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And they're off, out of the parking lot at Fort Hunt Park.



Supervisor Dan Storck addresses the cyclists before leaving the parking lot.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon By Bike Fosters Exploring

Two-wheelers star in third annual Tour de Mount Vernon.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Even with the temperatures hovering around freezing, bicyclists came out for the third annual Tour de Mount Vernon ride, exploring the district's trails and developing camaraderie that brings together the community.

"We look for ways to bring people together," said Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) who organized the ride around his district "to show off Mount Vernon," he added.

The riders gathered in Fort Hunt Park on Saturday morning, Nov. 17, bundled in layers with a variety of head coverings, and set their sites for the trail. This ride was

originally scheduled a few weeks earlier but it was rained out. There were two routes mapped out, fitting the needs for the various levels of riders, both starting off on the Mount Vernon Bike Path along the Potomac River. Officers from the Mount Vernon police station helped out, as well as the staff from Storck's office, members of the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bi-

cycling (FABB), area businesses, and volunteers.

Jim York was in from Mason Neck in the southern part of the Mount Vernon District. He was riding "to get outside and enjoy the community," he said. York's neighbor, Chris Hamilton, had another reason. "It's healthy," he said.

Jorge Torrico was a dedicated cyclist from Burke that rides a Brompton folding bike from England. He believes in "functional riding," that is not just for leisure, like riding to the store or other destinations that would normally require a car. Health, pollution and congestion on the roads are reasons he rides, and loves the versatility the folding bike provides.

"I use it every day to commute from Burke to DC," he said.

Dave Evans is a friend of Storck's that owns the La Prima catering business, and supplied the food the riders ate at the end of the ride. He's a Mount Vernon resident and has been involved in the Tour de Mount Vernon from the very beginning. "I ride my bike through this park at least once a week," he said.

After registration and tweaking the air pressure in the tires, riders gathered in the parking lot to start their quest. Storck manned the microphone, highlighting the park's history and spots along the



Jorge Torrico was a dedicated cyclist from Burke that rides a Brompton folding bike from England.

route to look out for, including wet leaves on the Mount Vernon trail that could cause a bike tire to slide. "At Dyke Marsh, you'll see a boat out on the river rebuilding the dike," he said.

Captain Matt Owens, the police commander at the Mount Vernon District Station, addressed the riders: "Follow the rules of the road out there."

Camela Speer, a member of Storck's staff, helped pull it all together. "It's a lot of logistics," she said. They had been planning the event since June, she said.



Supervisor Dan Storck likes the camaraderie and community at the third annual Tour de Mount Vernon.



Asim Chaudry puts the final touches on his bike before the ride.

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'Honoring Our Fallen Hero'

BY JIM O'FARRELL

NAVY VETERAN AND TRAVIS MANION
FOUNDATION AMBASSADOR

At the Operation Legacy Veterans Day of Service at West Potomac High School, the following speech honored the memory of Command Sergeant Major James Blankenbecler.

Next in this Veterans Day ceremony we honor our fallen hero. That's right he's our fallen hero. Have any of you ever passed through the entrance to the football stadium for a Friday night football game, a PE class, a cross country practice and glanced to your left to see a marble plaque on the ground with a small American Flag in front at the base of an adolescent oak tree? Ever wondered why the tree was planted and the plaque placed with the words "The Tree is Dedicated in Memory of CSM James D. Blankenbecler for his Dedication and His Sacrifice in Operation Iraqi Freedom" and the words "Always with Honor?"

Several weeks ago, Ms. Statz, Steve Larsen and I were passing by this oak tree when I noticed the plaque I had never noticed before. We talked about it and all three sort of wondered, "Who was this guy?"

Within a day or two I was Googling the name and trying to find answers. I found a remembrance website where people had left messages after the CSM was killed.

One of them spoke of this person's character — even in high school:

"I photographed and knew James at Groveton High School and while most of the other athletes had big heads, James was always kind to me, he hung out with me at times, and always took an interest in my photos. I thought he was really cool for hanging out with a nerd (so I was called). I am deeply saddened by this loss; my sympathies go out to his family." Signed: Little Ernie of New York City

Interestingly, just below Little Ernie's remembrance of Jim were the words his wife Linnie had written: "My beautiful husband, I miss you so much. On your wedding ring were the words inscribed 'Always with Honor.' I loved being married to you and will honor your memory for as long as I live."

I could've left it at that for today's ceremony, but I just had to learn more about this star football quarterback from this very high school. Thanks to the Internet I tracked down two of Jim's Army colleagues. One a fellow Command Sergeant Major now retired and living in Texas, another a retired Colonel who was Jim's Commanding Officer in Iraq. Now retired and living in Tampa, Florida.

After a couple of messages on LinkedIn they responded and the CSM introduced me via email to Col. Rick Starkey — this was Jim Blankenbecler's Commanding Officer in Iraq. We spoke on the phone and he told me stories of Jim and what he meant to Rick. I asked if Rick would write a letter to you. And he agreed.

Now, I'd like to read the letter from Col Starkey to you, the students and faculty of West Potomac High School and the veterans gathered here today. Col Starkey's Mission as he said to me: to hopefully help you see the adolescent oak tree next to the football field in a new light.

Here we go ...

Letter from Rick Starkey, U.S. Army, Colonel (Retired), and Battalion Commander of 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, with CSM Jim Blankenbecler serving as the Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I am particularly honored today to share with you,



The adolescent oak tree at West Potomac High School with a memorial at its base to Command Sergeant Major James Blankenbecler.

especially on Veteran's Day, the great legacy of CSM Jim Blankenbecler — a local hero. I wish I could be with you today, but I was unable to make the trip. Before I tell you about CSM Blankenbecler, I'd like to thank the Travis Manion Foundation and all of the volunteers for coordinating this event and for giving me the opportunity to share Jim's story. I'd also like to thank all of the Veteran's that are here today, as well as First Responders, and the families that support them.

"I'd like to offer my special heartfelt thanks and gratitude to those that have lost loved ones while in service to our great nation or those that have suffered life altering injuries. You are heroes to all of us and I salute your selflessness and patriotism. You, and those like you, represent the greatness of our country — and the epitome of living by a creed ... a creed that follows the motto "If Not Me, Then Who?" and a moral courage that sets you apart from others. The sacrifices of our military and their families stand as a tremendous testimony, and Veteran's Day is a perfect day for all citizens to show our gratitude.

"As I wondered what I could tell you about CSM Jim Blankenbecler, my biggest wish is that after today's event, you will think of him as more than a name on a plaque under the Oak Tree by the football field — and that you'll in some way feel more connected to the special man he was. I'll begin by saying he grew up here, he's one of your local heroes, and graduated from Groveton High School in 1982 — while serving as the team's star quarterback. For the history buffs, in 1985 Groveton merged with Fort Hunt to become West Potomac High School — so Jim is one of your own as an alumn of West Potomac High. Those early leadership traits displayed on the football field and among his classmates were evident in Jim, and he was a thoughtful and considerate person that always put others first — and he always treated others with dignity and respect.

"Jim was a talent and could have done well in any profession, including receiving a football scholarship, but he found his calling as a Soldier. He was great

SEE HONORING OUR, PAGE 17



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COMING SOON

Mt. Vernon **Low \$800S**
8608 Woodland Heights Ct.
Beautiful turn key home: 4BR, 3.5 bath center hall colonial in sought after Mt. Vernon neighborhood of Woodland Heights. 4,000 sq. ft. Stunning Sun Room addition looks out over beautifully landscaped and terraced backyard, complete w/ in-ground irrigation system. Large and updated kitchen w/ center isle, granite counters and ceramic tile. Gorgeous hardwood floors, 6 panel doors, double plane windows. Large Owner's suite w/vaulted ceiling and walk-in closets w/ separate soaking tub and shower. Finished basement offers a Rec Rm w/ bar, 3rd full bath and ample storage. GREAT LOCATION: 20 mins to Ft. Belvoir & 15 to Old Town and easy access to GW Pkwy.



Alex/Stratford **\$574,900**
2601 Culpeper Road
Price just reduced on this — Lovely 4 bedroom, 3 bath home with carport in popular Stratford on the Potomac. Situated in sought after Stratford Elementary school district. Well maintained home. Replacement windows. Freshly painted interior with refinished hardwood floors. Beautiful landscaping. Updated baths. Family room with gas fireplace. You'll love it!!



Stafford/Aqua Villa **\$264,900**
11 Shady Lane
Beautiful 3BR, 3BA Cape Cod, bursting with charm. This property contains two lots (for total .67 acres), with winter views of Aquia Creek. 2nd Lot may potentially be buildable (grandfathered). Expansive and open floor plan. Enjoy nature's beauty from the back screened porch or multiple decks. Large shed/hobby room w/electricity (conveys as is). Quiet and serene location. Close to Quantico!



McLean/Fountains at McLean **\$234,900**
1537 Lincoln Way #304
LOCATION!
LOCATION! Beautiful 1BR unit in heart of Tysons near shops/mall/restaurants/metro/495/Toll Rd, commuters dream! Upgraded bathroom & kit w/granite counter-tops. Kit w/ breakfast bar is open to living rm which flows out to spacious private balcony and storage closet. Bedroom w/ walk in closet. Full washer & dryer in unit. A MUST SEE!



UNDER CONTRACT

Ft.Hunt/Collingwood on Potomac **\$729,900**
8313 Cedardale Drive
Beautiful 5BR/3BA home w/carport in sought after Ft. Hunt community with easy access to GW Pkwy and Mt. Vernon Bike Trail just blocks away. Wayneswood Elementary. Home provides lots of space including finished attic as a bonus room. Hardwood floors throughout 4 of the 5 levels. Anderson glass doors off of dining room lead to large deck overlooking lovely fenced back yard w/garden shed. Updated kitchen and baths. Fireplace in living room. Large family room in lower level is bright and cheerful.



UNDER CONTRACT

Alex/Engleside **\$1,300,000**
8734 Lukens Lane
4.128 acres zones R-2 for sale. There are 2 lots: 4/0 acres w/house (Tax Map 1101 01 0043) and .128 acre vacant land (1101 01 0043A). House on Property sold "AS IS" and NO ACCESS given or allowed. Land Value only. Water, sewer, gas, electricity available. This land is adjacent to the houses on Halley Farm Ct. which were built in the 2010-2011 time frame.



COMING SOON

Alex/Mt. Vernon Woods
8102 Martha Washington
Precious 3BR, 1BA Rambler — Perfect Starter Home — Double pane windows and updated bath plus wood burning fireplace— Large deck overlooks the beautifully landscaped, deep, fenced backyard—Perfect for the grill. Roof 2016, A/C Compressor 2017, HWH 2018 — 10 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 17 mins to Old town, Alex.



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OPINION

Give Locally

For tens of thousands of poor children and families in our area, uncertainty and need are distant from the celebrations and plenty that so many of us associate with this holiday period.

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 Public Schools, more than 54,000 students (29 percent) are poor enough to receive subsidized meals.

Many 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 Thanksgiv-

ing 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

List of Nonprofits in Fairfax County

❖ **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 housing programs as well as a Workforce Development Center. Last year, for the holidays, donations of nearly 10,000 toys, books, games, clothing, and other gifts ensured a joy-filled holiday for hundreds of children. 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria VA 22306. www.ucmagency.org Donations of cash/checks and gift cards are also welcome.

❖ **Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services**, 8305-17B Richmond Highway, PO Box 15096, Alexandria, VA, 22039. 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.

❖ **Neighborhood Health**, 6677 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22306. The organization partners with its patients to treat the whole person through medical, behavioral health and dental programs. It has 10 clinics throughout Arlington and Fairfax counties. Participating with all insurance including commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid, 703-535-5568, www.neighborhoodhealthva.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. It helps children from all over the Mount Vernon area through small acts of kindness.

❖ **Mount Vernon At Home**, 703-303-4060, www.mountvernonathome.org. From practical help to social,

wellness, educational and cultural activities, Mount Vernon At Home membership helps connect senior members of our community. Neighbors helping neighbors with volunteer support is the power of Mount Vernon At Home. Mount Vernon At Home is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to meet the needs of its older members. The group fundraises all year to make this possible and count on the generosity of the community.

❖ **Christian Relief Services**, 8301 Richmond Highway, Suite 900, Alexandria, VA 22309, 703-317-9086, 703-317-9690 christianrelief.org/

❖ **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

❖ **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/

❖ **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.

❖ **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. For families in need, often there isn't enough money to spend on

gifts. To register for the Gifts for Kids drive, visit <https://www.cornerstonesva.org/gifts-for-kids-donation-form/>. Personalized wish lists will be distributed within two business days of your submission. Gifts will be collected at Cornerstones' main office, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, VA 20190, during the following times: Thursday, Dec. 6 and Friday, Dec. 7: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 8: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. 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 hundreds of needy families this year. In December, Share's families will be welcomed to a festive party, served a light meal, and Santa will travel all the way from the North Pole to take photographs with the children. Help Share help those in need by fulfilling a wish or donating Walmart, Target, Giant, or Safeway gift cards. Contact ShareWishes@gmail.com for more information. 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. 703-437-0600.

❖ **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. Coming up, holiday bike drive. 703-281-7614, www.cho-va.com

❖ **Our Neighbor's Child** (ONC) volunteers are preparing for delivery of holiday gifts for children from financially struggling families in western Fairfax County – predominantly in Centreville and Chantilly. www.ourneighborschild.org/

❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**. The organization provides the essential building blocks for financial, emotional and physical well-being, serving as leaders and innovators for the Northern Virginia community. Every year, it empowers 35,000 individuals to achieve self-sufficiency. www.nvfs.org Northern Virginia Family Service, 10455 White Granite, Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124. 571-748-2500

❖ **Second Story** — Second Story (formerly Alternative House) provides shelter and services for homeless, runaway or abused teenagers, unaccompanied youth, and young mothers and their children. second-story.org.

❖ **Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna** providing services, personal enrichment, volunteer opportunities for adults 50 and over. Currently serving 3,000-plus mature adults in the region. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org

❖ **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. 703-988-9656.

❖ **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 donations and volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030

SEE WHERE TO GIVE. PAGE 18

Mount Vernon Gazette

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Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE OF BUDGET AND WATER RATE PUBLIC HEARING

December 13, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 13, 2018, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2019, include the following:

1. An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,150 to \$4,260¹.
2. An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$13,420 to \$15,285.
3. An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,260 to \$1,300¹.
4. An increase in the Base Commodity Charge from \$2.94 to \$3.07 per 1,000 gallons of water.
5. An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge for meters larger than a standard 5/8" residential meter¹.
6. An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$45 to \$48.
7. An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge.
8. An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$36 to \$38.

¹Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$183.2 million budget for calendar year 2019¹. Revenues are expected to be \$183.2 million in 2019. Water sales are expected to provide \$158.3 million. Approximately \$24.9 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-\$1,000s-	
	2018	2019
Personal Services and Employee Benefits	\$ 55,934	\$ 57,584
Power and Utilities	10,755	11,102
Chemicals	6,958	7,532
Purchased Water	7,810	7,155
Supplies and Materials	5,261	5,444
Insurance	955	1,075
Fuel	700	728
Postage	603	612
Contractual Services	12,481	12,974
Professional Services	1,001	1,065
Other	2,428	2,505
Sub-Total	104,886	107,776
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(10,248)	(10,380)
Total	\$ 94,638	\$ 97,396

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$42,988,000
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$31,337,000

¹ Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes to the rates can be viewed on our website at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates. A copy of the proposed budget can be found at www.fairfaxwater.org. Those wishing to speak or receive a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017.

Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 12, 2018, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

OPINION

Still No Answers

On Nov. 16, a day before the anniversary of the U.S. Park Police shooting of Bijan Ghaisar, an unarmed, 25-year-old man who died days later from his wounds, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8) issued the following statement:

"One year after the shooting of Bijan Ghaisar, we are no closer to understanding why he had to die. The complete lack of transparency by federal authorities continues to hurt Bijan's loved ones and undermine trust in the community. There is no excuse for taking this long to release the most basic information about a police-involved shooting.

"I will continue to press for details, and to push for legislative solutions to prevent this from happening again, but it should not be this hard to establish basic facts of what occurred here."

The shooting of Bijan Ghaisar by U.S. Park Police occurred on the evening of Nov. 17, 2017, in the Fairfax County portion of Beyer's congressional district.

Last week Beyer joined District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton to introduce legislation requiring all federal officers to wear body cameras and use dashboard cameras in vehicles.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Patently Unethical

To the Editor:

I am a physician, an independent voter, and a resident of Mount Vernon. My main voting issue is climate change from global warming, caused largely by human consumption of fossil fuels.

I voted for Governor Northam because he promised that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline would be fully evaluated, including the environmental impact at each water crossing. He has not honored that promise. Failure to honor campaign promises is typical of politicians, but I had expected Northam to have higher ethical standards.

Now he is disrupting a governmental process by changing citizen members of the state Air Pollution Control Board and the state Water Control Board in the midst of their hearings and deliberations. These members were the very ones that expressed concern over Dominion's Atlantic Coast Pipeline plan. This is patently an unethical political action. I am outraged by this! These board members have spent hours becoming fully informed on these matters, and it is no time to bring in others new to the issues. These board members have seen face to face the passion of Union Hill residents, environmentalists, and people concerned over the consequences of global warming. They have heard scientific facts from lawyers of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Southern Environmental Law Center which debunked inadequate studies by Dominion.

We have enough pipelines to supply current needs and business growth in Virginia. Modern businesses want energy from renewable sources in Virginia, not from cli-



PHOTO BY HELEN WAUTES/THE GAZETTE

Signs bear witness to the one-year anniversary of the shooting of Bijan Ghaisar at Alexandria Avenue and Fort Hunt Road.

mate-damaging fossil fuels. We know that this is about profit for Dominion, and that rate payers will pay for it.

One of the basic principles in medicine is, first do no harm. Governor Northam, as a pediatrician, knows this. But building more fossil fuel infrastructure does much harm, now and for decades to come. It will do harm to his children and mine.

I regret my vote for Governor Northam. I am ashamed of him. He should be ashamed of himself!

I urge other citizens to take a stand against new pipelines, since they threaten to increase the climate chaos on this planet that we are already experiencing.

Bruce P. Tinker, MD, FACC
Alexandria

Write

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue.

The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

Send to:

Letters to the Editor
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By e-mail:
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Teaching Gratitude, Giving

Child development experts share suggestions for helping children develop a sense of altruism.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

When teaching their three young children about gratitude and benevolence, Marcus Rosano and his wife Laura began with what they consider the basics: treating others with kindness.

"After leaving a sports practice, we tell them to go back and say, 'goodbye' and 'thank-you' to their coach," he said. "My wife and I have focused on the way we treat others. Part of kindness is understanding that there are people in our community who can't afford presents at Christmas and who aren't going to have a Thanksgiving turkey with all the trimmings."

The Rosanos' method of instruction is an effective one, according to researchers who say that parents are their children's most influential teachers. "The best thing a parent can do to promote altruistic behavior is to model the behavior themselves," said Jessica McLaughlin, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "Kids imitate their parents and they are more likely to engage in altruistic behavior if we show them how to treat others with kindness and empathy."

Parents can choose to partake in simple, random acts of kindness, while they are with their children, added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "For example, paying for someone in line behind you in the grocery store, or helping an elderly person carry their grocery bags to the car, or helping a neighbor shovel snow or clear ice from their walkway."

Use that opportunity to initiate a dialogue, continued Bagshaw. "Then afterwards, talk with your child about how it made you feel to help someone else. Through that discussion, brainstorm with your child how it might have made the person you helped feel. [This will] help develop empathy in your child."

"I would suggest that parents discuss with kids what circumstances other kids and families may be in over the holidays and how it may differ from their own," said child psychologist Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D. "For example, there are families who have limited food and those who rely on shelters. They could also discuss ways to acknowledge and express gratitude for specific things they have, from food to heat to their personal belongings, like saying something from their day that they are grateful for; not just at Thanksgiving dinner, but every day at dinner or before bed."

It is important that parents tailor their dialogue and lessons on gratitude and altruism to a child's age and level of development, advises Linda Gulyn, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Marymount University.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCUS ROSANO

Lesson on gratitude and giving during the holidays should be age-appropriate say psychologists.

"Preschool-aged kids need to see the immediate and tangible effects of helping and giving to others," she said. "For example, 'See how much grandpa likes it when you help him carry the holiday decorations?' Or 'Because you shared your train tracks, now [your playmate] can get his train over the hill.'"

School-aged children learn best by seeing the social benefits and being part of group activities associated with giving and helping, suggests Gulyn. "[This is] because peers and people outside immediate family are more interesting to them," she said. "For example the Girl Scout troop helped the elderly people decorate the senior living rec center."

Teenaged children, on the other hand, are idealistic and interested in social justice issues, says Gulyn. "They care about pop culture, too," said said. "My teens enjoyed shopping for holiday gifts for other kids who were socioeconomically disadvantaged. They bought sports team gear for fel-

low teen boys. "Identify issues that are important to a child and provide opportunities for them practice altruism around those topics, suggests Carolyn Cass Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. "For instance if your child is interested in animals you might help them collect old towels and blankets in the neighborhood to take to a shelter," she said. "This helps build a sense of agency and responsibility and shows them that we each can make a difference."

"During the holidays, parents should share their family histories and traditions and note their good fortune in living today with many daily comforts and conveniences that their grandparents did not have," said Short, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University. "Gift giving encourages empathy and perspective-taking to consider what others might like and it brings people closer together."

SCHOOLS



PHOTO BY MELANIE BEUS

From left: Nicole Duchaine, Keeley Bryant, Karly Sargent, and Isabel Pascal.

'A Spare Me'

BY CAROLINE MILNE
ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

What makes us us? Is it our body, brain, memories, soul? Mount Vernon High School's thought-provoking performance of "A Spare Me" explores identity and how society views others.

"A Spare Me," written by A. Rey Pamatmat, takes place in a dystopian society, where the fate of humanity rests on society's current teenagers. Because of this fragile state the children receive clones, who are referred to as spares, to replace them when they die. While the spares are given the "primary's" memory, they are not the same person. The spares question their identities, as they feel that they are made up of two different people and are pressured to be the deceased by friends and family.

The entire cast transported the audience to a dystopian, futuristic society through their synchronization, unwavering characterization, and clear diction. The student ensemble was always in character, playing games such as rock paper scissors, talking to one another, or fighting each other in the common room.

The creative set, lighting, costumes and sound created a futuristic image. The set, which Tania Romero Gonzalez led, consisted of multipurpose marble green platforms, a trapped door, and a black balcony.

On the floor of the stage written in Latin read, "We are always watching," emphasizing the dystopian aspect of the play. The

backdrop of the stage was lit by electric blues and greens. During the Epilogue the set, lighting (done by Micco Aniano Daniels), and costumes (created by Laura Schmechel) painted a stunning image. The spares were dressed in polka-dotted hospital gowns and were leaning against the rods holding up the balcony, while the backdrop was an eerie, and an electric, green. The futuristic music (done by Tanner Buggein) in between scenes also emphasized the dystopian setting and was occasionally accompanied by the rumble of a car, an impressive addition. The stage crew also admirably made transitions quickly.

Monica Caceres's make-up and hairstyles added nice details to the characters. Tee's convincing bruise and black eye after a fight were especially laudable.

Keeley Bryant's performance as Tee was especially impressive. Her facial expressions, posture, diction, tone color, and pauses genuinely portrayed her character. She also admirably depicted Tee, a spare, questioning her identity, emphasizing the message of the production.

Isabel Pascal's portrayal of Elga was also notable. Her stage presence, diction, and characterization were unwavering, and who could forget her impressive recounts of several random numbers.

Mount Vernon's laudable production of "A Spare Me" asked the audience to question how they treat others in society and their own identities.

The Cappies, "Critics and Awards Program," is a program through which high school theatre and journalism students are trained as critics, attend shows at other schools, and write reviews.

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Public Meetings

Fall Transportation Meetings: Updated Schedule

You are invited to participate in public meetings held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The meetings will begin with an open house followed by a public comment period. At the open house you can learn about various transportation initiatives, as well as Virginia's project prioritization process (SMART SCALE), Virginia's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and the VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan. Representatives from the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment and Departments of Transportation and Rail and Public Transportation will be in attendance to highlight their transportation programs and discuss your ideas and concerns about Virginia's transportation network. The open house will be followed by a public comment period, where you can provide comments about the various initiatives. Comments will be accepted at the meeting and may also be submitted via email or online at www.CTB.Virginia.gov.

Updated Schedule: Area Public Meetings will be held at the dates, locations and times listed below:

**Wednesday, November 28,
2018 at 5:30 p.m.***
NOVA District Office
Potomac Conference Room
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

**Thursday, November 29,
2018 at 4 p.m.***
Fredericksburg District
Office Auditorium
86 Deacon Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22405

Fall meeting materials will be available at:
<http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/fallmeetings/> beginning October 15, 2018.

*Please note that these dates have been changed from previous listings.

If you cannot attend a meeting, you may send your comments on highway projects to Infrastructure Investment Director, VDOT, 1401 E. Broad St., Richmond, Virginia 23219, or Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

You may send comments on rail, public transportation, and transportation demand management to Public Information Officer, DRPT, 600 E. Main St., Suite 2102, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or DRPTPR@drpt.Virginia.gov.

Comments will be accepted until December 13, 2018.

The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on these policies or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-2730 or the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-4440 (TTY users call 711).

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Mount Vernon by Candlelight returns Nov. 23, with holiday themes and special tours of the Mansion and grounds.

Tour Mount Vernon by Candlelight

And chat with America's first First Lady.

BY ROBERT BLIZARD

A warm welcome from smiling hosts and hostesses, candlelit walkways, as well as warm apple cider and cookies. Hard to get better than that for a holiday season festival.

But imagine the following enhancements: a glowing bonfire, a visiting camel, a tour of one of the world's most famous historic homes and a brief chat with America's first First Lady.

That's right, Martha Washington, along with an array of costumed 18th-century personalities, will welcome visitors to the Mount Vernon estate on chilly nights during Mount Vernon by Candlelight, a special Christmas-themed tour for the whole family.

Arrive at Mount Vernon's Ford Orientation Center and be led by a tour guide to

the majestic lawn leading to the famed house. Walk in the moonlight under enormous, stately trees while learning more about General Washington and his celebrated mansion.

Once there, you'll be greeted by actors portraying real-life people who once lived at the estate or visited there in Washington's day. They include the farm manager, an enslaved worker in the kitchen, a granddaughter and, of course, the President's wife.

The role of Martha Washington is inhabited by actress Mary Wiseman, who has been interpreting the persona for more than a decade at the estate. She'll welcome you in the dining room — both colorful and filigreed — where she entertained not only friends and family at Christmas, but also American history luminaries such as the Marquis de Lafayette. The French nobleman was a George Washington protégé who

brought this nation's first leader a key from the Bastille; it hangs in the house's central hallway for all visitors to see.

After departing the home, step into a garden landscaped according to Mount Vernon historical records. Once there, you'll be guided into the garden house where you can watch — and even participate in — 18th-century dancing. Accompanied by a recorder, the dancers invite both adults and children to join in while showing everyone the proper steps.

Before leaving, one can stop at outdoor tents set up in a meadow where historically dressed volunteers will help you warm up by cauldron fires and direct you to cider and treats. You can also bid Aladdin the camel a merry Christmas. The animal has become a holiday favorite with visitors over the last decade and is historically accurate. Records show that George Washington invited a representative of a traveling circus to his estate one Christmastime so he could bring the circus's camel, a site which few, if any, 18th-century Americans had ever seen.

If, after the tour, you're still in need of cozy warmth, stop at the Inn at Mount Vernon, the on-site restaurant, for Virginia peanut soup or some other fare. Or stop at the bar for spirits distilled as Washington might have distilled spirits and which are marketed under a special Mount Vernon label.

"This is a terrific way to see the mansion and all that it represents come to life," said Rebecca Aloisi, Mount Vernon's vice president of marketing. "Usually, people learn about the architectural details and other facts as they tour the house but for this event, the tour is provided by people from George Washington's life, all of whom tell their personal story about the holidays and the estate for guests. It's a very special opportunity to take a unique peak into the past."

Mount Vernon by Candlelight basic information: Nov. 23, 24, and 30; Dec. 1, 7, 8 and 16. 5-8 p.m. Tickets: \$25 adult (12 and up); \$17 youth (ages 6-11); Children 5 and under are free. Free parking on site. For tickets and more information, visit: www.mountvernon.org/candlelight.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Art Exhibit: "Connecting Threads." Through Nov. 25 at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The exhibit features the work of regional artists showcasing traditional and non-traditional ways to manipulate fiber and highlights narratives where textiles and fiber trigger nostalgia. See the exhibit and donate new towels for Carpenter's Shelter from

Nov. 2-25. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/event/connecting-threads.

Art Exhibit: "Pattern+Texture." Through Dec. 2, gallery hours at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St., Studio 21, Alexandria. Photographer Pete McCutchen captures mesmerizing patterns found in rock, ice, and sand, transforming natural scenery into abstract, alternate realities. Presented in monochrome and printed on metallic paper, McCutchen's photographs bewitch the eye with their ability to evoke two-dimensional patterns; jagged rocks become houndstooth; sand dunes pose as pinstripes. Visit

www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

Mount Vernon Farmers Market.

Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-noon at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Every Wednesday (through Dec. 19), 15 local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; meats; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; dairy products and eggs; herbs; and more. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

"Christmas at the Old Bull & Bush." Through Dec. 23, at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Admission is \$55. The Old Bull and Bush Public House is

alive with British music hall songs and carols, corny jokes and funny sketches, tuneful melodies, sing-alongs and sausage rolls. Celebrate the holidays with Florrie Forde, the most famous music hall star of the era, and her troupe of British performers. Call 703-548-9044 or visit www.MetroStage.org.

FRIDAY/NOV. 23

Heather & Greens. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. At 418 S. Washington St., Alexandria. Heather & Greens pre-order sale ends on Friday, Nov. 23. Orders are available for pick-up at The Campagna Center from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 30 and Saturday,

Dec. 1. Limited quantity. Proceeds benefit the programs of The Campagna Center that serve over 2,000 children and families in Alexandria. Call 703-224-2395 or email developmentoffice@campagnacenter.org.

George Washington Spirits Sale.

10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. At the Shops at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. All distilled spirits made at George Washington's Distillery will be on sale for the first time in its history. This Black Friday, visit the Shops at Mount Vernon to enjoy 20 percent off Mount Vernon's award-winning whiskey and spirits, including George Washington's Rye Whiskey—the

ENTERTAINMENT

State Spirit of Virginia—two-year and four-year straight rye whiskey, Peach Eau de Vie, Apple Brandy, and George Washington Whiskey gift sets. Visit mountvernon.org/spiritsale.

Tree Lighting Ceremony. 6 p.m. At Market Square, 301 King St., Alexandria. Kick off the holiday season at the 2018 City of Alexandria Tree Lighting Ceremony. The event will begin with a welcome by the Town Crier and remarks from Mayor Allison Silberberg, followed by a performance by Santa's Frosty Follies from the Metropolitan Fine Arts Center, the lighting of the tree, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Visit www.alexandriava.gov.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 23-24

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. 5-8 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Join Mount Vernon's residents and visitors for a festive evening tour. The experience begins in the Ford Orientation Center, where visitors enjoy the sounds of the holiday season and view spectacular Christmas trees highlighting the lives of the Washingtons and their home. Visitors will be guided into the 18th century for a lantern-lit tour of the historic area, where they will see the Slave Quarters and the Blacksmith Shop. Inside the Mansion, Martha Washington and other Mount Vernon residents will welcome visitors into their home and share stories of past Christmases. Tickets: \$25 adult, \$17 youth (ages 6-11). Visit mountvernon.org/candlelight.

Holiday Shopping. Through Old Town Alexandria. Returning this year is Alexandria's alternative Black Friday experience on Nov. 23, with one-of-a-kind deals at more than 50



George Washington Spirits Sale

All distilled spirits made at George Washington's Distillery will be on sale for the first time in its history. This Black Friday, visit the Shops at Mount Vernon to enjoy 20 percent off Mount Vernon's award-winning whiskey and spirits, including George Washington's Rye Whiskey—the State Spirit of Virginia—two-year and four-year straight rye whiskey, Peach Eau de Vie, Apple Brandy, and George Washington Whiskey Gift Sets. Friday, Nov. 23, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. at the Shops at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Visit

locally owned boutiques in Old Town and Del Ray, plus the Old Town Boutique District's first-ever Plaid Friday. On Alexandria's Small Business Saturday, Nov. 24, shoppers will be treated to free parking at parking meters, the Elf Prize Patrol and special in-store activities at more than 50 boutiques in Old Town and Del Ray. Alexandria Restaurant Partners' offering 10 percent off at all ARP restaurants (Vola's Dockside Grill, Mia's Italian Kitchen, The Majestic, Joe Theismann's Restaurant & Bar and Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza &

Tap) when you present a receipt from a local small business. Visit VisitAlexandriaVA.com/ShopSmall.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 23-25

Christmas Tree and Wreath Sale. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Fraser Fir trees and wreaths will arrive fresh from Pennsylvania and be ready to sell the day after Thanksgiving. The tree lot is a festive atmosphere, complete with hot cocoa and cookies. Join for

caroling on Dec. 1 at 2:45 p.m. and Dec. 2 at 11:45 a.m. Visit www.staidanepiscopal.com.

NOV. 24-DEC. 16

Christmas Tree Sale. At Belle View Shopping Center, 1632 Belle View Blvd., Alexandria. Mount Vernon Kiwanis will hold its annual Christmas Tree Sale featuring Frasier Fir trees and garland and wreaths. 100 percent of profits will go to high school scholarships and local charities.

SATURDAY/NOV. 24

Small Business Saturday. More than 50 independently owned boutiques in Old Town Alexandria and Del Ray will offer special in-store activities. The Elf Prize Patrol returns from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. treating shoppers in Old Town and Del Ray with surprise giveaways. Other highlights include free parking at parking meters, pop-up musical performances by The Alexandria Singers and the Alexandria Citizens Band from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., a postcard pop-up from Penny Post, special activities at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, hands-on arts activities by the Mobile Art Lab and holiday tunes and cheer by DJ Josh Goldman. Visit alexandriaVA.com/SmallBusinessSaturday.

Christmas Tree Sale. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. At 110 Callahan Drive, in the Amtrak Parking Lot, Alexandria. The Alexandria Police Youth Camp Christmas tree sale begins. The lot will be open daily until they run out of trees, which will likely take three weeks. They have purchased more trees than ever before because they may be faced with an additional

\$10,000 bill to transport the kids to camp next summer; the goal is to cover that cost in additional tree sales. The youth camp has been operating for more than 70 years and this fundraiser is the largest, helping to cover approximately 50 percent of the summer camp operation. The tree sale runs from Mon.-Fri., 4-8 p.m.; and Sat. and Sun., 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Photos with Santa. 12 p.m.-3 p.m. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Hooray for Books! and Visit Alexandria will present photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Advance reservation is required. To reserve a 10-minute slot for a child to meet with Santa, make any size donation to the bookstore's special Santa account, which will be used to provide books, toys and games for the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program's Holiday Party. Visit www.Hooray4Books.com.

Urban Redeux Grand Opening. 1-3 p.m. At 8742 Cooper Road, Alexandria. Celebrate the Grand Opening of Urban Redeux, a unique, small business in the community. Meet the owners and artists who create the one-of-a-kind "junkie, funk, and furnishings" and receive special Small Business Saturday giveaways. See all this new store has to offer and enjoy light refreshments. Hosted by Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce.

Wetlands Nighttime Hike. 4:15-5:45 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. On the "Hot Cocoa Wetland Night Hike" look for signs and listen for sounds of beavers, owls, deer and other nocturnal winter animals. \$9 per person. Designed for participants age 6-adult, and children must be accompanied by a registered adult. The program will be canceled in the

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30 & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 FROM 9 AM – 5 PM
Decorate your home with greenery and traditional Scottish heather while supporting The Campagna Center.

TASTE OF SCOTLAND
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 6:30 PM – 10:30 PM
The Atrium Building, 277 South Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
This elegant evening features a robust Scotch tasting menu, including a variety of Scotches direct from Scotland distilleries, and decadent catering for all guests.

HOLIDAY HOME TOUR
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 12:30 PM-4:00 PM
Explore Alexandria's history by touring some of Old Town's most splendid homes, decked-out by acclaimed interior designers and local florists. While you tour the homes, guides will fill you in on fun facts and historical tidbits.

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Alexandria Gazette Packet | Mount Vernon Gazette
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ENTERTAINMENT

event of inclement weather. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

SUNDAY/NOV. 25

Museum Store Sunday. Free to browse. Visit favorite historic Alexandria museums on Museum Store Sunday for unique and historically inspired gifts with special offers, seasonal refreshments and more. Participating museum stores include the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, Friendship Firehouse Museum, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Alexandria Black History Museum, Fort Ward Museum, Freedom House Museum, and the Carlyle House. Visit www.VisitAlexandria.com/MuseumStoreSunday.

MONDAY/NOV. 26

Loan Sharks or Lenders of Last Resort? 7:15 p.m. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Part of the Agenda:Alexandria program, which falls on the fourth Monday of the month. Programs are \$5 each or free with your \$35 membership, payable on-line at www.AgreendaAlexandria.org/sign-up page or at the door by check or credit. All are invited to a pre-program dinner if desired. Dinner is 6:45-7:15 p.m., prices starting at \$32 with reservations by the Friday prior to the program. Visit www.AgreendaAlexandria.com.

TUESDAY/NOV. 27

Snacks & Self-Expression. 3:15 p.m. At Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Free. Teens find their inner artist using the mediums of painting, sketching, collage and more. Plus snacks. They'll bring the supplies, teens bring the inspiration. For teens (grades 6-12). Contact Anton Murray at amurray@alexlibraryva.org. Or visit the website: alexlibraryva.org.

Preserving Heritage. 7 p.m. At Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St., Alexandria. Free. Victoria Vasques and Marty Abbott will discuss the work being done to preserve and support learning of indigenous languages of North America. Contact Anton Murray at amurray@alexlibraryva.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 28

Building Relationships. 6 p.m. At Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke St., Alexandria. Free. This workshop will help attendees to experience MLK's call to develop "understanding with the enemy and release those vast reservoirs of goodwill that have been blocked by impenetrable walls of hate." Contact Anton Murray at amurray@alexlibraryva.org. Visit alexlibraryva.org.

THURSDAY/NOV.29-SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Alexandria Community Nutcracker. At West Potomac High School, 6500 Quander Road, Alexandria. Celebrating its 10th year, the Alexandria Community Nutcracker – in collaboration with The West Potomac Academy Program – will once again delight guests of all ages with the holiday classic, "The Nutcracker." This season's four performances will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 29; 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 30; and 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 1. Cost is \$10-\$25. Visit www.alexandrianutcracker.com.

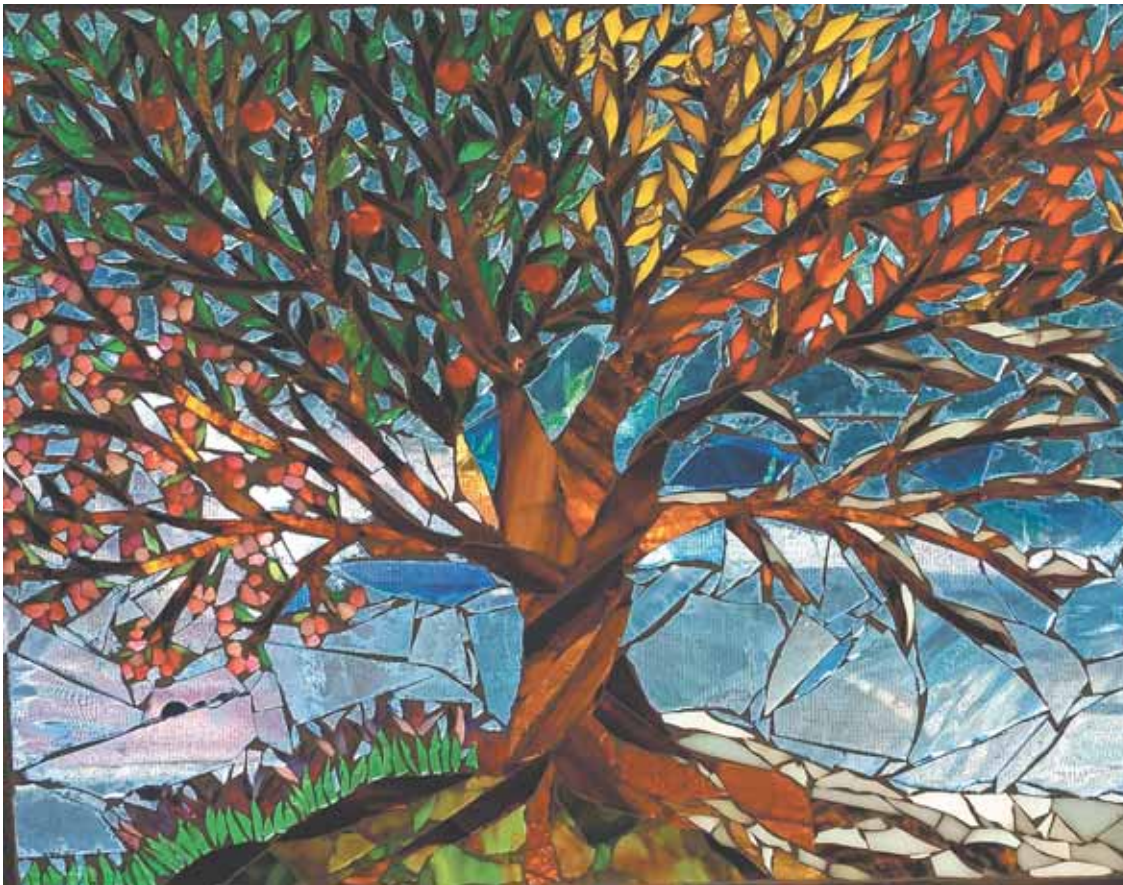


PHOTO BY MARIA ILLINGWORTH

Del Ray Holiday Show

The Fifth Annual Del Ray Holiday Show, studio show of fine arts/crafts, 7 artists (glass mosaics, fine jewelry, woodfired pottery, turned pens, paper mache masks, upcycle bags/scarves, gourmet dog treats). Sunday, Dec. 2, noon-6 p.m. at Studio of Stephen Lally, 8 East Howell Ave., Alexandria. Email slallypottery@gmail.com, call 703-819-9990 or visit stephenlallypottery.com for more.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/NOV.30-DEC. 1

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. 5-8 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Join Mount Vernon's residents and visitors for a festive evening tour. The experience begins in the Ford Orientation Center, where visitors can enjoy the sounds of the holiday season and view spectacular Christmas trees highlighting the lives of the Washingtons and their home. Visitors will be guided into the 18th century for a lantern-lit tour of the historic area, where they will see the Slave Quarters and the Blacksmith Shop. Inside the Mansion, Martha Washington and other Mount Vernon residents will welcome guests into their home and share stories of past Christmases. \$25 adult, \$17 youth (ages 6-11). Visit mountvernon.org/candlelight.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30-SUNDAY/DEC. 2

Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market. Friday, 6-9 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Offers handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Different artists each weekend. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and more. Plus FUNdraising 2019 wall calendars, cookbooks, and upcycled tote bags to support Del Ray Artisans. Free admission. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2018.

NOV. 30-DEC. 15

"Adventures with Mr. Bear." At The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Presented by Arts on the Horizon. One winter afternoon, a young girl and her favorite stuffed animal, Mr. Bear, play a game of hide and seek which evolves into a series of exciting adventures. \$10. Performance Schedule:(Friday, Nov. 30 - 10:30

a.m.; Saturday, Dec. 1 - 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; Thursday, Dec. 6 at 10:30 a.m.; Friday, Dec. 7 at 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, Dec. 8 at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; Thursday, Dec. 13 at 10:30 a.m.; Friday, Dec. 14 at 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, Dec. 15 at 10 and 11:30 a.m. Purchase tickets at www.artsonthehorizon.org/mr-bear-2018.html.

NOV. 30-DEC. 16

LTA's "A Christmas Carol." At 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. The Little Theatre of Alexandria rings in the holiday season with a return of the classic by Charles Dickens. Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable, bitter old miser travels with ghostly guides through Christmas past, present and future to find the true meaning of the holidays. Tickets \$20. Call 703-683-0496 or visit www.TheLittleTheatre.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Holiday Market. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. The Mount Vernon High School PTSA presents their 2018 Holiday Market. Accepting vendors. Learn more at Facebook.com/MVHSHM or email ptsaholidayfest@gmail.com.

Christmastide at Gunston Hall. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. A full day of holiday activities starts with a visit from Santa to games and crafts for all ages. The evening hours provide a romantic holiday experience by candlelight as visitors sample period food in the kitchen and explore the grounds by candlelight. \$15 for adults; \$10 for children. Visit www.gunstonhall.org/ or call 703-550-9220.

Brunch With Santa. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. At Pinecrest Golf Course, 6600 Little River Turnpike, Alexandria. Skip the lines at the mall and bring

the family to Pinecrest's new indoor golf studio. Meet and take pictures with Santa while enjoying a family friendly brunch. Santa will be making his way around to mingle with families, take requests for holiday wish lists and give out goody bags before he heads back to the North Pole. \$12 for ages 3 to 12; \$14 for ages 13 and up. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Email fcpapinecrestgc@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-941-1061.

Scottish Walk Open House. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. At The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Tour the historic Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum and learn about this family-run business and the products they sold to the residents of Alexandria between 1792 and 1933. Special guests The Schod Family Apothecary will demonstrate the making of 19th century apothecary products. Don't miss the Apothecary's museum shop, which is filled with fun, creative and unique holiday gifts. Call 703-746-3852 or visit AlexandriaVA.gov/Apothecary.

Story Time for Little Historians. 11 a.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. "Why the Sun & Moon Live in the Sky," retold and illustrated by Niki Daly. Enjoy cultural stories and creative craft activities that introduce world history and folklore. Afterwards, explore the museum exhibits to learn about local Black history. All ages welcome, but most suitable for children 4 and older. Admission is \$3 per person. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 703-746-4356.

48th Annual Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk Parade. 11 a.m. Dozens of Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans parade through the streets of Old Town, joined by pipe and drum bands from around the region, as well as terriers and hounds. The parade, which takes place rain or

shine, begins at St. Asaph and Wolfe Streets and concludes at Market Square with a massed band concert. Parade admission is free. Call 703-549-0111 or visit www.CampagnaCenter.org/ScottishWalkWeekend.

Scottish Walk Open House. Noon-4 p.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Visit Old Town to enjoy Alexandria's rich Scottish heritage and see the Scottish Walk Parade march past Alexandria's oldest stone building, Carlyle House. After the parade, enter the museum gates and step back in time for an open house in the spirit of the holiday season. The museum will be open for free and docents will be available to answer questions about the house and the collection while guests tour at their own pace. Visit www.novaparks.com/parks/carlyle-house-historic-park.

Ship Biscuit Ornament Making. 1-4 p.m. At Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., #327, Alexandria. An almost completely intact ship's biscuit from the 18th century was found in Alexandria last year. To commemorate the discovery, visitors are invited to make their own ship's biscuit. Each biscuit will be stamped with the year and then baked at home to track its preservation. No registration required. Call 703-746-4399 or visit www.AlexandriaArchaeology.org.

19th Annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. 5:30 p.m. At Alexandria City Marina, Cameron Street. Alexandria's waterfront shines as dozens of brightly lit boats cruise the Potomac River for the Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Parade viewing areas include: Founders Park (351 North Union St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Waterfront Park (1A Prince St.), Shipyard/Harborside Park (1 Wilkes St.), and Ford's Landing Park (99 Franklin St.). Call 703-746-3301. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/BoatParade.

Country-Western Dance. At Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance. Lessons, 6-7 p.m. Open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$12; \$5 for children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Toys 4 Tots Dance: collecting unwrapped toys for donation. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

Holidays on the Avenue in Del Ray. 6 p.m. At Pat Miller Neighborhood Square at Mount Vernon Avenue and E. Oxford Avenue, Alexandria. Kick off the holidays with a visit to Del Ray for the annual holiday tree lighting, featuring a special appearance by Santa Claus who will lead carols and sit for photos with children. Continue the celebration and start your holiday shopping with a stroll down Mount Vernon Avenue, which will be illuminated by thousands of luminarias. Pick your favorite in the neighborhood business association's annual Christmas tree decorating contest. Call 703-683-2570 or visit www.VisitDelRay.com

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 1-2

Watercolor Exhibition. Saturday, 4-7 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Some 60 local artists will exhibit and offer for sale original paintings at the 26th annual Watercolor Exhibition and Sale. Free. Email blackhawk245@hotmail.com or call

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ENTERTAINMENT

703-799-9635.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 1-2

Christmas Tree and Wreath Sale. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Fraser Fir trees and wreaths will arrive fresh from Pennsylvania and be ready to sell the day after Thanksgiving. The tree lot is a festive atmosphere, complete with hot cocoa and cookies. Join for caroling on Dec. 1 at 2:45 p.m. and Dec. 2 at 11:45 a.m. Visit www.staidansepiscopal.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 2

Holiday Sweater Run. 8 a.m. Meet at Waterfront Park, 1A Prince St., Alexandria. Followed by brunch at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. at Chadwicks, 203 Strand St., Alexandria. Join Pacers Running, the City of Alexandria and Chadwicks at Waterfront Park for a run. All paces are welcome, and no ticket is required to join the run. Come out in your holiday finest (running shoes strongly encouraged). The run route will take you south through Old Town on Union Street and then connect to the George Washington Memorial Parkway Trail. There will be different turnarounds options from 4 miles up 20 miles. Call 703-836-1463 or visit www.RunPacers.com.

Del Ray Holiday Pop-Up Market.

11 a.m.-3 p.m. At the Pat Miller Neighborhood Square at Mount Vernon Avenue and E. Oxford Ave., Alexandria. Find the perfect gift at this pop-up market featuring local artisans and at-home entrepreneurs. Call 703-683-2570 or visit www.VisitDelRay.com.

Gardeners' Holiday Open House.

Noon-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Treat yourself to a day of fun as Green Spring features holiday decorations, seasonal displays, live music and holiday breads. There will be ornaments for sale and free refreshments. For gardeners of all ages. Children, and the young at heart, will enjoy the holiday puppet shows by Bob Brown Puppets at 1 and 3 p.m. \$5 per person, and advance registration is recommended. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

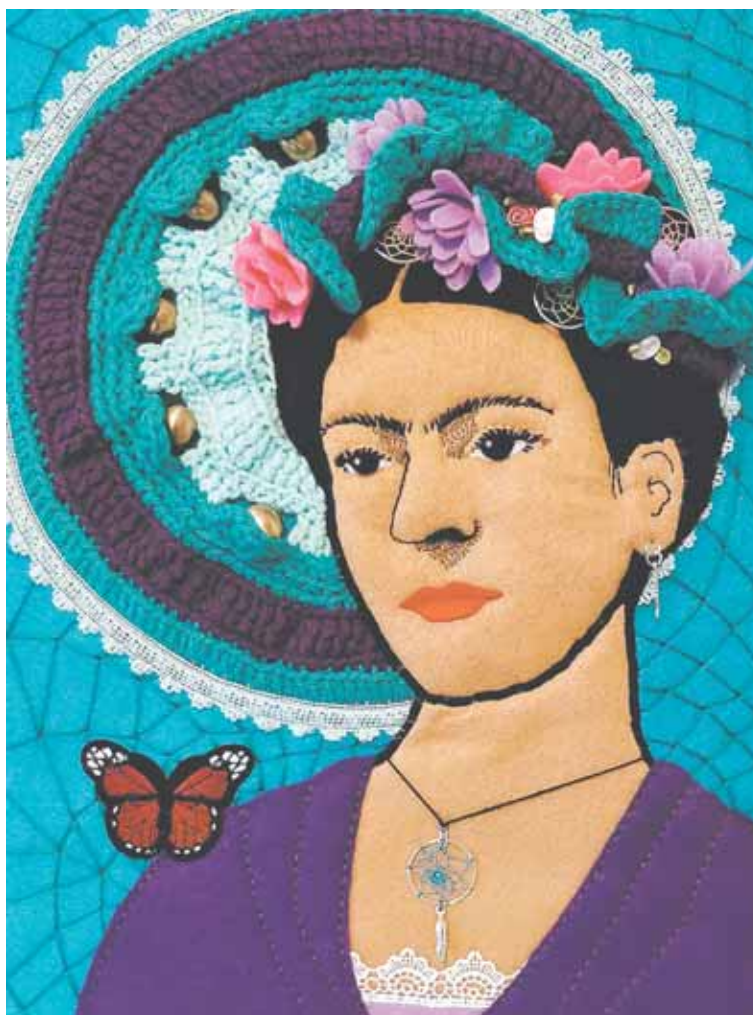
Del Ray Holiday Show.

Noon-6 p.m. At Studio of Stephen Lally, 8 East Howell Ave., Alexandria. The Fifth Annual Del Ray Holiday Show, studio show of fine arts/crafts, seven artists (glass mosaics, fine jewelry, woodfired pottery, turned pens, paper mache masks, upcycle bags/scarves, gourmet dog treats). Email slallypottery@gmail.com, call 703-819-9990 or visit stephenlallypottery.com.

New Dominion Chorale.

4 p.m. At Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. New Dominion Chorale to perform Gloria in Excelsis. The concert, conducted by Artistic Director Thomas Beveridge, will feature Puccini's "Messa di Gloria," Bach's "The Childhood of Jesus," and Beveridge's "Carols for Singers and Orchestra." \$35 for adults, \$30 for seniors (62+), and \$15 for students up to age 22. Call 202-244-7191; e-mail ndcpublicity@gmail.com or visit www.newdominion.org.

Messiah Sing-Along. 4-6 p.m. at Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King St. This year, sing all choruses (parts 1, 2 and 3) accompanied by the Amadeus



"Dream Weaver Frida" by Dawn Wyse Hurto and Liz Martinez (artwork in exhibit).

Orchestra. The audience is the chorus, led by the Fairlington United Methodist Church Choir with Dr. Louise Wilson, conductor. Free. Visit bit.ly/messiahsing-along.

MONDAY/DEC. 3

Poetry Workshop. 6:30-8 p.m. at Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Alexandria. "Building Cultural Bridges" with Wendi R Kaplan, Poet Laureate. At these workshops, poetry can be read and written. The Poet Laureate and literary programs are part of the Office of the Arts, a division of the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The workshops are free; to register, RSVP at poet@alexandriava.gov or contact Cheryl Anne Colton at 703-746-5565 or cheryllanne.colton@alexandriava.gov, or visit www.alexandriava.gov/Arts.

Connecting Threads

Art exhibit, "Connecting Threads," will be at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria Nov. 2-25. The exhibit features the work of regional artists showcasing traditional and non-traditional ways to manipulate fiber and highlights narratives where textiles and fiber trigger nostalgia. See the exhibit and donate new towels for Carpenter's Shelter through Nov. 25. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/event/connecting-threads

DEL RAY ARTISANS HOLIDAY MARKET 2018

DelRayArtisans.org

WEEKEND 1
November 30th through December 2nd
WEEKEND 2
December 7th through December 9th
WEEKEND 3
December 14th through December 16th

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Foundation Brings Operation Legacy to WPHS

FROM PAGE 1

blocks behind the Safeway on Fort Hunt Road. He played football for Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association (FHYAA) and attended Hollin Meadows Elementary School and later the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Several years ago, O’Farrell, a fellow Naval Academy graduate who lives in Fort Hunt, decided to honor Travis’s memory and connect military veterans with students at West Potomac High School through a day of service on Veterans Day.

The students were inspired. “The highlight of my day was interacting and meet-

ing with the veterans that were assisting with Operation Legacy,” said Jayson Ruelas, a WPHS senior.

“After talking with several of the veterans that were participating, I realized that I enjoy and want to continue serving those who served for me.”

One of the highlights of the opening ceremony was the announcement of the winners of the first Operation Legacy Veterans Day of Service Poetry Contest at WPHS. In response to a request from O’Farrell and English teachers, Robert Holloway and Sherylin Bayers, 26 students submitted poems intended to address several themes they were provided. These themes included:

- ❖ “If Not Me, Then Who...”
- ❖ What does Veterans Day mean to you?
- ❖ What will your legacy of service be?
- ❖ Why is it important to be part of something bigger than yourself?
- ❖ Our nation is built on timeless ideals of freedom, diversity, unity, and selfless service for the common good. America is the land of opportunity and a beacon of hope despite our cultural, social, and economic differences.
- ❖ What is Character? How do Moral Courage, Integrity, Leadership and Service impact our Character?
- ❖ Who is someone in your life that you think has strong Character? Why?

To engage veterans in the poetry contest, O’Farrell contacted Sam Pressler, executive director of Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP) and asked if he could ask for military veterans to serve as judges. ASAP’s community of veterans immediately responded and scored each of the 26 poems.

The three winners of the poetry contest were:

- ❖ 1st place – “The Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month” by Ryan Bowers
- ❖ 2nd place – “Pathfinder” by Sabit Alam
- ❖ 3rd place – “Maria” by Victoria Santos-Blanco.

Poetry Contest Winners

1st Place:

The Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month

By Ryan Bowers

The eleventh day of the eleventh month is a day of commemoration

For those who sacrificed themselves for our great nation
For the soldiers young and old
Who fought for our freedom, brave and bold
For those who paid the ultimate price
To keep our nation a paradise

The eleventh day of the eleventh month is a day to recall All of those who answered the service call
While we were at home watching TV
They were in scenarios we would all certainly flee

The eleventh day of the eleventh month is a time to pause
To think of those who fought for the greatest cause
For the soldiers who
Kept on fighting to protect the red, white, and blue
For the men and women who fought for our rights
And continue to fight through days and through nights

The eleventh day of the eleventh month is a time to remember those who fight for the common name
Without them, our country wouldn’t be the same

The eleventh day of the eleventh month is a time to reflect
And remember the unsung heroes who deserve our respect
Those who have lived and those who have died
That deserve all of our pride
Those who have served on land and in sea
In order to keep the United States free

2nd Place:

“Pathfinder”

By Sabit Alam

“Rosalie Elisabeth Perdue.”
Three simple words on metal
Mom’s smile hiding there
Waiting for me
Like the first time she remembered to come home, hands outstretched:
Her hair smelled like rosemaries.

Papa’s hand clenched mine,
my fingertips pink, pink, blue
the pain numbed
— time always numbs pain —
but the cold stayed, pierced.
It froze the world into silence,
stinging deafness after a gunshot.
Papa’s fiery laughter, the warmth of his smiles: they’re gone.
Flames extinguished by the rain.

The two of us a lonely funeral,
Lost in the flood of mourners.
Lined up against the wall,
fingers pressed to the fogged-up silver
— maybe they’re like me,
searching for the familiar shape of an R, an O, an S —
bundled up in coats, oblivious to the biting wind,
all in the name of searching for a name,
a memory.

What’s in a name?
A lot.
Sometimes too much to be bared:
too much to explain why our third plate at our table is always empty,
too much to offer recompense for the years of missed Thanksgivings, Christmases, Easters ...
— No, too much to be held in three words.

Too much to be held.

Tomorrow, it will have been thirteen years since Papa first took me to the Wall. We go every year.
I’m always sure to leave flowers for her,
just under her name,
“Rosalie Elisabeth Perdue.”
she’s remembered.

I remember.

3rd Place:

“Maria”

By Victoria Santos-Blanco

She walks with her head held high,
Never going to drop it.
Her black hair, darker than a night sky,
With white streaks painted like stars
Curl down her back into cascading waves.
She screams.
She yells.
All for my own good. She was my first love, First arms I hugged,
First person to wipe my tears. She’s everything.
She’s underestimated,
Everyone treats her as if she is their servant,
Not knowing the pain she’s going through to cook Every single night.
She started out with nothing and built up her way to everything.
Her mother brought her to America to escape from
Vandals, Thieves,
Gang violence in her own neighborhood.
All she had was her husband and a three-year old girl,
A girl who was oblivious of the pains in life.
A girl who she will protect so that she won’t suffer as much as she did.

She was going to be a lawyer,
Have a bright future.
About to be the first in her class.
Couldn’t pay to stay,
She left so she could have money to pay for her brothers’ education Because to her, they were more important.
Now, she does everything so that her little girl can reach the dreams that she was never even allowed to make.
They never see her cry,
Or break down;
Though her aching joints make it harder for her to even work.
She’s an immigrant, and even after 13 years
She is still made fun of because of her accent. She doesn’t seek revenge,
She prays for them, so that they can learn to not be ignorant and realize that
Some people don’t have everything handed over to them.
Some people actually have to work hard to get somewhere.
She wanted to be a lawyer.
She settled for a kindergarten teacher. “I love my job.” she says.
I know you better than that. I’ve known you forever. She says that she’s satisfied,
But her eyes tell a different story.
Her mindset, her perseverance, her words They make the perfect verdict.
She isn’t affluent.
We get by how we can.
We may not have much, but we are happy.
She shows me how to be kind,
How to have courage,
How to ignore the racist comments and just get by the school day without talking back.
She’s strong,
But most of all she doesn’t know how to give up.
And all of those characteristics, all of those screams and yells to make me a good person, All of those pep talks, all of those little white lies so I won’t have to worry,
All of that is what makes her
The only person I would ever want to be my mother, That’s what makes her
Maria



West Potomac High School students participated in the first Operation Legacy Veterans Day of Service Poetry Contest.

'Honoring Our Fallen Hero'

FROM PAGE 5

man that lived his life with enthusiasm, integrity, and courage — and he was also a caring leader that always took time to listen, care for, and encourage others. He truly was an inspirational leader and Soldier, but he was also a passionate and caring person, and a wonderful son, brother, husband, father, and friend that was taken from us way too soon. His courageous and enthusiastic leadership style inspired others to be and do their best in every endeavor. Anything worth doing, is worth doing right and to the best of your ability.

"If you are anything like me, your life has been filled with some very good days ... even great days ... But we also have challenging or even bad days. Such was the day when we lost CSM Jim Blankenbecker. 1 October 2003 was, and continues to be, the worst day of my life ... and there's really no close second. I have relived that day countless times and there is nothing I'd love more than to have the outcome of that day turn out differently.

"Jim and I had just finished promoting a Motor Sergeant to Sergeant First Class in Al Taji, Iraq on 30 September. CSM Blankenbecker wouldn't have missed being a part of that promotion for anything, and he always placed getting out and visiting Soldiers as a priority over his personal safety. After spending the night with Bravo Battery in Al Taji, we woke that morning like any other morning in Iraq. After spending the morning with Soldiers, we left Al Taji en route to Tikrit — our Battalion Headquarters, shared with the 4th Infantry Division Main Headquarters. The sun was going down and prior to our making it to our home base in Tikrit, at a place known as the Samara ByPass, our convoy encountered a rocket propelled grenade ambush. While each of the vehicles were fired upon, it was CSM Blankenbecker's vehicle that sustained two direct hits.

"His vehicle was still operational, and his driver, Specialist Preston Haley, was able to keep the vehicle moving to get out of the kill zone, as we are trained. What made the situation more difficult was their radio was no longer operational. I had no idea if anyone in the vehicle was hurt or how badly the vehicle had been hit, but it was still moving under its own power. For anyone that has experienced combat, it is a sobering experience. One minute, it is peaceful and calm, the next minute all hell breaks loose ... as you are being fired upon, there is momentary chaos — followed by responding as if it were muscle memory. As the vehicle pulled up to the secure assembly area, we had formed a few kilometers up the road, I immediately knew CSM Blankenbecker had been hit. While the other two in his vehicle had minor shrapnel wounds and hearing loss from the explosion, they were in far better condition than Jim. I couldn't have been more proud of the Soldiers' action that day and the bravery and

response they all displayed — and it should fill all of you with pride knowing how bravely and honorably your military serve you around the world. Acts we often hear nothing about.

"I remember locking eyes with Jim when they first pulled up, but we were unable to share words. We removed him from the vehicle to begin CPR and to call for a medevac helicopter. Unfortunately, as he arrived at the Ballad Airfield Hospital, CSM Jim Blankenbecker was pronounced dead. I remember the doctor telling me that. My adrenaline was on full blast and I'd really been hoping he was going to be OK. For those that have never been in a situation like that, as I was giving Jim CPR, he aspirated in my mouth — a taste that remained with me for several days after the tragic event. I'd give him or any other CPR if I felt it could save their life. My uniform was soaked with Jim's blood. I remember having to borrow another pair of pants to wear back to the Battalion Headquarters, as I didn't want Soldiers to see me wearing the blood of their fallen Brother and their fallen Command Sergeant Major. That day was and remains the worst day in my life. I tell you those details so that you might understand the emotion and extreme rawness of that day, a day like many others have experienced by veterans. An experience most Americans will never have to experience thanks to our men and women in uniform. Despite that day being such a sad day, I remain so grateful to have served with him, and it has been my biggest honor to serve alongside America's best.

"Jim's sacrifice and bravery are unquestioned and heroic. Jim was the kind of man that left an impact on others and he inspired many people throughout his life — including mine. We lost other Soldiers in our Battalion, but to lose your Command Sergeant Major is a significant loss for any unit to deal with. I know that Jim would be honored by your observing and remembering him today. We lost a great man, a great leader, and a great friend, that day. I miss Jim's smile, I miss watching him talking to Soldiers and sharing his experiences with them, I miss his counsel as a teammate, and I miss his friendship. I know he's watching down on this ceremony today with pride — and I'm sure he and his family appreciate you showing him the respect he so definitely earned. Thank you all for coming to today's ceremony. I'd also like to thank all of the students from West Potomac High School — and I hope you'll think of Jim and the type of man he was anytime you see the Oak Tree and the plaque that bears his name. There is greatness in each of you and I hope and pray you find happiness and a way to make our world a better place. I also hope that you take time to give back to make you, your families, and your communities better ... After all, if not you, then who?

"Thank You and God Bless!"

— Col. Rick Starkey, U.S. Army, Retired

BULLETIN BOARD

SATURDAY/NOV 24-SUNDAY/DEC. 16

Christmas Tree Sale. Weekdays, noon-8 p.m.; weekends, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. at Belle View Shopping Center, Belle View Boulevard and Ft Hunt Road. The 63rd Annual Mount Vernon Kiwanis Christmas Tree sale with all Fraser fir trees from southwest Virginia and North Carolina. All garland and wreaths are made from Virginia Fraser firs. 100 percent of profits go to scholarships and local charities.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30

SCAN's 7th Annual Training for

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Advocates. 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the South County Government Center at 8350 Richmond Highway. SCAN's Annual Training for Child & Family Advocates in Virginia includes training in basic advocacy skills to help participants better understand the legislative process and how to be an effective advocate. \$10. Register at www.eventbrite.com/e/7th-annual-speak-up-for-children-advocacy-training-tickets-51773097729.

IEP Transition Plan. 10 a.m.-noon at Virginia Hills Center, 6520 Diana Lane, Multi-purpose Room #1, Alexandria. Join FCPS Career and

Transition Services to learn the importance of the IEP Transition Plan for effective postsecondary planning in middle and high school. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

TUESDAY/DEC. 4

Senior Volunteerism. 10:30 a.m. At Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. RSVP Northern Virginia will hold a seminar on senior volunteerism. Call RSVP at 703-403-5360. Visit www.rsvpnova.org.

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Announcements

Legals

After many years of serving the community, Kristin Rosenthal, L.P.C., and Mount Vernon Family Therapy Associates, LLC will be selling its practice to Jennifer McEwan, Ph.D., who will continue the practice at 1707 Belle View Blvd, Alexandria, VA. Unless Kristin Rosenthal, L.P.C., and Mount Vernon Family Therapy Associates, LLC, receives by December 31, 2018, written direction from a patient, or patient's agent, to transfer a copy of the patient's medical records to another health care provider, or send a copy of such records directly to the patient, all medical records will be transferred to Jennifer McEwan, Ph.D., at the address above. There will be a copying fee of \$0.50 per page charged for the transfer of your records to another provider or for the release of the records to you.

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Indeed, A Festivus Miracle

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



For those readers still following me after reading last week's column: "Airing of a Grievance," when I moaned and groaned about my anxiety and fear concerning the impact of my possibly having to delay the first of my three holiday-season infusions due to unacceptable lab results, let me real-time you: chemotherapy went ahead Friday, Nov. 16, as regularly scheduled.

Now, there will be no need to drive back from Pennsylvania to Maryland on the Friday after Thanksgiving – after arriving there the preceding afternoon, only to have to drive back to Pennsylvania Friday after my morning infusion, in order to resume our holiday weekend; and then drive back home again on Sunday during one of the busiest driving weekends of the year.

Given that there's no delay, this means I'll be sitting down for Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday afternoon. Unfortunately, the eating side effects typical of my treatment will have not subsided as yet so enjoying my favorite meal of the year will be impaired. Still, given the alternatives discussed, no delay in treatment is an altogether better outcome. I will be able to enjoy leftover turkey sandwiches on Friday though.

And so, perhaps you can imagine the relief I felt when I called the Infusion Center on Friday morning, Nov. 16, to confirm my appointment.

It has happened previously when I've made this pre-appointment confirmation call, that I've been told not to come and to reschedule. Moreover, it has also happened – once, that after making this call, receiving approval to come in, driving 45 minutes, checking in at reception and then getting hooked up to an IV, that I was told after further review by my oncologist, that I had to go home.

Disappointing, as you can imagine, but had it happened last week, the Friday before Thanksgiving, as has been well-blathered about in two columns, it would have been particularly discouraging and extremely disheartening.

It really wasn't until 10:30 a.m., after my oncology nurse set up my IV and ordered my drug (alimta) that I had the nerve to ask if I was 100 percent getting my drugs today. Enthusiastically, Nora said: "Oh. You're getting your drugs today. I've checked everything."

After hearing her response, my eyes welled up with tears and I heaved a sigh of relief, the likes of which I've never heaved before.

In addition to writing about this scheduling 'heave,' I've been worried for a few months now based on the finding of my most recent CT scan during my last post-scan appointment with my oncologist on Oct. 5. This scan confirmed an enlarged tumor under my Adam's Apple.

This every-three-week infusion schedule was implemented specifically to determine if this new growth was old growth recently impeded or new growth indicating my treatment has stopped working. If my treatment has stopped working, and I believe I have written about it previously, I might not be living the life going forward that I want to.

And so, when Nora confirmed my infusion mid morning on Friday, the pent-up emotion, the worry, the fear, the holiday hassle all faded away and I began to breathe more normally and easily as I had in six weeks or so anticipating this day. At least the first hurdle has been passed.

My next scheduled infusion is Dec. 7. Three weeks later is another infusion on Dec. 28. Followed up by a CT scan on Jan. 2, 2019. I would love to receive both infusions before that next scan to maximize the medicine I will be receiving.

Certainly there will be anxiety and fear worrying about those results, but absent the holiday season, I think I can manage it. More of a mindset than a miracle at that point.

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

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Where to Give Locally

FROM PAGE 6

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- ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) FISH provides funds and volunteers to serve the needy and elderly in the greater Fairfax City area of Fairfax County. FISH responds to requests for life's necessities: food, clothing, financial assistance for delinquent rent, mortgage, utility bills, gasoline, and prescriptions. Requests for assistance are passed on to FISH by the Office of Coordinated Services Planning 703-222-0880 fairfaxfish.org/
- ❖ **Lamb Center**, www.thelambcenter.org, day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178.
- ❖ **Food for Others** Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. 2938 Prosperity Ave. info@foodforothers.org. Most needed items include: Fresh fruits (oranges, apples, bananas, tomatoes, avocados, grapes, berries), Fresh vegetables (cucumbers, celery, peppers, lettuce, eggplant), Canned chili, Canned tomato products (crushed, peeled, diced, etc.), Canned meat (chicken, beef, turkey, or seafood), Rice, 16 oz packages, Spaghetti sauce, 14 oz – 1lb (ideally in cans instead of glass), Canned fruit (packed in fruit juice instead of syrup) 11oz – 20oz, Beans, dried or canned (black, kidney, pinto, etc.), Canned pasta. www.foodforothers.org
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others** (ECHO), 703-569-9160. 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. Outwear drive through Dec. 14. See Greater Springfield Chamber for drop off locations. www.echo-inc.org.
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** (LCAC) will provide Thanksgiving and holiday assistance to hundreds of families. Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets along with fulfilling gift wishes for children and teens will help low-income families. See website for warm coat and Christmas donations and volunteer needs. lortonaction.org/seasonal-assistance/.
- ❖ **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, contact alnorthervna@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. Mailing address: 4201 Wilson Blvd., #110-284, Arlington, VA 22203, CFC #33011, Phone 703-591-4965, 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
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.org
- ❖ **Homestretch** is a 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/volunteer/
- ❖ **Pathway Homes** providing non-time-limited housing and supportive services to adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring disabilities in Northern Virginia. Founded in 1980, Pathways currently serves more than 400 adults in community-based homes in Northern Virginia. www.pathwayhomes.org

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