

Fairfax Station

CONNECTION Clifton & Lorton

Ballerinas dance the "Waltz of the Flowers" from the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet 2018 production of "The Nutcracker."

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Environmental Priorities for Virginia

Virginia Conservation Network Hosts 2019 General Assembly Preview.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

In preparation for the Virginia General Assembly, 2020 Session, the Virginia Conservation Network and its Network partners convened Saturday, Dec. 7 in Richmond, for a preview of environmental issues in the coming session of the General Assembly. The group provided information for a collective approach to advancing policy.

There were nine watch parties across the state; including the one in Reston. Kyle Gatlin, state climate organizer at Virginia Conservation Network, emceed the event held at the National Wildlife Federation Reston Office. Great Falls Group Sierra Club Virginia and Choose Clean Water Coalition hosted the location.

"All watch parties across the Commonwealth will be viewed simultaneously. The only thing different is the location and sponsors. The goal is partially to raise awareness of environmental issues in the Commonwealth but also to empower and excite attendees and the public to take further action. They can take action through our partner organizations in their programs," said Gatlin.

AFTER EACH SPEAKER'S REMARKS, watch party attendees could text their questions into Richmond. "We will try to get in as many questions as we can and tend to get questions from every geographic area, some specific to that region based on the topic. The transportation funding question has been popular in previous years in the Northern Virginia region," Gatlin said.

Paul Duncan of Fairfax attended the Reston event with the goal of education and action. "I'm here today because I'm eager to learn what's possible for Virginia, now that Democrats have taken control. I want to know how I can contribute," he said.

For twelve-year activist Susan Stillman of Vienna, there wasn't anything more important than dealing with policy and climate change as well as powering Virginia with clean energy. "Policy in Virginia needs to change relative to our investor-owned electrical utilities," she said.

According to Alex Rough of Reston, political and transportation chair of the Great Falls Sierra Club, Northern Virginia is the "capital of the internet with about 70 percent of the world's internet traffic passing through the region." "New Virginia Dominion Power fossil fuel projects are being undertaken at the behest of the data center growth in Northern Virginia. ... Otherwise, the demand for new fossil fuel infrastructure is relatively flat. I implore Virginia state leaders to support legislation demanding new data centers projects be based on 100 percent renewable energy," Rough said.

Douglas Stewart of Fairfax City focused on building sustainable communities by



During the Reston Watch Party of the Virginia Conservation Network's 2019 General Assembly Preview, attendees discuss collective approaches to advancing priority environmental policy in the upcoming state legislative session.



Susan Stillman of Vienna at the Reston Watch Party of the Virginia Conservation Network's 2019 General Assembly Preview.

curbing vehicle pollution and transforming transportation. "I'm interested in creating more walkable, bicycle-friendly communities. That's why I'm here today. I like this environmental community, and it's a great way to act on my priorities. I love to walk and bike, and by doing that; I can help the environment by reducing pollution. It all fits together," he said.

Susan Bonney of McLean came to learn what Virginia bills needed to pass to stop construction of "fracked natural gas pipeline," she said. "I learned today that the pipeline developers' energy demand fore-

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Alex Rough, Political Chair/Transportation Chair of the Great Falls Group-Sierra Club discusses fossil fuels and data center growth in Northern Virginia.

casts are now so off and wrong that there will not be a public benefit from the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and Mountain Valley Pipeline. Our General Assembly needs to pass bills that will make state agencies do transparent analysis to investigate the need for pipelines that impact our water and communities."

Approximately 40 people, including Virginia State Del. Ken Plum (D-36), attended the Reston Watch Party and viewed the live stream presentation by Virginia Conservation Network.

"I am more hopeful for positive environmental legislation for Virginia in the upcoming 2020 General Assembly than I have ever been before," said Plum. "The public is more acutely aware of the dangers of climate, and they voted accordingly in the last election. The new members coming into the legislature are more environmentally conscious and friendly than many from the past."

At 9 a.m., Saturday morning, all watch party locations connected to the Richmond In-Person Preview, hosted by Virginia Conservation Network, The Frontier Project at 3005 West Marshall Street, Richmond. Mary Rafferty, executive director of Virginia Conservation Network, emceed the two-hour presentation. "Each year, we work with 225 (partners) to come up with the year's agenda and work to ensure that we push it forward throughout the year but particularly during the General Assembly Session."

NATURAL RESOURCES FUNDING in the state budget was the first topic reviewed as a statewide conservation priority during the General Assembly preview. Peggy Sanner, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Zachary Sheldon, The Nature Conservancy spoke.

"This year, we have the wind at our back in at least three ways. We have our governor's commitment to triple the size of the portion of the general fund for natural resources. In 10 days, he's going to introduce his Biennial Budget for the next two years. This is what he is committed to doing. We don't know what it is going to say yet, but we have optimism based on his commitment. And third, the energy brought in by the new General Assembly on the environment."

Sheldon said, "An important tool we want to leave as it is, is the Land Preservation Act Tax Credit. It's a very effective program and very popular." Virginia allows an income tax credit for 40 percent of the value of donated land or conservation easements.

Bold action on climate, the second statewide conservation priority was the topic for Will Cleveland, Southern Environmental Law Center and Harrison Wallace, Chesapeake Climate Action Network. "You've probably heard me talk about this before, that's the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. I think this is the year we are going to get this up and have the most equitable version of this bill," said Wallace.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI, pronounced "Reggie") is the first mandatory market-based program in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Cleveland, there are four pillars to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the first to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector. "That means fewer coal

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PAGE 10

Shirley Ginwright, chairman of the Communities of Trust, presents a plaque to Sharon Bulova (in purple) while Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, Police Chief Ed Roessler, MPO Wayne Twombly and Major Dean Lay, look on.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION

'This Has Been a Great Ride'

Community bids farewell to Board Chairman Sharon Bulova.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's the end of an era in Fairfax County: When the Board of Supervisors reconvenes in January 2020, Sharon Bulova will no longer be at its helm. She's retiring after serving 31 years on the Board, including the past 10 years as its chairman.

And Monday evening, Dec. 9, friends, family members, county officials and staff, plus longtime colleagues and associates, gathered at the county Government Center to bid her farewell. The event was filled with speeches, plaques, standing ovations and – like Bulova, herself – genuine feelings of warmth and goodwill.

She began her tenure on the Board as Braddock District Supervisor and, for 20 years, she also chaired the Board's Budget Committee. Her accomplishments are many, including helping to found the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail line and overseeing the huge Tysons Corner redevelopment and the opening of the Silver Line.

Also significant was Bulova's establishment of the Communities of Trust in December 2014 with then county NAACP President Shirley Ginwright. Bulova embraced police reform and established a commission which led to the Police Civilian Review panel and the independent police auditor.

Now, though, Bulova is stepping down to be able to enjoy the extra hours she'll have in her life, as a result of leaving this demanding, time-consuming job leading a complicated county of 1.1 million people. Among the things she plans to do are visit her daughter in Seattle and travel to France.

Meanwhile, fellow Democrat Jeff McKay, former Lee District supervisor, was elected to succeed her as Board chairman.

After all the presentations and glowing words from everyone else on Monday, Bulova addressed the crowd gathered in the Government



From left, past Board of Supervisors Chairman Kate Hanley and retiring Board Chairman Sharon Bulova.

Center forum. She thanked everyone she's worked with and said how glad she was that people in Fairfax County truly care about their local government. She also noted that she's comfortable leaving her post now because she knows she's leaving it in good hands.

Lastly, Bulova stressed how proud she's been to have served these past three decades in local government. "This has been a great ride," she said. "Local government is where the rubber hits the road. It's been a wonderful journey, and I appreciated the opportunity to make it with all of you."



Past and present Board of Supervisors members honor Sharon Bulova (in purple) for her three decades of service to Fairfax County.

Presenting Colonial Christmas Traditions

Come join the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee to learn how the Gen. and Mrs. Washington celebrated Christmas. Rev. Tom Costa of the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild portrays the Rev. Lee Massey, the second colonial rector of Pohick Church, and Susan Costa portrays Mrs. Elizabeth Massey in a presentation of how Christmas was kept in the various colonies. Topics include church and home decorations, gift-giving, dinner parties, Christmas carols of the period, Twelfth Night Great Cakes, and more, including tales of seasonal festivities at the home of his good friends and parishioners, George and Martha Washington. FREE.

Saturday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. Conference Room at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rev. Tom Costa of the Historic Pohick Church portrays the Rev. Lee Massey and Susan Costa portrays Mrs. Elizabeth Massey.

For more information see the website at <http://washingtonbirthday.com/events-1>



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Rev. Thomas Costa of Historic Pohick Church.

Christmas Holiday Services at Historic Pohick Episcopal Church

TUESDAY, DEC. 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

Evening services begin at 6 p.m. with a Family Holy Eucharist with Children's Choirs. At 10:30 p.m. is a Christmas Carol presentation with choir and brass ensemble, followed by the 11 p.m. Festival Holy Eucharist.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY

At 10 a.m. will be a Christmas Day Holy Eucharist. Pohick Episcopal Church is located at 9301 Richmond Highway in Lorton, on U.S. Route 1 between Telegraph Road and Pohick Road. For more information see the website at www.pohick.org or call 703-339-6572.



Strikers walking by the Capitol Hill, including Annabelle Dennen, 14, Great Falls and Cate Coetzee, 14, Great Falls.



Strikers on the streets of D.C.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

'Fridays for Future' Protests Continue

Great Falls youth join the strike.

Outside of the Library of Congress, strikers and a golden retriever sit in playing protest music. Their colorful signs read "School Strike For Climate" and "Fridays For Future." It is a scene that repeats itself every Friday. The group was of many ages and were from Maryland,

DC, and some from our Great Falls community. Some have come after a day in school, some have skipped school to be present.

They are striking, as they do every Friday, with the DC branch of Fridays For Future, an international organization founded by Greta Thunberg. They are there to demand action

on the climate crisis as demanded by science, and they have vowed to come back every Friday until they see it.

It is a cold December day, but that doesn't deter them. As the light fades over Washington, two strikers take their shoes off and dance on the sidewalk to Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start The Fire."

—CATE COETZEE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Supporting 'Less-fortunate Others'

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the opinion piece titled "Commentary: Helping Families Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Fairfax County" (Connection, November 20-26, 2019).

As this county is known for its high rank among the richest in the nation, it was pleasing to see awareness brought to the issue of wealth disparity and struggling families in Fairfax.

The rapid growth of industries generates peril for the working-class as individuals view their financial shortcomings as a personal problem rather than a public issue of a sick society. Responsively, the efforts of Cornerstones and Britepaths seemingly work to combat the negative consequences of inequality and economic instability that our capitalist system produces.

The reflecting words of client "Denise" brought an insight into the new feeling of hope provided by the extra allowance from EITC. This hope effectively propelled her and other recipients alike toward

more rewarding opportunities and, eventually, upward mobility. Her comment that "conversations about social support programs are not hypothetical political statements; they are decisions that impact real people", really weighed on me. My wish for fellow readers is that they think back on how they might've undermined the experiences of "less-fortunate others" in the past.

Jessica Sarmiento
Herndon

Time for Community to Come Together

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article titled "Opinion: Editorial: Give Locally" (Connection, November 20-26, 2019).

In NOVA, and especially in the area where I live, the disparity between household incomes can be staggering. It becomes especially salient during Christmas time, when you see people posting pictures of the piles and piles of Christmas presents stacked underneath their tree, and boasting of their "haul" on Christmas morn-

ing, when there are families just a few blocks away struggling to even buy their children one or two gifts. So many people are so far removed from their neighbors and their communities that they don't realize or refuse to acknowledge the issue.

It is incredibly sad to me that there are so many underprivileged students in an area filled with so much wealth, as well as the elitism of certain areas in our community. I hope that our community can come together and provide for those who are in need this holiday season, take some of the burden off of these struggling families, and facilitate a more inclusive and interconnected community for the years to come.

Molly Van Trees
Centreville

Karma

To the Editor:

Virginia Republicans should now consider what they've done to folks like John & Renee Thoburn and Lt. Col Oliver North, (Ret) when thinking about this lost elections. Maybe they should make the song by Tim McGraw, "Humble and Kind" an integral aspect of their character. You were respon-

sible for destroying the lives of John & Renee, and you chose to vote for Marshall Coleman, a throw away vote, rather than a decorated Marine/Vietnam Veteran/and your own Republican nominee - Ollie. Now you get to sit in your much deserved time out chair and watch as the Orchestra of the Democratic Party enjoy their well deserved victory. I doubt you learned your lesson about arrogance, but at least now you'll be on the sidelines of change while those much more deserving as you now take the lead in Virginia.

Dave Minyard
Vienna

Write The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors. Send to:

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 12

Provide Feedback on Parkway

Improvements. 6:30-8:30 p.m. At Robinson Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. The Virginia Department of Transportation will hold a design public hearing on plans for improvements to about five miles of the Fairfax County Parkway (Route 286), including widening the road from four to six lanes between Route 29 (Lee Highway) and Route 123 (Ox Road). The proposed project design also includes:

- ❖ Building an interchange at Popes Head Road and the future Shirley Gate Road extension.
- ❖ Improving the Route 123 interchange and Fairfax County Parkway/Burke Centre Parkway intersection.
- ❖ Providing a continuous shared-use path within the project limits by constructing the missing segment from Burke Centre Parkway to Route 123.

Comments may be provided at the meeting or sent to VDOT by Dec. 23, 2019. E-mail or mail comments to Mr. Sitaram Kodali, P.E., Project Manager, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

Coffee with Del. Bulova.

9-11 a.m. At Main Street Bagel, 10268 Main Street, City of Fairfax. Del. David Bulova (D-Fairfax) will continue a tradition started in 2006 by holding informal office hours to take place from 9 to 11 a.m.. Constituents are

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St. John's Episcopal Church

Christmas Services



Christmas Eve, December 24

- 4 PM - Service of Holy Eucharist & Choir
- with Children's Sermon & Nursery available
- 8:30 PM - Christmas Music
- 9 PM - Service of Holy Eucharist & Choir

Christmas Day, December 25

- 9:30 AM - Service of Holy Eucharist with Music



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HOME LIFE STYLE

Lighting Up the Season

Holiday designs to benefit Children's National Hospital.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO BY RICHIE DOWNS/ASICO PHOTO

Erica Burns of Erica Burns Interiors designed a holiday tree that features bright colors, sparkling materials, and soft and textured finishes to engage the senses.

Holiday trees donned with a wide array of décor that ranges from musical instruments and fairies to dollhouses and mice will be on display to raise money for charity later this month. "Light Up the Season," the annual event that highlights creative collaborations between Children's National Hospital patients and notable area artists will be held on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington, D.C.

As part of the project, patient-designer teams created custom holiday trees, mantelpieces, menorahs and dollhouses — all available for purchase — with proceeds going to Children's National to support programs that improve the health and well-being of children across the Washington, D.C. region.

Inspired by the children's Christmas book, "If You Take a Mouse to the Movies," the tree created by Quintece Hill-Mattauszek of Studio Q Designs in Alexandria features mice decorating the holiday tree while under a whimsical snowfall.

"Through a child's eyes mice are symbols of youth and innocence with their resourceful courage, adorable curiosity, and their perspective of seeing the world from a different point of view, just like children," she said. "We have embraced them in children's literature for decades because of the lessons they teach, the values they instill, and playfulness they leave in our hearts."

Using a recording of "O Tannenbaum" and musical-themed ornaments, Potomac, Md. designer Sharon Kleinman of Transitions by Sharon Kleinman, assembled a melodious creation. "During our get-to-know-you session, I discovered that my partner is quite the musician," she said. "He plays several instruments and is passionate about music. We decided to make our tree a musical tree."

Taking inspiration from their patient-partner's love of animals, the design team at Pamela Harvey Interiors in Oak Hill, created a display that includes a

dollhouse and a fully decorated 7.5 foot tree with a modern farmhouse vibe.

"Our team had a lot of fun decorating ... we added lighting, wallpaper, area carpets, wood furniture and soft furnishings," said Harvey. "We even decorated it with tiny wreaths and Christmas trees complete with tiny presents. Our tree includes a selection of hand-made clay ornaments. Each ornament is stamped with a different animal and attached with a simple satin ribbon." Keeping the modern farmhouse theme continuous, the Harvey team combined green, plaid, white, silver and natural wood tones to complement the animal ornaments. "We are presenting our patient with a barnyard animal farm, which is decorated with the same theme, as our gift for inspiring us to create holiday decor that can be enjoyed for many years," said Harvey.

Fairies and folklore were the basis for the Christmas tree created Sandra Meyer of Ella Scott Design in Bethesda. The patient's predilection for all things mythical was brought to life in a tree filled with flowers, fantasy and mythical fairies in nature-themed setting. "Fairies have a long history [of] symbolizing kindness and a desire to help humans," said Meyer. "Light Up the Season" is a fairy-like event that exists to help others."

Light Up the Season will be held on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington, D.C. Tickets for the event are \$50 per child (ages 16 and under), \$85 per adult and \$250 for a family of four (package includes two adults and two children 16 and under). For more information, visit www.childrensnational.org/lightuptheseason or email lightuptheseasondc@gmail.com.

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FROM PAGE 5

invited to talk about issues of interest and to ask questions about legislation affecting our community. The format is casual and no appointment is needed. Bulova is also happy to arrange individual appointments on specific issues or concerns. He represents Virginia's 37th House District, which includes the City of Fairfax and portions of Fairfax County. Visit www.davidbulova.com.

PN Support Group. 2-4 p.m. At Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. PN Support Group monthly meeting. Share information, experience, hope and news about Peripheral Neuropathy among fellow sufferers. Guest speaker and group discussions. Visit the website: www.dcpnsupport.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 17

Car Seat Safety Check. 5-9 p.m. at the West Springfield district police station, 6140 Rolling Road. Fairfax County Police Department offers free safety check and install events throughout the year to ensure children travel safely. By appointment only; call 703-644-7377 and press 0 at the recording to schedule. In preparation for appointment, install the seat using the instructions that came with the car seat. Trained officers will review the car seat instructions and car owner's manual to be certain that they are being followed as they should.

Lions Dinner Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Lions Club meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Guests are welcome to learn about the mission of the Lions

Clubs "We Serve," meet club members and learn to help serve the community. Free to first time guests. Email fairfaxlions@cox.net or visit www.fairfaxlions.org for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 28

Messy Church. 5-6:30 p.m. at St. Peter's in the Woods, 5911 Fairview Woods Drive, Fairfax Station. Join St. Peter's in the Woods for their monthly Messy Church. It's a worshipping community especially geared towards families and young children, but welcoming to all. Bible-themed crafts and activities, casual worship and a free, family-style dinner. Call 703-503-9210 for more. Registration is appreciated, visit www.stpetersinthewoods.org/events.

MONDAY/JAN. 13

Effective Strategies for Dementia Caregivers. 7-8:30 p.m. At Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Explore how communication changes when someone is living with Alzheimer's, and identify strategies to help you communicate at each stage of the disease. Presented by the Alzheimer's Association. Light refreshments provided. Free. Visit the website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

BRITEPATHS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is seeking volunteers to sponsor families in need who live throughout the Fairfax County area. Sponsors are matched with families who have demonstrated need, and may opt to provide a December holiday meal and/or gifts for children under 18.

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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ONGOING

Shir HaLev, the Community Jewish Chorale of Northern Virginia. Rehearsals are held select Tuesdays, 7:30-9 p.m. at Congregation Olam Tikvah, 3800 Glenbrook Road, Fairfax. The Chorale is a friendly, welcoming, adult volunteer choir. Membership in the group is open to all, members of Congregation Olam Tikvah and other Northern Virginians. Their repertoire consists mainly of Jewish liturgical music and also some contemporary Jewish music and some secular showtunes, too. Visit carolboydleon.com/shir_halev for more.

Burke Farmers Market. Through Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-noon at the VRE parking lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke. A great selection of fresh produce, baked goods, seafood, and dairy. All vendors make their own food or grow it locally within 125 miles. Call 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/burke for more.

Give the Gift of Original Art. Now thru Jan. 5. At Torpedo Factory Artists at Mosaic, 2905 District Ave., #105, Fairfax. Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 – 7 p.m. Reception celebrating small businesses, Nov. 30, 5 to 8 p.m. You can find extraordinary fine art that makes great gifts this holiday season — the work of highly-acclaimed Torpedo Factory Artists — at their satellite space in Merrifield. Beautiful paintings, fine-art photographs, one-of-a-kind jewelry, scarves, ceramics and much more will be offered. Plus you can get an early start on your holiday shopping. Artists Sonne Hernandez and Greg Knott are in residence during this show.

PJ Party + Santa's Arrival. At Springfield Town Center, Springfield. Welcome Santa with a Pajama Party. Get in the holiday spirit with caroling, hot coco and watch as Santa arrives in style with Fairfax police and fire. Santa's visiting hours will be as follows: Now through Dec. 13; Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Dec. 14 thru Dec. 23: Monday – Saturday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Christmas Eve: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

NOW THRU DEC. 20

Fairfax City Elf Hunt. 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Takes place Fairfax City-wide, start point: Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Locate 10 elves in Fairfax City businesses, get a stamp from each business confirming that you found the elf; share the Fairfax City Elf Hunt card with us at economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov. Once you have submitted your Fairfax City Elf Hunt card, you will receive a Fairfax City car magnet and have your name entered into a drawing for a \$250 cash prize. Completed cards must be received by Dec. 16 to be eligible. Free to participate; patrons are encouraged to purchase items when they visit businesses. Visit the website: <https://fairfaxcityconnected.com/2019/10/08/elfhunt/#prettyPhoto>

DEC. 13-22

ETAP's "Finding Santa." 12 show times over 2 weekends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 7:30 p.m., 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. At Richard J. Ernst Theatre, Annandale NOVA Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Encore Theatrical Arts Project presents a new holiday musical, "Finding Santa." Cost is \$19-\$26. This song and dance musical features over 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, over 165 costumes, and over 16 musical numbers. Come see all the glamour of a Broadway-style show right here in Northern Virginia. Appropriate for audiences of all ages Visit the website: www.Encore-tap.org

FRIDAY/DEC. 13

Vienna Boys Choir. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. There is no sound more celestial than the angelic voices of the Vienna Boys Choir, who return for their annual holiday concert to celebrate the magic of the season. The world's foremost children's choral group performs a delightful program of classical masterpieces, contemporary pop favorites, Austrian folk songs, and beloved Christmas carols with their signature old-world



Congregation Adat Reyim presents Zemer Chai Songs for Chanukah on Sunday, Dec. 15.

Celebrate Chanukah with Zemer Chai Songs

Sunday/Dec. 15, 7 p.m. At Congregation Adat Reyim, 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield. Zemer Chai, The Jewish Chorale of the Nation's Capital, returns for the first time in more than a decade, to Northern Virginia. The Pozez JCC and Congregation Adat Reyim are proud to welcome this unique Chanukah celebration. The concert, filled with songs of hope and determination, includes melodies dating back 1,000 years as well as songs from the current music scene and in between. The 40-member choir also includes a clarinet, flute, tof (drum), bass and piano. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$36 at the door; Active or retired military discount \$20/\$30 Purchase tickets at <https://zemerchai.bpt.me>



The U.S. Army Chorus puts on a concert on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Westwood Baptist Church in Springfield.

U.S. Army Chorus Concert

Saturday/Dec. 14, 3-5 p.m. At Westwood Baptist Church, 8200 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The U.S. Army Chorus will perform a free community concert. Don't miss your chance to hear The U.S. Army Chorus when they return to Westwood Baptist Church for an afternoon of holiday nostalgia that is sure to enhance your patriotism and Advent preparations. Contact usarmyband.com or the church at 703-451-5120.

charm and youthful vocal purity. Tickets are \$55, \$47, \$33. Visit the website: www.cfa.gmu.edu.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

VRE Santa Train. Burke Centre VRE Station, 10399 Premier Court, Burke. The 75-minute excursions begin as early as 8:09 a.m. and as late as 3:55 p.m. Santa, Mrs. Claus and their elves will be on board listening to children's holiday wishes and handing out goodie bags. Santa Train tickets can be purchased beginning Nov. 25. Half of the tickets will be sold online and the other half will be available for purchase at five locations. Each location sells tickets only for the train station that corresponds to its location. VRE recommends creating an account before tickets go on sale to expedite the checkout process. Tickets are \$5 in person and \$6 online. Details about online ticket sales and

vendor locations can be found at <http://vrespecialevents.org>. Visit www.vre.org.

Toy Drive. 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. At PaperMoon Springfield, 6315 Amherst Ave., Springfield. Since 1947, the goal of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots initiative has been to bring the joy of Christmas to less fortunate children. To help Toys for Tots fulfill its annual mission, philanthropic dancers from PaperMoon Springfield are hosting their annual holiday toy donation drive. New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off Sunday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., or Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. at the gentlemen's club, at 6315 Amherst Ave, Springfield. The drive goes through Dec. 14, wrapping up with a black-tie party. Visit the website: papermoonvip.com

Santa Critters & Craft. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Come one, come all to meet Santa and his merry band of critters this holiday

season at Hidden Pond Nature Center. Bring your camera to take a picture with Jolly Saint Nick, his elves and their animal friends at the Santa's Critters & Craft program. Cost is \$10 per child. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

U.S. Army Chorus Concert. 3-5 p.m. At Westwood Baptist Church, 8200 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The U.S. Army Chorus will perform a free community concert. Don't miss your chance to hear The U.S. Army Chorus when they return to Westwood Baptist Church for an afternoon of holiday nostalgia that is sure to enhance your patriotism and Advent preparations. Contact usarmyband.com or the church at 703-451-5120.

Community Nativities Festival. 5-8 p.m. At Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6219 Villa Street (corner of Franconia Rd & S. Van Dorn St.), Franconia. Join in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ as you enjoy an evening of community nativity displays and hymns of Christmas. Free. www.festivalofnativities.com/

Annual Christmas Musical. 6 p.m. At Greater Little Zion Baptist Church, 10185 Zion Drive, Fairfax. The Ministry of Music and Performing Arts of Greater Little Zion Baptist Church in Fairfax presents its Annual Christmas Musical, No Ordinary Night, a special service to celebrate the birth of our Savior in narration, music, song, and dance. Featured will be the Greater Little Zion choirs and praise dancers, along with a special performance by recording artist and renown pianist, Bro. Jeff Corry. Free. Call 703-239-9111.

NVRC Gala and Showcase. 6-10 p.m. At Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Gala to benefit the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC) with a cocktail hour, dinner, a silent auction and a showcase of deaf and HOH talent. Cost: \$125. Visit the website: www.nvrcgala.org

American Festival Pops Orchestra. 8 p.m. At George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Just hear those sleigh bells jinglin' as the American Festival Pops Orchestra ushers in the season with its annual holiday concert. A beloved tradition at the Center, the uplifting evening includes treasured classics like Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride", "A Christmas Festival," and a rousing carol sing-along. Maestro Anthony Maiello leads Northern Virginia's very own pops orchestra and special guest artists in a cherished holiday celebration. Tickets are \$55, \$47, \$33. Visit www.cfa.gmu.edu.

DEC. 14-15

Winter Wonderland. Noon to 5 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. At Winter Wonderland, you can hop a train ride on the Holiday Express, take unlimited spins on the Carolers Carousel, play Gingerbread Man Golf or cook s'mores by the fire. Visit with Santa and enjoy hot chocolate or cider and candy canes. Five-hour passes are \$15 in advance and \$20 on the event day. The park will also be accepting new toys or canned food items for donation. In the evenings, enjoy a magical train ride through a forest decorated with holiday-themed lights and scenes. Celebration Station runs the same weekends as Winter Wonderland, but will take place on Friday and Saturday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. Celebration Station ticket are \$10 each; trains depart every 20 minutes. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.

19th Annual Bethlehem Walk. 3-7 p.m. At Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale. Get in the Christmas spirit walking through the narrow streets of Bethlehem. Haggle with shop owners, sidestep tax collectors, avoid the Roman centurions on your way to the manger scene. Hundreds of families make the trek each year to a replica of the holy city, raised by Parkwood Baptist Church as its annual celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. For nearly two decades, this popular event has been offered at no charge to the Washington Metro community. It features a live nativity scene with animals, Christmas music performances, crafts, games and story times for children. Guests are urged to reserve free, timed, tour tickets in advance at www.parkwood.org. Call 703-978-8160.

Les Mills Bodycombat Instructor Training. At South Run RECenter, 7550 Reservation Drive, Springfield. The Les Mills Body Combat Instructor training contains both practical and

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

theoretical components and is designed for participants who are experienced in fitness classes, in good mental health and physically fit. Classes run from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, and students must attend the entire session to pass the module. The registration fee is \$299. Potential instructors should register through the instructor portal at the Les Mills website (<https://lesmills.secure.force.com/instructorportal/Create-Account>) or reach out to their local Fairfax County RECenter Fitness Director. Call 703-866-0566 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter/south-run.

SUNDAY/DEC. 15

Choral Lessons and Carols. 10-11:15 a.m. At St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Celebrate the holiday season with the sweet sounds of hammered dulcimer, Irish flute, bagpipes, harp-guitar, concertina, and bodhran. Celtic musicians will provide the music for this Advent Lessons & Carols service. A special collection for ECHO and FACETS will be taken. Free. Visit the website: standrews.net

Victorian Tea. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Celebrate the holidays with a traditional Victorian tea at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Wonderful teas and sweet treats will be provided while you browse the Civil War and Railroad artifacts and exhibits. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org

Santa Visit. 2 p.m. At American Legion Post 176 Springfield, located at 6520 Amherst Ave., Springfield. Santa is coming to The American Legion Post 176 Springfield.

Family Wreath Making. 2-3:30 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Family members of all ages are invited to work on seasonal wreaths made from vines and decorated with greens, cones, dried flowers and ribbons. Cost is \$15. Register one adult to reserve the supplies for yourself and/or your family. One wreath per registrant. Please register another adult for each additional wreath. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic. 4:30-6 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join WMP for delightful musical treats during the holiday season performing Vaughan Williams' delightful version of Greensleeves with flutist Lynn Ann Zimmerman-Bell and Heidi Sturniolo on harp. Principal tubist Karl Hovey explores Richard Strauss' romantic Horn Concerto, playing it on the tuba. Discover how Stravinsky evokes the world of commedia dell'arte clowns in Pulcinella. Cost: \$25; 18 and under free. www.wmpamusic.org.

Zemer Chai Songs. 7 p.m. At Congregation Adat Reyim, 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield. Zemer Chai, The Jewish Chorale of the Nation's Capital, returns for the first time in more than a decade, to Northern Virginia. The Pozez JCC and Congregation Adat Reyim are proud to welcome this unique Chanukah celebration. The concert, filled with songs of hope and determination, includes melodies dating back 1,000 years as well as songs from the current music scene and in between. The 40-member choir also includes a clarinet, flute, tof (drum), bass and piano. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$36 at the door; <https://zemerchai.bpt.me>

MONDAY/DEC. 16

Funday Monday. 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Crafts, music, movement, and fun with Mr. Skip, My Gym, Paint Your Own Pottery and a new VIP series featuring community helpers and leaders. Free. www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts or call 703-385-2712.

Nature Quest. 11 a.m. to noon. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. From field to stream and everything in between, children ages 3 to 6 learn about local animal species hands-on and in the field. Program topics vary each week. 11 a.m. to noon for three weeks. The cost is \$26 per child for the series. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

TUESDAY/DEC. 17

Pub Theology. 7-9 p.m. At Patriot Pub and Grill, 10560 Main Street, Fairfax. Interfaith Connections at the Pub is a gathering to provide



PHOTO BY DJ COREY PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY FAIRFAX SYMPHONY AND FAIRFAX BALLET

Ballerinas dance the “Waltz of the Flowers” from the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet 2018 production of “The Nutcracker.”

Cherished Holiday Tradition Returns

‘The Nutcracker’ performed by Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet at Center for the Arts.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

With a combined more than 110 years as Fairfax County performing arts organization, the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) and the Fairfax Ballet Company are collaborating to present the captivating masterwork, Tchaikovsky's “The Nutcracker.”

Along with live musical accompaniment by the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra directed by Christopher Zimmerman, there will be more than fifty dancers on the big Center for the Arts stage from The Fairfax Ballet as well as special soloists and American Ballet Theatre alumni Elina Miettinen (Sugar Plum Fairy) and Sean Stewart (Cavalier) performing original choreography.

“There is a reason that ‘The Nutcracker’ is so popular. Of all Tchaikovsky's Ballet Pieces—and they are all wonderfully evocative musically — it is perhaps the most imaginative in terms of orchestral color (use of instruments) and variety between “serious” dramatic music and set pieces for dance,” said Christopher Zimmerman, Music Director and Con-

Where and When

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet present Tchaikovsky's “The Nutcracker” at Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, George Mason University Campus, 4374 Mason Pond, Drive, Fairfax. Performances: Saturday, Dec 21 and Sunday, Dec 22 at 4 p.m. Tickets: \$49, \$69 and \$89. Call 703-993-2787 or visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

ductor, FSO. “With the ‘Nutcracker,’ Tchaikovsky wrote not only his final ballet, but a piece which synthesizes the best of his symphonic writing and his writing for the stage,” added Zimmerman.

“The Nutcracker” story begins on Christmas Eve in the home of two young children, Clara and Fritz. The family gathers around the Christmas tree. Soon, they welcome the arrival of Uncle Drosselmeier, a toymaker bringing gifts. Audiences will then take in a transition from reality into fantasy with waltzing snowflakes, a handsome prince, and some mischievous mice as the toys come to life for a truly memorable night.

“We're incredibly honored to join the Fairfax Symphony in our fifth production of ‘The Nutcracker,’” said Karla Petry, Executive Director, Fairfax Ballet. “Audiences are in for a special treat.”

“We are proud to maintain the long standing tradition of our productions, while find-

ing unique ways to add new opportunities for our dancers and surprises for our long standing audience members,” said Andrea Cook, Artistic Director, Fairfax Ballet. Cook is a Fairfax County native and Chantilly HS alum.

Fairfax Ballet principal dancers include Nicole Shortle, age 16, of Oakton, and a sophomore at Oakton High School in the treasured role of Clara.

Carlos Martinez, attending George Mason University, School of Dance will dance as the Nutcracker Prince. Northern Virginia's Aleksey Kurdrin will be Herr Drosselmeier and Philip Smith-Cobbs will dance the Arabian pas de deux.

There will also be more than four dozen dancers and students on stage ranging from 7-19 from Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties.

“From the incredible dancers on stage, live music by our full FSO orchestra, and beautiful, high definition, digital scenery, it's sure to be a magical experience for the whole family,” said Jonathan Kerr, Executive Director, FSO.

A beloved Holiday season event is coming courtesy of Fairfax's own, Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Ballet.

a safe, open space where people can explore and express their own doubts and questions and learn from others from various belief systems. The format is based off the book Pub Theology to provide a safe, open space where people can explore and express their own doubts and questions, learn from others and engage people of varying religious traditions. Non-alcoholic beverages and vegetarian dishes are available. Free. www.eventbrite.com/e/interfaith-connections-at-the-pub-holiday-edition-tickets-85190600379.

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

Tea Tasting. 3-4 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Sample a variety of whole leaf hot teas — white, green, oolong and black. Learn how to make authentic masala chai. Free. For teens and adults. Email Sonal Gosai at sonal.gosai@fairfaxcounty.gov. librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/5090800

SUNDAY/DEC. 22

Lessons and Carols. 10 a.m. At Historic Pohick

Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Historic Pohick Church, the Colonial parish of George Washington and George Mason, will have a Service of Lessons and Carols. This service originated in Victorian England in the 1880s as “Lesson and Carols: A Festal Service for Christmastide,” as a series of scripture readings interspersed with Advent and Christmas carols, hymns and choral anthems, tracing God's love from the creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden, through the annunciation and birth of the Christ Child. Call 703-339-6572 or visit <http://www.pohick.org>.

Environmental Priorities for Virginia

FROM PAGE 2

plants, fewer gas plants. REGGIE is how we do that...The next thing we need to do is to reduce the amount of energy we use. ... The less you use, the less you pay. There is going to be legislation this year that will require the utilities to hit certain energy efficiency saving targets - making sure they are burning less. ... Energy efficiency is actually the single most labor-intensive type of energy resource out there while being the cheapest. It creates the most jobs. It saves the most money. We don't do nearly enough in Virginia. We are going to see legislation do that," said Cleveland. "The third pillar is distributive generation ... We have, in Virginia, laws that allow customers to put solar on their roofs. There are, however, some limitations on what you can do; how much you can have, where you can put it. We are going to see legislation this year ... to remove the existing market barriers ... so more people can go solar. ... We call it 'boots on the roof.' That's how you create jobs in clean energy.

"The last piece [is] ... building out utility-scale solar, building out the offshore wind. There are good ways to do these things, and there are the Dominion ways of doing these things," Cleveland said.

Virginia Conservation Network named protecting waterways from plastics pollution and toxics as its third conservation priority, presented by Danielle Simms, Virginia League of Conservation Voters and Zach Huntington, clean streams program manager, Clean Fairfax.

"The plastic bills are pretty straightforward; what we are expecting. There are two in the Senate that have already been introduced. Senate Bill 11 is a local option tax on paper and plastic bags, with a 5-cent tax for those bags. Four cents going back to the locality so they can use it appropriately as they see fit. One cent goes back to the distributor of the bag; that helps offset the cost. SB 26 is a 5-cent tax on a plastic bag given to a customer free of charge for Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Both of these together would create a really strong plastic bag plan for Virginia going forward."

A four-person panel presented: "Other Statewide Conservation Issues Expected." Panelist named and discussed, "Transportation Funding, Dominion Energy Accountability, Creating Wildlife Corridors and Preventing Offshore Drilling."

In the third and final presentation, Mary Rafferty, Virginia Conservation Network, offered, "Tools and Strategies for being an Effective Conservation Advocate in 2020," a guide on how to communicate with legislators throughout the year to show that protecting Virginia's environment is a priority. She shared that information on how to get in touch with state legislators could be found at <http://vpap.org>.

REGIONAL DISCUSSIONS followed the live stream. At the Reston Watch Party, comments ranged from the amount of electric energy used by Northern Virginia data centers, eradication of solar energy barriers and that the Watch Party marked six weeks until the start of the 2020 legislative session. Attendees reiterated the need to reach out to legislators



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Emcee Kyle Gatlin, state climate organizer at Virginia Conservation Network, opens the Reston Watch Party.

while Gatlin reminded all to mark their calendars for Jan. 28, 2020, Conservation Lobby Day, to ensure a strong voice early in the legislative session.

Virginia Conservation Network is "a facilitator of strategic action, a resource for Network Partners statewide, and a constant conservation presence in Virginia's Capital. The organization and its staff focus on strengthening the conservation community as a whole and winning environmental victories that benefit all Virginians." Visit www.vcna.org for more information.

Legislators Action

State Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36):

"Personally, I have a few priorities. First, I am introducing legislation to ban fracking East of I-95.

"Second, I am introducing a bill to encourage more home energy audits are part of home sales. If home purchasers require home energy audits and repairs from that it could save millions of tons of carbon dioxide on an annual basis. Wasted energy is our cheapest energy resource to tap.

"I will also be introducing legislation to begin to prepare Virginia for electric vehicles including 'right to charge' legislation to prohibit condominium and homeowners associations from restricting owners rights to install chargers in their own parking lots along, with an electric vehicle purchase grant program (in lieu of a tax credit).

"I will also be introducing legislation to allow community net metering so that groups of homeowners can build solar panels on third-party property and reap the benefits on their own electric meters. This is the only way people can get solar in more established neighborhoods such as most of those in the 36th District where mature tree cover limits neighborhood solar potential."

Del. Karrie Delaney (D-67):

"I am proud to be an ally and partner of the Virginia Conservation Network and its partners. I support their 2020 legislative efforts and will personally be filling legislation which furthers their goals and visions."

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

Britepaths also has a great need for cash donations and gift cards to grocery stores or Target/Walmart 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 sryan@britepaths.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

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

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

ONGOING

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com.

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and the its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Haven of Northern Virginia is committed to offering, support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. Volunteers provide individual and group support to those suffering from a loss. Volunteers must participate in a 30 hour training. Training will be offered in October 2018. To volunteer, call Haven at 703-941-7000.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnieb517@verizon.net.

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

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Still Processing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Off we go — or not — into the wild blue yonder. It seems that my most recent CT scan's results, described as "a little worse" by my oncologist are indeed cause for some reflection and change. (I'm not quite able to say "cause for concern," yet.) As such, to make the most effective change, per my oncologist's orders, I am scheduled for a needle biopsy on the Wednesday this column publishes. This procedure will determine, if there is a match, to the specific type of cancer tumor that I have. (Without boring you with too many details, the short version is that all cancer tumors are not alike. Biomarkers/genetic mutations such as ALK, BRAF, EGFR, NTRK, PD-L1 and ROS1 are the most common, and certain medicines work better against certain tumor types. Variation in the tumor types, such as the ones I've described, is a relatively recent discovery in lung cancer research.)

What this research has led to is another new kind of cancer treatment known as "targeted therapy." This means than rather than "flying blind," to use one of my brother, Richard's, favorite expressions, and employing a one-size-fits-all kind of approach to treatment, oncologists now have specific medicines to infuse when the tumor's genetic mutation is confirmed. Wednesday hopefully, will confirm something. However, researchers have not discovered all the tumor types so it's possible that this biopsy will reveal nothing useful for me and in effect, I'll be back to square one-ish.

As for what 'square-one-ish' means? It means that I'll likely be infusing medicines that previously worked for a time but whose infusions were stopped after they all ran their successful course years ago. As I've been told whenever this change became necessary, cancer cells eventually figure out what's happening to them and then the tumors begin growing. Once this growth is indicated on the CT scan, a new medicine is usually started, and on and on it goes until, apparently now, for me anyhow. "Targeted therapy" offers lots of new medicines. I just need a match. Unfortunately, there's no guarantee the biopsy will provide just such a match. There's only one way to find out. On Wednesday, we will begin to find out. To say I have a lot riding on this determination is the understatement of the year; at least for Team Lourie, it is. If I'm forced to repeat infusions from medicines that stopped working years ago, it'll be "Katie, bar the door," as we say in Boston which means, "Look out!"

I'm trying not to 'look out' though. I'm trying not to look anywhere, except straight ahead. Just because my life may be at stake, is no time to deviate from the norm that has been my modus operandi over the past 11 years. I'm not quite ready to consider that my stage IV lung cancer survival is coming to an end. Maybe it's just staggering and within a week or so, I'll get my bearings again. New medical information getting me new medical treatment is sure to put a bounce back in my step. For the first time in 11 years, to quote George Costanza from Seinfeld: "I'm back, baby." This could be the jolt my body needs to get me through to the next

research level. The Team Lourie strategy has always been for me to try and live long enough to reach the next medical breakthrough. So far, I've benefited from a few: tarceva, avastin and alimta; all miracle drugs according to my oncologist, and here I am, living proof that it has all worked.

Until I hear, post procedure, from my oncologist, in the interim, I am re-experiencing many what-happens-if-and-when emotions that I've not wrestled with for years. Unfortunately, this hospital visit is taking me back to the visit/biopsy I had in Feb. 2009 which confirmed the malignancy in my lungs in the first place. And here I am, hopefully not in the last place, waiting for the results of a biopsy yet again. It didn't work out so good in 2009. I just hope I have better luck in 2019.

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

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