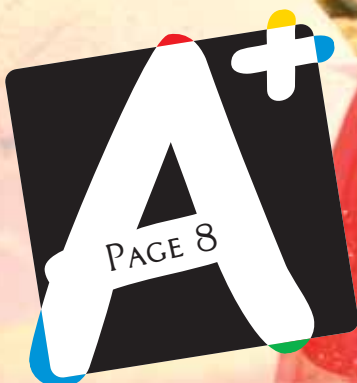


The Richards family of Reston pause for a photo opportunity while enjoying the delights of the McLean Bible Church Christmas Village. "Something for everyone" they said, with kids ranging from 2 to 11.



Spectacular Christmas Village

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Commission
Recommendations:
88 Percent Implemented

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Board Placing Puzzle Pieces
Around Wiehle Station

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COMMENTARY

Civics Education

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



While I enjoy studying history and reading the stories of the past, I equally enjoy studying the writing of history—historiography—which is “the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particulars from the authentic materials, and the synthesis of particulars into a narrative that will stand the test of critical methods.” (Merriam-Webster) Recently I taught a course at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University that I titled “A New Look at the Old Dominion.” The purpose of the course was not so much to retell the history of Virginia as it was to examine the way in which the story of the Commonwealth has been told over the decades. Certainly the story of Virginia is ideal for a historiographical analysis. Much of the history has been glamorized for so long as to leave a confusing and contradictory understanding of the state’s past. I have been particularly concerned about the picture of the Commonwealth presented in state-written textbooks that were used in our public schools over the years. One could get the impression from these books that the land settled as Virginia was god-given to the colonists that they could save it from the heathens who inhabited it, that slavery was good for the slaves, that the federal government was the bad guy in every controversy, and that states’ rights should be pre-eminent over human rights. Fortunately, through the

hard work of many individuals much of that misinformation has been removed from the classroom.

My concern for the future is how individual citizens, historians and teachers deal with the deluge of fake news that is swirling around us. The presidential election of 2016 is historic in the amount of fake news to which voters were exposed through the new technologies of social media. Of great concern is the inability of traditional news sources to deal with the fake stories and the gullibility of some of the public to believe whatever they read or hear from their identified news source regardless of the lack of credibility that source may have. Journalists themselves were even questioning what was true among all the falsehoods, denials, and diversion to other topics that were going on during the campaign. Certainly historians will face a monumental task of explaining to future generations what happened during this phase of our history.

If our democratic republic is to exist, we cannot simply wait for future analysis to understand what is going on. Certainly students in school should learn about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) for future potential employment and consumerism, but I believe that for the future of our country students need to learn the tools and methods of historiography: gathering and weighing evidence, critical thinking, evaluating sources, and others. Our citizens and voters need to arm themselves with the tools of social scientists as they choose their leaders. That is why we need more civics education in our schools.



PHOTO BY SEAN BAHRAMI

Dogwood Elementary Wins Walk to School Awards

Reston Association Board of Directors President Ellen Graves, left, presents Dogwood Elementary School Assistant Principal Sean McCartney, a staff member and two students with the International Walk to School Day Awards. One award is given to the Reston elementary school with the highest number of students who participate on the day of the event, and another is given for the highest percentage of students in a particular school who participate. Dogwood won both awards. Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Dogwood, Forest Edge, Hunters Woods, Lake Anne, Sunrise Valley and Terraset elementary schools participated in International Walk to School Day on Oct. 5.

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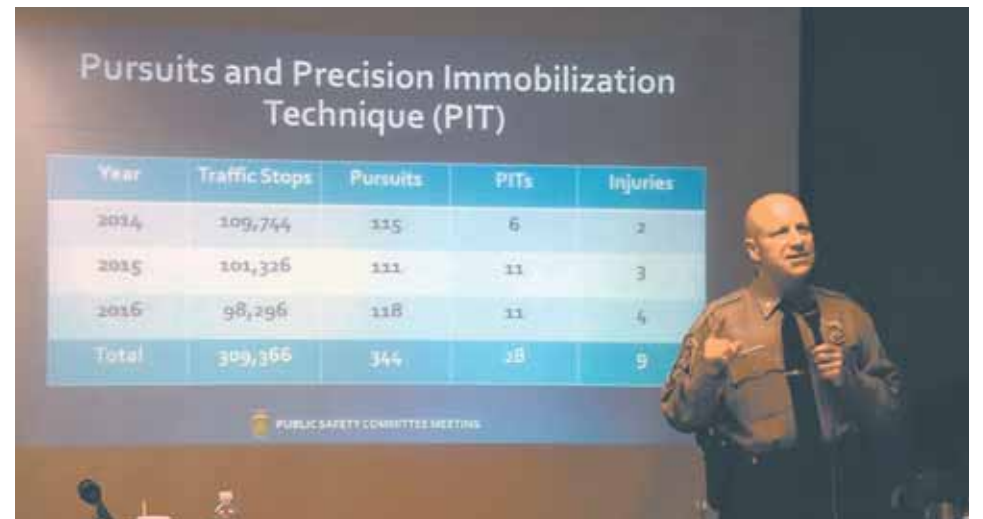


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A Dec. 13 presentation from Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, Recruitment, Diversity and Vetting subcommittee chair Shirley Ginwright (right), marked the last subcommittee to be heard by the supervisors.



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.

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).

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.

COMMENTARY

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 Stottlmyer, 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 commission 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 5

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OPINION

Police Reform Underway

FROM PAGE 4

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 interested 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.

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ by noon on Friday.

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

Inova Blood Drive 12 - 7 p.m. beside the Pavilion
11900 Market Street, Reston Town Center. Schedule appointments at 1-866-256-6372 or inova.org/donateblood. On-site registration.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 11

Learn About the Consolidated Community Funding Pool 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Taking Place at The Jo Ann Rose Gallery Reston Community Center Lake Anne 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. Our January 2017 FCIA Network Meeting will focus on Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP) priorities in preparation for the next CCFP funding cycle. FCIA Network Meeting attendees will dialogue about the types of services for which there is a continuing need, current service gaps, and emerging needs. The CCFP funds local nonprofit organizations to provide human services, affordable housing development and construction. Priority-setting is the first step of the next funding cycle. Once set, a request for proposal will be issued in the fall of 2017. Awards will be announced the following spring. Total funding in FY 2017 was 12.5 million dollars. **Please note, this meeting WILL NOT take place at the Government Center.**

FEBRUARY

Free public service seminars — on Decluttering (Feb. 2, McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Rd., McLean), Aging in Place (Feb. 8, Falls Church H.S., 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church), Downsizing (Feb. 14, Marshall H.S. 7731 Leesburg Pk., Falls Church), & Retirement Communities (Feb. 22, Madison H.S., 2500 James Madison Dr., Vienna). For more information and seminar registration go to RetireeRealEstate.org, or call 703-772-3033.

Submit a Nomination for Volunteerism & Community Service Awards
The Virginia Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards is looking to recognize individuals and groups whose volunteer activities contribute to the life and welfare of Virginia citizens. There are a variety of categories for both individuals as well as groups so if you have a special volunteer in your organization or know of a group that should be nominated, please visit the website to get started: <http://virginiavirus.virginia.gov/volunteering/governors-volunteerism-awards/>

ONGOING

Passages Divorce Care. Tuesdays 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. beginning Sept. 13 through Jan. 7. Vienna Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of Maple Avenue (Rt. 123) and Park Street in Vienna, Virginia. Cost to cover materials \$20, scholarships available. 703-938-9050, www.viennapres.org, or send an email to Passages@ViennaPres.org

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HOLIDAY FUN

McLean Bible Church Hosts Spectacular Christmas Village

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

They said it was an inaugural event, their first go at putting together a free, family-friendly holiday happening for anyone and everyone to enjoy, but the activities, the sets, the quality and quantity of the entertainment and refreshments and the sheer scope of their efforts seemed anything but a novice production.

For six nights – Sunday, Dec. 11 through Friday, Dec. 16 – every inch of the Tysons Corner location of the McLean Bible Church (MBC) at 8925 Leesburg Pike in Vienna was transformed into a magical Christmas Village, inside and out. The organizers were hoping for a good turnout, wishing to spread the joy of the Season to as many as possible. The opening night numbers far exceeded even their optimistic expectations.

“I think we had close to 7,000 to get things started on Sunday night,” reported MBC Associate Senior Pastor Dale Sutherland. “That’s probably the most we have had any Sunday in the building at one time.”

The following weeknights saw crowds of over 2,000 each night, though everyone was preparing for the Friday night Grand Finale. “I have a feeling that will be a big one. But we’re ready,” declared Rosie Pinkerman, MBC Director of Host Teams, on Wednesday evening. Pinkerman was speaking from her post in the church’s upper level Main Lobby – or “Village Square” for this occasion – where she said she was “really just keeping out of the way of all our amazing volunteers. They’ve got this covered.”

According to Pinkerman the event was first discussed three years ago but really hit the design board about two years later. “It’s a true testament to the great McLean Bible Church spirit and about 800 volunteers!” Just about everything involved in the final product was the result of volunteer efforts. That includes building, the set up and supervision of a dizzying number of activities, most of the forest of decorated Christmas trees, food and beverage offerings and serving, vehicle traffic control and pedestrian flow.

OK. Back to the start of this adventure at the “Village Square” where dozens of costumed “elves” greeted, directed and generally spread plenty of Christmas cheer. They helped friends and families take photos in front of a massive tree and on either side of a polar display as the crowds made their way to a full-sized carousel for a quick spin before heading to the auditorium for the Christmas Show.

WITH THREE PERFORMANCES a night and featuring the MBC Worship Band that had the packed houses singing along, the Christmas Concert and Show included a humorous kid-narrated film about the “Story of Christmas.” When that laughter died down, there was interactive storytelling by church member Paul Cunningham who enthralled an audience



“It’s snowing!” And so it seemed to be during one of the MBC Worship Band’s performances. The group played to a packed house and had the audience signing right along to some of the time-honored traditional Christmas carols and rocking to some of the more modern numbers.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION



From left — Gavin, 11, and brother Mason, 9, from Reston particularly enjoyed the “ice” skating. Judging from the lines for this event, they weren’t alone in that sentiment.

of youngsters surrounding him by the stage.

On the lower level it quickly became clear that there was so much to see and do that it was no wonder why some, like the Paulsen family from Springfield, decided that one trip to the MBC Christmas Village just wasn’t enough. “We were here on Sunday night,” said Howard Paulsen, with his two boys Michael and Brian in tow. “We found out we had missed the train ride and some of the other activities, so we came back for more.”

A train ride? Absolutely. And a good-sized one at that with room for the whole family to hop on board as they were driven at a pretty good speed through the “Christmas Tree Forest.” Further along the lower level

“Main Street,” for those who hadn’t finished their Christmas shopping, there was a “World Bazaar” featuring handcrafted gifts at booths decorated to call to mind the country of origin. Regions of Latin America, Asia and Africa were represented with their items being sold to benefit ministries around the world that focus on ending poverty.

The spirit of giving was not forgotten in this Winter Wonderland. “Operation Christmas Child” was set up next door to the Bazaar to garner donations for children who otherwise might not see a gift beneath the Christmas tree.

Across the “street” children were lined up in “Candyland” for some time in the Bounc-

ing Christmas Castle, a bit of face-painting, and a few other interactive offerings. If that wasn’t enough action to satisfy even the most energetic youngsters, there was still the “Polar Playground” complete with a variety of obstacles courses sure to have some of those little ones falling asleep on their rides home.

Shows. Markets. Carousel and train rides. Lots to eat and drink. Sounds complete, and then some. But what would a Christmas Village be without the chance to do a little “ice” skating? Not to worry. The MBC elves thought of that, as well, transforming one large room into an indoor skating rink, where the organizers kindly provided helpful portable hand rails for those most in danger of spending more time sitting on the rink, rather than skating around it.

Just like the Christmas Show and the Christmas Experience that started Village event, the MBC folks capped off their presentation with a reminder of what they are all about. “Our Village is for everyone, regardless of their beliefs. All are welcomed and will feel welcome,” said Pastor Sutherland, but their mission in what they do is to “communicate the story of Jesus and what He did for Mankind.” And so the last thing that guests encountered set up outside the church was a live Nativity scene complete with Holy Family, their visitors, quite a few sheep and even a donkey. Then it was back to their cars, with the calls of “Thanks for coming! Merry Christmas!” ringing in their ears.

INAUGURAL EVENT, remember? That means there are already plans in the works for next year’s Village. A word to the wise? Don’t miss it if you did this year, and if you were part of this year’s fun, who knows what new adventures await you at the 2017 McLean Bible Church Christmas Village?



The Richards family of Reston pause for a photo opportunity while enjoying the delights of the McLean Bible Church Christmas Village. “Something for everyone” they said, with kids ranging from 2 to 11.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Send announcements to www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

All-comers Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running Every Tuesday and Thursday, 6:30 p.m. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a free, fun, low-key run that's safe and social. 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com

One to One English Conversation Dec. 1 - Dec. 31 Reston Regional Library 11925 Bowman Towne Dr. Reston. Practice your conversation skills with a volunteer. Call to register Mondays after 1 p.m.

Retrospective Photography Exhibit Dec. 1 - 31 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Daily except Sunday when the RCC facility closes at 8 p.m. Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. This exhibit includes more than 70 color and monochrome photos by Reston photographer Fran Bastress taken from 2007 to the present. She specializes in landscape, nature, and fine art photography. Cost: Free. www.restoncommunitycenter.com/attend-shows-events-exhibits/exhibits-and-galleries

LRA PenFed Realty Hosts Sievers' Paintings The League of Reston Artists is showing the oil paintings of Ruth Sievers during December 2016 and January 2017 at the office of PenFed Realty, 1886 Metro Center Dr. Reston. The exhibit is free and the office is open to visitors Monday through Friday from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. www.leagueofrestonartists.org

Art in Public Places by League of Reston Artists LRA Through Dec. 31 Art in Public Places (AIPP) program is managed by the League of Reston Artists (LRA) and provides exhibition venues for its members at 16 locations in northern Virginia, with a majority in the Reston-Herndon area. Most of the venues are office and government buildings with a great deal of traffic. The program was initially developed and managed by Ms. Pat Macintyre, one of the founders of LRA. president.lra@gmail.com 202-746-0304 <http://www.leagueofrestonartists.org/>

Explorations in Color Exhibit Featuring Artist Kristin Herzog December 7, 2016 - January 8, 2017. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Explorations in Color is an exhibit featuring abstract paintings executed in vibrant color. Kristin Herzog's paintings are all about color and its power to convey emotion. With color she explores her reactions to the physical and emotional landscapes of daily life. For more information call 703-956-9560. www.artspaceherndon.com

Exercise for Parkinson's Every Monday, 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. Reston Sport&health, 11445 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. This program brings together people impacted by Parkinson's Disease to participate in various physical exercises aimed at improving posture, balance and circulation and increasing strength, muscle control and mobility. Free.parkinsonfoundation.org. ckacenga@sportandhealth.com 703-621-4148.

Teen and Adult Art Classes ArtSpace Herndon Every Monday from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. 750 Center Street, Herndon. Drawing and Mixed Media with Melanie Stanley - During Fall and Winter of 2016. Cost: \$45/class. The class will use a variety of techniques for drawing, painting, mark making, and collage using fine arts tools and materials. Students will be taken down a creative path to learn to use drawing tools and brushes more effectively. Register by emailing Melanie, and she will send you the supply list and payment options/information: ridingfree2@gmail.com. 703-956-9560. www.artspaceherndon.com

All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. For more information, call 703-689-0999 <https://potomacriverrunning.com>.

Herndon Regional Wind Ensemble Practice. Every Tuesday 7-9 p.m. through May. Herndon Middle School, 901 Locust St., Herndon. For advanced high school students, college students, and adults who play a brass, woodwind or percussion instrument. 703-904-4800 HerndonRegionalWindEnsemble@gmail.com Cost: Free

Senior Tea ARTSPACE Herndon 10:30 - 12 p.m. Every month seniors are invited to visit the gallery to view the current exhibit and enjoy a cup of tea on the second Friday of the month,

from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. 750 Center Street, Herndon. All teas are free and open to the public. <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/events-2/senior-tea/>

College Night Skate, Rock N Skate, Cartoon Skate at the Ice Skating Pavilion
Every Thursday, 6 - 9 p.m. - Every Friday, 8 - 10 p.m.
Skate Shop, 1818 Discovery Street, Reston Town Center. 11900 Market Street. Receive \$2 off admission with valid college ID. Live DJ & music, games & prizes; skating continues until 11 pm. Share the ice with Scooby-Doo, Cat in the Hat and more. 703-709-6300 skating@restontowncenter.com restontowncenter.com/skating

Ice Skating in the Pavilion 8 a.m. - 11 p.m. open daily, November until March

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 21

Meet Me at the Movies - Senior Movie Day at Bow Tie Cinemas 10 a.m. doors open at 9:15 a.m. 11940 Market Street, Reston Town Center. Reston Association presents "Me Before You." Refreshments and door prizes provided prior to movie. Free to 55+. Information: Ashleigh@reston.org, 703-435-6530, or reston.org

Open Acrylic Painting Art Studio Tuesday - Friday 10 - 6 p.m. at Art Frame Solutions 11529 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Pick a theme, instruction, acrylic paints and complete a masterpiece. No experience necessary. Beginners welcome. ages 7-adult. If interested in booking room you'll need 8 people. Weekend times 6 - 8 p.m. Cost: \$30 per person, price includes all art supplies, 2-3 hours in room and instruction. artframesolutions1@gmail.com 703-648-3800 www.artframesolutions.com

THURSDAY/DEC. 22

College Night Skate at the Ice Skating Pavilion Every Thursday 6 - 9 p.m. 11900 Market St. Reston. Receive \$2 off admission with valid college ID. 703.709.6300 skating@restontowncenter.com restontowncenter.com/skating

Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running Every Tuesday and Thursday 6:30 p.m. 11900 Market St. Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a free, fun, low-key run that's safe and social. 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 23

Rock N Skate at the Ice Skating Pavilion 8-10 p.m. Every Friday. Live DJ & music, games & prizes; skating continues until 11 pm. 11900 Market St. Reston. Receive \$2 off admission with valid college ID. 703-709-6300 skating@restontowncenter.com restontowncenter.com/skating

SATURDAY/DEC. 24

Cartoon Skate at the Ice Skating Pavilion 11- 1 p.m. Share the ice with Scooby-Doo, Cat in the Hat and more. 11900 Market St. Reston. 703-709-6300 skating@restontowncenter.com restontowncenter.com/skating

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

Inova Blood Drive 12 - 7 p.m. beside the Pavilion
11900 Market Street, Reston Town Center. Schedule appointments at 1-866-256-6372 or inova.org/donateblood. On-site registration.

SUNDAY/JAN. 1

New Year's Day 5K 10 a.m. Fountain Square 11900 Market Street, Reston Town Center. Kick off the New Year with a run from Reston Town Center with music, food, and fun celebration following the race. Presented by Potomac River Running. 703-689-0999 at praces.com/newyearsday

Plan Ahead Reston & Herndon

SATURDAY/JAN. 21


NextStop's Theater Presents Much Ado About Nothing 7 p.m. NextStop's Theater 269 Sunset Park Drive Herndon, VA 20170. The Shakespeare tale of Beatrice and Benedick, the original romantic comedy. The pair are locked in a constant battle of wits and share a mutual disdain for love. Cost: \$25 -average per ticket. www.nextstoptheatre.org/contact/




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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 Gulyn, 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 Gulyn. "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.

FAITH Burn, Burn, Burn!

The story of Chanukah.

BY RABBI LEIBEL FAJNALND
DIRECTOR CHABAD OF RESTON - HERNDON

The story of Chanukah happened more than 2,000 years ago. Alexander the Great marched across the Middle East and into the land of Israel. While he allowed the Jews autonomy, Antiochos Epiphanes, who ruled Greek Syria after him, and in time Judea as well, was a harsh and brutal tyrant.

Antiochus strove to unite his empire under the Hellenist banner. Jewish study and worship were prohibited; Torah scrolls were burned; pagan altars were set up in villages all across the land. Many died heroically, standing true to their faith.

And then, a small band of brave men and women, fled into the hills of Judea, and the great revolt broke out. Known as the Maccabees, these warriors — small in number but great in faith and courage — miraculously defeated an enemy more numerous and better trained than they.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, the Maccabees found their Temple desecrated; its holy vessels destroyed or stolen, the sacred oil tainted and defiled; the seal on each flask broken by the enemy. Miraculously a small flask of pure olive oil was found — complete with an unbroken seal. Though pure and fit for the kindling of the great Menorah, it was enough for just one day! A full week was needed to produce new oil.

And wonder of wonders, that tiny amount of oil kept burning and burning for eight days and nights.

The Spiritual Battle

If we think for a moment about the story of Chanukah, it does seem odd that the enemy, upon entering the holy Temple, went about breaking the seal on every flask of oil. Why did they not destroy the oil, spill it on the ground, or even take it for their own needs? What is the point of merely breaking the seal?

In truth, the battle that was fought was not merely about territory — it was a spiritual battle as well. The oil is the spiritual fiber that burns in every one of us. The tyrannical Antiochus and his armies were intent on polluting it. Modernizing and secularizing

Community Chanukah Events

(RSVP at www.chabadrh.org)

Chanukah on Ice

Join us and enjoy... Ice-skate to lively Chanukah music with family and friends. Grand Menorah lighting with Mr. & Mrs. "Voice of the Wizards" Steve Buckhantz. Hot latkes and donuts. Dreidels and Chocolate Gelt for all. Grand Raffle and more.

Sunday, Dec. 25, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. at Reston Town Center Ice Skating Rink, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Admission: FREE. \$12 to skate. Event Sponsorship: Dreidle Sponsor \$50. Menorah Sponsor \$100. Macabee \$180.

Chanukah Magic at Lake Anne

Join us for an amazing night of Chanukah fun for your entire family.

Enjoy: the hilarious pirate magic of Captain Silly Bones, lighting of our giant cupcake Menorah, face-painting, balloon shaping, mac & cheese dinner, chocolate coins, dreidles, latekes Chanukah activities and much more.

Tuesday, Dec. 27, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. at Reston Community Center, 1609 Washington Plz N, Reston. Fee: \$5 per person. \$18 per family. Event Sponsorship: Dreidle Sponsor \$50. Menorah Sponsor \$100. Macabee \$180.

Menorah Making Competition for Children

Get creative and build a unique menorah according to the rules below. Bring your completed menorah to Chanukah Magic at Reston Community Center Lake Anne on Tuesday, Dec. 27 at 4:30 p.m.

Rules: Menorah must have a total of nine branches (including the shamash). Eight branches must be in a straight line and of even height.

Scoring: At the party, each Menorah will be tagged and guests will vote for the best one. Winner receives a \$30 Amazon Gift Card and a Menorah. Contestants will be divided into 2 groups: Ages 5 - 8 and ages 9 - 12. One winner from each group. If we've got enough entries, we may pick a runner up, too!

It was for our right to be different that the Maccabees fought. It was to preserve the unique oil that makes us who we are, that they sacrificed their lives.

This Chanukah, as we munch on crispy fried potato latkes or dig into a delicious jelly donut, let us consider our own faith in God and the life purpose that He has ordained for us.

Just as the Maccabees restored and rededicated the Holy Temple, let us rededicate our lives to the pursuit of goodness and righteousness, and bring light into our own homes and lives. Better yet, into the world at large...Burn bright like a menorah on a winter night.

For more information on the above, email Rabbi Leibel Fajnalnd at rabbi@chabadrh.org



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Christmas Day - 12/25
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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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The McLean Connection
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PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Making a list and checking it twice are FISH volunteers, from left: Ellen Scheinfeld, James Bell of Life Ticket Church – waving in the back row – Susan Markel, and Gracy Olmeda, another volunteer from Life Ticket Church.

Herndon-Reston FISH Plays Santa's Helpers Once Again

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Robyn Kampf thinks it was about forty (Yes, 4-0!) years ago that she first got involved in the Herndon-Reston Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help (FISH) holiday toy and food drive. “I’m not in charge any more, [she ran the event for several years] but it continues on, always in good hands and doing good things.”

This year the nonprofit will play “Santa’s Helpers” for 160 families whose children would be facing a less-than-Merry-Christmas without all of the people, organizations, schools, clubs and companies who donated toys, food items and gift cards, along with their time to collect, sort and distribute what was collected. “I know without this help,” said Maria A. of Herndon, “we just couldn’t make Christmas for our kids, even though my husband and me both work. There’s just not enough money left over.”

The United Christian Parish Church in Reston provided the venue for this year’s distribution, which took place on Saturday, Dec. 17 and Sunday, the 18. The FISH volunteers had the room well set up with tables of toys organized by type – Legos, dolls, board games, etc. – and then again by age group so as each adult entered, making their choices was a breeze, while other volunteers helped keep the youngsters occupied in the lobby area. Wouldn’t want them to get a sneak peek at what’s in store for Christmas morning!

In addition to the toy give-away, each family received some goodies for the adults, as well, and gift cards to Safeway and Target to make sure the holiday was truly bright.

Some of those toy items were pretty big and shopping bags got a bit heavy, but the FISH folks were ready to lend a helping hand getting things out to cars. There was even a volunteer cheerfully helping to wrap and decorate packages in another room in the church complex. Again, no little ones allowed in that space while the wrapping was underway.

On the weekend before Christmas there was probably a lot of things the volunteers could have been doing to prepare for their own festivities, but as volunteer Ellen Scheinfeld put it, “What better way to really prepare for Christmas? I’m happy to be here.”



Once the toys were selected, there were still some gift cards from stores like Safeway and Target to collect, as well as some food items – and smiling, helpful volunteers to help shoppers get their goods out to the cars. From left — Marcus Bradley and David Zahraie hand out the gift cards and provide the muscle to the cars, while FISH board member Janie Odlem manned the food goods table and made sure to wish each recipient a Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years.

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Aerial view of the location for Metro Commerce Center

14-Story Hotel Smaller Than High Rises at Wiehle Station

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

CESC Commerce Executive Park was the first to present a vision to the Board of Supervisors for its 11.58 acres portion of land near Wiehle Metro Station.

“It’s the first significant land use case of its type on the South side of the Toll Road, obviously very proximate to the Wiehle Station as well,” said Gregory Riegle of McGuire Woods. “This is an opportunity to unlock the existing rail station so to speak.”

The Board approved the development at its afternoon public hearings on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016.

The four-phase conceptual plan project called Commerce Metro Center starts with a rezoning from Light Industrial District to Planned Development Commercial district

that will allow CESC Commerce Executive Park LLC to develop office, hotel, multi-family and retail uses.

Developer Vornado’s Commerce Metro Center will consist of about 1.1 million square feet in new mixed use development at the site of existing office park, while the Lincoln will be a seven-story apartment on an adjacent property.

“If you’re familiar with the existing condition, we have a circumstance that is far from optimal in terms of a new Metro-rail station,” he said. “This application starts to solve that condition by providing new access, organized access, and collective starting to open this important piece of infrastructure and amenity to the public as large.”

The applicant plans to start the first phase of development on the existing surface parking lot by building a seven-story, 100-foot



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Illustration of what the four-phase project would look like when completed.

tall residential building with 200 dwelling units at the property at 1850 Centennial Park Drive, 11440 Commerce Park Drive, north of Sunrise Valley drive and west of Wiehle Avenue.

In future phases the applicant plans to: build a 24-story, 255-foot tall building with 300 residential units, retail spaces on the ground floor and underground parking (phase two); and construct a 22-story, 275-foot tall, 385,000 square-foot building immediately east of the Metro platform and central plaza.

A HOTEL is envisioned for the fourth phase of Commerce Metro Station; the applicant describes a 14-story, 155-foot-tall, 175-room building that will also have retail on the ground floor.

Ronald Weber testified before the Board in opposition to the project, stating his opinion on problems with bus access and lack of

kiss and ride facilities and traffic problems.

“There are major transportation problems that it fails to address,” he said. “It doesn’t unlock the station, except to them... what you have is a project that should not be allowed.”

The Board gave unanimous approval.

“This is another site coming in to the transit area which has been industrial for quite some time,” said Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

“I think the beginning of this process is an opportunity for us,” she said, “It is a change that will improve the lifestyle along Sunrise Valley [Drive].”

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the application on Oct. 6, 2016.

The development retains 1.52 acres for park space in multiple phases for six different parks and pocket parks. Overall, 39 percent of the development will be for residential use.

Board Placing Puzzle Pieces

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Parcel are “coming in faster than we can think,” said Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins, regarding Wiehle Station Venture’s project at Commerce Park at 11400 Commerce Park Drive and 1913 Association Drive, north of Sunrise Valley Drive.

On Tuesday, Dec. 6, The Board approved Wiehle Station Venture’s application to rezone its 3.14 acres portion of the Commerce Business Park property from I-3 (industrial) to PRM (mixed residential), The Lincoln.

“This is an infill project within an existing office park,” said Mark Looney, who called his client’s portion one-sixth of the puzzle. He called CESC’s project, heard by the Board hours earlier, two-thirds of the office park.

Wiehle Station Venture seeks to build Lincoln at Commerce Park, a seven-story, 85-foot-tall residential building with 260 dwelling units at a 82.8 dwelling units per acre

and 2.5 floor area ratio.

The site is one quarter mile from the southern entrance of the Wiehle Metro Station, according to Planning Commission documents.

“This is a progression in terms of a transition from an industrial area to a transit-oriented development,” said Hudgins.

Looney said “a series of improvements particularly along Sunrise Valley Drive that are going to transform this area into a more urban walkable pedestrian-friendly community.”

He highlighted a nine-foot cycle track, an eight-foot sidewalk, and streetscape improvements.

Twelve hours into the Board meeting, Looney said he would spare the Board a 45-slide presentation he could have given.

The site currently is a surface parking lot and a 72,637 office condominium building the applicant will retain.

The Planning Commission had recommended approval of the application on Sept. 29, 2016.



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

A 260-apartment project, the Lincoln at Commerce Park was approved for three acres adjacent to the Metro Commerce Center.