness, she found strength and comfort in a friendship with another widow.

"[We] had a wonderful relationship ... for several years following my husband's death," said Bell, who attended the workshop. "We had a regular lunch date and also shared a number of holidays. She also died a couple of years ago, and I realized that I am particularly missing her presence."

Earlier this year, Bell's brother died as well. "I found myself re-experiencing many of the feelings I had had when my husband died, [but feeling] particularly helpless to comfort my sister-in-law," she said. "Perhaps [my] presence is the most important thing I can ... offer my sister-in-law."

Some of the workshop attendees wanted to learn how to better support others. "I am a member of the Community of Hope International, a group of lay pastoral caregivers whose ministry is to visit those who are experiencing sickness, trauma, tragedy or loss of a loved one," said Caroline

McCormack, one of the participants. "I wanted to have a better understanding of the grieving process, so I might be a more compassionate listener."

She and Bell learned that process is different for everyone. "My husband's death was preceded by a long illness. My brother's death was sudden," said Bell. "I wondered if something about the timing made a difference in how we experience and cope with grief. I learned that it really does not."

"The holidays are a time when you reflect on family, and it's hard for someone who's aware that that person isn't there."

— Carey Gauzens, LCSW

"... We all experience grief in different ways and it can show up at unexpected times and places and so we need to be gentle with ourselves and find ways that we can express our grief in ways that feel healing and safe for us," added Revered Elizabeth Rees, Associate Rector, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church.

This is a point Gauzens tried to underscore: Grieving is an individual process and there is no one-size-fits-all method for coping. Even people who are grieving for the same person can experience it differently and have different needs. "For example, one person might want to talk about the loss, but others might not," she said. "It's important to be sensitive to family members who grieve differently and compromise so that each person feels emotionally safe."

Cultivating self-awareness and knowing what is normal to expect while one is grieving is important. "Sometimes the symptoms are so intense it makes people feel like they're going crazy and frightens them sometimes," said Gauzens. "They might cry at the drop of a hat, get angry or feel unable to control their emotions. There could become deeply distracted or confused like get lost going someplace they know well.

"Give yourself permission to make careful decisions about how you'll spend your time," she added. "It's helpful to discern within yourself what feels right. Decide whether to maintain holiday traditions or do something completely different."

Avoiding all festive, social activities might do more harm than good, however. "A person who's grieving might end up isolating because they won't go to places they once went to with the person they've lost," said Gauzens.

Instead, Gauzens suggests planning "something to look forward to after the holiday to reward yourself for getting through the holidays."

She also stressed the need for self-care, including exercising, eating healthy and staying hydrated. "It's important to minimize your use of mood altering substances like alcohol," said Gauzens. "It's tempting to try to numb the pain, but it comes back."

Changing customs can make holidays less painful, says Dr. Linda Guly, Ph.D., professor of psychology, Marymount University in Arlington. "I like to break with traditions that are familiar and that remind us of the loved one we lost," she said. "Sometimes it's good to shake it up and start a new tradition, so you're looking forward instead of behind you."

"The days are darker and colder, which exacerbates any sadness that we might be feeling anyway," said Guly. "Hang in there. It will feel better and you will get through it. The holidays will go by and we'll get back into our routine and productive lives that help with healing."

There is a point however, when assistance from a mental health professional is a necessary, Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, George Mason University in Fairfax. "People should seek professional help if they have significant distress and difficulty in daily self-care and functioning at home or work that has lasted more than two weeks without improvement," he said. "Common symptoms for depression are low mood, lack of pleasure in previously enjoyable activities, social isolation, and thoughts of hopelessness and helplessness."

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.

PEOPLE

Antonio and Francisca Alonso.

PHOTO BY JULIAN ALONSO



Creating 'Vacation Style Living' in Great Falls

AV Architects + Builders - helping Great Falls residents stay in the homes and community they love

BY ADRIENNE WEST
THE CONNECTION

Antonio and Francisca Alonso are a local husband and wife team with a mission: making your home more functional so you can stay in Great Falls. Since beginning their business in 2001, their design concepts have evolved with their clients' changing needs. They moved their office space from Tysons to the Village three years ago and have purchased land to build their own retirement home. "We waited for years for the chance to move here because we love the Great Falls community and are very invested in the area," Antonio said. Francisca added, "Great Falls is a unique community because it's so close to everything, yet is an open, pastoral area with big lots and not overbuilt; it's not strip mall like."

They feel that openness is what makes Great Falls so conducive to their "vacation style living" concept. Antonio shared that it is important to take advantage of the landscape. "We really engage the outdoors with our designs. And for people that want to stay in this area and have a home that makes them feel like they are on vacation, Great Falls is the perfect setting for this type of architecture."

FRANCISCA wrote the book, "Nesting for Empty Nesters: The Vacation Style Living Approach to Aging in Place," with Antonio to share their vision with a wider audience. With two children in college and another two in high school, they are looking to the future like many of their clients. She explained, "We are nearing the empty nester stage and our business is very much paral

SEE HOME, PAGE 15



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG PHOTOGRAPHY

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The Great Falls Farmers Market: Back to the Roots

Come, hang out,
and enjoy the
joyful ambiance.

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY
MARKET MANAGER

The presence of farmers-market vendors at the Grange stirs up the memory of the original Grangers who raised money through community events, supplemented by a loan, to build the Grange Hall Number 738, which was opened in 1929. Today, vendors and clients alike love the homey charm of the building and sense the authentic local culture that has made the building a center of community activity over many years of its life. Vendors share a “back to the roots” commitment to agricultural sustainability and handmade craftsmanship with those who came before them. Our farmers market serves as an incubator of unique local talents, holding a space for new businesses to establish their roots, gain strength, modify their product offerings as needed, thanks to customer feedback, launching compelling new products. Our customers are known for their graciousness and courtesy, their love of a good chat, and their ever-warm greetings. The decision to seek local foods and handmade crafts at a farmers market is driven by a desire for quality: They realize that it costs more to shepherd an animal in a respectful manner, feeding them properly while allowing them to graze freely; or cultivating an organic or eco crop without the use of chemicals; or baking a small batch of bread or pastries that include quality ingredients, a more time-consuming process and fine artistry; or cooking fresh dishes using certified organic whole plant ingredients because it is the right thing to do for health and well-being; or processing herbs cryogenically to maintain their inherent nutritional benefits while preserving the herb’s unique flavor. “Buying Local” — supporting local shops and markets — may cost a bit more upfront, but ultimately keeps dollars in the local economy as small businesses invariably hire others nearby as they grow. Here is a review of the quality being offered...

Chemical-Free Produce

Tuscarora Organic Growers Coop is 100 percent grown by the 48 small family farmers who are the owners and members of the coop.

This winter, it is possible to subscribe to a weekly order of mix of greens, for example, at a significantly reduced price or to purchase a box of mixed root vegetables at a discount. Sign up at the farmer’s market and select your preferences. Jerry Fields, owner of Jerry’s Gourmet Berries just had his pickling and fermentation process cer-



Certified organic root vegetables – sweet potatoes, onions, sweet white turnips, mixed variety beets, red beets, Japanese sweet potatoes, red mini potatoes, and mixed variety radishes, available at Tuscarora Organic Growers Coop.



Yiannis Hobson, husband of Eugenia Hobson, Chef of Our Mom Eugenia Great Falls Restaurant, presenting Keftedis (Greek meatballs) and Baklava.

tified organic, as is his entire farm and all he grows.

He has his greenhouse going and will be offering fresh salad ingredients – lettuces and tomatoes — just after the New Year. Jerry has prepared a berry-vinegar and is working with Michael Sideris, owner of Vordonia Extra Virgin Olive Oil, to make a salad dressing that includes both products. DoctorSchar’ EcoFarm, a 14-acre farm on Seneca Road in Great Falls, is gearing up to present a range of vegetables orchard fruit in the spring in addition to the mushrooms, jams and vinegars it is offering today. Learn more about this brilliant herbal doctor and his farming endeavors at www.doctorschar.com

Respectfully-Raised Live Stock & Poultry

Liberty Hill Farm provides organic feed to their poultry and pigs, and their beef is 100 percent grass-fed. They also offer potpies, soups, and quiches, great for a quick meal. Craig Hagaman of High View Farm offers Heritage Berkshire pork, and grass-fed Heritage Scottish Highland beef, known to be the breed with the lowest cholesterol. All of their feed is non-GMO, non-soy. Both meat vendors offer poultry and eggs. Real Country Sausage offers a variety of sausages made from 100-year-old family recipes with amazing seasonings.



Lee Washington, co-founder of Spiced For You, presents their wide selection of spiced blends, containing freeze-dried herbal recipes, redefining the flavor of recipes from around the world. They have just begun to offer individual spices and herbs as well.



Steve of Capital Celtic Band plays a wide medley of contemporary and celtic songs.

Ready-to-Eat Cuisine

GreenFare Organic Café has just received its USDA Certification as “Organic,” one of only six restaurants in the entire U.S. so certified. Every fresh prepared meal they offer - whether hot at the market or cold to reheat at home – is 100 percent certified organic. We are honored to have this highest organic-standard restaurant offering fresh prepared meals at our market.

Luke Wahlgren, owner of World Eats and a resident of Great Falls, holds the record for selling out of his empanadas filled with recipes of cuisines around the world every single Saturday. He thanks the market cus-

SEE SATURDAYS, PAGE 13

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PHOTOS BY CHRISTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Saturdays at Grange

FROM PAGE 12

tomers and the market manager with providing him with a steady foundation on which to build his business. He has purchased a food truck and sells empanadas at lunchtime in the Tysons Corner area during the week. He also offers catering for parties or sports team events. His consistent effort plays a huge part in his success as well as the quality of his ingredients. Luke values the community of vendors who share their wisdom and experience with each other.

Masterful Spice Blends

Lee Washington, owner of Spiced for You, has been selling cryogenically ground herbs, spices and chili powders combined in blends that capture flavor from around the world. Our customers say they would be interested in purchasing individual spices as well. The company has begun to process individual spices so that those who love to cook can do the combining and achieve their favorite recipes. Visit their web site at www.spicedforyou.com to see all the wonderful recipes you can cook with their spice blends. The ingredients are amazing.

Our newest introduction at the market is Zaatar, a Lebanese dip made of wild thyme, sumac, and sesame seeds. The ingredients, imported from a small Lebanese farm with an outstanding reputation, are being prepared and packaged by Agur Foods of Great Falls. Elaine Shadid, co-owner, is delighted to share this Lebanese custom of dipping bread, veggies, and even rubbing meat in Zataar. Sesame seed provides the fiber; wild thyme provides antioxidants and iron; and sumac provides the tanginess, and vitamin C benefits. Come, taste this remarkable product at the market.

Artfully Prepared Bakery Items

We are graced with a bouquet of talented bakers. Jo Oo, owner of Plain and Simple, is known for her healthy baking – every recipe has a vegetable or a fruit in it. She works from a base of her grandmother's recipes, then modified them to make them more healthy. Eva Kronenburg, owner of EC Pastries, a fine, award-winning French-style pastry chef, has graced our market with exquisite buns, donuts, muffins, cupcakes, cakes, pies and more. Walker Pence, owner of GF Bakery is our youngest baker this year, a student of the Langley School. He has a gift for making "gluten free" taste really great. Baguette Republic



PHOTOS BY CHRISTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Marika Tsombikos, a student of Ms. Poythress' Fashion Marketing classes and a graduate of Langley High School, as well as a graduate of Hult International Business School in London with a major in Fashion Design and writing, returned to Great Falls to try her hand at designing and making a line of handmade leather handbags and accessories. Marika has been jury-selected as an "Emerging Designer Maker" at the NY NOW Show at the Jacob Javitts Center in February.



Kathryn Follin gets to make everyone happy, helping them choose their favorite Baguette Republic morning sweet.

has been serving our market since the very first days and has consistently delivered top quality muffins, croissants, scones, as well as breads and baguettes known for their 3-4 day fermentation process, resulting in European-style breads that are low in gluten. Sophie's Hand Pies knows how to make a sweet treat taste awesome. Understanding that all great conversations occur over a great sweet, Sophie aims to charm!

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I Have Ca, Ca, Ca, Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Here I am thinking, believing, writing that I'm Mr. Well-Adjusted cancer patient and all it took was one conversation in a restaurant the other night at the Connection Christmas party to prove that I'm not. It was a casual, festive atmosphere with everybody enjoying food and drink. I was sitting in a booth with my wife, Dina, my co-worker, David, and his mother Sherry, who I had never met before, who was in-town visiting her sons and planning a drive downtown to see the National Christmas Tree. We were all exchanging pleasantries and getting on quite well when I remembered that David's mother is a nurse. I thought she would be the perfect person to ask about my oncology nurse. But to give the question some context, I thought I had to tell her I had cancer. And when I did, I could barely get the word out. After I stammered I asked, if there was any professional reason/advisory explaining why I haven't heard back from my long-time (seven years) oncology nurse who, I had learned four weeks earlier at my last infusion when he wasn't there to tend to me, retired early. He didn't exactly leave me adrift but a month later, he still hasn't returned my cellphone message (an email to his Verizon account bounced back and he hasn't posted anything current on Facebook).

Obviously he's entitled. Nevertheless, I'm perplexed. We were buddies. We were extremely compatible: sports, humor, from the Northeast, same age, Jewish and both spoke a little Yiddish. Heck, I had even been to his house for a Super Bowl party; plus we've been out to lunch a couple of times after my infusion, met locally for a medical follow up (not exactly a house call but he did come to me), and as I may have written in a previous column, he likely saved my life when I showed up at the Infusion Center with an oxygen level of 85. (Subsequent to that reading, he went into high gear making the necessary arrangements to get me transferred to on-site urgent care and ultimately "ambulanced" to Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring where I spent the next week. Though he didn't visit me; he later explained that he rarely visited patients, he did call to check on me.) The short story is: our relationship went beyond patient-nurse. I wouldn't say I looked forward to my infusions, but because of him, I didn't dread them either.

It's not as if he has to do anything for me or acknowledge me or even stay in contact with me. He has his own life; he's made a change and presumably, his oncology patients are not part of it. I can understand that. In the medical specialty field, oncology is one of, if not the most, emotionally demanding/wrenching: patients with whom you've developed a relationship often die. I can imagine how there's only so much loss of life one can take. However, I thought our relationship went beyond that, in spite of the challenging demands that dealing with a "terminal" patient can exact.

Oddly enough, I'm not taking it personally. My feelings are not hurt, really. Until I know more of the circumstances surrounding his retirement (health, family, lifestyle, etc.), I'm not begrudging him at all. Moreover, he doesn't owe me an explanation. His retiring is not about me. It's about him and because of that, I want to know why he decided to leave and whether we can still stay in touch. So far, we haven't; he hasn't.

There's no doubt that he's been an important part of my cancer-patient life, and in a way, I thought — through my personality and survival, important to him also. Perhaps I was, professionally. Personally, I thought so as well. I just haven't heard any evidence of it in the last month. Still, I will always be grateful for his care and concern.

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

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I believe the future is only the past again, entered through another gate.
-Arthur Wing Pinero

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Making Great Falls a Home

FROM PAGE 11
 led to our lives. When we started, we were doing remodels of mudrooms and kitchens because we had little kids and saw the need for more functional spaces. And now, friends keep telling us they don't want to move but their house is either too big or doesn't serve them for the next stage in their life. It really saddened me that people who lived in Great Falls for many years felt pushed out by the fact that they couldn't live in their house because it was dysfunctional. What we would like to propose is to renovate your house so you can be there until you're 108, or sell it if it's a large home, find a tear down on a lot and build a house that's all one level. Maybe have two rooms upstairs for resale or one in the basement but your main living is on one level." One thing that sets AV apart from other firms is they work with their clients' ideas instead of off templates or existing plans. Great Falls resident, Larisa Caicedo, hired them for that reason. "We interviewed about three or four architects, but AV had an open conversation with us and were willing to work with us, instead of us working with their ideas." Caicedo

added, "We gave them a budget and they brought it to reality. I liked that they were a team and we were a team," adds Caicedo.

Lauren Barton, a resident for nine years, has done three projects with AV since 2008 because "they really understood what we were looking to do." When she met with Francisca and Antonio, she threw around a lot of ideas and appreciated that they "could see the big picture and were able to transform our ideas into something beautiful." Barton adds that AV has "always been good about giving back to our community," giving the example of Francisca speaking to a local Girl Scout troop about her job and being a good role model for girls.

AV has also been a supporter of Celebrate Great Falls and the Friends of the Fireworks for years, ensuring those small town traditions continue in the community. Francisca and Alonso think the fireworks and other events on community's social calendar are what brings everyone together, unlike bigger cities.

MORE INFORMATION can be found at: <http://avarchitectsbuid.com/>, <http://nestingforemptynesters.com>.



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