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The concrete is crumbling in places at the at Cinder Bed Road underpass; changes to the outdated underpass are being studied.

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ENTERTAINMENT**
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One-Lane Underpass Now Seeing Backups

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Defies Soaking Rain**

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**High Energy,
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Small Business Saturday Defies Soaking Rain

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce carried on a tradition on this year's Small Business Saturday with their "Business in the Brewery" event at the Fair Winds Brewery in Newington. According to Chamber president Nancy-jo Manney, this is the second year the Chamber held Business in the Brewery where they bring local small businesses to a place that offers good exhibit space and a built-in crowd, and locally brewed craft beer.

"Small Business Saturday is an opportunity for us to celebrate and recognize local small businesses, the backbone of our economy," said Manney.

Flowers 'n' Ferns is a Chamber member from Burke that broke out the hot cider and promotional material for Small Business Saturday, but after a few hours of steady rainfall, Karen Lynn Fountain, the shop owner, headed to the event at the Fair Winds.

Nalls Produce off Beulah Street has been a family owned and operated business for more than 50 years, and honored Small Business Day with a free gift. "Our customers have supported us for decades — saved us from becoming just another housing development — and we want to say thanks," said Valerie Nalls, the owner's daughter who has worked there through the years. Cary Nalls started the produce stand when he was just a kid and he continues to work every day. "My children, Blake and Morgan, are now learning how to lend a hand at Nalls too, just like I did when I was a kid," added Valerie.

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said that small businesses are critical to our local economy and "the biggest generators



PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY-JO MANNEY

At Fair Winds in Lorton, the Business in the Brewery event — on Small Business Saturday — attracted many.

of new jobs." Herrity supported the recent development of a county effort to support small businesses called BizEx, "which is designed to improve the zoning and permitting process," Herrity said. The Board of Supervisors just approved a \$1 million investment in Revolution, an incubator to help small technology startups.

"I have actually seen a growth in small businesses in Fairfax County from retail to IT and health care," Herrity said.

Small Business Saturday goes back to 2010 when the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) launched an initiative to support the neighborhood mom and pop stores that have a local angle. "Small businesses provide a character to communities," said Jack Spirakes, the public information



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

At Flowers 'n' Ferns in Burke, the welcome mat reminds shoppers of the shop small significance.

officer for the Washington Metropolitan Area District office of the SBA. In 2017, 108 million consumers shopped at small busi-



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Karen Lynn Fountain at Flowers 'n' Ferns shows off a holiday arrangement on Small Business Saturday.

nesses on Small Business Saturday, spending a combined \$12 billion at independent neighborhood retailers and restaurants, the SBA said. Locally, SBA participates in a monthly workshop with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority aimed at local entrepreneurs.

"It's a chance for communities to rally around these businesses," added Carol Wilkerson, an SBA spokesperson out of the national office in Washington, D.C.

Allstate Contributes to 'Weekend Food for Kids'

Assistance League of Northern Virginia's Weekend Food for Kids program was the featured volunteer service activity for the "Feed Your Future Volunteer Relay" that took place during the recent Allstate Insurance Company Regional Advisory Board conference in Washington, D.C.

Lynn Barron and Karen Amster, board members with the all-volunteer ALNV, were invited to attend and speak about Assistance League's impactful program that increases food security in three local school districts in the region. Assistance League provides bags of nonperishable food for at-risk children to take home on the weekends when school meals are not available who otherwise could be hungry.

Following the keynote presentation, the event turned competitive. Executives, regional advisory board members — ex-

clusive agents and exclusive financial specialists from D.C., Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia — participated in a volunteer relay, packing food for hungry children.

Allstate Senior Communication Consultant Caitlyn Barron coordinated the resources and purchased the nonperishable food items to support The Allstate Foundation Helping Hands in the Community group volunteer event. A team of more than 40 volunteers packed 500+ bags of food for at-risk children whose families struggle to put food on the table on weekends when school meals are not available.

This partnership provided an opportunity to satisfy an immediate need for food assistance at two Title I elementary schools not currently supported by the Weekend Food for Kids program.

See www.assistanceleague.org/northern-virginia/



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left: Karen Amster (ALNV), Caitlyn Barron (Allstate), Lynn Barron (ALNV) and Christine Angles (Allstate).

PEOPLE

Historic Pohick Church Minister Receives Award

Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Costa of the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild received the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal from President Ernie Coggins of the George Washington Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution at the conclusion of a program that honored seven veterans living at the Sunrise at Mount Vernon assisted-living facility in Alexandria on Nov. 10. After honoring the esteemed veterans of our armed forces for Veterans Day, the Bronze Good Citizenship medal was awarded by the chapter for Reverend Costa's service to the residents, to the local SAR, and for supporting Revolutionary War-era history programs in the area.



Burke Student Earns American Heritage Girls Award

Theresa M. Morthland of Burke earned the Stars & Stripes Award, the highest recognition that American Heritage Girls offers to girl members. The award requires a great deal of time, sacrifice and devotion to achieve.

In addition to living out the American Heritage Girls creed and oath, award recipients complete a number of requirements, including earning a total of 16 merit badges; holding a leadership position in their troop for a minimum of six months; planning, developing and providing leadership to others in a service project lasting more than 100 hours; writing a life ambition/spiritual walk essay and résumé; and passing a Board of Review.

Morthland chose to serve the Church of the Nativity Catholic School by designing and building an elevated sandbox with an innovative design so preschool children in wheelchairs and children with tactile difficulties can play in the sand with their friends. The sandbox has become a focal point in the playground and with multiple classes of children. She worked with multiple schools before actual construction, making presentations to each administration to seek approval. She also made a presentation to the parish's Knights of Columbus Council 7992 seeking and ultimately receiving their financial support to complete the project.

Morthland served as the troop's Senior Troop Leader, Closet Coordinator, and earned multiple awards, such as, the Harriet Tubman Level Award, Dolley Madison Level Award, and the Mary, the First Disciple Religious Medal.

A member of Immanuel Bible Church's American Heritage Girls Troop VA1115,



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Theresa M. Morthland of Burke.

Morthland is the 448th girl nationally — and the 37th girl in Virginia — to earn the Stars & Stripes Award. She will be recognized in a court-of-honor ceremony at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 17, at Immanuel Bible Church in Annandale.

She is the daughter of Sam and Michele Morthland of Burke and the family attends the Church of the Nativity Catholic Church in Burke. She graduated Lake Braddock Secondary School in June where she was active in the Color Guard. She currently attends West Virginia University as a Freshman in Forensics Biology. She was recognized by the college with both academic and leadership scholarships.

American Heritage Girls Inc. is a national character-development organization for girls ages 5 to 18 that embraces Christian values and encourages family involvement. For more information, go to www.americanheritagegirls.org.

WE'RE HAPPY TO WELCOME THE DOCTOR WHOSE RESEARCH HELPED STANDARDIZE SAFER EYE INJECTION TECHNIQUES

You'll be happy to know he's now seeing patients in your community

The Retina Group of Washington (RGW), the country's largest provider of retinal and macular care, has added yet another extraordinary physician to better serve the eye-related needs of people throughout Northern Virginia.

RGW is pleased to announce that Dr. Joshua D. Levinson has joined the practice and is seeing patients in the Fairfax and Alexandria offices. It was his research on improving the safety of intravitreal injections for Macular Degeneration, Retinal Vein Occlusions and complications from Diabetes that is credited with making more sterile techniques common practice at clinics throughout the country. Dr. Levinson cares for patients suffering from Diabetic Retinopathy and Age-Related Macular Degeneration, and performs surgical procedures for retinal detachments and macular holes among many other eye-related problems.

We hope our patients will have the opportunity to meet and be treated by Dr. Levinson sometime soon. They can be certain their eyes are in excellent hands.

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From left — Bill Lynch, Port Royal Pride; Wayne Klotz, I-95 Business Parks Management; Tom King, BoatUS; Kirk La, BoatUS; Beth Newburger; Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield); Bill Roberts, GEICO; Nancy Pierce, GEICO; Marc Vignerot, BoatUS.

BoatUS/GEICO Marine Insurance Cut Ribbon at New Headquarters in Springfield

After more than 40 years at its location at 880 South Pickett Street in Alexandria, Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) and GEICO Marine Insurance officially opened the organization's new headquarters at 5323 Port Royal Road in Springfield. Attending ribbon cutting event were Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield), GEICO President and CEO Bill Roberts, and BoatUS CEO Kirk La. BoatUS is the nation's largest advocacy, services and safety group for recreational boaters and employs nearly 400 in the region. BoatUS' South Pickett Street location was a former US Army depot when BoatUS Founder Richard Schwartz developed the building for the association's national headquarters. The new headquarters is the first in the 52-year-old organization's history built for the sole purpose of serving the more-than-half-million BoatUS members and GEICO Marine Insurance custom-

ers.

"This new 65,000-square-foot building will help us grow for the next 50 years," said BoatUS CEO Kirk La. "We will need new team members who are looking for opportunity and a solid career path. With its great amenities, this facility makes BoatUS and GEICO Marine Insurance a very appealing place to work."

The newly constructed building is home to association and corporate headquarters with insurance policyholder and claims customer service, as well as nationwide 24/7 dispatch operations for recreational boat owners. BoatUS's 24-hour TowBoatUS on-water assistance fleet is the largest in the nation with more than 600 towing-response vessels. In a twist of fate that some say is a homecoming for the organization, 40 years ago Founder Schwartz had an early BoatUS headquarters office located just one block away.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Greenspring residents and staff celebrate the Springfield retirement community's 20th Anniversary.

Greenspring Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Greenspring, an Erickson Living re-tirement community, celebrates 20 years of serving seniors this month with a series of anniversary events on its Springfield campus.

Greenspring first opened its doors to pioneer residents on Nov. 17, 1998, bringing a revolutionary kind of retirement living to Northern Virginia. Today, it is the largest continuing care retirement community in the Commonwealth of Virginia, serving more than 2,000 residents.

"A lot has changed in 20 years, but our mission remains the same," said Chandra Kumar,

Greenspring's Executive Director. "Sharing our gifts to create a community that celebrates life is not only our mission statement, but truly a way of life here at Greenspring — for staff and residents alike." Greenspring's picturesque campus features five restaurants, a fitness center, all-season pool and spa, an on-site medical center and pharmacy, bank, library, salon, computer lab, creative arts studio, woodshop, music room and more. The community even has its own television studio and polling precinct. Additional information about Greenspring can be found at GreenspringCommunity.com.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



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

Call for Children's Connection 2018

Get creative and send art, poetry and more.

During the last week of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette, Children's Almanac and Children's Centre View) is a tradition of well over a decade.

We welcome contributions from public and private schools, art classes, individuals and homeschoolers. We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email or delivered on flash drive. Writing should be submitted in text format. Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format.

Some suggestions:

- ❖ Drawings or paintings or photographs of

your family, friends, pets or some favorite activity. These should be photographed or scanned and submitted in jpeg format. Photos of sculpture or larger art projects are also welcome.

❖ Short answers (50 to 100 words) to some of the following questions: If you could give your parents, family or friends any gift that didn't cost money what would that gift be? What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming year? What do you want to be when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite toy? What makes a good friend?

❖ Your opinion (50 to 100 words) about traffic, sports, restaurants, video games, toys, trends, politics, etc.

- ❖ Poetry or other creative writing.
- ❖ News stories from school newspapers.
- ❖ Photos and text about activities or events.

To be published, we must have the full first and last name of the student artist/writer.

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school

location. Home schoolers' contributions are welcomed.

To send flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the flash drive to: Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette, Children's Almanac and Children's Centre View), 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Please send all submissions by Monday, Dec. 3, 2018. The Children's Edition will publish the last week of 2018.

You can see last year's editions by visiting www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/ and scroll down to Children's Edition.

Email submissions for the Children's Edition to the following editors:

For Burke, Clifton, Fairfax, Fairfax Station, Great Falls, Herndon, Lorton, McLean, Reston, or Springfield, email to Kemal Kurspahic at kemal@connectionnewspapers.com.

For Arlington, Potomac, CentreView, Chantilly, Alexandria and Mount Vernon, email to Steven Mauren, smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

EDITORIAL

Bringing People in from the Cold

This year 36 churches will be host sites for the hypothermia program.

BY JOE FAY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FACETS

Fifteen years ago, two Fairfax men froze to death during the fall. At the time, FACETS was a nonprofit that was primarily serving meals to the county's homeless in partnership with several churches. FACETS' leaders knew that feeding people only to send them back into the extreme cold was not a great answer for the growing number of people who were homeless in the community.

That winter FACETS responded by offering temporary shelter in conjunction with its partner churches, the Lamb Center, and Salvation Army to get people in from the cold. The first year, these hypothermia shelters rotated to several different churches and only opened when the temperatures dropped below freezing. Soon the centers were serving up to 60 people on cold nights.



The program has evolved as the region's population has grown. In 2006, FACETS worked on policies and procedures with the county and formally began managing central Fairfax's Hypothermia Prevention and Response Program. This year 36 churches will be host sites for the program with more than 50 churches and other faith communities providing volunteers.

These faith community partners rotate when opening their doors to provide shelter. In anticipation, churches and temples are preparing their facilities to welcome people in need during the cold months ahead — cleaning, getting supplies, and preparing the space. Other volunteers are planning menus. Unique partnerships have formed as a result of the program as Christians, Muslims, Jews, and more join together to help the homeless and in the process learn about each other.

The effort also matured beyond just providing safe haven. Guests now receive life-changing

case management. By interacting with guests at the shelters, FACETS' case managers are able to address their needs in a very personal way by gaining their trust and connecting them with housing solutions and critical services. They also receive a variety of services from the county.

Last year 283 guests were given shelter from the biting cold. More than 3,800 people volunteered 33,000 hours last season to care for these guests who are homeless. By the end of season, 41 of these people had left homelessness behind and were housed.

This year's Hypothermia Response and Prevention Program began the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend and runs seven nights a week through April 1. With the projected cold and forecasts of a very snowy winter season, demand is expected to grow.

To learn more, donate or volunteer, visit us at www.FACETSCares.org.

FACETS is a Fairfax-based nonprofit working to prevent and end homelessness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protecting Our Diversity

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for publishing the article about the Fairfax For All coalition's recent activities ("Advocating for Immigrant Protection").

As the daughter of two immigrants, immigration policy has al-

ways been important to me — especially as the debate over deportation and ICE has escalated. My parents were fortunate enough to be able to immigrate legally, and have been citizens for about 10 years, but in examining the data I've come to see that that's most likely to do with the fact that they are white and had college degrees. Our town is so beautifully diverse,

and I believe that we're losing an important part of our culture when immigrants are scared to participate in the community for fear of deportation.

If what Fairfax For All says is true, then there is an entire group of people in our town who are being excluded from important decisions, prevented from seeking medical attention, and afraid to participate

in the community — all out of fear. I'm learning just how important these relationships to the community, or social ties, are. They allow individuals a sense of purpose and help them to feel assimilated into this community that we like to profess as being so diverse.

Emma Steinhobel
Herndon

Springfield CONNECTION

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BULLETIN

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

HOLIDAY DONATIONS

Blanket and Coat Drive. Through Dec. 8. Organized by NOVA Relief Center, blankets and coats will be sent to refugees in three camps in Jordan this winter. Blankets and coats should be new or gently worn. Monetary donations are also needed and may be made to NOVA Relief Center online and at some drop-off locations. For drop-off sites or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit novareliefcenr.org.

Holiday Basket Donation.

Thanksgiving basket donations by Nov. 19 and Christmas baskets by Dec. 17. Preparing a special holiday meal and joining one's family around the table to give thanks are visions that come to mind when we think of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. For many families and individuals, enjoying a special holiday meal when finances are tight is just not possible. Visit www.koinoniacaes.org/holiday-baskets.html for suggestions and to sign up to donate a basket.

Food for Fines. Nov. 1-30. Fairfax County Public Library will be hosting a food drive called "Food for Fines." Canned goods and other non-perishable items collected during the drive will be donated to Food for Others, a not-for-profit food pantry and food rescue operation that serves Fairfax County. Each item donated will erase \$1 from a patron's overdue fines up to a maximum of \$15. Customers may donate even if there are no fines accrued. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/food-fines for more.

Toys for Tots Donations. Nov. 28-Dec. 8 at PaperMoon, 6315 Amherst Ave., Springfield. PaperMoon, a gentlemen's club in Springfield, will be collecting new, unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots. Call 703-866-4160 or visit www.papermoonvip.com

Toys for Tots Drive. Through Dec. 10. Area Sheehy Auto Stores will collect new and unwrapped toys to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, which will distribute those toys as gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted. Sheehy's Toys for Tots drop-off locations include:

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

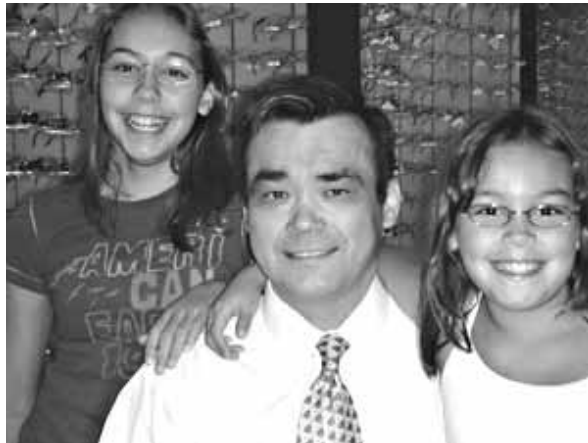
Christmas Wish Donations and Volunteers. Koinonia is now accepting donations of unwrapped Christmas gifts so that their clients can pick out gifts for their families. This year Christmas wishes will be held at Franconia United Methodist Church from Dec. 10-12. Donations will be accepted through Dec. 10. Visit www.koinoniacaes.org for a list of suggested toys and gift cards. Volunteers needed Dec. 9-12, call 703-971-1991.

Sponsor a Local Family. Through Dec. 14, Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) is seeking volunteers to sponsor families in need. Sponsors are matched with an individual or family with demonstrated need, and may provide a December holiday meal, and/or gifts for children under 18. Cash donations and gift cards are welcome to assist those who are not sponsored. A wonderful family, company or group holiday service project. Register and learn more at britepaths.org. Contact 703-273-8829 or jwalton@britepaths.org.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

DR. GENE SWEETNAM DR. GRACE CHANG

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

'The Dance Numbers Are Spectacular'

Encore presents holiday show, "An Invitation to Christmas."

BY BONNIE HOBBS

To Go

The dancers of Encore Theatrical Arts Project are kicking up their heels with glee, getting ready for their upcoming, holiday extravaganza, "An Invitation to Christmas." The show runs Dec. 7-16 in the Richard Ernst Theater at NOVA's Annandale campus.

In the story, the elves at the North Pole are super-busy with so much work to do that they need extra help. So they send out invitations to children selected by Santa to attend Elf-Training School. However, one of the new recruits is a full-grown man, and his classmates wonder why he's there. He does, too, since he thought he was going on a job interview.

The cast of 24 dancers, plus adult guest performers Jack Stein and Allen McRae, have been rehearsing since August, and Director/Choreographer Raynor van der Merwe says things are coming along really well. "We had our first, dress rehearsal and, suddenly, the characters came to life," she said. "And many of the performers are triple threats — dancing, singing and acting."

"Besides being a visual feast for the eyes, the show is uplifting — from the story to the music," she continued. "We have lots of

Show times are: Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 8 at noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 9 at noon and 4 p.m.; Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 15 at noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m.; and Dec. 16 at noon and 4 p.m. Tickets range from \$19-\$26 via www.encore-tap.org or 703-222-5511.

Location: Richard Ernst Theater, NOVA campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike in Annandale.

new numbers, plus some old favorites. I look for music that might be familiar, but not something people will hear over the radio. So I choose songs that move the story forward, put people in the holiday spirit and let them escape this busy season for two hours."

The scenes take place in New York City, Santa's workshop at the North Pole and outdoors in a snow-covered, winter wonderland. And van der Merwe describes the costumes as both "colorful and glamorous."

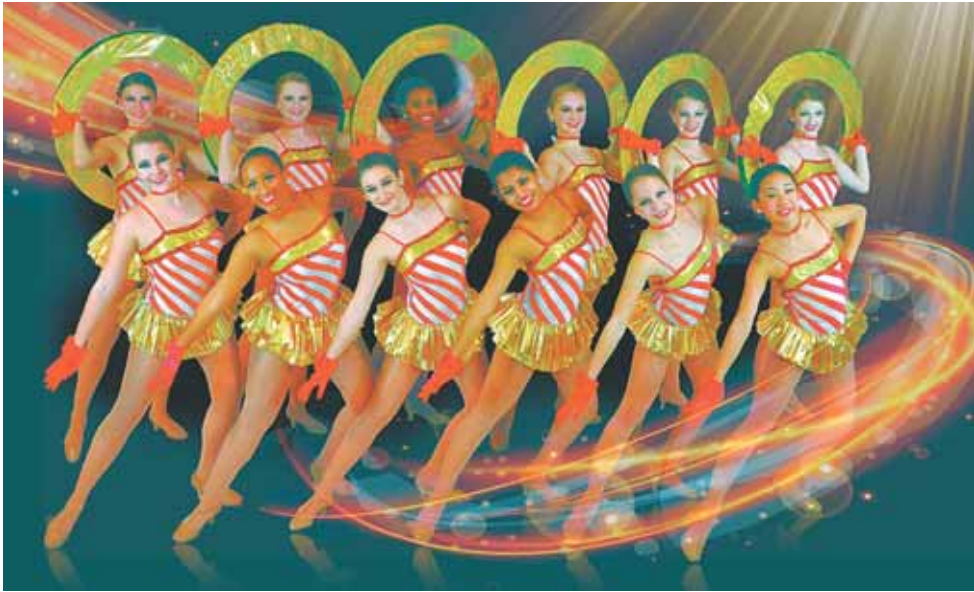
"Everybody's working hard and has clicked really well," she said. "It's a great unity and, when everything comes together, it's magic. And that's what I love about theater — the community of it. No one does it on their own; the script, choreography, sets and lighting are among the puzzle pieces

SEE ENCORE, PAGE 14

From left:
Ashleigh Wood,
Kendra Walsh,
Rithika Ashok,
Tiffanie Jones
and Myra
Lawson strike
a pose.
Encore's
Christmas
show starts
Dec. 7.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
LINDA HELMS
PHOTOGRAPHY





Encore's dancers always perform a Rockettes-themed number during their shows.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDA HELMS PHOTOGRAPHY

Multiple Santa Clauses will entertain during Encore's upcoming Christmas show.



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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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ONGOING

Red Cross Fundraiser. Through Saturday, Dec. 15 at Crafhthouse, 11861 Palace Way, Fairfax. All three Crafhthouse locations in Northern Virginia are donating 10 percent of all bottled beer purchases to the American Red Cross – California Wildfires Fund to assist those affected by the wildfires in California. Call 703-825-1811 or visit www.crafthouseusa.com for more.

Pop-Up Art show. Through Dec. 16 at Gallery 57, 11899 Grand Commons Ave., Fairfax. Emerging Artists Initiative and the Peterson Companies are partnering to bring an artistic and creative facet to the Fairfax community. A new pop-up art gallery at Fairfax Corner Center will exhibit paintings and sculptures by four resident artists in vacant retail space. Free. director@eaiinc.org or visit eaiinc.org

Glass National 2018. Through Jan. 13 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Gallery, W-16, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center presents its 3rd Annual Glass National exhibition. Glass National is a juried exhibition which promotes and displays the breadth of contemporary glass artwork being created throughout the USA and Canada by highlighting both functional and sculptural works. This year's juror is artist and educator Carmen Lozar, director of the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries at Illinois Wesleyan University. Visit www.workhousearts.org/event/glass-national-2018.

Founding Artists Exhibition.

Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10-year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Visit www.workhousearts.org for more.

Second Saturdays. 6-9 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Second Saturday Art Walk is the perfect time to meet nearly 85 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in our galleries. Visit www.workhousearts.org/.

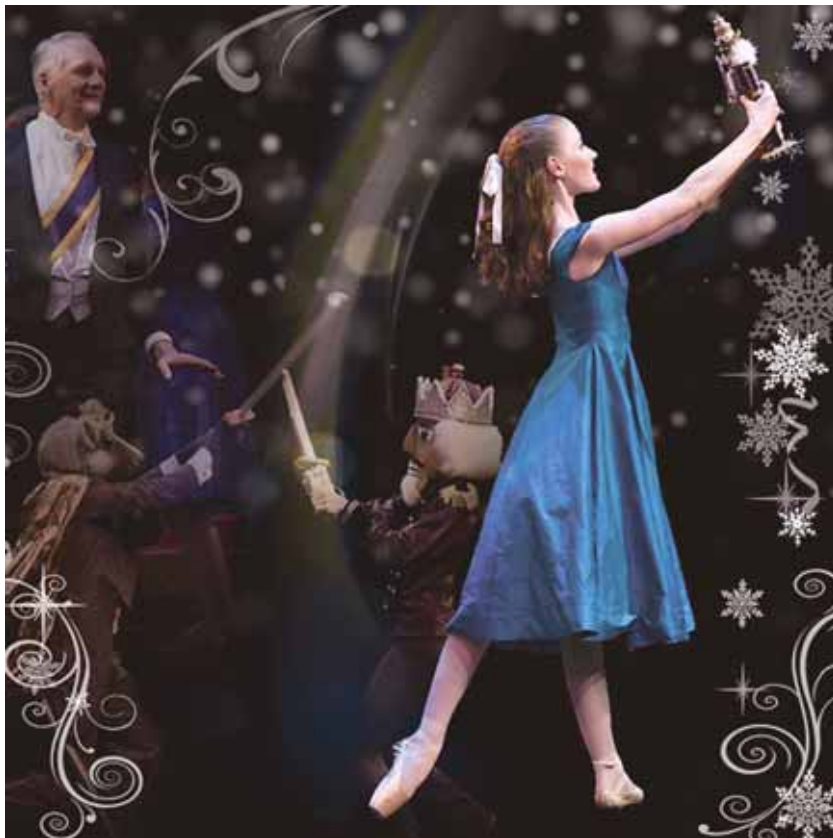
Smoke Free Bingo. 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). www.fairfaxvd.com. 703-273-3638.

THURSDAY/NOV. 29

Genealogy Workshop. 6:30-9 p.m. at Pohick Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Anna Maria Fitzhugh Chapter, NSDAR, will have a Genealogy Workshop. Prospective DAR members will receive assistance with the application process. Contact 703-690-7136 for more.

THURSDAY/NOV. 29-DEC. 2

BalletNova presents The Nutcracker. Thursday-Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 1 and 5 p.m.; Sunday, 3 and 7 p.m. at George Mason High School Theatre, 7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. BalletNova's Nutcracker has become a holiday tradition. BalletNova presents a brand-new production of the holiday classic with new



BalletNova Presents The Nutcracker

BalletNova's Nutcracker has become a holiday tradition. BalletNova presents a brand-new production of the holiday classic with new costumes, new characters and new choreography. The Sugar Plum Fairy is being danced by Willa Frantz, of Fairfax. Thursday-Friday, Nov. 29-30, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 1, 1 and 5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 2, 3 and 7 p.m. at George Mason High School Theatre, 7124 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. \$18-42. Call 703-778-3008 or visit www.BalletNova.org for more.

IMAGE BY
RUTH JUDSON /
ELIZABETH LUCREZIO

costumes, new characters and new choreography. The Sugar Plum Fairy is danced by Willa Frantz, of Fairfax. \$18-42. Call 703-778-3008 or visit www.BalletNova.org for more.

THURSDAY/NOV. 29-DEC. 1

Holiday Book Sale. Thursday, 3-9 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. More than 10,000 like new books in all categories, most at \$2 or less, plus loads of CDs, DVDs and special gift offerings. Over 3,000 children's books, too. Funds raised will pay for our children's programs and more. Free admission. Email rbfriends@gmail.com or call 703-451-8055.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30-SATURDAY/DEC. 1

The Pajama Game. Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 2 and 7 p.m. at Falls Church High School, 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church. A musical based on the 1953 novel "7 1/2 Cents" by Richard Bissell. \$7. Visit www.fchsdrama.org or www.itickets.com/events/408638.html.

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Holiday Extravaganza. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Santa arrives at 8:30 a.m. courtesy of the Lorton Volunteer Fire Department kicking off the Candy Cane Kids Fun Run for kids age 12 and under. At 9 a.m., 170 vendors featuring all sorts of handcrafted items will offer everything from handmade glass ornaments and jewelry to soaps, lotions, clothing, and holiday décor. Cookies with Santa, free, 9:30-12; Fairfax Co Sheriff, Child ID and fingerprinting, free, 9-3; Santa's Book Emporium, 9-3. Proceeds benefit the SCHS All Night Grad Party, PTSO, Band Boosters and Athletic Boosters. Free, \$3. Visit www.southcountypthso.org.

Tyler's Mission Fundraiser. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Tyler's Mission, in partnership with

Beyond Batten Disease Foundation 501(3)(c), strives to raise awareness and funding for research, treatment and a cure. Tyler's Stars will be holding a fundraiser during the South County Holiday Extravaganza. Visit www.defeatbatten.org to learn more about Tyler and Batten Disease.

Advent Festival. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. Open to all and designed with busy families in mind. Includes a Fair Trade Christmas Market, Christmas Concert (11 a.m.), Food Trucks, DIY Advent craft stations, free coffee and cookies and more. Free admission. Visit ststephensfairfax.org.

Christmastide at Gunston Hall. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Holiday activities start 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. \$15 for adults; \$10 for children. Visit www.gunstonhall.org/ or call 703-550-9220.

Joyful Music in Clifton. 4:30, 5:30, and 6:30 p.m. at Clifton Primitive Baptist Church, 7200 Main St., Clifton. Art Guild of Clifton presents Quest Singers in three holiday music programs, opening this festive season. Tickets not required. Free will donation sustaining Art Guild scholarship program appreciated. Horse parade at noon. Holiday Homes Tour, 4-7 p.m. Call 703-830-8466 or visit www.artguildofclifton.org.

A Cathedral Brass Christmas. 6 p.m. at Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. The Cathedral Brass will present "Christmas Cheer!" – a festive program of holiday favorites. The Cathedral Brass is a 23-player symphonic brass ensemble. Free. Visit www.livingsaviorlutheran.org or cathedralbrass.org for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 1-2

Holiday Arts and Crafts Show. Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Audrey Moore

Recreation Center, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale. One of Northern Virginia's longest running arts and crafts shows with plenty of great gifts to choose from. Top-quality handmade arts and crafts will be offered by 100 of the area's finest artisans. Admission is \$2 per person; children ages 12 and under are free. Door prizes. Call 703-321-7081

SUNDAY/DEC. 2

Christmas Musical: "Here Comes Heaven." 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. at Jubilee Christian Center of Fairfax, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. Jubilee Christian Center presents "Here Comes Heaven," composed of adults, youth, and children. There will be a reception with refreshments after the 11 a.m. service. The event is free. Call 703-383-1170 or visit www.jccag.org for more.

Concert: for King & Country. 6-10 p.m. at Eagle Bank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Two-time GRAMMY Award winners for King & Country Christmas tour. Joining the duo on tour is Zach Williams. \$28., \$40., \$42.5 Reserved, \$78.50 VIP. Call 703-993-3000 or visit www.TheConcertSpot.com

TUESDAY/DEC. 4

Burke Historical Society Research Seminar. 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Preserve heirloom photographs and documents – photographs, letters, ledgers, and more. Virginia Room librarian Chris Barbuschak will share preservation techniques to use at home. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org

THURSDAY/DEC. 6

Winter Wonderland. 4-7 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax. Join us Insight Memory Care Center in celebrating the season at their Winter Wonderland Holiday Party with treats, drinks, holiday cheer, and to celebrate the families, supporters, volunteers, board and staff members who support Insight. Visit

www.insightmcc.org for more.

Holiday Open House. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon Governmental Cetnter, 2511 Parkers Lane. Join Supervisor Storck, his staff and members of the Mount Vernon District Boards, Authorities and Commissions for a holiday open house. Enjoy an evening of refreshments, get to know the staff and tour the office. Consider supporting those in need by donating to the Blanket & Coat Drive for Refugees sponsored by the NOVA Relief Center. New or gently used coat and blanket donations can be dropped off at the Mount Vernon District Office until Friday, Dec. 7. RSVP by Dec. 1, appreciated but not required. Call 703-780-7518.

FRIDAY/DEC. 7

Holiday Benefit Concert. 7:30-9 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Celebrate the holiday season with candlelight and carols with hammered dulcimerist, Karen Ashbrook and friends Paul Oorts, Eileen Estes and Jamie Sandel. Free admission. All donations will go to Fairfax Area Community Emergency and Transitional Services (FACETS) and Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO) to help people in need. Childcare provided. Reception to follow. Email foma@standrews.net or call 703-455-2500 for more.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 7-8

The Pajama Game. Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 2 and 7 p.m. at Falls Church High School, 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church. The Pajama Game is a musical based on the 1953 novel "7 1/2 Cents" by Richard Bissell. \$7. Visit www.fchsdrama.org or www.itickets.com/events/408638.html.

SATURDAY/DEC. 8

Winter Open House. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Celebrate the season with crafts, activities, seasonal music with a recorder ensemble and light refreshments for the whole family. Children can join Kingsley's Winter Reading Club by reading five books between Dec. 8 and Feb. 2 and receive a prize. Free. Call 703-978-5600.

Art & Crafts Marketplace. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Santa and his elves will be on duty for picture taking; gift wrapping available (all sizes welcome); vendors with something for everyone; babysitting for parents while shopping; food for sale; 50/50 raffle; drawings hourly and an auction. Contact Carrie Holmes, Chairperson at 571-205-9083 or Bob Gaylord, LBSS PTSA Second Vice President at 703-338-3033.

Night in Bethlehem. 6-8 p.m. at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Experience a live recreation of the Christmas Story. Free to the community and includes a living Nativity, manger petting zoo, crafts, and hot cider. Call 703 971 5151 or visit www.franconiaumc.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 15

Jazz Brunch and Vendor Expo. Vendor Expo, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jazz Brunch, noon at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, 6560 Braddock Road, Alexandria. Fairfax County NAACP offers a Jazz Brunch and Business and Vendor Expo, featuring more than 40 vendors. Shop for holiday gifts and stay to enjoy the jazz brunch celebration. Proceeds benefit

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY CARLA OLIVO

Stan the Stallion and Santa get ready to run a previous Candy Cane Kids' Fun Run.

Holiday Extravaganza

Santa arrives at 8:30 a.m. courtesy of the Lorton Volunteer Fire Department kicking off the Candy Cane Kids Fun Run for kids age 12 and under. At 9 a.m., 170 vendors featuring all sorts of handcrafted items will offer everything from handmade glass ornaments and jewelry to soaps, lotions, clothing, and holiday décor. Cookies with Santa, free, 9:30-12; Fairfax Co Sheriff, Child ID and fingerprinting, free, 9-3; Santa's Book Emporium, 9-3. Proceeds benefit the SCHS All Night Grad Party, PTSO, Band Boosters and Athletic Boosters. Saturday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Free, \$3. Visit

scholarships and advocacy efforts. Jazz Brunch, \$65; expo admission is free. Visit www.fairfaxnaacp.org.

Pet Adoption Event. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Find a new forever animal friend with the help of the City of Fairfax Animal Control and Animal Shelter. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/police/programs/animal-control/adopt-a-pet for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 16

Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker. 4 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts Concert Hall. Experience this timeless holiday classic with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet. Enjoy a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, sugar plum fairies and epic battles between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice. There will not be a pre-concert discussion for this matinee performance. \$49-\$89. Visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org/nutcracker-1-1/ for more.

BHS General Meeting. 3:30-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6540 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Cindy Bennett shares anecdotes from her new book Wicked Fairfax County, recounting events like the typhoid epidemic at Camp Alger, a 1918 murder in Burke, and, of course, the Bunnymen. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 21

Moscow Ballet's Nutcracker. 4 and 8 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts

Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Experience Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker during their Dove of Peace Tour, spreading goodwill in over 100 cities across North America during the holiday season. \$28 and up. Go to www.nutcracker.com for tickets.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 26

Holiday Concert. 6-7:30 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, D.C. Featuring local Encore Chorale groups from Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Reston. Encore Creativity for Older Adults, the nation's largest choral program for singers 55+, will present the combined talents of more than 250 Encore Chorales and Encore ROCKS singers in concert. Free, the public is invited and no tickets are required. Call 301-261-5747 or visit www.encorecreativity.org for more.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 27-29

The Nutcracker. 2 and 7 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus in the Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater. Virginia Ballet Company and School will present its 68th season of the classic Nutcracker ballet. \$30 for adults; \$20 for children, students and seniors at www.vaballet.org. A limited number of general admission tickets is available for the Working Stage Rehearsal on Dec. 26 at 6:30 p.m. (\$10) at www.vaballet.org. The tickets for the Working Stage Rehearsal must be purchased in advance.

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This traffic jam leads up to the one-lane underpass.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



The concrete is crumbling in places at the Cinder Bed Road underpass: Changes to the outdated underpass are being studied.

One-Lane Underpass Now Seeing Backups

Changes to the outdated underpass at Cinder Bed Road being studied.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Over the last couple of months, Cinder Bed Road has become the detour route for the new bridge that is about half way done over the CSX Railroad tracks in Newington. The detour route was mapped out by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in connection with their Backlick Road Bridge over the CSX Railroad project. During the week, particularly around the rush hours, the traffic backs up on Cinder Bed Road past the Newington Road intersection, causing another delay in a frequently used thoroughfare.

There is a rumor that the underpass will be fixed as part of the bridge project that's going on now but that's only partially true. According to Michael Murphy, a VDOT public affairs spokesperson, there is a study going on concerning a new overpass at that location, and that study is funded by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) as part of Atlantic Gateway. Whether or not Newington Road is closed during construction of the underpass has not been decided yet; the decision won't be made until the project enters the design phase. The design phase could start as early as 2019, according to Murphy.

The underpass is part of a frequently used cut-through route from the Telegraph Road-Fort Belvoir area to I-95.

Jack Moriarty is a bartender at Fair Winds, a local brewery right next to the bridge. He's has seen all the traffic backing up and pe-



Trucks are a big part of the traffic in this industrial area.



When completed, this new VDOT bridge should provide some relief to the Cinder Bed traffic jam.



This detour map on the bridge webpage routes traffic right down Cinder Bed Road to the underpass.

MAP BY THE
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

destrians dangerously walking under the bridge. "I'm surprised it's still open," he said. And as far as the increased rush hour backups, "that's good for our business."

Candice Bennett, a Lorton Station community association board member, hasn't heard anything. She recently attended a South County Federation meeting, but it wasn't mentioned. "Nothing about any changes coming to this road," she said.

The \$9.5 million bridge project about a mile down the road from the one-lane bridge is part of the larger Atlantic Gateway improvements, a multi-modal suite of projects focused on the I-95 corridor between Washington, D.C. and Fredericksburg, according to the project website. The new bridge is expected to be opened by spring 2019.

Cinder Bed

The Newington Road-Cinder Bed Road area can be described as a cross between industrial and warehouse-office park. On the southern end, it ends in a circle, surrounded by warehouses and offices, and on the northern end, there are a few vacant properties, various auto body companies, a Fairfax Water Authority office and the Fairfax County Newington Transportation Facility.

A few years ago, Cinder Bed Road was realigned and a bridge built over the Long Branch stream, eliminating an area that frequently flooded. It is in the Mount Vernon District.

At the dead end on the north end, a bike trail winds around under the power lines, continues along the stream, and goes uphill to the Island Creek community. Plans are in the works to connect the bike trail to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station.

CAPPIES REVIEW

West Springfield High 'The Monster Under The Bed'

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entertaining for
viewers of all ages.

BY AMANDA WILFONG
FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL

The Monster Under The Bed," presented by West Springfield High School, was thoroughly entertaining for viewers of all ages, snatching the attention and laughter of the entire audience. The plot revolves around Ben, a young boy that stumbles across an actual monster who is living under his bed, with whom Ben switches places for the day. The show debuted in the Polka Theatre, in the United Kingdom in 2009. In West Springfield's production, they successfully upheld the play's British roots through the impressive use of believable yet understandable accents by every single actor in the show. Connor Brunson, who portrayed Ben, instantly captured the hearts of everyone in the audience. His youthful energy and playful personality solidified the image of a little boy that he tried to convey, which was believable the entire time. Sonya Maria Leon perfectly fit the role of the zany yet sweet Monster found under Ben's bed, caus-



From left — Connor Brunson, Mia Bridges, Emily Norto, Martin Desjardins.

ing every scene that she participated in to burst with energy and enthusiasm. What stood out during her performance was the physicality she used, altering certain actions like jumping around and walking to make herself seem even more like a unique creature, which contributed heavily to the entertaining and comedic aspects of the show. Both Brunson and Leon established distinc-

tive relationships not only with each other, but with all those around them, making the world of the play much more real.

Captivating performances by supporting roles are what brought this production to the next level. Zoey Barnett, portraying the role of Ben's teacher, Miss Rowlands, commanded the stage with every appearance, and added depth and detail to a very simple

character. Steven "Fish" Smith also did a phenomenal job at making the simple role of Anthony stand out throughout the performance by combining the perfect amount of arrogance and comedy. Easily one of the most impressive appearances of the show was that of Martin Desjardins as the Dad Monster, whose face and body were never shown during the play, but who was still able to create a clear character filled with emotion using only his voice. He effortlessly showed various different sides of the role and displayed perfect character shifts.

Many of the technical aspects of the production were very effective and well-executed. The set pieces and puppetry were what really enhanced the show. The set pieces were extremely intricate, with numerous tiny details which transported the audience to a completely different world. The breathtaking puppet that represented the Dad Monster was consistently in sync with the words being spoken by Desjardins, and all puppets used during the play were very detailed and creative. The puppeteers were also in full costume and makeup, immersing themselves in the environment.

West Springfield created a production of The Monster Under The Bed that was a truly amusing and playful experience, perfect for people of all ages who are seeking high energy levels, talented individuals, and endless amounts of fun!

PHOTO BY ALANNA CARACULANO/WEST SPRINGFIELD HS

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Encore Presents Holiday Show

FROM PAGE 9

that must fall into place to make something unique and special. And with a live audience, each performance is different."

Chantilly High sophomore Kate Persell portrays Jingles the elf, who supervises the children who've been invited to become elves. "She's really cute, but likes to stay organized," said Persell. "She's friendly with the kids, but snarky with the adult trainee. I enjoy acting, and it's fun to play someone different from my own personality."

She's danced with Encore since third grade and loves the many, different styles of dance. "I can get my energy out, it's a good form of exercise and I do it with all my favorite people," she said. Persell's favorite dance is the "Once-A-Year Day" number. "All the elves are doing a hectic dance, running around like crazy, getting ready for Christmas," she said. "There's no resting point, and I love rushing with adrenaline, the whole time. And when we do the final pose, it feels so good."

Persell said the audience will enjoy the storyline because "It's humorous, with the businessman in an elf costume that doesn't fit him. The children in the cast are super-cute and talented, and the dance numbers are spectacular."

High-schooler Bea Tremblay dances in the ensemble and portrays a mail carrier. "She delivers the invitations to the kids, as well as to the adult, George Parker," said Tremblay. "She's undercover from the North Pole, so she's in New York street clothes. I wear a U.S. Postal Service hoodie and hat, plus gray slacks. She's a little mischievous and jolly because she knows she's handing out invitations to a magical experience."

Tremblay enjoys taking her character in a humorous direction and working with the other actors and dancers. She especially likes the "Santas" number. "We wear big bellies, wigs, hats, boots and Santa costumes," she said. "It's a high-energy dance, and 26 of us are onstage; and it's so much fun that I'm smiling the whole time."

She's danced since age 10 and is in her fourth year with Encore's performing company. "The company creates a community, and the other girls and I support each other and have formed a family," said Tremblay. "And it's so nice dancing together without having to compete. We can concentrate on the art and performance quality."

Calling the show "fun-loving and happy," she said, "We have lots of little kids acting, too, and they're really doing a great job. We've got bright and beautiful costumes, and the set puts you in the Christmas spirit as soon as you see it. We also have cool props, neat vocal numbers and a lot of actors who make it what it is."

High-schooler Becca Perron plays Digits the elf. "She works in the mailroom and is very serious," said Perron. "She doesn't like her supervisor, Dally, because she bosses her around. Digits also thinks Dally is lazy and she should have her job. She's fun to play because she's not like me, and being an elf is just the best time. I get to be over-the-top and really let myself go."

It's Perron's ninth year with Encore and sixth with its performing company. She likes the "Rag Dolls" number because, she said, "We get to make really funny faces and expressions as Raggedy Anns and Andys. And we especially like it when the kids in the audience laugh."

"As a group, we put so much passion and love into our shows," she continued. "So when we see a big



Dancers rehearse a number from Encore's new show, "An Invitation to Christmas."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDA HELMS PHOTOGRAPHY



From left: Faith Chin, Maya Tischler and Tiffanie Jones are among Encore's dancers.

audience, it's just the greatest feeling. We're well-known for our professional sets and performances that set us apart from other dance groups."

High-schooler Faith Chun plays an elf named Cookie. "She loves baking treats and has an energetic personality," said Chun. "She gets excited after making cookies and other baked goods, but is disappointed when they're all gone. It's fun playing her because of her energy, and I'm sometimes that way, too."

Chun's favorite dance is "Rockettes," during which the dancers wear white leotards with white fluff in back and have their hair in high ponytails. "I like that style of dance, with the kickline, and the number has both fast and slow parts," she said. "We have sharp poses, so we have to really be in synch."

Dancing since age 3, it's her seventh year with Encore. "Dancing is always my passion," said Chun. "It makes me happy and is my favorite thing to do. It takes me away from my stress and schoolwork, and I really enjoy doing it." Regarding the show, she said audiences will like "the storyline and the dance styles. It will allow them to connect to Christmas in a different way and is enjoyable to watch."

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

Toy Drive. Through Friday, Dec. 14 at local Weichert, Realtors offices. Members of the community are invited to drop off new, unwrapped toys at the company's sales offices. The toys will be delivered throughout the holidays in conjunction with local charities that assist financially and physically disadvantaged children. To find a local office, go to www.weichert.com/offices/.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping (Tuesday, Friday) within the Fairfax-Burke area and in the South County area (west of Route 1, Alexandria). Office volunteers are also needed to work in the SCFB (Olley Glen) office to schedule rides. Bilingual volunteers (English and Spanish) are needed as drivers and office volunteers. Email Shavaun Wall at recruiter@scfbva.org or call 703-323-4788.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30

Application Deadline. The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District is seeking a spring intern. Help to support the NVSWCD outreach programs, which reach thousands of people and have a deep impact on many youth and adults. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/soil-water-conservation/spring-internship-2019 for details.

Portrait of an ADHD Graduate. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 100, Dunn Loring. This workshop will highlight the strengths and challenges of students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, the effectiveness of parenting as a consultant, and more. Information and ideas for parents of children of ALL ages. Free to parents, educators and community members. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more

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. Have in-depth conversations with CTS staff. Free to parents, educators and community members. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

Blue Christmas Service. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Fairfax. knowledge loss or difficulty during the holiday season. Free. Email comms@unityoffairfax.org, call 703-281-1767 or RSVP at www.eventbrite.com/e/blue-christmas-service-tickets-52684194845.

Survey Deadline. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has launched an online survey (fcfcpstudy.metroquest.com) requesting feedback from residents on future Fairfax County and Franconia-Springfield Parkways corridor enhancements. FCDOT held three community meetings in Fairfax, Springfield and Reston that featured interactive exercises for attendees to provide input on the future of the Parkways. The exercises from the meetings have been converted into an online survey. Additional comments may be sent to the FCDOT team via the project webpage at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/study/fairfax-county-parkway or by calling 703-877-5600, TTY 711.

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Medicare - Health Fair. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Fairfax County Government is offering a free Medicare - Health Fair: Congressman Gerry Connolly's Annual Open Season Workshop for Federal Employees and Retirees. Call 703-256-3071, TTY 711.

Feedback Deadline. Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) continues to solicit feedback on how people get around in the Franconia-Springfield area on the local transit network. To give your input on service in the Franconia Springfield area:

- ❖ Email fairfaxconnector@fairfaxcounty.gov
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Mow, Mow, Mow Your Grass ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... Not gently by the stream, and not by yours truly, either. Yet another task that seems beyond this homeowner's ability.

Which is fine by me because the older I get, it seems the less capable I become, and the less inclined I am to risk life and limb in the pursuit of that which that doesn't make me happy. Throw in a lung cancer diagnosis and the last thing my re-wired (figuratively speaking) brain will allow me to do is anything which doesn't put a smile on my face and a bounce in my step. And avoiding yard work ranks up there with most household tasks that a typical able-bodied homeowner takes pride in doing him or herself.

It's not so much that I take pride in avoiding it, it's just that I know my limitations, unlike Hal Holbrook in "Magnum Force."

Sharp objects, mechanical objects and/or electrical/spinning/rotating objects, objects with multiple doohickies (or a reasonable facsimile thereof), objects which require assembly/reading instructions are all challenging for me. Moreover, none of it fascinates me in the least.

What fascinates me more is the level of interest and passion with which so many of my brethren are engaged in the process; from start to finish.

I just don't get it. Nor have I ever gotten it, and neither do I expect to get it in the future.

Perhaps this total lack of interest comes from the experience of being a life-long renter. Never during my pre-college daze was my family ever responsible for yard work, home repairs (inside or out), or had much of a need for tools, other than the most rudimentary: hammer, screwdriver, pliers, etc.

No power tools. Nothing electrical that required a plug/proximity to an outlet. No plumbing, and of course, nothing like a chainsaw.

My parents were children of the Depression and all they had time for was school, play and some work; yes, even as children. And living in tenement/multi-level housing hardly lent itself to anything but doing what was necessary to survive.

But as my parents so often said: everyone else they knew was experiencing similar hardships so they didn't really realize what they were missing. Tools? Repairs? Amenities? Conveniences? Hardly. Toilet paper was a Sears catalogue cut into squares and hung on a nail in the bathroom down the hall - outside of their apartment.

They didn't have money or time for any of it. What money they earned was for food, rent, utilities and clothes; the most basic of basics.

It is through these experiences that my parents passed on their instincts and priorities to the their two Baby Boomer-era sons. There was ample love, affection and importance of family but not so much time and/or energy for interior and exterior home repairs, yard work, tools and what to do with them/how to use them as well as a variety of other homeowner-type tasks.

As a family of renters, it was never our responsibility. I suppose that was a match made in Depression-era heaven because very little in our family's past prepared us for this new future.

When my father returned from his service in World War II (working in Washington, D.C., actually), he had, unlike Liam Neeson, no unique set of skills. He had to find some vocation/avocation that would provide for his family - which he did, as a salesman.

After living in Dorchester, Mass. for their entire lives (since their parents immigrated to America in the early 20th century), in 1958, my parents moved the family to Newton Centre, Mass. - for the schools. We spent the next 15 years as renters and other than taking out the trash and the rubbish, I did very little to hone my homeowner-type skills.

I wouldn't say I've been stigmatized by this experience, but I learned very little that became useful in the maintenance and upkeep of the 275-year-old home, my wife Dina and I have occupied for the past 25+ years. Other than knowing how to ask for help that is.

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

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