

Springfield CONNECTION

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HOLIDAY
ENTERTAINMENT

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Springfield Scouts Jack Rose, 13, on left, and Finneas Rose, 7, are passing out bags from the bed of one truck in ECHO parking lot. Annual Scouting for Food drive nets 25,842 pounds of food for ECHO clients.

Scouting For Food in Springfield

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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 16-22, 2017

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SALT Holds Annual Advocacy Conference

Social justice advocates told: “Go and do good.”

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE GAZETTE

The agenda was full at the 2017 Social Action Linking Together (SALT) Fall Advocacy Conference. The annual forum was held at the Virginia International University in Fairfax on Saturday, Nov. 11 with a packed house in attendance.

SALT is a non-partisan faith-based network of individuals and organizations with the goal of bringing “the social and economic justice teachings of their faith to bear on public policy and legislation.” What started as eight socially conscious people about 20 years ago, has grown to a base of about 1,300, who educate themselves and the public on the facts surrounding social issues, and the actions that can be taken to address them.

“It’s education, it’s advocacy, building relationships with legislators, and bringing people together to strengthen the voices of all,” said SALT Founder and Coordinator John Horejsi, who is no stranger to the halls of the Commonwealth’s governmental chambers and offices in Richmond.

Each year, SALT selects new priority issues, or continues to address issues in progress, and rallies its troops to raise awareness and recommend actions. Horejsi was particularly pleased to announce that largely through the efforts of SALT members, many more Virginians in need will now benefit from the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) program, simply by having consolidated the TANF categories.

Additional improvements to TANF, including an associated scholarship program is one of SALT’s priorities for the 2018 Virginia legislative session.

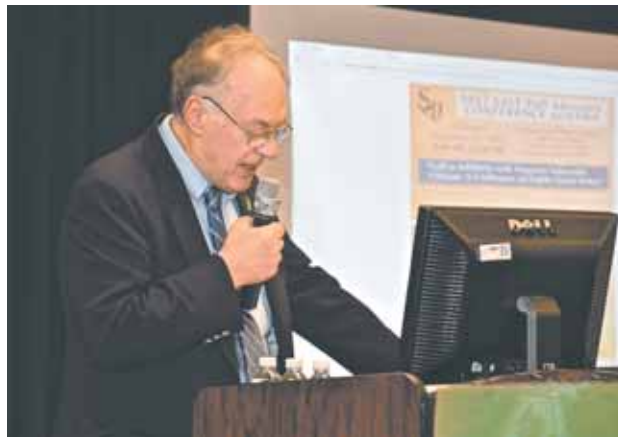
THE GROUP has identified several other priorities upon which they will focus their attention in the coming year, including:

- ❖ Ending school lunch shaming: SALT supports legislation that would prohibit identifying – and stigmatizing – children who are unable to pay for school meals.
- ❖ Legislation to provide video visitation services to inmates, and not to ban in-person visits where video visits are provided.
- ❖ Limiting, and ultimately eliminating solitary confinement in prisons.
- ❖ Opposing block grants for all human service programs opposing block grants for Medicaid.
- ❖ Supporting greater equity in Kinship Guardian situations, granting more funds to family members caring for children — where foster carers now receive, in some



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE GAZETTE

Sister Simone Campbell — often referred to as “the nun on the bus” for the bus tours she and other nuns undertake on their mission to bring about social justice — was the keynote speaker at the SALT conference.



Social Action Linking Together (SALT) founder and coordinator John Horejsi welcomes attendees to the organization’s 2017 Fall Advocacy Conference.

cases, almost five times the funds allotted to family carers.

To illustrate the scope of the needs of the citizens of Virginia, Horejsi recruited Sister Simone Campbell and state Del. Ken Plum (D-36) as speakers for the forum.

Sister Campbell, a member of the international Roman Catholic religious congregation Sisters of Social Service is often referred to as one of the “Nuns on a Bus.” As the director of NETWORK, a Catholic advocacy group for social justice, Sister Campbell leads a group of nuns who, since 2012, conduct bus tours around the country as part of their advocacy work, educating and leading discussions on a variety of issues, from healthcare to immigration, voter suppression to advocating for a “living wage” for all.

The need to provide a “living wage” was a central element in Sister Campbell’s keynote address on “21st Century Poverty.”

Sister Campbell advised the audience to throw away the old stereotypes of the “typically impoverished.” Today’s poor are increasingly “the working poor,” she said, recounting the story of a young woman she encountered at a special White House luncheon. The woman was filled with excitement for having been chosen to attend the

event, yet before the end of the meal, she confessed that despite having a “good, full-time job” at a well-known retailer, she lived at a homeless shelter because she couldn’t afford the high cost of rents in the D.C. area. Her dream was to work and save her way out of this dilemma.

Sister Campbell doesn’t believe that anyone working a full-time job – and some working more than one job – should not be earning enough to pay for a place to live and the means to exist.

“There’s something wrong here. We say we are a nation based on family, yet we do so little to support families and hardworking individuals.”

The “nun on a bus” expressed her scepticism regarding the tax reform proposals currently being put forth on the Hill. “Trickle down does not work. We have already proven this, time and again. And you know the definition of insanity, right? Doing the same thing over and over, expecting a different result.”

Before concluding her remarks, Sister Campbell challenged the attendees to embrace certain “virtues,” including remembering to keep a “modicum of joy” in your efforts.

Secondly, she added to “use your ‘holy curiosity,’ by asking people about themselves and their situations as the way to truly know the face of 21st century poverty. Practice “sacred gossip” by sharing the stories that you hear and encouraging others to take action, and finally, just figuring out what your part is and doing it.”

Sister Campbell cautioned against trying to “do it all” or needing to take charge. “Learn whether you’re the head, the feet, the hands, whatever you do best to contribute.”

She says it took awhile, but now she knows what she does best and where she fits in. “I am the stomach acid ... there to churn everybody and everything up.”

Plum followed Sister Campbell’s address, giving a mini-history of the Commonwealth,

particularly in relation to slavery, the birth of a culture of racism, and the reasons why he feels the issue of monuments to Confederate war participants is far from over.

“Virginia has more such monuments than any other state,” said Plum, “with 223, almost all of them built in either the early 1900s or during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. What’s the message there?”

Like Sister Campbell, Plum also addressed the issue of poverty and the widening gap between the wealthy and the less fortunate, using a series of charts and graphs that illustrated how statistics may not tell the whole story, unless you look a little deeper.

Despite always being categorized as one of the richest states in the union, Plum showed how the “real” numbers show one geographically small portion of Virginia, the “Golden Crescent” of Northern Virginia to Hampton Roads, having a median income of \$150,000. “For the rest of Virginia, that number is closer to \$40,000. What do we do with that information? We have to find ways to share economic opportunities and all that comes with it to rural Virginia, as well.”

LOOKING AHEAD to the 2018 legislative session, Plum thinks redistricting could be a hot topic — and that it should be. Fighting for more school funding and the expansion of Medicaid is also on his agenda. “\$10.4 billion by not expanding it. Who leaves that kind of money on the table, especially in ‘fiscally conservative’ Virginia?”

Plum warns that it “might not be pretty” when the session begins, as both parties readjust after the Democratic wins in the Nov. 7 election, but the delegate is hopeful that all the new faces bring fresh new perspectives and new solutions.

The final speaker at the forum was Gay Gardner, from Interfaith Action for Human Rights, (IAHR) speaking about her organization’s efforts to “make solitary confinement truly a last resort.”

Gardner cited numerous studies that attest to the physical and mental harm done by long-term solitary confinement.

Kimberly Jenkins-Snodgrass, a board member with IAHR spoke briefly about her own son, an inmate who has been kept in solitary for four years. Other prisoners they have contact with have been held in isolation for even longer, one for 14 years.

“Getting a straight answer as to why these men have been so confined is not easy,” Gardner said. Sometimes, solitary is employed as a response to an inmate who exhibits signs of mental illness or distress, “but solitary confinement only makes the condition worse.”

A question-and-answer session followed the speakers’ presentations. Horejsi noted that the energy in the room remained high, despite the almost overwhelming number of issues that had been brought to the table. “Must be that joy that Sister Simone told us to keep handy,” he said, before adjourning the forum and exhorting attendees to “Go and do good.”

Past issues of

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VDOT Virginia Department
of Transportation

Rolling Road Widening Fairfax County

Public Information Meeting

Thursday, November 30, 2017

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Rolling Valley Elementary School
6703 Barnack Drive
West Springfield, VA 22152**

Find out about plans to reduce congestion and improve safety by widening Rolling Road (Route 638) from two to four lanes between Viola Street and Old Keene Mill Road, with pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Efforts to explore options for the undergrounding of utilities will also be detailed.

Stop by between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to view displays and learn more about the project. VDOT staff will be available to answer your questions.

Review project information at the VDOT project website (www.virginiadot.org/projects), at the information meeting, or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call ahead at 703-259-1795 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Give your written comments at the meeting, or submit them by **December 11, 2017** to Hamid Misaghian, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Rolling Road Widening" in the subject line.

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State Project: 0638-029-156, P104, R204, C504
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PHOTOS BY HANAN DAQQA/THE CONNECTION

Teachers, parents, and students salute the flag as the "Star-Spangled Banner" played.

Students Read Letters to Veterans

Veterans Day celebrated at Hunt Valley Elementary.

BY HANAN DAQQA
THE CONNECTION

Hunt Valley Elementary School's principal, David Fee, a self-described "military brat," knows how children need to celebrate Veterans Day: "In the past, veterans would come and we would just honor veterans. Now, we have this piece with the kids reading letters they write to their parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. It means so much to the families, to the kids and to me. My dad was in the Air Force. I never knew what it was like to talk about my dad. I feel that this is another reason why we wanted to do this; I never had a chance to speak in front of anyone about my own dad. So this is the third year we have done this with the kids reading. We add more kids to it each year and we love it," said the principal to reporters.

Fairfax County Public Schools celebrated Veterans Day on Nov. 10. Students, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts were rolling out of Hunt Valley as the song "The Army Goes Rolling Along" played.

It was a cold, windy day. "The wind always seems to pick up when we do our Veterans Day ceremony, so we can see the flags better," said the principal just before the children started the flag-raising ceremony.

More than 20 students read their letters to the crowd. "We forget that freedom is not free and that members of the military have to give up time with their families," said one student whose father has



Students listen as their friends read their letters out loud.



The band concluded the ceremony by playing "America the Beautiful"

been in Afghanistan since February. Just as the ceremony started with music, it concluded with the band playing "America the Beautiful."

Diana, a sixth grader and band member, fought back her tears

when she was asked about what Veterans Day means to her: "I really wish my grandfather was here, because he passed away two years ago and I really just want to recognize how great he was when he fought in the Korean War."

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CAPPIES REVIEW

A Display of Sophistication and Maturity Hayfield Secondary School presents musical "Rent."

BY VANESSA RIVERA
OAKTON HIGH SCHOOL

A year in the life of friends may be measured in day-lights, sunsets, and cups of coffee, but the talent and dedication seen in Hayfield Secondary School's production of "Rent" was immeasurable.

Based on Giacomo Puccini's opera "La Boheme," "Rent" is a rock musical with book, music, and lyrics by Jonathan Larson. Premiering in 1996 in the New York Theatre Workshop, "Rent" went on to Broadway in the same year. After 5,123 performances over the span of 12 years, "Rent" closed in 2008.

The story starts on Christmas Eve with Mark Cohen, a struggling filmmaker, as he documents life on Avenue B with his roommate, Roger Davis. Mark, dealing with a recent breakup, and Roger, coming to terms with his recently diagnosed HIV, face eviction. As the two seek meaning in life, they struggle, alongside their friends, with emotion, devotion, and causing a commotion.

Roger, played by Jackson Miller, and Mimi played by Trish Hoang, lit a spark in their duet "Light My Candle." Jackson Miller, a standout actor, ensured every song was a "one song glory" with his vocal expertise. Mark (Corbin Farrell) and Joanne (Hallie Streisky) maintained a spiteful yet good-natured chemistry, evident during "Tango: Maureen." As the two bonded over the unfaithful Maureen, they tangoed cleanly. Shannon Flack reached for the stars, and then jumped over the moon, in her role as Maureen. She brought an irreplaceable energy as she pouted playfully or protested dramatically.

A true light of the cast, Max von Kolnitz, played the lovable and bright character of Angel. Max executed high energy twirls, impressive vocals, and poise to bring the drag queen role to life. The relationship of Angel (von Kolnitz) and Tom Collins (Marek Brown) proved captivating and caring. No matter where the scene's focus was, Angel and Collins held hands and shared loving glances. After Angel's tragic passing in Act Two, Marek Brown notably used visual expressions to transition from calm to heart-

broken.

Beautifully professional, the set immaculately encompassed New York "at the end of the millennium." A telephone booth, a harvest moon, and old rock and roll posters adorned the set's levels and scaffolding. Stacked televisions played clips of the friends laughing together, bringing a creative touch to the show. Overall, space was greatly used, and complemented by lighting. When Angel flounced on stage, Christmas lights glittered to match his energy. In addition, blackouts and crisp lights helped introduce memorable moments, such as the dazzling snowfall during "Christmas Bells."

Perhaps most impressive of Hayfield's production of "Rent" was the sophistication and maturity each cast member displayed, which can often be a challenge for the themes portrayed in the script. The entire ensemble came together and connected, building an honest and genuine show, indisputably throughout the knockout number "Seasons of Love."

The musical "Rent" sends the message to remember love, and you'll have no trouble remembering Hayfield Secondary School's production.



Corbin Farrell in Hayfield Secondary School's production of musical "Rent."

PHOTO BY DR. TOM KINDER

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OPINION

Give Locally in Fairfax County

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger for tens of thousands of poor children in our area.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

Northern Virginia is among the wealthiest

areas in the country. Many if not most of us go through our daily and seasonal routines without encountering evidence of the needy families among us.

In Fairfax County, more than 52,000 (28 percent) of FCPS students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals.

The median family income in Fairfax County rose to \$129,800. But among families with children, 6 percent have income below the poverty level. That's \$20,420 for a family of three. That's about \$1,700 a month. Median rent in Fairfax County is \$1,747, meaning the cost for half the rentals is more than that.

These are children living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. Some of these are children who

may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school.

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger — a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

Many nonprofits in the county need your help to provide a holiday meal for Thanksgiving or Christmas, to provide children with gifts.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are a few ideas. We will rerun this list again after Thanksgiving, so please let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

WHERE TO GIVE LOCALLY

- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org. Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive. Gifts will be collected at Cornerstones main office, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, VA 20190 on Thursday, Dec. 7 and Friday, Dec. 8, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 9, 9 a.m. – noon. Contact Nate King, Donations and Drives Coordinator, at 571-323-9569.
- ❖ **Share of McLean** operates a food pantry; provides assistance to families to avoid eviction, keep utilities on and meet other needs in a crisis. Share of McLean will provide holiday assistance to more than 250 needy families (630-plus people) this year. Help neighbors in need by donating money, fulfilling a wish or donating Walmart, Target, Giant, or Safeway gift cards. Share's Furniture Program is in major need of drivers and helpers. Visit the Furniture Program page. The Food Pantry is in major need of supplies; visit the Food Pantry page and check Facebook to see how to help the Food Pantry. Visit www.shareofmclean.org for more info about Share.
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105, herndonrestonfish.org. Herndon-Reston FISH has assisted local residents in short-term crises by since 1969. FISH provides Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help by responding to emergency requests for rent, transportation, utilities, medical prescriptions and other needs. FISH operates The Bargain Loft, a thrift store, which needs donations of good quality saleable items, accepting and selling art, furniture, jewelry, household linens, dishes, pots and pans, books, women's designer clothing (clean and on hangers), puzzles, games, collectibles, small electronics and more. If you have store questions, call 703-437-0600. Herndon-Reston FISH also provides Holiday Food & Gift Baskets during the November and December season.
- ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more. Every year the goal is to provide each family with a week's worth of non-perishable food in November and again in December. When funds allow, grocery gift cards are also included. In November, clients also receive a voucher for coats and warm clothing. In December, children 16 and under receive gifts. holiday@linkagainsthunger.org. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org.
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others** (CHO), Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. Last year 450 children had a special Christmas through the annual Christmas Store. 703-281-7614, www.cho-va.com
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**. Just \$50 provides a complete holiday meal to a family of four. Donate at give.nvfs.org/holidaydonation or via check payable to "NVFS" with "Operation Turkey" on the memo line, or send grocery store gift cards.

Northern Virginia Family Service, attn: Holiday Initiatives, 10455 White Granite, Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124.

- ❖ **Second Story** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182. 703-506-9191, second-story.org. Second Story (formerly Alternative House) provides shelter and services for homeless, runaway or abused teenagers, unaccompanied youth, and young mothers and their children. Requests for food and clothing are up more than 50 percent.
- ❖ **Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna** providing services, personal enrichment, volunteer opportunities for adults 50 and over. Currently serving 3,000+ mature adults in the region. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org.
- ❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. www.touchingheart.com, 703-901-7355.
- ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly. For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153.
- ❖ **HomeAid** builds and renovates facilities that house the homeless, and partners with many local organizations to do so. 3684 Centerview Drive, Suite 110B, Chantilly, VA 20151. www.homeaidnova.org.
- ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area, a partner in efforts to end homelessness in Fairfax County. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251, volunteer@facetscares.org or www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22030.
- ❖ **Britepaths** will have 3,000 individuals and families in need of holiday assistance list this fall. Sponsor a family or donate to provide a family with a Thanksgiving meal, December holiday meal and/or gifts for their children. britepaths.org.
- ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) helps local people who are in temporary need of life's basic necessities such as food, clothing, and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880, fairfaxfish.org.
- ❖ **Lamb Center**, day center for homeless, Fairfax. 703-691-3178, www.thelambcenter.org.
- ❖ **Food for Others** provides a safety net for people who suddenly face unforeseen emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173, info@foodforothers.org or www.foodforothers.org. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others** (ECHO). 703-569-9160, www.foodforothers.org. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low

income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year.

- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** (LCAC) will provide Thanksgiving and Holiday assistance to more than 450 families this year. Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets along with fulfilling gift wishes for more than 1,000 children and teens will help low-income families More information at lortonaction.org/seasonal-assistance/. Volunteers are needed for these events as well. Register online at lortonaction.org or call 703-339-5161, ext. 140 or email Linda@LortonAction.org. Mailing address: LCAC, P.O. Box 154, Lorton, VA 22199-0154.
 - ❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. Assistance League's philanthropic programs touch the lives of thousands of children at 11 Title I schools in Northern Virginia, serving children most in need at selected schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria. To learn more about volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, email alnorthernva@gmail.com or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.
 - ❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services** (CAUSE) ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. 1100 N Glebe Road, Suite 373, Arlington, VA 22201. 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org.
 - ❖ **Shelter House** provides crisis intervention, safe housing and supportive services to promote self-sufficiency for homeless families and victims of domestic violence in Fairfax County. www.shelterhouse.org/
 - ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, VA 22306 assists low-income families and individuals living along the Route 1 Corridor, UCM provides four different housing programs as well as a Workforce Development Center to help prepare people for moving forward with their jobs. For the holidays, donations of nearly 10,000 toys, books, games, clothing, and other gifts ensured a joy-filled holiday for more than 1,200 children in 600 families. 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria VA 22306. www.ucmagency.org
- Donations of cash/checks and gift cards are also welcome.
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia. 703-541-3063, www.capitalareafoodbank.org.
 - ❖ **Homestretch** is the largest provider of transitional housing in Fairfax County and offers a services to help the homeless better their lives through education. Email jhenderson@homestretchva.org; 703-237-2035 x125; homestretchva.org/.
 - ❖ **Pathway Homes** focuses on providing housing and support services to individuals with serious mental illnesses, with the mission to help these individuals reach their full potential and lead stable lives. They offer both in-home programs, semi-independent houses and assisted living facilities. 10201 Fairfax Boulevard, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. 703-876-

SEE GIVE LOCALLY. PAGE 15

Springfield
CONNECTION

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
south@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Reporter
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Editorial Assistant
south@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
e-mail:
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Steve Hogan
Display Advertising, 703-778-9418
shogan@connectionnewspapers.com

Debbie Funk
National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
[@MaryKimm](https://twitter.com/MaryKimm)

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Special Assistant to the Publisher
Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
[@TheismannMedia](https://twitter.com/TheismannMedia)

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



NEWS

Del. Albo Recognized for Supporting MADD's Mission to End Drunk Driving

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has named Del. Dave Albo (R-42) a 2017 Legislator of the Year for his work throughout his career in the Virginia House of Delegates. Albo has served as Chair of House Courts of Justice for the past 11



Del. Dave Albo (R-42)

years, which is where the majority of bills concerning MADD are heard.

MADD thanked Albo for being a champion of their cause, and a voice for many in the State of Virginia. Albo grew up in Springfield and currently lives in Fairfax Station. Albo did not seek reelection this year.



MAP COURTESY OF VDOT

Detour in place until fall 2018 for CSX Railroad bridge reconstruction.

Backlick Road Bridge Closure Begins

Beginning Tuesday, Nov. 14 (weather permitting), the Backlick Road bridge over CSX Railroad located just north of Cinder Bed Road will be closed to all traffic until fall 2018 for bridge reconstruction, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Traffic will be detoured via Fairfax County Parkway (Route 286), Loisdale Road, Newington Road and Cinder Bed Road back to Backlick Road.

During the bridge closure, there will also be a temporary access

road open to all traffic connecting Backlick Road to the ramp from Telegraph Road (Route 611) to northbound Fairfax County Parkway. Drivers will be able to access Backlick Road from the ramp, and vice versa.

The existing two-lane Backlick Road bridge over the CSX Railroad is being replaced with a slightly higher one that accommodates the addition of new railroad tracks as part of the Commonwealth's Atlantic Gateway Project.

The bridge project is scheduled for completion in spring 2019.

FAITH NOTES

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

Jubilee Christian Center will have a Patriotic Service on Sunday, May 28, 8:45 and 11 a.m., featuring special music and message. Jubilee is

located at 4650 Shirley Gate Rd., Fairfax. There will be no 6 p.m. service on May 28. For information, call 703-383-1170, or see www.jccag.org

The Fairfax Church of Christ, 3901 Rugby Road in Fairfax, has facilitators available to help those who are experiencing a separation or divorce. 703-631-2100 or www.fxcc.org.

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HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

NOV. 16-18

Christmas Craft Show. Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Oakton Church of the Brethren, 10025 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Oakton Church of the Brethren's 24th Annual Christmas Craft Show is a three-day event featuring a wide variety of handmade creations and craft supplies for purchase, plus a soup and sandwich lunch and bake sale. Visit www.oaktonbrethren.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 18-19

Burke Civic Ballet's Nutcracker. Saturday, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. at Ernst Theater on Northern Virginia Community College's campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Featuring 3-year-old miniature dolls to professional dancers courtesy of Colorado Ballet, this production of the Nutcracker will enchant all ages. Be mesmerized by a growing tree, magic tricks, leaping mice, toy soldiers, falling snow, authentic costumes made in Ukraine, 75 dancing flowers and delectable confections from the Kingdom of Sweets. \$20-\$28, buy tickets at buffas.com/burke-civic-ballet/nutcracker-tickets-buy-now/.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Santa Fest. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall. Welcome Santa to Springfield Town Center enjoy snacks straight from the North Pole, craft activities, face painting and entertainment and photos with Santa, all in Grand Court, located on the first level of Spring Town Center. Visit springfieldtowncenter.com.

5th Annual Snowflake Stampede. 5:30 p.m. at Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. At the Bull Run Festival of Lights, a 2.5 mile fun run or walk for holiday enthusiasts of all ages. Enjoy a special preview of the Festival of Lights on foot, and take a picture with your favorite display. Parking and check in are at the corporate barn pavilion; follow the signs for the Snowflake Stampede. \$22 per adult (13 and older); \$17 per child (3-12); 2 and younger, free. Visit ticketfly.com to sign up (search Snowflake Stampede). Prepayment required. More at www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights/snowflake-stampede.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

Turkey Trot. 8 a.m. Start and finish at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Dept., 400 Center St. S., Vienna. Visit www.viennaturkeytrot.org/.

NOV. 22-JAN. 7

Bull Run Festival of Lights. Monday-Thursday, 5:30-9:30 p.m., \$15 per car; Fridays-Sundays and holidays, 5:30-10 p.m., \$20 per car. Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. The Bull Run Festival of Lights is more than just a light show. After enjoying two and a half miles of light displays, stop at the Holiday Village, complete with bonfires, s'mores, holiday merchandise and free activities, the Holiday Village is fun for the whole family. Have a photo taken with Santa. Call 703-631-0550 or visit www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights.

SATURDAY/NOV. 25

The Nutcracker. 2 and 7 p.m. in the Centreville High School Auditorium, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. The entirely student and volunteer



Burke Civic Ballet's Nutcracker

Burke Civic Ballet's Nutcracker features 3-year-old miniature dolls to professional dancers courtesy of Colorado Ballet. Be mesmerized by a growing tree, magic tricks, leaping mice, toy soldiers, falling snow, authentic costumes made in Ukraine, 75 dancing flowers and delectable confections from the Kingdom of Sweets. Saturday, Nov. 18, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 19, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. at Ernst Theater on Northern Virginia Community College's campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. \$20-\$28, buy tickets at www.buffas.com.

production features Little Rocky Run residents, MSB alumnae dancers and current students from Mia Saunders School of Ballet. Email msb.nutcracker.tickets@gmail.com.

NOV. 24-26

Thanksgiving Weekend Show. Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Spring Hill ReCenter, 1239 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Approximately 80 juried artisans offering original, handmade arts and crafts, including decorative painting, fused, etched, painted and stained glass, ceramics and pottery, hand-painted silk, woodworking handweaving, photography, paintings and drawings, clothing and functional textiles, jewelry and much more. All of the artists and artisans will be on hand to answer questions and talk about their work. \$5, Free for children 12 and under. Email anneclark01@comcast.net or call 703-391-5611.

NOV. 25-26

Fairfax Ballet Company's Nutcracker. Nov. 25, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Nov. 26, 2 p.m. at W.T. Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Fairfax Ballet Senior company member Ana Victoria Smith of Clifton, dances the role of Clara. Company members, along with students from the Russell School of Ballet and professional guest artists. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-665-9427.

FRIDAY/DEC. 1

Guitarist Peter Griggs Holiday Concert. 7 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Show is called "Music For An Old English Christmas." Visit www.gracepresby.org or call 703-451-2900.

Tree Lighting in Clifton. 7 p.m. at Chapel Road and Main Street in Clifton. Set the holiday season in motion with the official lighting of the town Christmas Tree. Carol, drink

hot chocolate, roast s'mores over the fire, and join in the holiday spirit. Visit clifton-va.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Annual Holiday Train Show. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Bring broken locomotives to the "Train Doctor" to fix or advise on other options. Stop and admire the antique cars visiting for this event, weather permitting. Visit the gift shop for holiday gift items and Santa may stop by to visit. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$5. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

Holiday Sing-A-Long Luncheon. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. \$20. Call 703-922-6438 or email Springwmconn@yahoo.com.

Festival of Lights and Carols. 2-7 p.m. at 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Children ages 12 and under can enjoy lunch with Santa at Sherwood Community Center. Lunch seatings will be offered at 11:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m., must pre-register. Listen to live holiday music and enjoy s'mores and hot cider at Old Town Square from 2-7 p.m. Enjoy caroling and lighting of the Christmas Tree at Old Town Square at 6 p.m. Visit fairfaxva.gov/about-us/special-events/festival-of-lights-and-carols.

Christmas in Brass. 3 p.m. at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield. Featuring the Barclay Brass Quintet. This stellar ensemble will present a program of secular and sacred seasonal music that will appeal to a broad audience of all ages. Email concerts@kirkwoodpres.com, visit www.kirkwoodpres.com, or call the church office at 703-451-5320.

Town of Clifton Holiday Homes Tour. 4-7 p.m. at 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton. Five homes in Town and a bonus home outside of Town, in addition to the caboose and two

historic churches that will be open to the public. Free admission. Call 703-517-7703.

SUNDAY/DEC. 3

Home for the Holidays Concert. 4-6 p.m. at Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. Main Street Community Band plays a mix of seasonal favorites. Visit www.fairfaxband.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

Flutist in Concert. 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrate the Sounds of the Season with the Columbia Flute Choir in the Christmas Concert. Free. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

DEC. 8-9

Christmas Store Help Needed. Friday night for set up and Saturday to escort shoppers at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE. Call 703-938-7213.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Lunch with Santa. 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Children ages 10 and under can enjoy lunch with Santa. \$6. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

Horse-drawn Carriage Rides. 4-9 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. \$5 per person; children 5 and under ride free with adult. Proceeds go to local charities. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Ornament Craft Day. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

Horse-drawn Carriage Rides. 4-9 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. \$5 per person; children 5 and under ride free with adult. Proceeds go to local charities. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

Handel's "Messiah." 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Enjoy a free performance of Handel's "Messiah" by the choirs of Unity of Fairfax and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events.

Mini-Train Rides. noon-4 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. Proceeds go to local charities. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 23

Horse-drawn Carriage Rides. 4-9 p.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. \$5 per person; children 5 and under ride free with adult. Proceeds go to local charities. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Celebrations. Celebrate Christmas in a positive, welcoming and inclusive spiritual community. Meditation service at 9 a.m., family-oriented service at 11 a.m.; candlelight service at 7:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, Oakton. Free. Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events.

THROUGH DEC. 24

Santa's Flight Academy. Various times at at Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Santa surrounded by a space motif. Visit www.santaexpresslane.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

Burning Bowl Ceremony. 9 and 11 a.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Experience this ritual of releasing what no longer serves you and envisioning the year ahead. Free. Visit unityoffairfax.org.
New Year's Eve Scramble. 10 a.m. at Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Shotgun start. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. \$60 per player. Call 703-471-5769 or visit www.herndongolf.com.

MONDAY/JAN. 1

New Year's Labyrinth. noon-4 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Set your intentions for 2018 while walking Unity's indoor labyrinth. Free. Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events.
New Year's Day 5K. 10 a.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Music, food, awards, and fun celebration following the race. Presented by Potomac River Running. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

THROUGH EARLY JANUARY

Winter Walk of Lights. At Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. The garden is transformed into a half-mile, walk of lights. Revisit perennial favorites such as the animated Lakeside Lights, the Fountain of Lights, and the Holiday Nature Walk – and look for new displays each year. Round out a visit roasting marshmallows and sipping on hot beverages, available for purchase. Visit www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights.

Manners in the Tech Age

Etiquette classes aim to teach the lost art of manners.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

On a sunny, fall day a group of 10-year-old children sit around an antique cherry wood table in Arlington. The boys are wearing navy blazers, pressed khakis and shiny loafers. The girls have donned their most festive dresses, nude stockings and have gros-grain ribbons in their neatly combed hair. They've arrived at the home for a lesson in etiquette. Most of them would rather be some place else.

"I have to leave early for a soccer game," said Jimmy, who has a hard time disguising his glee.

In an era when it's commonplace to order pizza on a smartphone and coordinate play dates by text, old-fashioned etiquette can appear obsolete. A recent survey of teachers shows that 73 percent of instructors believe that students are less polite than when the teachers themselves were students. In the age high-tech conveniences, children can become over scheduled and under socialized, which has led to an uptick in the number of parents who are enrolling their children in etiquette classes, say protocol instructors.

"Parents have a tremendous interest in etiquette classes because so many parents realize that they don't have that knowledge themselves," said Dorothea Johnson, who founded the Protocol School of Washington and is the author of the book "Modern Manners: Tools to Take You to the Top," which she co-authored with her granddaughter actress Liv Tyler.

"I think most parents know that good manners and etiquette will be important to their [children's] future," added Henryette Neal who teaches etiquette classes for children through the Fairfax County Park Authority. "Young people will be educated, but without proper social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly." Neal is also the owner of owner of Steppin Out Charm and Imaging Studio.

The result of fast-paced lifestyles combined with overloaded schedules is a generation of children who place more value on social media savvy than on knowledge of social graces. Family dinners are replaced by fast food, says one parent. "Who needs good manners to gobble down a slice of pizza," said Carole Mincey of Alexandria whose 14-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son have taken etiquette and ballroom dance from Simpson's Classes, one of the area's invitation-only etiquette schools. "Because everyone is so busy and technology is so advanced, reality television shows are setting standards of behavior and handwritten thank you notes have been replaced by emails and even texts."

GOOD MANNERS are as important to a child's future success as academics, says another parent. "I feel like if people know what to do in social situations it empowers them," said Sarah Henry of Chevy Chase, mother of a 10-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son. "If you're unsure of what to do, it can make you feel intimidated. So it's all about empowering children with knowledge. And it's good for them



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY
Henryette Neal teaches etiquette classes for children through the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Fairfax County Etiquette Classes

parktakes.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/

to be exposed to proper etiquette in case they're not getting it at home. And if they are getting it at home, etiquette classes can reinforce it."

Interactive class sessions help keep their children engaged in the etiquette lessons. "The key is to keep the children occupied," said Johnson. "For example, when teaching proper introductions, I would call two children up to the front of the room and have them introduce themselves to each other."

In addition to learning such common courtesies such as saying "Please," "Thank you" and "You're welcome," children learn to write thank-you notes

and introduce themselves to others by making direct eye contact and offering a firm handshake.

Henry says that in a class that she coordinated for her daughter's Girl Scout troop, part of the curriculum included having the children

form a receiving line with parents where they practiced handshakes and eye contact.

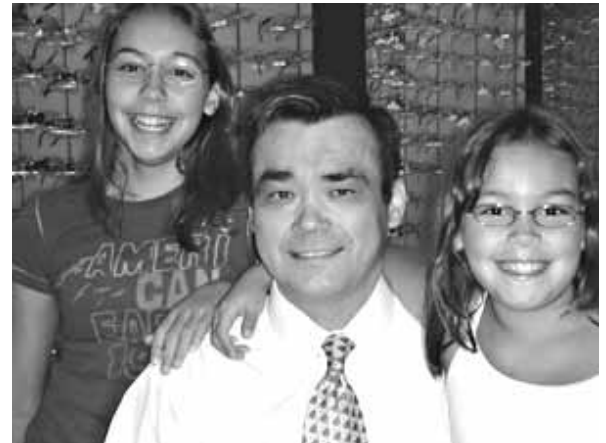
"We also printed proper table setting samples online and give the girls plastic forks spoons, knives, napkins and a copy of the place setting," said Henry. "We talked about the placement of the utensils, how to hold a knife and fork properly. One of my pet peeves is watching people hold a knife like it's a stick."

These are good life lessons, says Neal. "Etiquette classes are important because people still need to be respectful of others, and it starts with our children," she said. "A simple please and thank you is important."

"Young people will be educated, but without proper social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly."

— Henryette Neal, etiquette instructor.

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• Chantilly Connection	• Mount Vernon Gazette	• Vienna/Dakota Connection

ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Santa's Flight Academy. Through Dec. 24, at various times at at Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Santa surrounded by a space motif. Visit www.santaexpresslane.com.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Spy Lecture. 7 p.m. at the Braddock District Supervisor's Office, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Retired FBI Agent Lydia Jechorek discusses her presentation "From Teaching Art to Chasing Spies." Free. Call 703-764-8061.

NOV. 17-18

International Holiday Bazaar. 8:30 a.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church, 6911 Braddock Road, Springfield. Hosted by Bethany House of Northern Virginia. Friday from 4-8 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Proceeds go to Bethany House of Northern Virginia which provides emergency shelter and supportive services to victims of domestic violence throughout Northern Virginia and the surrounding DC metro communities.\$5. Visit www.bhmv.org.

St. Matthews Annual Craft Fair & Children's Show. Friday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. More than 40 vendors and children's author and entertainer Edward Allan Faine (a.k.a. "How-to Cowboy") will teach attendees how to whistle through their tongues, play hand trumpet, talk like Donald Duck and Darth Vader, and perform other tricks. Free. Visit stmatthewsumc.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Santa Fest. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall. Welcome Santa to Springfield Town Center, enjoy snacks straight from the North Pole, craft activities, face painting and entertainment and photos with Santa, all in Grand Court located on the first level of Spring Town Center. Visit springfieldtowncenter.com.

SUNDAY/NOV. 19

Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The NTRAK group with a display of running N Gauge model trains. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

Crop Hunger Walk. 2 p.m. at Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St., Fairfax. 25th annual Burke/Fairfax CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds and awareness to combat hunger and provide disaster relief. Visit www.burkecropwalk.org.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner. 5-7 p.m. at the Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. The 5th annual "pre-Thanksgiving" dinner with all the trimmings. The event is free and open to all. Visit franconiaumc.org.

MONDAY/NOV. 20

Mason Jazz Vocals. 8-10 p.m. at the Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. George Mason University presents an evening of jazz vocals, soloists, the Mason Jazz Vocal Ensemble and special guests, Herndon High School Jazz Choir. \$12



From left: Mark Walters, Jill Gardner and Roger Honeywell in "The Girl of the Golden West."

PHOTO BY
BEN SCHILL
PHOTOGRAPHY/
COURTESY
VIRGINIA OPERA

Opera in the Gold Rush Days

Virginia Opera's "The Girl of the Golden West" at the Center for the Arts.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

If you believe opera is only about faraway places with strange sounding names, the very American, "The Girl of the Golden West" is coming to town courtesy of Virginia Opera, the official opera company of Virginia. The Virginia Opera was also a recent recipient of several "Arts Inspiration Awards" from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

"Puccini's 'The Girl of the Golden West' is a colorful opera about just regular people during the California Gold Rush of 1849," said Jake Gardner who sings the role of the good hearted Sheriff Jack Rance in the production. "With sumptuous music composed by Puccini ["La Boheme" later adapted to become the urban musical "Rent"] the opera even sounds at times like music from Western movies many will recall."

"The Girl of the Golden West" has a sweeping score that is Puccini's interpretation of the rough and tough rural American Wild West. Including cigars, whiskey, mud, and even a dog. The opera's themes include unrequited love, jealousy, betrayal, and redemption.

There are miners trying to make their fortunes, a mysterious bandit and a sheriff out to get his man.

The story line follows the travails of Minnie, the saloon owner. She is the object of desire for many of the home-sick, card-playing patrons of her establishment. But, Minnie has her own thoughts about that, especially after a mysterious stranger arrives.

Jill Gardner sings the role of Minnie. She describes Minnie as a "woman of dignity who happens to run a high class saloon. It is a beautiful love story with its theme of redemption."

The major role of Ramerrez (alias Dick Johnson), the bandit who steals Minnie's heart is portrayed by acclaimed veteran tenor, Roger Honeywell. Virginia Opera's production of "The Girl of the Golden West" is directed by Lillian Groag who created and first directed the opera for the world famous Glimmerglass Opera. The Virginia Opera's production will be under the baton of musical director Andrew Bisantz.

In a recent interview, Jill Gardner and Jake Gardner, married in real life, spoke of "the great joy of working together. We are even able to assist one another in performing such a great work of art as 'The Girl of the Golden West.'"

Inviting audiences to the opera, Jill Gardner said, "If you enjoy the music from a composer like Andrew Lloyd Weber, please take in 'The Girl of the Golden West.' The music is sumptuous."

Where & When

Virginia Opera presents "The Girl of the Golden West" at Center for the Arts, George Mason University, 444 University Drive, Fairfax. Performances: Dec. 2, 2017 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 3, 2017 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$54, \$90 and \$110. Call 888-945-2468 or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. **Note:** Sung in Italian with projected English supertitles. Pre-performance discussion 45 minutes before the curtain with "Dr. Opera" Glenn Winters.

adults \$8 seniors \$5 youth through grade 12. Visit <http://cfa.gmu.edu>.

NOV. 20-DEC. 10

Toy Collection. Sheehy Auto Stores throughout the Washington, D.C.-metro area will collect new and unwrapped toys as part of the company's annual Sheehy Cares Toy Collection to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, which will distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which

the campaign is conducted. Sheehy's Toys for Tots drop-off locations include:

- ❖ Sheehy Volkswagen of Springfield, 6601 Backlick Road, Springfield
- ❖ Sheehy Ford of Springfield, 6727 Loisdale Road, Springfield
- ❖ Sheehy Subaru of Springfield, 6571 Backlick Road, Springfield
- ❖ Patriot Harley-Davidson, 9739 Fairfax Boulevard, Fairfax

NOV. 25-26

Fairfax Ballet Company's

Nutcracker. Nov. 25, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Nov. 26, 2 p.m. at W.T. Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Fairfax Ballet Senior company member Ana Victoria Smith of Clifton, dances the role of Clara. Company members, along with students from the Russell School of Ballet and professional guest artists. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-665-9427.

FRIDAY/DEC. 1

Guitarist Peter Griggs Holiday

Concert. 7 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Show is called "Music For An Old English Christmas." Visit www.gracepresby.org or call 703-451-2900.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Christmas Traditions Concert.

9:30-11 a.m. at St. Stephens United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The St. Stephen's United Methodist Women Maranatha Singers will present a morning of holiday music. Free. Call 703-250-5013.

Holiday Sing-A-Long Luncheon.

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. \$20. Call 703-922-6438 or email Springwmconn@yahoo.com.

Festival of Lights and Carols. 2-7 p.m. at 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Children ages 12 and under can enjoy lunch with Santa at Sherwood Community Center. Lunch seatings will be offered at 11:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m., must pre-register. Listen to live holiday music and enjoy s'mores and hot cider at Old Town Square from 2-7 p.m. Enjoy caroling and lighting of the Christmas Tree at Old Town Square at 6 p.m. Visit fairfaxva.gov/about-us/special-events/festival-of-lights-and-carols.

Christmas in Brass. 3 p.m. at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield. Featuring the Barclay Brass Quintet. This ensemble will present a program of secular and sacred seasonal music that will appeal to a broad audience of all ages. Visit kirkwoodpres.com, or call 703-451-5320.

Historic Clifton Holiday Homes Tour . 4-7 p.m. at Clifton Baptist Church, 7152 Main St., Clifton. \$25 adult; \$5 child; credit cards are more. Visit clifton-va.com.

DEC. 2-3

Arts and Crafts Show. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sunday at the Audrey Moore RECenter, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale. Call 703-321-7081.

SUNDAY/DEC. 3

"Hansel and Gretel" Opera. 2 and 5 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Mason Opera will present Engelbert Humperdinck's take on the Brothers Grimm fairytale "Hansel and Gretel." Tickets: \$12, \$8, \$5. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

Home for the Holidays Concert. 4-6 p.m. at Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. Main Street Community Band plays a mix of seasonal favorites. Visit www.fairfaxband.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 4

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Fun with Mr. Skip. Free. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Smoke free, all proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

Flutist in Concert. 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrate the Sounds of the Season with the Columbia Flute Choir in the Christmas Concert. Free. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

GIFT GUIDE

Trends in Gift Giving

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Consider eco-friendly gifts that are constructed from recycled materials.

"Items made from reclaimed materials are a great way to give a unique gift," said Courtney Thomas of the Picket Fence in Burke. "Reclaimed wood is especially popular."

Solemate Socks are another colorful option. They are made by repurposing recycled cotton yarn that is then spun into vibrant, patterned socks. Thomas also recommends decorative items made from reclaimed wood. "We have some beautiful churches made from wood salvaged from barns in Alabama," she said.

Ornaments made from reclaimed paper are another environmentally conscious option. "Not only are these beautiful decorations, but they help provide jobs for people in third-world countries," said Thomas.

Kevin Sweitzer of Thos. Moser, Handmade American Furniture recommends items made from sustainable North American hardwoods, "Namely cherry from the Allegheny Plateau in Pennsylvania and walnut from the riverbanks of Missouri."

Examples include stacks of food-safe wooden bowls, which are "are sustainable and reusable, [make] a perfect hostess gift ... and a great conversation piece."

GIFTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the lives of others are

also on trend this year.

One example is Starling Project candles. Proceeds from the sales of these scented candles are donated to UNICEF to help provide solar energy to under-resourced countries.

"Products that support a cause are also a great way to both give a meaningful gift and help those in need," said Thomas. "We have pottery ornaments that are made in Alabama by women escaping domestic violence."

Vintage-inspired gifts are trendy this season, says Susan Nelson from Home on Cameron in Alexandria. "Wooden toys, [for example] appeal to all ages, as do vintage items such as magnifying glasses," she said. "Gifts that are unique and offer a unique experi-

ence are popular right now."

Handmade gifts are another consideration, adds Todd Martz, also from Home on Cameron. "Visitors ... love the handmade items for gifts, such as felt flowers from Nepal, hand painted vases, and the custom pillows [which come] in a variety of colors and patterns."

GIVING PRACTICAL GIFTS that the recipient will actually use can minimize the need for gift returns. Merchants who are on the

receiving end of after-season holiday gift returns suggest customers think about what it will be like for the recipient to actually own the gift, rather than the moment of receiving the gift.

One example, says Madeline Fairbanks of Country Casual Teak, "are accessories for those who entertain regularly such as ... wine stopper or wine caddy," she said. "Purchasers like the thoughtfulness of the items and the durability of the products because they last for many years."



Eco-friendly gift ideas include decorative items such as these churches which are wood salvaged from, says Courtney Thomas of the Picket Fence in Burke.



Ornaments made from recycled paper, such as these from The Picket Fence in Burke, make eco-friendly holiday gifts.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOME ON CAMERON

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Inside ECHO, the food on Scouts for Food Drive day are piling up.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

All morning, the trucks pulled up to the loading area and scouts came out and hauled the food inside.

Scouting For Food in Springfield

Annual drive nets 25,842 pounds of food for ECHO clients.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The trucks kept pulling up Saturday morning, Nov. 11 and the scouts were unloading as fast as they could, filling the bins at Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO) in Springfield. The donuts arrived, and there was finally a way to replenish the scouts' energy.

"Fifty seven pounds, we have a winner," said one of the parents, after weighing his bag at the door. The scales were manned by Gabriel Cooper, 13, and Zahai Khia, 17, both of troop 1853 who were participating in the event. The typical bag weighed 36 pounds so the 57 pounder was a big one. Empty bags were hung on doors of houses throughout Springfield earlier in November and Saturday, Nov. 11 was the pick up day.

"We really depend on this food drive," said Lucinda Marvin, the co-chair of the food room at ECHO. She's a volunteer, as are the rest of the staff there. "People just love ECHO and they know that we are 100 percent volunteer," she added.

According to their pamphlet, "through donations, ECHO is able to assist people who suffer the effects of long-term poverty as well as people who are experiencing an emergency need."

Steve Richardson is a scout leader and volunteer at ECHO and noted that they usually take in 22-25,000 pounds of food during this event every year. Though there were a lot of natural disasters rocking the country in the last few months where the contributions were going – i.e. the fires in California, the hurricane that hit Houston or the next hurricane devastating Puerto Rico – people in this area of Fairfax County are



Scout leader Steve Richardson with a bag left at doorways for the drive.



Munching a donut between bag weigh-ins was a good use of time management for Gabriel Cooper, 13, and Zahai Khia, 17.



To Get Involved

Contact ECHO
7205 Old Keene Mill Drive, Springfield
703-569-7972
www.echo-inc.org

still contributing. "We haven't noticed that the donations are down," Richardson said.

SCOUTING FOR FOOD is an annual food collection orchestrated by Scouts from National Capital Area Council. Local Scouts distribute plastic bags to homes across the region and return to pick up the bags, now filled with food, one week later. Collected food is distributed to needy families throughout the communities of the Council, according to the BSA National Capital Area Council.

By leaving empty bags at the door, there are good results from year to year, said Aaron Chusid, of the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. "Because it's our Scouts doing the good turn, people reliably come out to support the effort," Chusid said in an email. The National Capital Area Council covers 17 counties and the District of Columbia, so Chusid expects it will be over a million pounds of food collected, which will be a plus to local food pantries.

"We also distribute lists of their most-requested items to help alleviate potential shortages," Chusid added.

The Scouting for Food day was a success at ECHO this year. At the end of the weekend, they had collected 25,842 pounds of food, which was 2,500 more than the same collection last year.

The shelves were getting stocked Inside ECHO, right off Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield.

11

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Announcements

NEWS

Teaming Up To Benefit Toys For Tots

For the past 13 years Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department has been a partner with the United States Marines Toys for Tots Program. This year, G&C Express Tire and Auto Service at 14008 Willard Road in Chantilly will serve as a hub for businesses that want to help collect toys. G&C will also serve as a toy drop off site. Representatives of businesses that want to be a collection site may stop by G&C for a box and poster. The fire stations in Fairfax County will start collecting Toys for Tots on Friday, Nov. 24.

U.S. Marines and Battalion Chief Willie Bailey flank G&C owners Gregg and Christina Caldwell.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

DEADLINE NOV. 19

Future Lorton Community Center.

The project is currently entering the initial design stage and is targeted for completion by early 2022. Fairfax County is seeking public input to ensure that this new facility is designed to meet the needs and interests of the communities they serve. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov for more.

THURSDAY/NOV. 30

Rolling Road Widening Project Public Information Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Rolling Valley Elementary School located at 6703 Barnack Drive, Springfield. Visit VirginiaDOT.org for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Future Quest. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at GMU's Johnson Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. College and career conference for area middle and high school students with disabilities, as well as their parents, teachers and other professionals. Featuring more than 40 workshops and exhibits related to successful life after high school. Free. There is free parking in Lot K, or in the Mason Pond Parking Garage for \$8. Visit www.futurequestgmu.org to register or email futurequestnova@gmail.com.

Coffee with Del. David Bulova. 9-11 a.m. at Main Street Bagel, 10268 Main St., City of Fairfax. Del.David Bulova (D-37) will continue a tradition started in 2006 by holding informal office hours, constituents are invited to talk about issues of interest and to ask questions about legislation affecting the community. Visit www.davidbulova.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-

Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50 and older who no longer drive. **Volunteer drivers** are needed for trips (Monday-Friday) to medical appointments and companion

shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. **Office workers** are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday-Friday) to match drivers and those who need rides. Call 703-323-4788.

Positive Parenting Strategies Course.

At PHILLIPS, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS' counselors. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Strykowski at 703-658-9054.

Thermal Camera Loan Program.

Learn where the energy is leaking out of the home with a special attachment for the iPhone or Android. Visit fairfaxcounty.gov/energy or call 703-324-5955.

Master Gardener Training.

The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting

12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. fairfaxrotary.org.

NARFE Monthly Meeting

Every Second Tuesday 11:30 a.m. American Legion Post 177 located at 3939 Oak Street, Fairfax. NARFE Fairfax 737 monthly luncheon meeting. Enjoy lunch accompanied by a special program. Lunch at noon. Cost: \$11 Speaker/Program-12:45PM. rrharney2@cox.net 703-501-0020

Civil War Research scholarship to a

public or private high school senior who resides in Fairfax, Fairfax City, Prince William County, Manassas City, or Manassas Park from the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable in Centreville, Va. Visit bullruncwrt.org.

Fairfax-based non-profit

Britepaths offers free Financial Education Classes Sessions at various locations in the Fairfax County area to low- and middle-income adults who reside throughout Northern Virginia. The offerings are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. <https://britepaths.org/news/get-financially-fit-new-year>

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GIVE LOCALLY

FROM PAGE 6

- 0390, info@pathwayhomes.org, www.pathwayhomes.org, www.pathwayhomes.org/support-pathway/.
- ❖ **Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services**, 8305-17B Richmond Highway, PO Box 15096, Alexandria, VA, 22309. 703-768-9419, www.goodhousing.org/. The mission of Good Shepherd Housing (GSH) is to reduce homelessness, increase community support, and promote self-sufficiency. GSH housing manages more than 70 housing units.
 - ❖ **Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area** operates clubs in two of the neediest areas of the county, Culmore and Mount Vernon/ Route 1 corridor, focusing on character and academic success. www.bgcgw.org/fairfax.
 - ❖ **Christian Relief Services**, 8301 Richmond Highway, Suite 900, Alexandria, VA 22309, 703-317-9086, 703-317-9690, christianrelief.org/
 - ❖ **Friends of Guest House Northern Virginia** offers structure, supervision, support and assistance to female ex-offenders who want to improve their lives and break the cycle of incarceration. Friends of Guest House offers the only program for women of its kind in Northern Virginia. One East Luray Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301-2025, 703-549-8072, info@friendsofguesthouse.org, friendsofguesthouse.org/
 - ❖ **Wright to Read** 703-299-9854, www.wrighttoread.org. Provides volunteer-based, one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to City of Alexandria public elementary school children in need. Funds are needed to provide field trips and enrichment activities, books and other resources. For more information about Wright to Read and becoming a "Tutor/Mentor" see website.
 - ❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia** transforms the lives of lower-income families in need by providing affordable homeownership opportunities in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. Learn more at www.habitatnova.org.
 - ❖ **Alice's Kids** (@alicewillhelp) aliceskids.org P.O. Box 60, Mount Vernon, VA 22121 When a child is raised in poverty they suffer both publicly and privately. When there is no food in the refrigerator, no electricity nor heat, these are hardships that they can keep hidden from their peers. But, when that same child can't afford to pay for the band field trip, a pair of glasses, a chorus outfit or a new pair of shoes, these are indignities that are evident to their classmates. Alice's Kids pays for these relatively inexpensive items in the hopes of preserving the dignity of the child. Alice's Kids helps children from all over the Mount Vernon area through small acts of kindness.
 - ❖ **The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia** has launched its Permanent Fund campaign, a community endowment which is a forever source to provide critical support for those in need in the Northern Virginia region; Consider leaving a legacy through a current or planned gift to the Permanent Fund at the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia. www.cfnova.org/permanentfund.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Police-Public forum. 7-9 p.m. Heritage Human Resources Center, 7611 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The forums will provide information on the Panel as well as the Independent Police Auditor, the scope of their responsibilities, how complaints can be submitted, and how complaints will be investigated and processed. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/ for more.

Community Meeting. 7:30 at Ravensworth Baptist Church, 5100 Ravensworth Road, Annandale. Community meeting focused on the Ravensworth Road intersection of Braddock Road. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/braddockroadmmstudy/.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

Healthy You Summit. 4-6 p.m. at the West Springfield Government Center, Community Room, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield. Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. to discuss investing in your health and well-being. Visit www.fcacdst.org/health-care-summit for more.

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Not About Me, Mostly



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, as in a few weeks ago, Mindy, who none of you regular readers know, died of lung cancer. She was my decade's long best friend's wife. And she was my friend too, going back almost 40 years. Married to my oldest friend (starting in 10th grade), Cary, for over 35 years, Mindy was originally classified as stage I five years ago. Cary didn't tell me for a year or so after because he didn't want to burden me with another piece of bad news, and Mindy being diagnosed with lung cancer would most definitely have been bad news. She had a lobectomy (part of the lung is surgically removed), back then and that's pretty much all I know about the beginning stages. After the surgery however, she was told she was cancer free.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend Mindy's funeral. I had my own post-scan appointment on the Monday morning following the Sunday funeral and night-time shiva and the logistics of traveling back and forth from Washington, D.C., to Boston and back were unworkable. Two weeks later, last weekend in fact, I flew up to Boston and spent four days with Cary, just him and me in the house – without Mindy, of course. We shared an awful lot about Mindy and life, reminiscing backward and contemplating forward. One afternoon, along with Mindy's first cousin, Julie, Cary and I visited Mindy's grave, about 20 minutes from the house, where I was able to pay my respects and say a few words in private. After standing alongside the grave site for a few minutes, Cary took out his smart phone, bent over toward the ground and played "their" song, sniffling and wiping away tears in the process. A very touching moment. Another afternoon, I sat with Cary at their kitchen table and read through all the condolence cards with Cary explaining all the relationships to Mindy. One night, Cary and I went to dinner with his two sons, Jonathan and Jordon (along with Jon's girlfriend, Coleen and Jordy's wife, Lauren). At dinner, I shared two jokes with the boys that Mindy had told years ago, that to this day, I keep in my repertoire; they had not heard them before. One involved an elephant, another had to do with Jesus Christ becoming a bell ringer. Cary's third - and oldest son, Jeffrey, was not present as he had flown back to California on Tuesday where, after spending three weeks at home with his father and brothers watching his mother struggle to survive, he returned a few days after the funeral.

As for me, I teared up throughout the week-end. Over the years, especially after my parents moved to Florida, I didn't see Cary and Mindy as regularly as I had while my parents were still living in Massachusetts (four times a year, generally). From 1989 on, maybe we visited one another a dozen times in person: high school reunions, bar mitzvahs, a couple of Celtic's games and the odd occasion where the timing/opportunity presented itself. All the while, going on 45 years now, we spoke/speak every couple of weeks, picking up in conversation without ever missing a beat.

What was particularly/uniquely difficult for me – and I don't think it is as difficult as losing one's "soul mate," as Cary described Mindy, just as they were beginning to embark on their final journey together: retirement – was that I too have lung cancer. As such, it was a peculiar position in which I found myself. Not only was I grieving the loss of a close friend: Mindy, way too young; she was younger than me by a couple of years, and the effect it had on my best friend, Cary, I was also witnessing first hand, up close and extremely personally, the ravages and devastating impact of a lung cancer diagnosis, a diagnosis with which I am all too familiar. Of course, I felt bad for Cary losing his beautiful wife. Of course, I felt bad for the boys losing a fabulous, devoted mother. But there was a part of me that felt bad for me. As a cancer survivor, it's easy to pretend that this disease isn't killing you until you attend a funeral/spend time with the family of someone who has succumbed to this terrible disease. Then it hits home, with a vengeance. "Cancer sucks," as so many of us know, but life must go on, as difficult as it sometimes is.

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



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