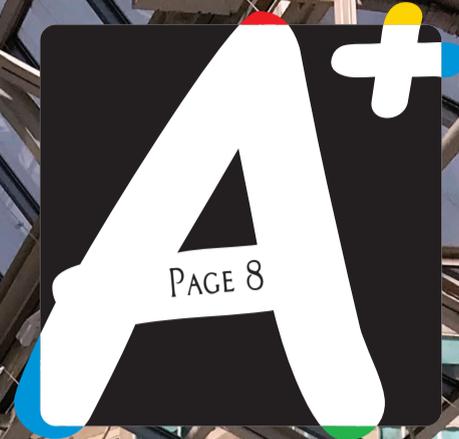


Reston CONNECTION



Holiday Fun on Ice

NEWS, PAGE 3

The pavillion cover allows skaters to stay out of the rain and snow at the ice skating rink at Reston Town Center.

A Year in Review: Change and Collaboration in County, Hunter Mill

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PHOTO BY GRETCHEN KERBACH/THE CONNECTION
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DECEMBER 20-26, 2017

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

COMMENTARY

A Year in Review: Change and Collaboration in County, Hunter Mill

BY SUPERVISOR CATHY HUDGINS
(D-HUNTER MILL)

Change and collaboration have been the themes for 2017 in Fairfax County and the Hunter Mill District.

This year, two of the most important accomplishments of the Board of Supervisors are the establishment of the Police Civilian Review Panel and the Independent Police Auditor. Like many large jurisdictions, the relationship of the police and our citizens is of great importance. The creation of the panel and the auditor aim to build the trust with citizens and the police necessary to keep our communities and residents safe.

Countywide, we welcome the changeover in leadership in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) with the installation of Superintendent Scott Brabrand, and the appointment of new County Executive Bryan Hill who will take the reins in the County in January. Their predecessors initiated changes in how we do business both at the Board levels and in our



Superintendent Scott Brabrand and Huntermill District Supervisor Catherine Hudgins.

programs and services. This collaboration between schools and county continues to evolve with an aim to greater efficiencies and better service delivery to our citizens. Already we have seen the benefits in our work on the FY2019 budget proposal.

One example of the county/schools collaboration is work of the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT). Composed of Board members, agency staff and community advocates, the

SCYPT team has a focus on how we can bring together the resources of the County, FCPS, and community organizations to help our children become successful individuals. This year, SCYPT developed their Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan to expand early children development and learning programs so more children begin their education ready for learning. Investments in pre-K pay off “bigly.”

In the Hunter Mill District, we’re

sprouting like long, planned for spring flowers. New development, residential and commercial, debuted in the Tysons area and in Reston.

❖ The Aperture apartments, BLVD Reston Station and other new buildings opened their doors, bringing new residents and businesses.

❖ Senior residents who want to stay in their community will have new options with the coming of the Hunters Woods at Trails Edge Senior Living Community in Reston.

❖ The Reston Transportation Service District was established this year to provide needed revenue for new roads, improvements to existing roads, intersection improvements and grid of streets to around the transit stations.

❖ In Reston, the community continues to tussle with the proposed zoning amendment to the Reston PRC to raise the density. While a decision is not forthcoming in 2017, it has been exciting to see so many residents becoming engaged in this issue by attending meetings, writing letters, and offering their input.

On the fun side in Hunter Mill:

❖ James Madison High school sports had a banner year as teams won state championships in Girls Swim and Dive, Cross Country, and Softball.

❖ McNair Elementary School Chess Team outmaneuvered their opponents at Virginia Scholastic Chess Championships in both team and individual competitions, coming home with multiple championship trophies.

❖ Vienna Chorale celebrated their 30th anniversary of sharing their beautiful music with the community.

❖ New public art sculptures were unveiled at the Aperture, and at the newly renovated Vienna Community Center, both welcome additions to our artscape. And, Reston Public Art celebrated their 10th anniversary.

❖ The NoVi Trail Network neared completion, providing walkable connections to local amenities such as parks, schools, Tysons and the Town of Vienna.

As you can see, 2017 was very busy! I look forward to being as equally engaged in 2018. A Happy Hunter Mill Holiday to you!



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The rink is kept cool by a chiller system underneath it, so visitors can skate even in mild weather.



Skate rentals are \$6 for everyone.

PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN KERNBACH/THE CONNECTION

Holiday Fun on Ice

BY GRETCHEN KERNBACH
THE CONNECTION

Centrally located in Reston Town Center, you can find couples holding hands while gliding across ice, dads trying to support their child's wobbly first steps in skates, and groups of friends laughing at one another as they slip every fifth step. Ice skating has always been among favorite activities of the winter time.

Open through March, the ice rink will be unlocking their doors at 10 a.m. for their special holiday hours. You can come skate bright and early or enjoy the twinkling lights above when it gets dark out. For more information on specific dates, visit www.restontowncenter.com/directory/reston-town-center-ice-skating-pavilion/



Gina Zeffino of Reston enjoys walking her 10-week-old Australian Sheppard, Elijah, around the town center.



Three generations of ice skaters: (from left) Kathy, Caroline, Scott and Bob Flinn came from Arlington to ice skate.

The pavilion puts on different kinds of events for skaters. "Rock 'n' Skate" occurs Fridays from 8 to 10 p.m., entertaining skaters with a live DJ, games and prizes. "Cartoon Skate" is chance to share the ice with characters like Scooby-Doo and Cat in the Hat, Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ice skating prices include \$10 for adult admission and \$9 for those under 12, over 55 or with military ID. Skate rentals are \$6 for everyone. Bring a group of friends and enjoy the outdoor arena for \$12 per person, including both admission and skate rental.

AND THE HOLIDAY FUN doesn't have to stop at the rink. To sweeten the deal, the Reston Town Center is offering free garage parking through Dec. 25 all day and all night. This allows visitors to come enjoy all of what the town center has to offer.

Ice skating rink at Reston Town Center attracts residents from throughout area.



Scott Flinn of Arlington helps his daughter, Caroline, try and balance on the ice.

Sponsored by The Tasting Room, Scout & Molly's Boutique will be hosting a free wine tasting on Dec. 22 from 7-10 p.m. For those with some last-minute shopping to do the weekend before Christmas, Kids R First will be gift wrapping at the Hyatt from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Dec. 23 and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Dec. 24.

After a session of ice skating, check out Tenor Tim Mckee on Dec. 23 at 12 or 1 p.m. for an outdoor musical performance on the Promenade. Or, perhaps end the day with a horse-drawn carriage ride for \$5. All of the calendar details can be found at restontowncenter.com.

Restaurants like Panera Bread, M&S Grill, Hen Penny and Clyde's are all located a short walk from the pavilion, making a warm lunch or dinner easily attainable after a skate.



The holidays are the perfect time for family bonding.

OPINION

Merry Christmas

Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

The pages of the Connection Newspapers (including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Potomac Almanac and the Centre View) have been full of holiday spirit beginning before Thanksgiving. Group and individual efforts to help the needy, holiday parades, Santa arriving by boat, Santa arriving by horse-drawn carriage, Santa arriving at the Malls, tree lightings, Menorah lightings, stories of giving, secular celebrations, religious celebrations. Shopping locally. Giving locally. Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

EDITORIAL

It is also about embracing the teachings of Jesus: to love thy neighbor as thyself; to help the needy; to feed the hungry and clothe the poor; to care for those who are sick; to invite and welcome strangers; to treat others as you would have them treat you.

Matthew 7:12:

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 25:35-40:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one

of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

SO LET US SHARE the verse relating the birth of Jesus from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is

come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Editor's Note About the Rest of 2017

This is our last regular edition of 2017. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish our annual Children's Issue, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. We have more submissions from local students than ever, and so some children's and teens' artwork and writing will spill over into the first week of the new year.

Our next regular edition will publish Jan. 3-4, 2018, with deadline for content and advertising of Dec. 30 (late ads accepted).

In the meantime you can reach the editors

at editors@connectionnewspapers.com and sales/marketing/advertising at sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

Find digital replica editions of recent papers at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs

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Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

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



The editorial in the Sept. 21, 1897 New York Sun, responding to a letter from 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon who had inquired about whether there was a Santa Claus, has become the most reprinted newspaper editorial, according to the Newseum (newseum.org/2014/12/22/). Virginia's father had told

her that if she read it in the Sun it was certain to be true. The editor wrote, “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.”

Virginians, especially those around the capital city, have long believed in Santa Claus. The “Leg-

endary Santa” has been meeting with boys and girls at Miller & Rhoads – first a department store and now a hotel in Richmond – for more than 75 years. There is ample proof that he is the “real” Santa Claus for he is able with assistance from the Snow Queen and some technology to call every child by name. We go with our grandchildren to see him at his latest location at the Children's Museum of Richmond. Read more about this Virginia tradition in “Legendary Santa's Stories from the Chair” (Children's Museum of Richmond,

2011, www.c-mor.org/santa/book). On page six is a photograph of young Jane Durham (now Plum) and her brother visiting Santa many years ago.

Throughout the capitol there is a quickened pace of activity during the holiday season in anticipation of the General Assembly convening on Jan. 10. There are wish lists from all the agencies and special interests. And, yes, Commonwealth, if there is a Santa Claus here is my wish list for the

SEE PLUM, PAGE 6

Reston
CONNECTION

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
reston@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Fallon Forbush
Reporter
fforbush@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Contributing Writer
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Reporter
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Editorial Assistant
reston@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/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

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

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Gingerbread Village. Through Jan. 4, various times at the Hyatt Regency Reston, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. See the annual display in the hotel lobby. Call 703-709-1234 or visit reston.hyatt.com.

All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. Call 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com.

Art Exhibit through Jan. 8 at Artsights, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. "Drag, Disney, Art Insights and Art Outsiders: The Art of Tennessee Loveless," see the new collection by Tennessee Loveless including his retrospective book 10x10x10 and images from his projects. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

THROUGH FEB. 17

Artist Exhibit. Various times at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 11900 Market St. Featuring the work of Paulina Peavy, namesake of "Paulina Peavy: A Message to Paulina," the first exhibition to bring together a selection of Peavy's works across disciplines including works on paper, paintings, films, texts, and numerous mixed media masks. Visit www.restonarts.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Puppet Snow Show. 10 and 11:30

a.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park's Visitor Center, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Puppet master Bob Brown brings this special holiday puppet show to the park. \$5. Call 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

SATURDAY/DEC. 23

Catchin' Toads and Tim McKee in Concert. noon at the Promenade, 11900 Market St., Reston. 45-minute performances presented by Reston Community Center. Call 703-476-4500 or visit restoncommunitycenter.com.

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. 31

New Year's Eve Golf Tournament. 10 a.m. at Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. Call 703-471-5769 visit www.herndongolf.com.

MONDAY/JAN. 1

New Year's Day 5K. 10 a.m. at Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St. music, food, awards, and fun celebration following the race. Presented by Potomac River Running. Call 703-709-6720 or visit restontowncenter.com.

DEADLINE JAN. 5, 2018

2018 Fine Art Photography Competition. Fine Art Photography

of any subject is welcome; there is no required theme for entries. Call 703-956-9560 or visit www.artspaceherndon.com.

SUNDAY/JAN. 7

Book Store Anniversary. 1-4 p.m. at Reston Used Books, 1623 Washington Plaza N. Open house to celebrate 40 years of being in business. Call 703-435-9772.

MONDAY/JAN. 8

Yoga Storytime with Little Twisters. 10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Read a classic children's book, then act it out using yoga moves and poses. Cosponsored by the Friends of Reston Library. Age 3-5 with adult. Call 703-689-2700.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

Baby Lapsit. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Enjoy nursery rhymes and songs while building early literacy skills for the child. Birth-11 months with adult. Call 703-689-2700.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

Yoga at the Library. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Local yoga instructor Madhavi Rao will lead this yoga session. Water provided. Bring a mat. Sponsored by the Friends of the Reston Regional Library. Call 703-689-2700.

MONDAY/JAN. 15

Social Justice Advocate Speech. noon at Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts



Live Music

Catchin' Toads will be in concert with Tim McKee on Saturday, Dec. 23 at noon at the Promenade, 11900 Market St., Reston. 45-minute performances presented by Reston Community Center. Call 703-476-4500 or visit restoncommunitycenter.com for more.

Neck Road, Reston. Tamika D. Mallory keynote address is at noon, followed by a community lunch. \$5 for Reston residents and employees, and \$10 for all others. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

Towne Drive. Read a classic children's book, then act it out using yoga moves and poses. Cosponsored by the Friends of Reston Library. Age 3-5 with adult. Call 703-689-2700.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

Red Cross Blood Drive. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Call 703-689-2700.

THURSDAY/JAN. 25

Dollars and Sense. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Monthly group discussion focuses on business leaders and markets. The discussion will focus on "Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World" by Michael Lewis. Call 703-689-2700.

TUESDAY/JAN. 16

Sam's Book Club. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join former library director Sam Clay as he leads a book discussion. January's title is "God Bless the Child" by Toni Morrison. Call 703-689-2700.

MONDAY/JAN. 18

Yoga Storytime with Little Twisters. 10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman

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Obituary

Kay Anderson Arace, 79, of Sunset Beach, NC passed away, Saturday, December 9, 2017 at the home of her son in Greensboro, NC.

Kay was born in Jamestown, NY June 18, 1938 to the late, Ralph "Biscuit" and "Margit "Peg" Sundeen Anderson. She graduated from Jamestown High School class of 1956 and then attended Syracuse University where she met her husband, Bob.

She and husband Bob, owned Spectrum Lamp & Shade in Reston, VA. Kay enjoyed volunteering at the Reston, VA hospital & the Shallotte, NC Novant Hospital. Kay was also active in a number of other community programs.

Kay is survived by her husband of fifty-nine years, Bob, sons, Michael Arace (Megan), Mark Arace (Angela), Daughter-in-law, Kathleen Arace and nine grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were son Robert and daughter Judith Arace, sisters Jacqueline Anderson Ness, Donna Rae Anderson Swanson and brother, Timothy Anderson.

Services will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to, Seaside UMC, 1300 Seaside Rd, SW, Sunset Beach, NC 28468, or the Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., 17th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601

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OPINION

Plum

FROM PAGE 4

legislative session, essentially duplicating my list from the last several years.

Virginia should extend health insurance to nearly half its uninsured working poor by expanding Medicaid. Not only would more people have access to preventative care as well as treatment, but Virginians would get more of their federal tax dollars back and a boost to the economy with the health care jobs being created.

While I am wishing, I want the General Assembly to expand background checks for all gun purchases to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and violent people. Just this past week I attended a vigil on the fifth anniversary of the massacre of 20 children

and 6 adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School and yet commonsense gun safety laws have not been enacted.

I also want the legislature to approve my bill to establish an independent redistricting commission that will fairly and objectively draw legislative boundaries. On my wish list we would outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. And while we are at it, we need to get the state back to the position of being an equal partner in funding public schools.

None of these goals will be reached by simply wishing for them. Hard work, determination, and public pressure can make them reality. Just like in Santa's workshop, there needs to be a lot of work done behind the scenes. Could this be the year I get what I want?

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Call 703-941-7000 or visit www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Mount Pleasant Baptist Church of Herndon invites the community to join them for praise and worship followed by a stirring message from the Word of God on Sundays starting at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. (with Sunday school at 7:30 and 9:30 a.m.). Visit www.mtpleasantbaptist.org or call 703-793-1196.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. Visit ShalomDC.org.

Hope Fellowship Church will temporarily be meeting at Hyatt Place, 21481 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling. Sunday worship services are Sundays at 9:30 and 10:45 a.m., a Bible Study is on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. and a weekly prayer conference call is Thursdays at 9 p.m. The public is invited to join a Bible believing, multi-ethnic/multi-cultural congregation, with Bible-based sermons and uplifting music. Call 703-599-3527 or visit www.hopefellowshipchurchloudoun.org.

Epiphany United Methodist Preschool, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, is now enrolling 3- to 4-year-old students. Call 703-938-2391 or visit www.epiphanypreschool.com.

Washington Plaza Baptist

Church will hold Adult Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. Sundays at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church needs knitters the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 7 p.m., at 432 Van Buren St., Herndon. The church's Prayer Shawl Ministry is offering free knitting instruction while providing shawls, blankets and other knitted items for people in need. No cost and yarn can be provided. Email shawl@saint-timothys.org or visit the Pastoral Care page at www.saint-timothys.org.

Nondenominational Christian businessmen meet for prayer, Biblical discussion and fellowship 7 p.m. Fridays at Anita's, 1051 Elden St., Herndon and noon Thursdays at 555 Grove St., Suite 200, Herndon. Call 703-795-1257.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. during the summer. Nursery and childcare are provided starting at 8 a.m. until the end of the service. Call 703-437-5500 or visit www.trinityherndon.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7:30-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12 or \$6 for students, seniors and unemployed. Call 202-986-2257 or visit www.meditation-dc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston, holds Sunday services at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m. during the summer. Nursery, Sunday school and adult education available. Call 703-437-6530 or visit www.stannes-reston.org.

BULLETIN

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

ORNAMENT FUNDRAISER

White House Ornaments Sale. Through Dec. 15, 2017 White House Ornaments available for purchase from Assistance League of Northern Virginia for \$22 per ornament. Proceeds benefit the nonprofit's children's programs. Local delivery can be arranged. Visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org for more.

HOLIDAY SOBER-RIDE

Free Sober Rides. The annual Holiday SoberRider program will operate 8 p.m.-4 a.m. each night from Friday, Dec. 15, 2017-Monday, Jan. 1, 2018. Area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter the code in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's weekly Holiday SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 2 p.m. on Dec. 15, Dec. 23 and Dec. 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 29

Blood Donations Needed. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Extended Stay America, 12190 Sunset Hills Road, Reston. The American Red Cross urges eligible donors to give more life by giving blood this December. In December, donations decline but the needs of patients remain steady. During the holiday season, set aside an hour to give the most important gift – give blood and give more life. All those who come to give blood or platelets Dec. 21, 2017, through Jan. 7, 2018, will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last. Make an appointment to give blood by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

TUESDAY/DEC. 26

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

ONGOING

Herndon High School Library needs volunteers. Training available to help with re-shelving books, pulling books for teacher use, helping to check passes, or other special projects. To learn more, email hhs_library@fcps.edu.

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.

Sunrise at Reston Town Center offers a monthly Caregiver Support Group on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8 p.m. Monthly support group offers a safe place for family caregivers, to meet and develop a mutual support system and to exchange practical information and possible solutions. Learn about resources available in the community and how to manage caregiver related stress. Call 703-956-8930 or email Reston.ED@sunriseseniorliving.com to RSVP.

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. Call Natalie McCall nmccall@onelifefitness.com 703-904-7600 for more.

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.

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"Suit Yourself, Biscuit"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Talk about a superfluous statement. I was asleep in bed and awoke to find one of our five cats, Biscuit, the oldest at 11+, lying sphinx-like on the front right of our bed. Though it was dark, I could see in his yellow eyes that he was awake.

Wanting to feel a cat against my body, I said, "Biscuit, come here. Come lie against my chest." No response so I repeated the request. This time with a bit more conviction: "Biscuit, come here. I want to feel you next to me." Again, no response. In fact, no reaction whatsoever. So I muttered, without thinking even: "OKAY, Biscuit, suit yourself."

And then I laughed. Of course he's going to suit himself. That's what cats do. I should be grateful he didn't jump off the bed. After all, he was minding his own business.

And that business is the entire philosophy of the feline species captured in two words. If any of you has ever owned a cat and been sensitive to and appreciative of their differences with the canine population, cats don't really come when you call them. Nor do they respond to a million other things you ask of them. If you understand and embrace that behavior, you'll likely begin to see this non-responsiveness as part of their charm.

However, when they do come when you call them, or when they climb uninvited onto your chest while lying in bed or snuggle with you on the couch; oh, how special you feel. And if you don't feel put upon or tolerated and can instead savor the uniqueness of their knead (and do everything you can to encourage its repetition), then you can indeed find pleasure and purpose in that moment, rare though it may be – or maybe not.

Accepting the parameters of the relationship with your cat, and managing your expectations, will go a long way toward understanding what your cat is able to give you. And what cats can give you is companionship and love – on their terms of course. The mere fact that Biscuit is lying on the bed should be enough to make me happy. Expecting that he would rise due to my beck and call, at night, especially while he's cat-napping is unreasonable on my part. Biscuit is not being difficult in the least. He is simply adhering to a non-responsive-type behavior that generations of cats – and generations of cat owners, should be accustomed to, not questioned or even curious about.

As an extraordinarily experienced cat owner (almost 40 years), I should have known better. Yet I couldn't resist the temptation/control the urge to give Biscuit (a cat) the chance to change the course of presumptive cat history and come to me when I asked. The problem is, once in a blue moon – or was that a red moon (it certainly appeared to be above the fold on the front page of The Washington Post the other day), cats will break with historical convention and respond/react/reply in kind with both word and deed. They'll come, they'll snuggle, they'll talk, they'll nuzzle, they might even lick. In fact, they'll do everything they can to endear themselves to you.

But it doesn't happen often or rather it doesn't happen consistently. Yet it remains the goal of every committed (or rather should be) cat owner to make every attempt to induce their cats to succumb to their cat-seducing charms. Like right now, Twinkle, our white, five-and-half-years-old domestic medium hair, is doing everything she can to get my attention. She's walking back and forth across my note pad (as I'm trying to write; I'm busy), she's rubbing her head against my face and using the top of my pen as some sort of head scratcher, she's lying on her left side with as many as four paws outstretched across my left arm as I use it to block her advance and she's talking non-stop.

She's being such a pain, but you have to love them. If you can't appreciate their untimely intrusions and instead expect some kind of predictable dog-like obedience, you need more than "The Cat Whisperer," you need "The Cat Screamer," because it's NOT HAPPENING.

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

Finding Peace and Joy

Relieving stress and finding meaning in the holiday season.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

When artist Kathryn Coneway is feeling overwhelmed by the stress of the holiday season, she heads outside to find peace and calm in nature.

"I get easily overwhelmed by the crowded parking lots and busy stores," she said. "When I'm feeling overwhelmed, I'll go to Huntley Meadows Park and walk around. The beauty of nature restores me. You're with other people when you're there, but there's still solitude."

From those who are dashing to finish holiday shopping and those who are financially strapped to those grieving a loss or dreading dealing with strained familial relationships, the stretch of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is often hectic and emotionally charged. Recharging and infusing the holidays with joy and peace might mean redefining the holiday season.

"Research shows increased happiness after thinking of three good things that happened to you today and what caused them," said Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. "Also, people report improved mood from doing five kind acts in a day, expressing gratitude, pursuing important goals, and playing sports."

An evening of music and quiet creativity is one method that Elizabeth Rees, associate rector

at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria uses to recharge during the holiday season. The event called "Healing Arts" is held at the Center for Spiritual Deepening at St. Aidan's. "Sometimes for me, meditative art helps me to get into a different space," she said. "And with instrumental cello and guitar music in the background, it [is] beautiful."

Visual imagery is another technique Rees employs. "I went to a... prayer-yoga-dance gathering this week, and [the instructor] had us physically pretend to pick up things that we want to let go of or that are weighing us down to place on an imaginary fire," she said. "I loved the imagery: my burdens and distractions going up in smoke along with my prayers rising to God to make space in me for something new."

Coneway uses the season's natural surrounding to inspire her art, which is another way in which she finds joy and relaxation. "The gift of this time of day is the display of light and colors of early morning and evening," she said. "I encourage families to gather around the table and [create] art together. Whether its parents addressing Christmas cards while children are drawing or making a collage out of wrapping paper or tissue paper, I encourage families to work on something together."

Serving others and expressing gratitude are research-driven techniques for finding happiness says Dr. Lois T. Stover, Ed.D., dean, School of Education and Human Services at Marymount University.

"Make holiday cards and send them out. It's fun to drop a word of kindness anonymously to someone in the neighborhood and then tell that person to pass along the idea, leaving words of kindness or gratitude themselves for someone else," she said. "Create an 'I am

thankful for ...' wall and cover it with sticky notes that complete the sentence as new thoughts come to mind each time you pass by."

There's plenty of holiday joy that comes without a price tag, suggests Stover. "Drive through various neighborhoods just after dark and exclaim 'Oooh - aah' over homes or other buildings that have particularly fun



Artist Kathryn Coneway and her family spend time in Huntley Meadows Park when they're feeling overwhelmed by the holiday rush.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHRYN CONEWAY



Richard Sylvain, Pat Keithly and Eileen Myers attended a "Healing Arts" event at the Center for Spiritual Deepening at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. Such activities can bring peace and joy during a hectic holiday season.

"Moments of quiet and rest and being able to be present in the moment help me to get through the frenzy."

— Elizabeth Rees, Associate Rector, Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church

or beautiful displays of lights," said Stover. "Listen to holiday music in a variety of genres and make play lists of favorites. Sing along loudly. It's hard to feel down while belting out anything from 'Frosty the Snowman' to 'Joy to the World.'"

For those looking to maintain the religious meaning of the season, Rees suggests daily devotions sent electronically. "I've found

some wonderful daily prayers that arrive each day by email. Just a minute or two of focus on what is deep and joyful and holy help center me for the day," she said. "For me, Ignatian prayer has been speaking to me lately, imagining myself into the stories of scripture. Moments of quiet and rest and being able to be present in the moment help me to get through the frenzy."

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