

# McLean CONNECTION

WELLBEING  
PAGE 9

HOLIDAY  
ENTERTAINMENT  
PAGE 12

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

# Winterfest Parade in McLean

NEWS, PAGE 3

Happy 4588!

NEWS, PAGE 10

‘Nutcracker’ in Honor of  
Military, First Responders

NEWS, PAGE 8

The Cub Scout Pack 665 of St. John's Episcopal Church marches in the Winterfest Parade in McLean on Sunday.

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The McLean High School Highlanders Marching Band.



The McLean Community Center marches in the parade.

## Winterfest Parade in McLean

Some 54 entries help ring in the holiday season in front of Langley Shopping Center.

With mild weather that turned out to be good, some 54 entries marched in the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Winterfest Parade on Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018, in front of the Langley Shopping Center on Old Chain Bridge Road, starting from Fleetwood Road and going to Elm Street in McLean.

The pre-parade show was emceed by Paul Kohlenberger and included performances by the Kent Gardens Elementary Chorus, the Choral Ensemble from Spring Hill Elementary School, the T.E.A. Center Dancers of McLean, and the band “Vengeance in Red” from Bach to Rock Music School. WUSA-TV9 Journalist Peggy Fox emceed the parade, which included the McLean High School Marching Band, the Army Fife and Drum Corps, Fairfax County Sheriff’s Honor Guard, and lots of Boys and Girl Scouts, Brownies, and Cub Scouts, fire engines and police cruisers, and, of course, Santa. Local elected officials who rode in the parade included: State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), Del. Rip Sullivan (D-48), Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville), and School Board Member Jane Strauss (Dranesville).

According to Trish Butler, Chairman of the Winterfest Steering Committee: “I think this has been an amazing experience for everyone involved. We get praises from all parts of the community about pulling everyone together to open up the holiday season this way.”

— STEVE HIBBARD

The band “Vengeance in Red,” part of the Bach to Rock Music School, performed before the parade.



The Cub Scout Pack 1127 marches in the Winterfest Parade in McLean on Sunday.



The Kent Gardens Elementary School Chorus performed before the parade.



The Girl Scout Troop 4022 marches in the parade.



The Choral Ensemble from Spring Hill Elementary School performed before the parade.



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— Vincent Van Gogh —

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## News



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

From left: Project manager Gibran Abifadel and Director of Fairfax County Dept. of Transportation Tom Biesiadny present the recommendation A-1 to improve the Balls Hill/Old Dominion intersection to a meeting of residents. The meeting was originally scheduled to take place earlier in the month, but was postponed due to the snow event.

## Not All Pleased with Intersection Plan

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

While there were a few who expressed their overall approval for Fairfax County Department of Transportation's (FCDOT) recommendation for improvements to the Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive intersection in McLean, the majority of those who attended the meeting at Cooper Middle School on the evening of Nov. 28 were less than satisfied with the outcome of more than two years of study and analysis.

FCDOT project manager Gibran Abifadel and Director Tom Biesiadny presented plan A-1 as their recommended solution for the exchange. This iteration would reconfigure what they have described as "severely skewed roadway geometry" that with a 3.8-minute average wait currently rates an "F" on their length-of-service scale. That metric measures the seconds of delay that each vehicle experiences at an intersection during peak hours on a scale of A – F.

Under plan A-1, the current intersection would basically be divided in two, with one intersection north of the current crossway, placing it farther away from the new Mehr Farms residential development. To the south, the proposal would realign Balls Hills Road further east, making the new intersection connect to Old Dominion Drive in a T-junction. Dulaney Drive would then meet Balls Hills just before the new intersection with the addition of a new offshoot to protect access to some of the properties located in that area.

**THE CHOICE OF A-1** as the recommended plan was further enhanced, accord-

ing to Abifadel and Biesiadny, by the county's recent purchase of a 1.68-acre parcel from the developers of the Summerstone property on Old Dominion, across from Mehr Farms.

The \$3.1 million purchase "gives us room to add 2,750 feet of pedestrian pathways and 1.5 miles of bike paths," said Abifadel. The additional land also allows the county to include stormwater management systems without further parcel purchases or costly negotiation with residents or developers.

"This option also presents the best Length of Service improvement," Abifadel added, noting that the studies had rated the others as "B" at best, and "D/E" in the case of the plan that included Virginia Department of Transportation requests. "The other options also look to be more costly and more disruptive to residents, nor do they add the enhancements of improved pedestrian and cyclist access."

Dranesville Supervisor John Foust, whose jurisdiction covers the affected area, expressed his approval for the project, declaring it "the best option" and citing that experts in the field of transportation believe these changes would "dramatically improve the intersection and flow of traffic."

Not all of his constituents are equally convinced.

Adrian Lund of McLean was just one of many who questioned why the construction of roundabouts "that also assist with traffic calming" are not being given serious consideration, instead of adding "more traffic light intersections." The fact that only about 1000 feet will be separating two sets of lights have some concerned about backups building in that space when drivers prac-

SEE INTERSECTION, PAGE 14

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# Holiday Family Entertainment at Its Best

## 1<sup>st</sup> Stage presents 'A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration.'

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

**T** rue to its aim, the 1<sup>st</sup> Stage production of, "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Paul Vogel is live Holiday family entertainment at its best.

It is a triumphant production with enormous artistic and historical depth powered forward by the jubilant, vigorous voices of a twelve member ensemble singing nearly two dozen musical numbers.

Under the dynamic direction of 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Artistic Associate, Deidra LaWan Starnes, "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" is a show full of hope, good will and a desire for peace during the troubled times when the United States was still torn apart between North and South, Blue and Grey. It is a production in which lines such as "the hope of peace is sweeter than peace itself" carry powerful meaning.



PHOTO BY TERESA CASTRACANE/COURTESY 1<sup>ST</sup> STAGE.

**From left, Russell Rinker, Karma Price, Billie Krishawn, Ayanna Hardy, Suzy Alden, Gary L. Perkins III, Joshua Simon, Demitrus Carter, Rebecca Ballinger, and V. Savoy McIlwain in "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" at 1<sup>st</sup> Stage.**

Playwright Vogel sets "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" in December 1864 in and around Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia on one of the coldest Christmas Eve in years. Vogel has a multitude of lives intersect in the play. There

are lives of the famous and infamous of Civil War times such as Lincoln, Grant, Lee, Mary Todd Lincoln, Booth and Surratt to name just a few along with fictionalized characters representing African-Americans who have major stories to present in the pag-

## Where and When

1<sup>st</sup> Stage presents "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Performances through Dec. 23. °Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., °Fridays at °8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at °2 p.m. °General admission tickets are \$39. °Senior (65+) tickets are \$36. °Student and military tickets are \$15. °Tickets online at °www.1ststage.org or by call 1°°Stage box office at °703-854-1856. °

eant of history that is "A Civil War Christmas."

The dozen-member cast performs double and triple roles, and some even more. The cast features the fine acting and resplendent voices of Suzy Alden, Rebecca Ballinger, Demitrus Carter, Tiziano D'Affuso, Ayanna Hardy, Billie Krishawn, V. Savoy McIlwain, Gary L. Perkins III, Karma Price, Russell Rinker, Sophie Schulman, and Joshua Simon.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Stage music directors include Markus Williams, Walter "Bobby" McCoy and Leigh Delano. The production includes a live band of piano, violin and percussion. The musical numbers range from the wonderful harmony of "Silent Night," "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," and "O, Tannenbaum" to spirituals with voices that reach to the rafters and beyond such as "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and "Children Go Where I Send Thee" as well as a mournful rendition of "Kaddish." The evocative set design is by Jessica Cancino with character defining expressive costumes by Danielle Preston

The 1<sup>st</sup> Stage production of "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" is one for the entire family.

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# OPINION

# Give Locally

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 helping 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. Some of these are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get at school.

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts

and plenty that we associate with Christmas and the holiday season.

Many nonprofits in the region need your help to provide holiday meals around Christmas, to provide children with gifts.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season, for humans in need, for animals in need, for an environment in need. Here are a few ideas. Please let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Where to Give Locally

❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, [www.cornerstonesva.org](http://www.cornerstonesva.org). 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, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive.

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 visit with Santa. Help Share help those in need by fulfilling a wish or donating gift cards. Contact [ShareWishes@gmail.com](mailto:ShareWishes@gmail.com) for more information. Visit [www.shareofmclean.org](http://www.shareofmclean.org) for more info about Share.

❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 [herndonrestonfish.org](http://herndonrestonfish.org). Herndon-Reston FISH has assisted local residents in short-term crises by since 1969. 703-437-0600.

❖ **The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia** [www.cfnova.org](http://www.cfnova.org). The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia works to respond to critical need and seed innovation in our region. [www.cfnova.org/for-donors/donate-now](http://www.cfnova.org/for-donors/donate-now)

❖ **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 December. Children 16 and under receive gifts. [holiday@linkagainsthunger.org](mailto:holiday@linkagainsthunger.org). 703-437-1776 [www.linkagainsthunger.org](http://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](http://www.cho-va.com)

❖ **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. [www.nvfs.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.scov.org)

❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. [www.touchingheart.com](http://www.touchingheart.com), 703-901-7355.

❖ **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 703-865-4251 or [volunteer@facetscares.org](mailto:volunteer@facetscares.org). [www.facetscares.org](http://www.facetscares.org). 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030

❖ **Britepaths** Britepaths is working to assist 800 Fairfax County area families who might otherwise go without December holiday meals and gifts for their children. Sponsor a family or donate to provide a family with a holiday meal and/or gifts for their children. [Britepaths.org](http://Britepaths.org)

❖ **Centreville Labor Resource Center** (CLRC), a safe, organized center where residents and contractors can negotiate work arrangements with day laborers. Centreville Square Shopping Center, 5944 Centreville Crest Ln, Centreville, VA 20121. Phone: (703) 543-6272 Email: [Contact@CentrevilleLRC.org](mailto:Contact@CentrevilleLRC.org) [www.centreville-lrc.org/](http://www.centreville-lrc.org/)

❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** (LCAC) will provide holiday assistance to hundreds of families. 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/](http://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 [alnorthernva@gmail.com](mailto:alnorthernva@gmail.com) or visit [www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org](http://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](http://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. It is our mission to get families back into stable housing in order to provide them the opportunity to continue their journey to self-sufficiency. [www.shelterhouse.org](http://www.shelterhouse.org)

❖ **Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter**. For more than a decade, the Friends community has impacted thousands of pets; saving lives, easing pain and suffering, and enriching the lives of pets and their humans. (571) 212-9858 [www.facebook.com/pg/FFCAS/about/](https://www.facebook.com/pg/FFCAS/about/)

❖ **New Hope Housing**, founded in 1977, is a non-profit agency in Northern Virginia committed to finding creative and lasting solutions to end the cycle of homelessness by offering homeless men, women and children the services they need to change their lives and succeed. 8407E Richmond Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22309 [www.newhopehousing.org/how-to-help/donate/](http://www.newhopehousing.org/how-to-help/donate/)

❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. [www.capitalareafoodbank.org](http://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](mailto:jhenderson@homestretchva.org); 703-237-2035 x125; [homestretchva.org/volunteer/](http://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](http://www.pathwayhomes.org)

❖ **Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area** operates three clubs in the county, Culmore, Chantilly and Mount Vernon. focusing on character and academic success. [www.bgcgw.org/fairfax](http://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. 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](mailto:info@friendsofguesthouse.org), [friendsofguesthouse.org/](http://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](http://www.habitatnova.org).

❖ **TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors**, 3033 Wilson Blvd., Third Floor, Arlington, VA 22201, Call 24/7 800-959-TAPS (8277) The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers compassionate care and resources to all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Make a donation to support surviving military families and loved ones. You can also make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one. [www.taps.org/donate](http://www.taps.org/donate)

❖ **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, Medicaid, 703-535-5568, [www.neighborhoodhealthva.org](http://www.neighborhoodhealthva.org)

❖ **OAR** rebuilds lives and breaks the cycle of crime with opportunities, alternatives, and resources for offenders and their families to create a safer community. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 250, Fairfax, VA 22030, 703-246-3033. OAR needs volunteers and financial donations. [oarnova.org/christmas](http://oarnova.org/christmas)

❖ **NAMI Northern Virginia** (National Alliance on Mental Illness) works to raise awareness and provide education, advocacy, and support programs for people living with mental illness, families, students, educators, law enforcement, and the public throughout our neighborhoods. Many excellent programs. [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/) HelpLine: (571)458.7310, Email: [info@nami-nova.org](mailto:info@nami-nova.org)

❖ **PRS**, Inc. exists so that individuals living with mental illness, substance use disorders, and anyone who faces life crises can achieve safety, personal wellness, recovery and community integration. Crisis counseling and connection to supports CRISISLINK When crisis calls, we answer 24/7 Call: 800-273-TALK [8255] Text: "CONNECT" to 85511

❖ **Potomac Riverkeeper Network** works to protect the public's right to clean water in our rivers and streams; to stop pollution; to promote safe drinking water; to protect healthy river habitats; and to enhance public use and enjoyment. (202) 888-2037 [www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org](http://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org)

❖ **Potomac River Conservancy**, 301.608.1188 [potomac.org](http://potomac.org), seeks to improve the Potomac River's water quality by building an impassioned base of river advocates to impart change at the local level.

## McLean CONNECTION

[www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com)

*An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.*

**Published by  
Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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# Sandra Grimes Honored with a Women in History Award

The December meeting of the Freedom Hill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a McLean based chapter, was held on Saturday, Dec. 1, 2018. During the meeting, chapter members and guests enjoyed a talk given by Sandra Grimes about the events leading up to and her personal involvement in the search for a traitor within the CIA, which led to the identification of fellow officer Aldrich (Rick) Ames.

Mrs. Grimes is a retired CIA officer who spent most of her twenty-six-year career working against the former Soviet Union. In the mid-1980s, the CIA experienced significant loss of Soviet human assets. Grimes served on a small team that investigated and uncovered the actions of Aldrich (Rick) Ames, a CIA

officer who was subsequently convicted of spying for the Soviet Union and sentenced to life in prison.

Grimes co-authored "Circle of Treason: A CIA Account of Traitor Aldrich Ames and the Men He Betrayed," (with colleague Jeanne Vertefeuille). The ABC mini-series The Assets is based on the book.

Chapter member Jean Luning-Johnson introduced Grimes at the start of the program. After the presentation, Chapter Regent Beth VanDoren Boswell and Chapter Historian Maureen Jenkins presented Grimes with a Women in American History Award to honor her service to our county and recognize her role in American History. The emphasis of Women in American History is on the role of women, past and present, in American history.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Chapter members presenting Sandra Grimes with the Women in History Award: From left — chapter member Jean Luning-Johnson, Chapter Historian Maureen Jenkins, Sandra Grimes, and Chapter Regent Beth Boswell.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://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 [novareliefcenter.org](http://novareliefcenter.org).

#### Volunteers Needed: CHO Christmas Store & Bike Program.

Friday, Dec. 7, 9:30 a.m.-noon (set up); Saturday, Dec. 8, 8:30 a.m.-noon (shop) at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE, Vienna. CHO's 2018 Christmas Store is an annual event that invites our less fortunate neighbors to "shop" for gifts for their families and provides holiday extras that many take for granted. CHO (Committee for Helping Others) will be accepting donations of new unwrapped gifts for young children, gift cards for teens, as well as food gift certificates from Giant and Safeway. It also will be accepting new or like new jackets and coats. Clothing and other donations can be dropped at the CHO Clothes Closet at Vienna Court Condos, 133 Park St. NE, across from the Vienna Presbyterian Church, any Monday morning or by appointment. Call 703-281-7614; leave a message in Box # 1. The "bike distribution program," will be collecting bikes on Saturday, Nov. 24, 9 a.m.-noon, at the Vienna Presbyterian parking lot and at Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road.

**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:

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SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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The proposed community plan has been submitted to Fairfax County for final approval.



# NEWS

**Giovanna Lee, Samarra Pack, Philip Smith-Cobbs, Emma Diehl, Madeline Chang, Sofia Santos, Samantha Condro, Elisabeth Musseman (Snow Queen), Ruslan Amrayev (Snow Cavalier), Claire de la Paz, Haley Dale, Taylor Anderson, Helene Yao.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



## 'Nutcracker' in Honor of Military, First Responders

The Ernst Community Cultural Center at the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus opened to a full house the Friday before Thanksgiving as Classical Ballet Theater performed their beloved, full length performance of the "Nutcracker" in honor of our military servicemen and women, local first responders and their families.

In this popular holiday classic young Clara falls asleep after a long Christmas party, and is swept away by her Nutcracker Prince and journeys through the Land of Snow to a magical realm where enchanted inhabitants of the Kingdom of Sweets dance for her. Among the many enchanted characters she meets on her journey are majestic Snow Queen (Elisabeth Musseman) and her flurry of snowflakes. Her trip culminates with a beautiful Pas de Deux (duet) danced by the Sugarplum Fairy and her Cavalier.

"It was a thrill and honor to perform for our local

veterans and first responders, and to dance with such an accomplished professional partner," said Musseman.

The Classical Ballet Theater of Northern Virginia has been training young dancers in the DC Metro area for professional careers with internationally acclaimed classical ballet and modern dance companies including the San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, Martha Graham Contemporary Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Company, and many others for over 25 years.

"It's Classical Ballet Theatre's honor to perform some of the area's highest caliber classical ballet and contemporary dance productions with our military veterans and first responders via our outreach programs," said Cynthia Donavin, Classical Ballet Theatre Founder and Artistic Director.

Future outreach performances, and applications for aspiring young dancers can be found at [cbtva.org](http://cbtva.org).

**Cooper Middle student Elisabeth Musseman performed the role of Snow Queen. She was paired with Ruslan Amrayev, a professional dancer and former soloist with the Moscow Festival Ballet.**

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# Habits that Stick

**Key to making  
changing old habits  
and making new ones.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Standing outside the glass doors of the studio, lit harshly by fluorescent bulbs, Annabelle VanLandingham admits that she is intimidated by a group of women standing in front of her — all model-thin and wearing cropped tank tops that reveal finely toned abs.

"I always feel like I don't fit it and everybody is staring at me, but this time, I'm really going to stick with it," she said, acknowledging her failed attempts to make regular exercise part of her daily life.

Vows to change habits are easy to make, but keeping them can seem nearly impossible. Commitments to cooking healthy weeknight dinners give way to the reality of packed schedules, while a morning meditation practice is overtaken by an inability to resist checking email right after getting out of bed. Local human behaviorists say that when it comes to creating habits, understanding how they develop is a first step.

**"If you want develop a  
meditation practice to relieve  
stress at work, set an alert on  
your phone for a time that  
know you'll definitely be free."**

— Lauren Puglisi, LCSW

"Essentially, a habit is turning a new behavior into something that is done automatically," said Lauren Puglisi, LCSW. "For example, grabbing a cigarette after dinner or putting on your seatbelt when you get in the car are automatic. You don't have to talk yourself into doing those things, you do them without even thinking."

For those who want to make activities like exercising or meditating life-long habits, the key is to begin with realistic and attainable steps. "New habits are best formed in small, manageable increments," said Jessica McLaughlin, Ph.D. assistant professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "For instance, if you want to develop the habit of exercising, start by taking 10-minute walks instead of promising to exercise for an hour every day. It is easier to form habits if the changes are similar to what you are already doing, as opposed to something that drastically alters your current day-to-day schedule."

Develop a list specific actions to take, advises Puglisi. "For example, swapping out potato chips and a soda for hummus and whole wheat pita bread for an afternoon snack or taking a 30-minute walk three days each week can be attainable ways to get started," she said. "Otherwise, you might get overwhelmed and give up."

"Research supports that it can take approximately two months of daily repetition to develop a habit, but keep in mind that some habits aren't as easy to make automatic, and may require more time," added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "For instance, developing a habit of walking 15 minutes every day may take eight to 10 weeks to become an automatic behavior, but running five miles every day could take much longer."

**"Plan on creating your  
daily walk or running  
habit with a friend, or  
coach, or group who  
will be a role model for  
self-control."**

— Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D.,  
Montgomery College

in its early stages," said Puglisi. "If you want develop a meditation practice to relieve stress at work, set an alert on your phone for a time that know you'll definitely be free," she said. "Set a realistic amount of time to spend meditating, and select a specific meditation. This will make it easy to do quickly and easily, so you'll have fewer excuses not to do it."

The company one keeps also plays a role in habit formation. "You're likely to boost your willpower if you choose to spend time with someone who has strong willpower," said Bagshaw. "Plan on creating your daily walk or running habit with a friend, or coach, or group who will be a role model for self-control."

Assess your progress regularly. "Self-monitoring adds to success," said psychologist Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D. "Writing down what you've eaten each day can help you stay honest with yourself. That said, be realistic with your time frames and don't cause yourself extra stress. If thinking about how you ate during the week on a Friday is less stressful than writing it every day, do that. But do choose a regular time to consider progress and impediments or you'll be at 2020 without your new habit."

"It helps to set up the environment to remind you to do the behavior and make it easy to follow through," said Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. "For example, put vegetables and fruits on the first shelf you see when you open the refrigerator. You are more likely to eat what you see than what you do not see."

Don't forget rewards, says McLaughlin. "Change won't happen unless you are motivated to make the change," she said. "This means you have to find what is rewarding for you. You might find that what you are doing is intrinsically rewarding, such as increasing your energy levels or seeing your scale number go down. Other times, you might need to create your own reward, such as getting a manicure when you've gone a week without biting your nails."



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Having a great time at the birthday bash! From left — Nicki Birch with her mom, Jane Peak, Cecile Cover and her daughter-in-law Bonnie Lepoff.



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Vinson Hall CEO Libby Bush enjoys the birthday cake and libations with resident Ruth Lassell, 97, and her son Don.

## Happy 4588!

Vinson Hall Retirement Community celebrates milestone birthdays.

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE CONNECTION

**4** 588 years. 1,674,620 days. 40,190,880 hours. You get the picture.

That's the combined years, days, or hours of life — depending on how you calculate it — that forty-seven residents of the Vinson Hall Retirement Community have achieved, and what staff, family and friends had gathered to celebrate on Monday, Nov. 26, at the complex of living facilities in McLean. It's the first time that Vinson Hall has hosted a joint birthday bash for those who have reached the 95-year milestone or beyond, or who are about to do so in just the near future.

"It's the inaugural event," said Vinson Hall CEO Libby Bush, crediting their Chaplain, Scott Harrison with the idea, "but I think it will become a new tradition."

Harrison handled the emcee duties for the party. He started with a "stroll down memory lane for some" having researched some "interesting facts and statistics" that many of the celebrants had lived through over the years. Not only had they experienced a myriad of personal moments like marriages, births, deaths, accomplishments, travel, friendships and more, but they were also witnesses to so many of the events that shape our world even today.

"The Roaring '20s, the Great Depression, World War II, technological advances and amazing developments, the list goes on," he noted. "And some changes in the cost of things over those years, too!"

**IN 1923**, sugar cost about \$.97 for a 5 lb. bag. A loaf of bread would run you \$.09. The average cost for a house was \$7,800 and a car would set you back about \$265 for a new, no-frills model.

When Chaplain Scott mentioned the transition from silent films to "talkies" and from



PHOTO COURTESY OF AIMEE FREEMAN/VHRC

**Gervais Brekke celebrates being 98-years-young at the Birthday Bash in honor of Vinson Hall Retirement Community residents aged 95 and older.**

black-and-white to color, everyone seemed to have a favorite movie star from the "good old days" that they wanted to acknowledge.

Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Lon Chaney, Laurel and Hardy, Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson were followed by shout-outs to Clark Gable and Bette Davis, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Shirley Temple, Jimmy Stewart, Cary Grant and more.

The Chaplain was also the one to read out the names of the honorees, with their birthdates, saying a few words about each as staff wandered through the tables to present each celebrating resident with a rose, donated by Karin's Florists of Vienna.

And of course, there was champagne



**One special memory that stands out for Dorothy Smith in more than 95 years of living? When her high school sweetheart got a few days leave and she and the Navy pilot were married in 1940.**

and cake.

Woodrow Wilson was serving as 28<sup>th</sup> president when the oldest of the Vinson honorees — Hollis Blood — was born. A native of Indiana, the 101-years-old Ms. Blood was asked to cut the first slice of the birthday cake — with its "Celebrating 4588 Years" frosting message — to share with her birthday pals.

Asked what the secret to longevity is that we might share it with Connection readers, Ms. Blood laughed, "Bourbon!" then quickly added "now that's a joke! We don't want to give people bad habits!"

One of her table-mates at the event, Audrey Cole, who still paints and exhibits

her work, credited "great doctors" for helping her to reach the near-century mark. "And keeping busy."

Mrs. Jane Peak, who proudly boasts the longest tenure at Vinson Hall with 29 years in residence, answered that longevity question quite simply. "You just get up every-day!"

Mrs. Peak, 98, says that Vinson Hall has everything she needs to keep doing just that. Aside from enjoying visits with nearby family, she can be found in the pool at least twice a week, "going for the gold" at water volleyball. "We just have such a good time,"

SEE MILESTONE, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM





**The oldest resident at Vinson Hall at 101, Ms. Hollis Blood does the honors and cuts the first piece of birthday cake for the birthday celebrants.**

# Milestone Birthdays Celebrated

FROM PAGE 10

she said. “I love it.” Dorothy Smith, who looks forward to turning 99 next year, thinks “eating cake” is part of the longevity equation. Asked what was one special memory from her many years, she quickly replied when her Navy pilot high school sweetheart got a few days leave in San Francisco in 1940. “It gave us the chance to get married!”

Cecile Cover, another birthday honoree, was a Navy Wave. In her youth, she was seriously into tumbling, which she practiced back in St. Paul, Minn. Today, she still attends the exercise classes that keep her ever fit, “but maybe no more tumbling!”

Gervais Brekke, also 98, is the daughter of a Navy rear admiral. With her Norwegian husband, Mrs. Brekke started a sailing school for children and teens on the Potomac.

**AFTER THE CAKE** was passed around, the champagne flowing and a rousing chorus of “Happy Birthday” sung by all, residents, family members and staff just enjoyed a good time with lots of chatting, and the sharing of stories that only folks of 95 or older can tell.

Looking out on the room filled with so much life, Chaplain Scott was moved to say that he saw the secret to their long-lived success.



**Audrey Cole celebrates being “more than 95!” at the Vinson Hall joint birthday bash for the 47 residents who have all achieved that milestone birthday – or surpassed it.**

“You are all engaged, and engaging!”

Vinson Hall Retirement Community offers five levels of care to its residents, from independent and assisted living to health care, memory support and short-term rehabilitation. Supported by the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, Vinson Hall serves retired military officers and their immediate families, as well as retired employees of various government agencies with a GS ranking of 14 or higher.

“Tell everyone to come on over here,” said Mrs. Peak. “We love to meet new people and welcome new neighbors.”

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



**From left: Russell Rinker, Karma Price, Billie Krishawn, Ayanna Hardy, Suzy Alden, Gary L. Perkins III, Joshua Simon, Demitrus Carter, Rebecca Ballinger, and V. Savoy McIlwain in “A Civil War Christmas” at 1st Stage in Tysons. The show runs through Dec. 23.**

## A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration

It's 1864 and Washington, D.C. is settling down to the coldest Christmas Eve in years in this pageant of carols by Paula Vogel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer of *Indecent*. Stories of many intertwining lives—spanning from the battlegrounds of Northern Virginia to the halls of the White House—demonstrate that the gladness of one's heart is the best gift of all. Through Dec. 23, Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.; Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays 2 and 8 p.m.; and Sundays, 2 p.m. at 1st Stage in Tysons, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Approximately 2 hours with one 15-minute intermission. Visit [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) for the schedule of Community Conversations, captioned and audio described performances. Tickets: general admission, \$39; senior (65+), \$36; student and military, \$15 at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or at 703-854-1856.



PHOTOS BY TERESA CASTRACANE

**From left: Rebecca Ballinger, Suzy Alden, and Tiziano D' Affuso in “A Civil War Christmas” at 1st Stage. The show runs through Dec. 23 in Tysons Corner.**

## CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### ONGOING

**Santa HQ.** Through Dec. 24, Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Santa is all about the experience and this year Tysons Corner Center is again partnering with HGTV to present the immersive “Santa HQ.” Families are invited to explore the wonder of Santa in the digital age. Guests can make reservations to spend less time in line. Shoppers are invited to bring an unwrapped toy and participate in our ‘Help Through Holiday Giving’ toy drive benefitting Second Story (formerly Alternative House). Visit [www.santa-hq.com](http://www.santa-hq.com).

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 5

**Open House.** 4-8 p.m. at Field & Gown warehouse, 318 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. Field & Gown is a Vienna-based wedding and event décor rental company. Check out the curated inventory at the Field & Gown Holiday Open House. Visit [www.fieldandgown.com](http://www.fieldandgown.com).

### THURSDAY/DEC. 6

#### 52nd annual Holiday Homes Tour.

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tour four large, festively decorated homes in the McLean neighborhoods of Langley Forest, River Oaks, Odrick's Corner and McLean Hamlet. Jewelry and holiday boutique and high-end raffle at house in River Oaks. \$30 before Dec. 6 at Mesmeralda's in McLean, Karin's Florist in Vienna, and Great Dogs of Great Falls. \$35 at the tour houses on Dec. 6. Call 703-556-0197 or visit [www.mcleanwomansclub.org](http://www.mcleanwomansclub.org).

**Movie Screening: “Angst: Raising Awareness Around Anxiety.”** 7 p.m. in the McLean High School Auditorium, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. This documentary features students affected by anxiety, mental

health professionals, and Olympic athlete and mental health advocate Michael Phelps. Following the movie, a panel of mental health professionals from McLean High School and the community will lead a panel discussion and question and answer session to provide further information. Friends, neighbors and anyone sixth grade and above are welcome to the free event. Visit [mcleancc.org/](http://mcleancc.org/).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 7

**“Dining with Dorothy.”** 12:30 p.m. at Tysons Corner Sakura Japanese Steak House, 8369 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Join with friends or make new ones. Newcomers are welcome. To reserve space contact event chair, Dorothy Flood at [dflood1706@gmail.com](mailto:dflood1706@gmail.com).

#### Old Firehouse Friday Night Trip.

3:30-11 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join the Old Firehouse as they head to AMC Tysons for two movies and dinner at the food court. Movie tickets are included in the fee. Bring \$20 for dinner and additional money for movie concessions as desired. \$35/\$25 MCC district residents. Activity No. 5303.218. Register at [www.mcleancenter.org/teens/events/after-school-trips](http://www.mcleancenter.org/teens/events/after-school-trips).

#### Meet the Artist: Fleurs et Fruits.

6-7 p.m. at TD Bank, 9901 Walker Road, Great Falls Village. Jan Heginbotham presents “Les Fleurs et les Fruits,” still life paintings in oil and gouache. Portraits of fresh flowers and handsome fruits and veggies. Free. Email [the\\_sculptor@hotmail.com](mailto:the_sculptor@hotmail.com) or visit [www.JanHeginbotham.com](http://www.JanHeginbotham.com).

### FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 7-8

**Annual Renaissance Feaste.** 7 p.m. at Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Langley High School's choirs are busy rehearsing for the 16th annual Renaissance Feaste, which takes place in the school's “Langley Halle.”

Choir students in full medieval attire – dressed as jesters, minstrels, and musicians – will serenade guests with holiday carols, entertaining them with performances straight out of Merrie Olde England. Guests will dine on authentic medieval English fare, including meat pie (or chicken or vegetarian), potatoes, and English custard topped with apple crisp. For tickets, available through Nov. 30, visit [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com), and search for “feaste” (with “e” at the end).

### DEC. 7-JAN. 4

**Art Exhibit: Fleurs et Fruits.** Bank hours at TD Bank, 9901 Walker Road, Great Falls Village. Jan Heginbotham presents “Les Fleurs et les Fruits,” still life paintings in oil and gouache. Portraits of fresh flowers and handsome fruits and veggies. Free. Email [the\\_sculptor@hotmail.com](mailto:the_sculptor@hotmail.com) or visit [www.JanHeginbotham.com](http://www.JanHeginbotham.com).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 8

**Puppy Nativity.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. Celebrate the holiday season with third annual Puppy Nativity, where dogs play dress up as part of the nativity (costumes provided). The church's youth group will be on hand to accept donations for Britepaths ([britepaths.org](http://britepaths.org)). The “Peace Like a River” art exhibit also will be open in The Gallery at the church during the event. Free. Visit [www.GoodShepherdVA.com](http://www.GoodShepherdVA.com).

**Annual Holiday Bazaar.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at McLean High School, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. The McLean High School Annual Holiday Bazaar Fundraiser features many returning and new vendors this year. Complimentary gift wrapping. Free admission for shoppers and free parking. Food available to purchase. Learn more at [www.mcleanboosters.org](http://www.mcleanboosters.org).

**Cookies and Cocoa with Santa.** 1-3 p.m. at Vienna Pediatric Dentistry, 301 Maple Ave. West, Suite 400, Vienna. Cookie decorating (gluten free options available), cocoa, Christmas music and most importantly, Santa. Parents are welcome to take pictures of their children with this special guest. Free, all are welcome. \*Consider bringing a small, unwrapped gift to donate to Toys for Tots. Call 703-938-6600 or visit [viennapediatricdentistry.com](http://viennapediatricdentistry.com).

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 8-9

**Christmas Market.** Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Shop for holiday hand-crafted gifts, fine art jewelry, nature photography, watercolors and homemade baked goods and sweets. The United Methodist Women will be providing Christmas gift wrapping services (morning drop-offs welcomed). Bring a camera and the kids to visit with Santa from 11-3 on Saturday. A majority of the profits will go to women and children's missions. Free admission. Call 703-759-3509 or visit [www.andrewchapelumc.org](http://www.andrewchapelumc.org).

### SUNDAY/DEC. 9

**Gifts for Good Market.** 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. N.W., Vienna. Vienna Presbyterian Church will host its annual Gifts for Good Haiti Christmas Market featuring handmade Haitian artwork, including metal art, jewelry and Christmas ornaments. “Haiti Is Hot Sauce” gift packs in three “Caribbean” flavors are also for sale. All community members are welcome. Proceeds benefit Vienna Presbyterian mission partner Community Coalition for Haiti ([www.cchaiti.org](http://www.cchaiti.org)). For more email [wevn@verizon.net](mailto:wevn@verizon.net).

**Fair Trade Fair.** 9:15 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Ten Thousand Villages is an all-fair-

trade store in Alexandria with products crafted by artisans from around the world — brought to Lewinsville's St. Andrews Hall. Shop for stocking stuffers, larger Christmas gifts, or treats for oneself. The sale each year is sponsored by the Mission and Service Ministry Group. Free and open to the public. Visit [lewinsville.org](http://lewinsville.org) or call 703-356-7200.

**Cathedral Brass Concert.** 4:30-5:30 p.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE, Vienna. Jazz to traditional. Childcare is available. Call 703-938-9050 or visit [viennapres.org](http://viennapres.org).

**“Amahl and the Night Visitors.”** 6 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The Choirs of Lewinsville Presbyterian Church present: “Amahl and the Night Visitors” by Gian Carlo Menotti. A prelude of choral and handbell Advent and Christmas music will begin at 6 p.m. The production will begin at 6:30. Reception to follow in St. Andrews Hall. Free and open to the public. Visit [lewinsville.org](http://lewinsville.org) or call 703-356-7200.

### TUESDAY/DEC. 11

**McLean Historical Society Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. in the Administrative Office of the McLean Community Center, 6631 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The program will feature author/historian Chuck Mauro who will discuss his latest book “We Once Met by Chance,” a story of four individuals during the Civil War. Everyone is welcome. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 12

**McLean Newcomers and Neighbors Holiday Luncheon.** 11:30 a.m. at Brio Tuscan Grill, 7854L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. The cost of the luncheon is \$34 per person. To attend, pay at [squareup.com/market/mclean-newcomers-club](http://squareup.com/market/mclean-newcomers-club). Prospective members are invited. Make



# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



## Studio Bleu's The Nutcracker

This performance of The Nutcracker Ballet was choreographed by Troy D. Brown, who has been dancing professionally for over 20 years, and who attended the School of American Ballet in New York, under full scholarship, and is a graduate of the Duke Ellington School. Studio Bleu, located in Ashburn, is a nationally acclaimed dance center, owned by Kimberly Rishi, a resident of Reston. Studio Bleu has been partnering for almost 10 years with Brown's Art of Technique ballet conservatory program. Ashleigh Watkinson, of Great Falls, dances the role of Clara in Studio Bleu Dance Center's in the 2 p.m. performance. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Brad Kaminsky Foundation in support of their efforts to fight childhood cancer. Saturday, Dec. 15, 2 and 7 p.m. at Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn. Visit [www.tututix.com/client/studiobleu2018/](http://www.tututix.com/client/studiobleu2018/) for tickets.

**Ashleigh Watkinson, of Great Falls, will perform the role of Clara in Studio Bleu/Art of Technique's inaugural full-scale Nutcracker Ballet.**

reservations no later than Friday, Dec. 7. Visit [www.McLeanNewcomers.org](http://www.McLeanNewcomers.org).

### THURSDAY/DEC. 13

**Arts Society Holiday Party.** 7:30 p.m. at Vienna Art Center, 243 Church St., NW, suite 100, Vienna. The Vienna Arts Society is a 501 c 3 non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the community through the arts. All are invited. Call 703-319-3971 or visit [www.ViennaArtsSociety.org](http://www.ViennaArtsSociety.org).

### SATURDAY/DEC. 15

**Holiday Pancake Breakfast.** 8 a.m.-noon at the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St., South, Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary hosts their annual Holiday Pancake Breakfast. All you can eat pancakes, sausage, bacon, juice and coffee. Santa Claus will be greeting all from 9:30-11 a.m. There will be tours of the fire equipment available. Free child photo ID and fingerprint cards will be

available from Fairfax County Sheriff's office. Adults \$8, adults; \$7, seniors (65+); \$6, children ages 5-12, children 4 and under free. Email [Joanie@vvfd.org](mailto:Joanie@vvfd.org) or visit [vvfd.org](http://vvfd.org).  
**Parents' Day Out.** 9 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Annual Parents' Day Out event for children in Kindergarten through Grade 6. Sponsored by the Lewinsville Youth Ministry, children will spend time watching Christmas movies, making crafts, decorating Christmas cookies, and playing games while parents prepare for the holidays. Free and open to the public. Sign up at [www.lewinsville.org/event-items/parents-day-out/](http://www.lewinsville.org/event-items/parents-day-out/) or email Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom at [agroenenboom@lewinsville.org](mailto:agroenenboom@lewinsville.org).  
**Model Railroaders Open House.** 1-5 p.m. at the Vienna Depot, 231 Dominion Road NE. Northern Virginia Model Railroaders hold an open house at the Vienna Depot each month and on Vienna celebration days, including Viva! Vienna and the Vienna Holiday Stroll. Free admission. Call 703-938-5157 or visit [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org).

**Studio Bleu's The Nutcracker.** 2 and 7 p.m. at Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn. Ashleigh Watkinson, of Great Falls, dances the role of Clara in Studio Bleu Dance Center's in the 2 p.m. performance. Studio Bleu is owned by Kimberly Rishi, a resident of Reston. Visit [www.tututix.com/client/studiobleu2018/](http://www.tututix.com/client/studiobleu2018/) for tickets.  
**Christmas Carol Sing-along.** 3-5 p.m. at Historic Pleasant Grove, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Historic Pleasant Grove is holding its annual Christmas Carol Sing, followed by cookies and hot cider, at their quaint historic site. Free. Visit [www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org](http://www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org).  
**Night in Bethlehem.** 5-7 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Wander through the outdoor city marketplace and discover what life was like when Jesus was born. Create unique keepsakes and interact with this live nativity including Mary, Joseph and a tame camel, donkey and sheep – and hear the story of Jesus' birth. Free. Visit [www.andrewchapelumc.org](http://www.andrewchapelumc.org).

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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## News

**Checking out the plan boards before the Fairfax County Department of Transportation's presentation of their recommendation for improvements to the Balls Hill Road and Old Dominion Drive intersection in McLean.**



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

## Intersection Improvement Plan Questioned

FROM PAGE 4

tice the "green-go, yellow-go faster and block the box" method of road navigation.

The FCDOT representatives' defense of traffic lights versus roundabouts met with considerable push-back from residents with comments like "why do they work everywhere else in the country, and in fact, all around the world? Even when there are multiple entrances and exits involved?"

Another point of disagreement between the presenters and the resident opposition was the perception of a lack of comprehensive, big-picture planning by the county when addressing transportation and traffic issues.

A number of the plan opponents questioned the effects of the proposed improvements on other intersections, neighborhood access points and streets being used as cut-throughs for traffic or toll avoidance.

Jean Jonnard, a 50-year resident of McLean was one of those who didn't see how easing traffic flow in one spot would make it any easier for her to exit her own neighborhood, with its limited sight access, as cars flow by. Adding the bike paths worries Jonnard, as well.

"Right now, if there is a problem, you basically have to pull off into the gully to get out of the way. If you take even that away, where do cars go if there's a problem?" Jonnard thinks that further paving over the sides of Old Dominion and Balls Hill will create safety risks and cause more congestion if a vehicle is disabled or if there is a minor accident.

Other residents continued to name streets, intersections and traffic choke-points that they feel will actually deteriorate because of increased flow of traffic at the improved intersection, or that will simply not benefit at all from the project.

These locals were not receptive to Biesiadny's repeated response that this study and plan do not address those other points, only the Balls Hill and Old Dominion crossing.

"You're actually making our argument for us in this case," said one gentleman who described himself as a long-time McLean resident. "No one is considering the full, wider effects of what you're doing. That's how we got into this mess to begin with."

**ONE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES** of contention for the attending residents came down to timing.



**Alan Lund of McLean has questions and concerns about the county's intersection improvement proposal, one being why roundabouts are not being considered versus additional traffic lights.**



**Jean Jonnard, a resident of McLean for some 50 years, doesn't think the county's plans for the intersection at Balls Hill Rd. and Old Dominion Dr. answer the greater question of traffic congestion and safety in the area.**

When asked what are the next steps in this proposal process, Abifadel answered that the recommendation was complete and would be presented for approval by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at their next meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 4. His announcement was met with astonishment by a few of the attendees.

Lund, among others, was dismayed that the county had months to review the study plans, while residents were given less than a week from this presentation to the vote before the Board, and that the vote would be a simple "up or down" without any further public hearings or testimony allowed by residents.

Biesiadny countered that the public hearing held in June had been well-attended and that 32 comments had been submitted and reviewed before proposal A-1 was chosen as the best option.

"But there have been changes since that meeting and not everyone knew about it" was the common response from those in opposition.

Project manager Abifadel did his best to reassure those residents who still had questions and concerns, telling them that more input would be solicited during the design phase of the project, should it be given the green light by the Board of Supervisors.

Even if approved, he reminded them, any actual work is unlikely to begin before 2023.

The A-1 plan and more information about the project is available on the county's website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/Balls-Hill-Road](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/Balls-Hill-Road).



# BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

8527 Leesburg Pike, Vienna  
❖ Patriot Harley-Davidson, 9739 Fairfax Boulevard, Fairfax

**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 your local office, go to [www.weichert.com/offices/](http://www.weichert.com/offices/).

**Holiday Sponsors.** Through Dec. 14, Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths is seeking help from community members to sponsor Fairfax County area families in need for the December holidays or donate funds or gift cards to assist families who are not sponsored. Families Britepaths are assisting are referred by Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public Schools social workers. Visit [britepaths.org/our-programs/holiday-program](http://britepaths.org/our-programs/holiday-program).

## WEBINAR

**Online Salary Negotiation Workshop.** AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men. Visit [salary.aauw.org](http://salary.aauw.org).

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 5

**Policymaker Breakfast Series.** 7:30-9 a.m. at WGL, 8614 Westwood Center Drive, 12th Floor, Vienna. Join the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance for a conversation about the future of Metro with GM Paul Wiedefeld moderated by Washington Post Senior Regional Correspondent Robert McCartney. Now that Metro has dedicated funding, come find out what progress has been made, what challenges lie ahead and how Metro plans to continue improving safety and reliability. Breakfast will be provided.

Register at [secure.everyaction.com/gajS3CnuLES-1sbtYefx3g2](http://secure.everyaction.com/gajS3CnuLES-1sbtYefx3g2). Individual tickets are \$25 per person. Call 703-883-1830 for more.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 6

**Online Engagement Workshop.** 8:30 a.m.-noon at Banyan Conference Center, 8300 Boone Blvd., First Floor, Suite 450 Vienna. Randi Penfil, from Google, and Matthew Montoya, from Constant Contact, will give a workshop at the Hispanic Chamber NOVA offices to share how customers find a business online and how to promote an online presence. Call 703-790-0303 or visit [www.vahcc.com](http://www.vahcc.com) to register.

**Caregivers Support Group.** 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, [scov.org](http://scov.org). Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 9

**Blue Christmas.** 3 p.m. at Katie's Coffee House 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. A Blue Christmas Service is a non-traditional service of remembrance and hope for those who are stressed, lonely or grieving. No reservations, all are welcome. Dress is casual. Free. Call Carol Wright at 703-582-1640 for more.

## MONDAY/DEC. 10

**Public Forum.** 7-9 p.m. at Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mt. Vernon.

The Police Civilian Review Panel will conduct a public forum. Learn how to initiate the complaint process, what to expect once a complaint is filed, and receive a 2018 update on Panel activity. The Independent Police Auditor will be present to explain the Auditor's role in oversight. Participants will have the opportunity to engage the Panel with questions about the process. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecivilianreviewpanel/police-civilian-review-panel-public-forum](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecivilianreviewpanel/police-civilian-review-panel-public-forum) for more.

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## Scared to ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And that's what worries me. There's a part of me (too big a part, I'll admit), that rationalizes not going to the doctor as a means of preventing an untimely death.

Oh, don't get me wrong. I go to the doctor as often as needed. In fact, I've been commended as being a very "compliant" patient, meaning I show up for my appointments (apparently some patients don't). And I will continue to do so.

However, this column is not about the appointments I do make, it's about the ones I don't make.

Huh?

Let me clarify. I am referring to the voluntary-type appointments that I schedule myself – at my discretion, when some symptom or other, relating to cancer or not, manifests itself. The symptom which forces me to consider my own mortality because it's "presenting" at a time and place at which my oncologist is unaware.

The kind of symptom which, were I not a cancer patient, I wouldn't give a second thought (let alone a first thought). But since I am a cancer patient, whatever the symptom is – and I mean any and all symptoms: small, medium or large, it must be "the cancer" as "Forrest, Forrest Gump" characterized his mother's cause of death, and therefore, can't be minimized. In point of alternative fact, it must be maximized, and in that maximization comes anxiety and fear and every other stress-related emotion you can imagine.

Nevertheless, just as George advised Jerry in a long-ago "Seinfeld" episode on how to beat a lie detector test: "It's not a lie if you believe it," so too do I employ a similar strategy: if I don't go to the doctor and get evaluated then the symptoms I'm experiencing can't be confirmed as cancer. And if my symptoms can't be confirmed as cancer then I have much to less to worry about than if they were. The symptoms are simply the same kind and frequency as non-cancer patients experience and do not represent a slippery slope for yours truly.

I suppose there's a part of me (the irrational, unreasonable and illogical part) that believes if I don't make any extra-curricular-type visits to any of my doctors then my cancer can't get worse and I can continue to go on living as if I've not been diagnosed with a terminal disease: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV.

It reminds me of my late father's philosophy concerning automobile maintenance. If he never takes the car in for service, the mechanics will never find anything wrong with it. It's a version of what you don't know can't hurt you.

Well, in the cancer world in which I live 24/7, it all can hurt you and it can do so on its own timetable; when you least expect it and when you most fear it.

As yet another attempt to explain why this column has been written. For the past three weeks I've had persistent cold symptoms.

Since the symptoms never got any worse (though my fear did), I went along, tissue in hand, until my voice got so hoarse and weak that my wife, Dina – to her credit – insisted that I visit my internal medicine doctor and email my status as well to my oncologist. All of which I've done.

So far, nothing conclusive to report.

I've been prescribed some pre-pneumonia pills, have had a CT scan of the neck (per my oncologist's direction), results for which have not YET been received, am seeing an ENT doctor next week and am puffing Flonase into each nostril twice a day. My symptoms have not totally subsided but neither have they gotten worse – unlike my anxiety.

I really don't think there's anything wrong with me medically; mentally however, is another matter.

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





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**JD Sold More Homes Last Year in 22101 Than Any Other Agent!**



**\*OPEN\*  
SUN 12/9  
2-4pm!**

Offered for... \$2,549,000

**5906 Calla Drive, McLean**  
**\*DON'T MISS\* this SPECTACULAR new construction! 6BR/5.5 BA home featuring spacious living areas throughout; gourmet chef's eat-in kitchen with island, Thermador appliances and gorgeous custom cabinetry; owner's suite with sitting room, his/her closets and luxury bath; sparkling hardwood floors; 3-car garage; patio; wrap-around porch!**



**UNDER CONTRACT!**

Offered for... \$1,249,999

**1425 Highwood Drive, McLean**  
**\*STUNNING\* 6BR/5BA Colonial home on quiet cul-de-sac in Chesterbrook Woods!**  
Leave the city stress behind in your personal woodland retreat! Entertainers deck that backs to parkland; screened porch w/ a Charleston swing bed; granite kit with 2 bar areas opening to breakfast rm & family rm w/fireplace; fully finished walk - out LL w/ upscale rec room!



**\*OPEN\*  
SUN 12/9  
2-4pm!**

Offered for... \$1,019,000

**2415 Davis Avenue, Alexandria**  
**\*BEAUTIFUL\* historic-style 4BR/3 full BA home renovated to look like new with all the charm of yesteryear! Open floorplan with cheery family room steps out to level, landscaped backyard with patio; fantastic updated owner's suite w/ spa-like bath; hwd floors; 1-car garage and off-street parking; Convenient Braddock Heights location!**

**BEST  
WASHINGTONIAN  
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**1115 Lincoln Avenue  
Falls Church City, 22046  
\$1,125,000**



**623 Laura Drive  
Falls Church, 22046  
\$799,999**



**RENTAL!**

**7441 Chummley Court  
Falls Church, 22043  
\$2,850/month**



**UNDER CONTRACT!**

**6629 Williamsburg Blvd  
Arlington, 22213  
\$735,000**



**UNDER CONTRACT!**

**6805 Lumsden Street  
McLean, 22101  
\$1,739,000**



**UNDER CONTRACT!**

**315 N. Van Buren St  
Falls Church, 22046  
\$1,299,900**



**UNDER CONTRACT!**

**277 Gundry Drive  
Falls Church, 22046  
\$569,950**

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