

WELLBEING

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A jolly Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus arrive from the North Pole to Reston to participate in the 2019 Reston Holiday Parade.

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News

Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change

Reston Regional Library hosts defense correspondent and author Michael T. Klare.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

Extrême climate effects as a danger and primary concern of United States national security; that was the topic Nov. 14, when Reston Regional Library partnered with Scrawl Books to host author Michael T. Klare for a discussion, sale and signing of his just-published book, "All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change."

Klare is a defense correspondent, Director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College, and a senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association. Klare is also the author of fourteen other books, including Resource Wars (2001), Blood and Oil (2004), Rising Power, Shrinking Planet (2008) and The Race for



Author Michael T. Klare answers questions during the book discussion for his newly released examination of climate change, "All Hell Breaking Loose," held at Reston Regional Library Nov. 14

What's Left (2012).

Before Klare began his formal presentation and discussion at the library, patrons said what prompted them to come to the educational program offered through the Fairfax County Library System. Trudy Bell of Reston: "I'm here to learn more. I know nothing about how climate change impacts the military."

Ruth Percival, Reston: "I'm here to learn about how climate change impacts all areas of life. I do believe recycling and conserving energy all have an impact."

Daniel Volman of the District of Columbia: "I'm an old friend and long-time supporter of the author. I read military policy."

Ben Taylor of Reston: "Katherine Murphy of Reston brought me on a date to the library. I'm interested

in the topic."

ACCORDING TO KLARE, the U.S. military may not seem a likely institution to be worried about climate change; however, international competition over resources such as freshwater and land has led to conflict. "As I began to be involved in this research, over time, it became very clear that conflict occurred as waters rose, as rising temperatures flooded many

SEE AUTHOR, PAGE 7

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A cheer goes up for Christal Rheams and Caleb Green, the 2019 Grand Marshals of the Reston Holiday Parade. They represent "Voices of Service!" and are the singing quarter from the Center for American Military Music Opportunities.



The Junior Redskins Cheerleaders, part of the Washington Redskins organization, show off a little holiday cheer.

The Sights and Sounds of Reston Holidays

Festivities at Reston Town Center continue throughout the season.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

"The 2019 Reston Holiday Parade proved as always to be the best way to spend Black Friday," said Angie Goff, this year's parade emcee and News Anchor at FOX 5 – WTTG Washington. "Having a good time outside, getting into the holiday spirit, along with dining with friends and getting some shopping done," she said.

THE RESTON TOWN CENTER elves kicked off the parade carrying the Reston Holiday Parade banner accompanied by mascot dog RESTY. Next, bagpipers representing the MacMillan United Pipe Bands performed under the leadership of Pipe Major Andrew Donlon, Pipe Sergeant Tom Cangelosi, and Drum Sergeant Alexander Kuldell. The crowd gave a big cheer to Christal Rheams and Caleb Green, the 2019 Grand Marshals of the Reston Holiday Parade, members of 'Voices of Service! "You may have seen the outstanding "Voices of Service!" competing on America's Got Talent. Simon Cowell was floored by their performance," said Goff.

The parade rolled, for the next hour, choreographed like a New York Macy's Day Parade, only better. "It's a great parade... but I want to keep it a secret. It's a mini Macy's but more personal. It's our community," said Kathy Marten of Reston. "This is my family," she said pointing to a large gathering of children and adults.

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Emcee Angie Goff, News Anchor at FOX 5 – WTTG Washington at the 2019 Reston Holiday Parade.



A jolly Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus arrive from the North Pole to Reston.

"Here come our local dignitaries. First, our United States Congressman, Gerry Connolly, well-known to Reston and has proudly served Virginia's 11th District for seven years... in the U.S. House of Repre-

sentatives," said Goff. "Virginia Del. Ken Plum is here and also very well known in Reston. Delegate Plum represents all of Reston and parts of Herndon and Oakton in the Virginia General Assembly...Cathy

Hudgins is here, our Hunter Mill District Supervisor rolling along Market Street in a Frying Pan Farm Park truck pulling a holi

SEE HOLIDAY PARADE, PAGE 10



Fairfax County Police Reston Station Bike Team, from left: Second Lieutenant Mike Gubesch, Master Police Officer Brendan McMahon, Patrolmen First Class Dean A. Rocco, Landon Hopson and Bernd Bender at the 2019 Reston Holiday Parade.



Kathy Martin of Reston and her family settle in to watch the 2019 Reston Holiday Parade.

Will Democrats Deliver Real Change?

BY JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST

On Nov. 5, the Democrats captured majorities in both houses of Virginia's General Assembly after a long period of Republicans' having their way with public policy in the Commonwealth. Now, let's see what the Dems do. Because Gov. Ralph Northam is also a Democrat and because the composition of the Party now is very different—both more diverse and more progressive—from the Democrats of old it seems reasonable to expect a major shift in a more progressive direction. In fact, there is a lot of talk among the new legislators about many overdue actions including addressing gaping income inequality, gun violence, basic health care, expansion of pre-school education, gerrymandering and voting rights—in addition to actually ratifying the E.R.A! Some specific measures are being discussed, but we are starting to hear voices of some long-time incumbents counselling us not to expect too much too soon. Be realistic! We might expect bills introduced to raise the hopelessly outdated \$7.25 minimum wage with gradual increases actually

passing. But, there have also been reports that repeal of Virginia's so-called "right to work" law is unlikely even to be submitted and certainly will not pass if it were to surface. Corporations and their chambers of commerce still hold sway with too many legislators including a junior local state senator and other longer serving members. Many of us believe that the "right to work" law which stifles creation of unions is a major factor in income inequality, severely tilting the playing field against working men and women. Sadly, it appears that the new majorities may lack the spine to remember who got them elected and to confront "right to work." hence unlikely to take a real bite out of income inequality in Virginia.

I am assured that ERA ratification is a real priority on the agenda. Also, there may be more willingness to address gun violence, which in Virginia is remarkable. For example, universal background checks and a ban on large capacity magazines and bump stocks are already being discussed and deemed likely to pass. In Vir-



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

ginia, this one falls under the category of I'll believe it when I see the Governor's signature on the actual pieces of legislation. Banning assault weapons much less buying back those already in circulation, while crucial to reducing the killings, are definitely a bridge too far for the new majority.

Increased funding for pre-school education and expanded health insurance coverage have strong backing and may make it through the legislative minefields as long as no noticeable increases in taxes are required to implement them! One prominent local legislator suggests tax increases are unlikely in the first General Assembly session. This would suggest that it may be feasible in the subsequent GA. Really?!? A tax increase in the second year of the delegates' term as they face election? No way! Will not happen. For me, the biggest shock, and a tie for biggest disappointment along with the bleak outlook for "right to work" repeal, is what I've seen in the Post and gotten talking to a state senator that the constitutional amendment reforming redistricting (a dagger

to the heart of gerrymandering) is in jeopardy. The amendment passed the outgoing legislature and was presumed a slam dunk in the 2020 session, thus meeting the Virginia requirement of a second passage to effect an amendment to the constitution, is in jeopardy. Sen. Dick Saslaw, long time Senate Minority Leader and now returned to his old Majority Leader status, is a big fan of gerrymandering and anxious to avenge what Republicans did to Democrats for many years. Saslaw, who unfortunately barely beat rising star Yasmine Taeb in a primary, and others may scuttle the excellent compromise amendment that would create a commission to draw maps consisting of 8 citizens and 8 legislators, evenly divided by party and requiring a supermajority of both sides to approve a new map. This requires a genuine consensus and is regarded as one of the strongest redistricting reforms undertaken to date in the U.S. If Saslaw and friends succeed in killing the amendment, maps reflecting the new 2020 census will be gerrymandered as before except that the Democrats, not Republicans, will dictate the outcomes. Reform would be delayed until at least the 2030 census.

Skepticism on Casino Gaming in Virginia

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

After intensive lobbying by some local governments and private investors during the 2019 session, the General Assembly passed a bill requesting the Joint Legislative Audit Review

COMMENTARY Commission (JLARC) on which I serve to conduct a review of the impact if resort-style casinos were to be built in Bristol, Danville, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Richmond. These locations represent a pattern only of local governments that are interested and/or private investors who want to invest there. The JLARC staff with assistance of private consultants who specialize in gambling operations reported to the Commission last week. A copy of the report is available at <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/landing-2019-gaming.asp>.

Gambling has long been prohibited in Virginia, with the exception of the lottery, charitable gaming such as bingo, and wagering on horse races. Virginians currently wager over \$1 billion annually on

these forms of gaming, generating about \$600 million in revenue for various purposes, primarily K-12 education. Nearby states permit more forms of gambling than Virginia does, including casino gaming, sports wagering, and online casino gaming.

According to estimates from The Innovation Group, a national gaming consultant who assisted JLARC staff with the study, resort-style casinos could be built and sustained in Bristol, Danville, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Richmond. These estimates assume an initial \$200 million to \$300 million capital investment and an annual gaming revenue state tax rate of 27 percent (the national median). Casinos in these five locations are projected to generate about \$970 million annually in net gaming revenue and approximately \$260 million in gaming tax revenue for the state. For comparison, the Virginia Lottery generates over \$600 million annually after prizes are paid out. About one-third of total casino revenue is projected to be generated by out-of-state visitors.



The projected median wage of \$33,000 for casino employees would be below the median wage in the five localities. Not all casino jobs would represent a net gain of employment for the localities, and nearly half of the jobs would be low-skill and low-wage. Casino gambling would reduce the revenues in existing forms of gambling such as the Lottery that generates money for the schools.

According to the study, the prevalence of problem gambling in Virginia has not been measured, but evidence from national studies and states with a broad array of gaming options suggests that an estimated 5 to 10 percent of adults may experience gambling problems. The introduction of casinos would make more people at risk of experiencing problems as gambling opportunities increase.

The negative impacts of gambling are not limited to problem gamblers. The report indicates that research consistently shows adverse effects on others, most often a spouse or partner, but also the parents and children of prob-

lem gamblers, as well as other family members and close friends. The negative effects of problem gambling can be severe in a small portion of cases and include financial instability and mental health and relationship problems.

I am skeptical of introducing additional gambling opportunities in the Commonwealth. From what I have been able to learn, the modest revenues are not worth the risks involved. Is there something I am missing? (kenplum@aol.com)

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Small Business Saturday draws a steady stream of patrons to Chesapeake Chocolates, a small business located on Lake Anne.



Rick Thompson gives local small business artist, Marthe McGrath a suggestion about color choice at the Reston Art Gallery & Studio at Lake Anne.



Kristy Do announces she is the new owner of a small business in the Town of Herndon, Herndon Nails and Spa located at 754 Elden Street #101.

Small Business Saturday Promotes More Vibrant Communities

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Local small businesses in the Reston-Herndon area celebrated Small Business Saturday on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 30. The day is designed to encourage people to Shop Small and bring holiday shopping to small businesses.

Estimated data on businesses with under 100 employees, as reported in Amex-commissioned 2018 Small Business Economic Impact Study, cited that for every dollar spent at a small business, approximately 67 cents stays in the local community and that helps keep doors open.

Cassie Berman of Herndon is a bartender at Mile 20 connected to The Breeze Restaurant & Sports Bar in Herndon. "It's very important to support local small businesses," she said.

"Because it's the backbone of small town Herndon," said owner Phil Ohme.

ONE BLOCK DOWN Station Street, small business owner Kristy Do considered how to remodel the interior of her newly pur-

chased business. "The shop will be redesigned with new furniture and equipment. We look forward to meeting the community and supporting the local economy. While we are open today, Small Business Saturday and every day, watch for our Opening Banner soon, and we are also looking for additional staff," Do said.

Vanessa Rose co-owner of Maude, a small business in the Town of Herndon, understands the mutual relationship built between storeowners and others in a community; it is a bond. "For 16 years, Maude's has had the privilege to serve our community. One of the ways we do this is our annual No Mother Left Behind drive, where our team creates 200 beauty bags out of donations from our guests to mothers in need in our community. These bags are distributed by Cornerstones."

AT LAKE ANNE in Reston, Celestina Hernandez and Miguel Aragon Perdemo are the co-owners of Reston's newest small business, Reston Tailoring. According to Perdemo: "We opened in August, and we are in our fifth month. This is our first time opening a tailor shop. One of our tailors studied in Japan, and our other tailor has over 30 years of experience. She studied pattern making in Honduras. We look forward to serving the community. We have a commitment to the community; they can rely on us," Perdemo said.

Brigitte Wazana of Reston came into the shop to pick up some tailoring and said she was making the rounds to the different small businesses on the plaza. "I'm not a big mall person. I grew up in Paris where there were boutiques," Wazana said.

Chesapeake Chocolates is another small business located on Lake Anne. It is an independent, family-owned and operated business. On Small Business Saturday, Owner Doris Tyler offered samplings of wine and chocolates. A steady stream of customers came in and out of the door. She

offered Charlotte Craig, 8, of Reston a #ShopSmall sticker. Craig said, "I asked my mom for chocolate, but she said no. But then she said, let's go look."

A few doors down, Rick Thompson, co-owner of the Lake Anne Coffee House, another small business, sat with artist and painter Marthe McGrath in the Reston Art Gallery & Studio. "I see a lot of places, but this is my favorite," Thompson said. McGrath said the small privately owned cooperative gallery and studio, itself a small business, has operated at Lake Anne since 1962.



Doris Tyler, owner of Chesapeake Chocolates on Lake Anne in Reston gives customer Charlotte Craig, 8, a #ShopSmall sticker as Charlotte's mother, April Konar watches.



At Reston Tailoring on Lake Anne, co-owner Celestina Hernandez shows off the hand knitted children's jackets and crafted jewelry.

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WELLBEING

Maintaining Peace on Earth (and at Home)

Preserving your family's wellbeing during the holidays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The merriment of the holidays can disrupt a family's sense of wellbeing.

For many, December will be filled with sugar-laden holiday parties, lengthy-shopping trips and long lines for a chance to sit on Santa's lap. For families that thrive on routine, holiday merriment can lead to schedule disruptions that throw a family's rhythm into disarray. Maintaining the wellbeing of both parents and children during the season takes a bit of advanced planning.

"Children, just like adults, need both energetic time and rest time embedded throughout the day," said psychologist Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D. of Northern Virginia Community College and Belle Point Wellness Center. "During the holidays, this natural rhythm can easily get disrupted."

Keep the holidays in the proper perspective and remember that the season is for a finite period of time and one's normal routine will be restored, says therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C. "The biggest stress that people often have is feeling that they are being judged by others if their children are having a hard time. I tell my patients to focus on the things that they can control and remember, other people have once been in their shoes."

Providing opportunities for an emotional outlet can help with mood stabilization. "Make sure that [children] have enough outdoor play paired with quiet down time throughout their day," said Lorente. "Model for them how to find a quiet space to retreat to when things start to heat up."

When parents are able to exhibit a sense of tranquility during a period of chaos, children often mimic this emotional response. "Remain calm and stay patient," added Joanne Bagshaw, PhD Professor of Psychology Montgomery College. "Emotions are contagious, and your ability to remain calm under pressure is great role modeling for young children and can help prevent strong emotions from escalating."

When in new and unfamiliar social settings, some children need more time than others to adjust to the social demands, says Lorente. "Know your child," she said. "Some will make these transitions quite easily while many will find this challenging. Remember that our first job is to teach. And children learn best by watching how we handle the stressors of the season."

In fact, reflecting on a child's temperament can

serve as a guide for parents as they navigate the impact of a disputed schedule. "This is a time to go with what you know about your child," said psychologist Stacie Isenberg Psy. D. "Some kids can push bedtime and sugar every so often, with little to no negative effects. If this describes your child, stay later than usual and enjoy the special occasion. If this is not your child, you and your child are likely to become miserable by pushing the limits that night and very likely the next day or maybe two,"

Returning to normalcy as often as possible can preserve a family's wellbeing during the holiday season, suggests Jerome Short, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University. "Maintain household routines leading up to holiday events, such as regular meal, play, and bed times for children," he said. "Plenty of sleep, including naps, helps children with their attention spans, mood regulation, and self-control of their

"The biggest stress that people often have is feeling that they are being judged by others if their children are having a hard time. I tell my patients to focus on the things that they can control and remember, other people have once been in their shoes."

— Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C

behaviors,"

"Put limits around bedtime and sugar consumption that match your child's physiological and emotional abilities and you'll all have the best experience," added Isenberg.

Nutrition plays a role in mood and behavior especially during the holidays. "Keep some protein heavy snacks handy, like cheese sticks, or nuts if your child doesn't have allergies," said Bagshaw. "Snacks filled with protein can help stabilize blood sugar, and young children's moods."

Explaining to a child what they can expect at holiday event can mitigate meltdowns. "Make a plan with your partner and set realistic expectations on how long you will stay at events," said Barnaby. "This is often the best thing couples can do to manage stress and frustration that leads to conflict. Take turns in managing the children so that each of you can have some fun."

Author Discusses Pentagon Perspective on Climate Change

FROM PAGE 2

areas of the world. Precipitation would drop, and it was harder to grow crops. Food supplies would disappear ... and this would likely increase competition over scarce resources," he said. In the last ten years, Klare said as he continued his research, he discovered he was not alone in examining the relationship between climate change and its peril of resource scarcity and conflict.

"I discovered the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) was also researching the same topic...That got me very interested. Why is the DOD so interested in climate change and its consequences... this isn't exactly a military matter," he said. According to Klare, he spent the last five years researching the Pentagon's study of climate change and its impact on U.S. national security. He visited bases. He conducted interviews with current and retired officers and asked them what the highest priority of the U.S. military was today

"They would say it is preparing

for a conflict with Russia or China. No question about it ... counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, but that era is now over. Our adversaries have used that time to beef up their military, so we must compete at a high level with Russia with China...Talk deeper with the officials, and you see they have this other concern about climate change. They believe their ability to pursue their primary concern, gearing up for a great power conflict, is being undermined by climate change and will become more so each day as we move into the future."

As examples, Klare said as sea-level rise and more intense storms occurred, what once were nuisance floodings would turn disastrous for east and west coast bases like Naval Station Norfolk, the nation's largest naval base and Naval Base San Diego, the second-largest Surface Ship base of the United States Navy. Also, instead of the United States military fighting on the battlefields of foreign war, they could be fighting domes-

tic crises such as looters on the home front.

"And this is not what they want to do. They will see that there will be these complex emergencies, where the government will collapse, and they will have to step in and perform that role." Klare said the United States (and other countries, China and Russia) would be committing their military forces more and more to disaster relief at home too.

IN ONLINE REVIEWS of his book, Klare provided quotes by General Ron Keys, United States Air Force (Retired), chairman of the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) Military Advisory Board and John Conger, former Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

"Michael Klare has done a masterful job of capturing key points in the U.S. military's pragmatic approach to climate change. As he shows, the military is building resilience in its own training, testing, and ability to respond, and is



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Patrons line up to purchase Klare's book "All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change."

clear-eyed about warming's effects in catalyzing chaos and crises abroad that it may be called upon to respond to." - Keys

"Michael Klare does an exemplary job of recounting not only how military leaders view climate change differently than politicians on either end of the political spectrum, but why they do so. Seamlessly weaving together a narrative of Pentagon reports and compelling testimony, he shows that the military sees climate change as a threat to its capacity to defend the nation." - Conger

In the book's final sentences, Klare said, "In time, perhaps under a new administration, these voices will be heard more widely, and we will all benefit from these officers' valuable insights. Until then, hopefully, this book can pro-

vide a useful synthesis of the U.S. military's analysis of the consequences of climate change and the measures it is taking to guard against those consequences and reduce their severity."

"All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change," is available at Scrawl Books in Reston Town Center Reston, Amazon, Fairfax County libraries and other venues.

According to Fairfax County: "The library presents and hosts events on a range of topics of interest to the Fairfax County community.

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CALENDAR

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ONGOING

Santa's Secret Shop. Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 3 p.m. thru Dec. 22. At Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, at Route 28 and Route 7 at Claude Moore Park in Sterling. Children can shop in the barn theatre for their parents, grandparents, siblings, and teachers with the help of volunteer elves and museum staff. It will offer a selection of gifts priced under \$10. Santa's helpers will be available to help children wrap purchases with special bags and ribbons. When they are finished shopping, children can send a postcard to Santa at the North Pole. While waiting, parents can browse the museum gift shop where most items will be marked down 50%. Visit the website: www.heritagefarmmuseum.org

Season Extended at Farmers Market. On Saturdays, take advantage of the extended season until Dec. 7 at the Reston Market located at the Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza. You can preorder fresh produce, meats, cheese, pies, and eggs for the holidays or stop by for fresh produce, bread, and honey. Contact the Community Horticulture Office at 703-642-0128 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

Centroid Towns: Like a Passing Shadow. Through Jan. 4, at GRACE, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston. GRACE presents the next chapter of Baltimore-based artist Nate Larson's Centroid Towns project. Since the first US census in 1790, the United States Census Bureau has been recording the mean center of population as it moves steadily west and south. The first Centroid Town recorded was Chestertown, Maryland, and the projected Centroid of the 2020 census is Hartville, Missouri. Larson will dive deeper into the community of Waterford, Virginia, Centroid Town of 1810. Visit restonarts.org/exhibition/nate-larson/ for more.

"Matilda The Musical." Now thru Dec. 22. At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Show times are Thursdays through Sundays. A Broadway musical about a courageous girl with an unbounded imagination who proves that despite the odds, you can do anything you put your mind to — and change your destiny. Based on the book by Roald Dahl. Tickets start at \$40; Family 4-pack available — Buy 3 get one free with code "NextStopFam." Call 866-811-4111 or visit the website: nextstoptheatre.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

The Wonder of the Season. 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. At Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Join The Reston Chorale for The Wonder of the Season, featuring Vivaldi's Gloria, family holiday favorites and a very special guest. Children 17 and under admitted free, but tickets are required. Tickets are \$0 to \$25. Visit www.RestonChorale.org.

DEC. 9-13

"The Nutcracker." At Reston's CenterStage, RCC Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Presenting the Conservatory Ballet's 47th rendition of The Nutcracker. Performances are Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 9-10, 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11-12, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 12, 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 13, 3:30 p.m. Generations of children have had their imaginations sparked by Clara, The Mouse King, and The Sugar Plum Fairy. This year's performances in Reston are especially meaningful as they represent a mother-daughter team working together to keep a 47-year-old family tradition alive. This year's performance features many young, local dancers including: Ana Bustamante (Reston), a Junior at Herndon High School with a passion for singing and music; and Audrey Kelley (Reston) a Senior at South Lakes High School with a passion for ballet and sports; Audrey has been performing with the company since she was 5 years old. Tickets are \$17-\$25. Visit www.principalballet.co or email nutcracker@conservatory-ballet.com.



Holiday Tree Lighting in Herndon

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Holiday Tree Lighting & Sing-Along. 5-6 p.m. At Town Hall Square, 730 Elden Street, Herndon. Carols, tree lighting and a visit from Santa. Free. Call 571-323-5313 or visit the website: dullesregionalchamber.org.



The Sound Concert Fundraiser will take place Sunday, Dec. 8 in Reston.

Sound Concert Fundraiser

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Sound Concert Fundraiser. 5-6:30 p.m. At Rise Well-Being Center, 11130 Sunrise Valley Dr. - Private side entrance, Reston. A 45-minute meditative sound concert follows an overview of divinechildfoundation.org. All profits go directly to the non-profit, supporting several orphanages and mental health services in the Republic of Georgia. Visit the website: <https://www.risewellbeing.center>

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

Nuttin' Like the Nutcracker. 4-5:30 p.m. At Aldrin Elementary School, 11375 Center Harbor Road, Reston. Holiday family fun with selections from The Nutcracker by Tchaikovsky and presentations by Aldrin Elementary students. Bring your own bells or other favorite instruments, as well as your voices. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated. Visit the website: www.restoncommunityorchestra.org.

Events in Alexandria

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 6-7

The Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. At various Old Town Alexandria locations. The Campagna Center presents the 49th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend and Parade. The parade is Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. and begins at St. Asaph and Wolfe Streets and concludes at Market Square with a massed band concert. Admission: Free for parade and Heather and Greens Sales; \$180-\$290 for Taste of Scotland; \$40 for Holiday Home Tours. In 1749, the City of Alexandria was officially established by three Scottish merchants and named after its original founder, John Alexander, also of Scottish descent. Through your support of the events of The Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, you provide vital support to Campagna Center

programs that serve more than 2,000 children, teens, and adults throughout the year. Visit the website: <https://www.campagnacenter.org/scottishwalkweekend>

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Boat Parade of Lights. Parade begins at 5:30 p.m.; Dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 King Street, Alexandria. Parade viewing areas: Founders Park (351 N. Union St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.), Shipyard/Harborside Park (1 Wilkes St.), Windmill Hill Park (501 S. Union St.) and Ford's Landing Park (99 Franklin St.). Admission: Free; \$ for food/drink and some activities. Visit AlexandriaVA.com/boatparade Schedule in Old Town (2 to 8 p.m.)

Reston Calendar

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 4

Science Museum Announcement. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Trajectory Event Center, 13665 Dulles Technology Drive, Suite 150, Herndon. The Children's Science Center and the Science Museum of Virginia will publicly announce a \$10 million gift to fund the future science center in Northern Virginia. Contact Jason Werden at jwerden@yesandagency.com.

Holiday Open House. 4:30-6:30 p.m. At Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Come say farewell and share your best wishes as Cathy Hudgins concludes 20 years of service as Hunter Mill District Supervisor. Light refreshments and desserts. RSVP to 703-478-0283.

Healthy, Quick Recipes from India. 6:30 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. This class will present delicious healthy recipes from India. There will be samples to try! Adults, Teens. Visit the website www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

THURSDAY/DEC. 5

Millennials Book Club. 7 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. The title is Brick Lane, by Monica Ali. Check out a library copy or pick up a copy of your own. Adults from early 20s to early 30s. Visit the website www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

DEC. 5-8

Reston Friends Holiday Book Sale. Dec. 5 from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Dec. 6 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Dec. 7 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Dec. 8 from 1-4 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Visit the website www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

FRIDAY/DEC. 6

DIY — Holiday Ornament Making. 1 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne

Drive, Reston. Make and take home personalized holiday ornaments. All materials are provided. Adults. Visit the website www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

Poetry, Prose and Open Mic. 7 p.m. At ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon. An evening with author Madeline Mysko, poet Dean Bleher and many seasonal offerings. Recommended donation of \$5. Call 703-956-6590 or visit the website: artsherndon.org

Santa, Stars, & S'Mores. 7-8:30 p.m. At Runnymede Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Follow the luminaries to the campfire and Santa. Dress for the outdoors. S'more kits available for sale. In case of inclement weather, event will be held Sunday, Dec. 8 at the same time. Free Call 703-787-7300 or visit the website: herndon-va.gov/events

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Jingle on the Lake. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Join the Lake Anne Merchant Professionals Association for Jingle on the Lake. Come early to hear holiday music, participate in cookie decorating and other activities around the plaza, and see the plaza decorated for the holidays. Event Schedule:

- ❖ 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.: Reston Farmer's Market and Reston Craft Market;
- ❖ 9:45 a.m. - Jingle Jammie Beer Run at Lake Anne Brew House. Wear your santa hat and pajamas, runners/walkers/strollers/dogs, all are welcome • 10 am: Cookie decorating starts with Teapot and Cake;
- ❖ 10:30 - 11 a.m.: Good Shepherd Adult Choir performance;
- ❖ 12 p.m.: Santa arrives by boat with Susann Gerstein as Grand Marshall. Santa will stay to take a photo with and hear the wishes of all tiny tots attending the event inside the Reston Used Books Store;
- ❖ All day long: visit Lake Anne Plaza stores to pick up a letter to write to Santa. Mail to Santa at the North Pole Mail Service inside Chesapeake Chocolates.

Merchant specials:

- ❖ 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.: See the exhibit Live, Work, and PLAY! Toys of the 1960s exhibit at the Reston Historic Trust & Museum;
- ❖ 12 - 3 p.m.: Free wine tasting and hot chocolate at Chesapeake Chocolates.

Visit <http://lakeanneplaza.com>.

Holiday Homes Tour of Herndon. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tour Herndon homes decorated for the holidays. Tickets available in person at the Herndon Florist, 716 Lynn Street; Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Avenue; or online at facebook.com/holidayhomestour. Cost is \$15 in advance through Dec. 1, \$20 beginning Dec. 2. Call 703-435-6800 X2222.

Family Fun Winter Festival. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At The Goddard School, 2400 Dulles Town Blvd., Herndon. Featuring Kids Breakfast and pictures with Santa; dancing with a princess; cookie decorating; crafts from around the world; and winter games. Cost is \$7/child over 1 year old. Parents and children under 1 year old are free. Call 703-653-0337.

Children's Holiday Shopping. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Frying Pan Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Secret shoppers will assist your children in choosing gifts for everyone on their list — parents, grandparents, siblings and friends — and help wrap them for the holidays. You can set a budget, and kids can choose from a variety of reasonably priced items in the store. Register for a time slot on the half-hour. The cost is \$5 per child. Call 703-437-9101 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park>.

Gifts from the HeART Exhibit and Sale. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At RCC Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza in Reston. The exhibit showcases original works of art in a variety of media — including oil, acrylic, watercolor, collage, stained glass, ceramic, sculpture, and mixed media — in a wide range of sizes and prices. The Dec. 7 reception will offer the community a chance to purchase artwork and get into the holiday spirit with shopping and holiday refreshments. People can enjoy the artists' creations on display in the Jo Ann Rose Gallery through Jan. 6, 2020; 3D Gallery exhibit items will remain on display through Feb. 14. Artist entry fees and 10 percent of all sales will be donated to Cornerstones.

Winter Open House & Santa's Workshop. 12:30-4 p.m. At Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center Street, Herndon. Live music, visits with Santa, children's crafts and light refreshments. Free. Call 703-437-8855 or visit the website: fairfaxcounty.gov/library

Mystery Authors Extravaganza. 1 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Hear 21 authors from the Sisters in Crime Chesapeake Chapter as they talk about their latest books. From Libby Klein to Maya Corrigan and Sherry Harris, you will find your favorite mystery writers at the Reston Regional Library.

Local Book Launch for One of the World's Best Selling Authors

New thriller hits Herndon first at Herndon Middle School.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fans of one of the world's bestselling fiction-writers and storytellers, David Baldacci, attended the book launch for the second novel in his Atlee Pine Thriller, "A Minute to Midnight" by Grand Central Publishing. Held at Herndon Middle School on Nov. 19, an estimated crowd of 200 book enthusiasts from across the region and as far as Woodstock, Va. poured into the auditorium. Each hoped to be one of the lucky winners in the giveaway of 100 free signed copies of the new thriller and to hear Baldacci speak. Bards Alley in Vienna, an Indie bookstore owned by Jen Morrow, partnered with Reston Regional Library to produce the book launch. The Friends of the Reston Regional Library supported the event.

Igor Birman of Herndon sat in the auditorium's tiered theatre seats and waited for the author talk and signing to begin. "I like Baldacci's books," he said. "They are always entertaining. The last one, 'Long Road to Mercy' (Atlee Pine #1), was set in the Grand Canyon, and now I would like to visit there again. I look forward to reading his latest Atlee Pine Book," Birman said.

For Deb Tangren of Woodstock, Va., Baldacci's ability to develop his characters drew her to his novels. "You feel like you know them," she said. It was the opportunity, though, for the author to sign the 21 books she brought to the event that drew Tangren to make the 90-minute drive to Herndon.

Evelyn Valdez of Alexandria also attended the book launch. She described herself as "one of David Baldacci's biggest fans," something she said she shared with her 90-year-old grandfather. "He is only Spanish-speaking, so we have to wait a year for the book to be translated for him," she said.

According to Tracey Key of Reston, she found Baldacci "uniquely relevant in his ability to connect and communicate not only through his books but in personal storytelling during his book signings and interviews," she said.

Jen Morrow, the owner of Bards Alley, introduced Baldacci. "On the book birthday of 'A Minute to Midnight,' you really don't need a long introduction. A lifelong Virginian... (David) practiced law in Washington, D.C., but he was always a lifelong writer. He published his first novel, 'Absolute Power,' in 1996. A featured film adaptation followed with Clint Eastwood as its director and star. In total, David has published 40 novels. Is it 41 now ... all national and international bestsellers and several have been adapted for film and television. His novels are published in over 45 languages and in more than 80 countries, with over



Jen Morrow, owner of Bards Books in Vienna welcomes one of the world's bestselling fiction-writers and storytellers, David Baldacci to the book launch for the second novel in his Atlee Pine Thriller, "A Minute to Midnight," held at Herndon Middle School in the Town of Herndon on Nov. 19



Bestselling novelist and storyteller David Baldacci signs copies of his book, "A Minute to Midnight- an Atlee Pine Thriller" during the book launch hosted by Bards Books in Vienna partnering with Reston Regional Library held at Herndon Middle School on Nov. 19.

\$130 million worldwide sales. David has also published seven novels for younger readers. Now, in addition to being a prolific writer, David is a devoted philanthropist, and his greatest efforts are dedicated to his family's Wish You Well Foundation... fostering literacy and educational programs."

BALDACCI provided the audience with a snapshot of the first two chapters of "A Minute to Midnight." Baldacci said he brought back the main character, FBI Agent Atlee Pine. According to Baldacci, Pine finds herself interviewing a serial killer she thinks might have abducted her twin sister, Mercy, thirty years ago. While driving home following the interview, Pine receives an Amber Alert on her phone, sees the suspect and gives chase. "They have a confrontation, and he comes out on the worse end of it... She saw thirty years of frustration and anger building of not knowing what happened to her sister, and she almost beats this guy to death. And that's really bad for an FBI agent. They frown on stuff like that. So she's given an ultimatum. Get your head straight,

figure this out. Find out what happened, and if you don't do that, you have no more future at the Federal Bureau of Investigation," he said.

Transitioning to a different topic during his remarks, Baldacci said he grew up in segregated Richmond, Va., as a self-described library rat. "I don't think I'd be a writer today except for the fact I was a huge reader as a kid. I know what libraries meant to me... I was able to see the world through books. I read about people who didn't look like me, talk like me... dress like me, pray like me. But we all had one common factor among us all, and that was our humanity. That's what I got out of books growing up as a kid in a world that maybe wasn't as fair-minded or equal as it should have been...Libraries can change you completely," he said.

"I find readers to be more open, more tolerant, curious about life and talkative. They want to know things, and they can change their minds. They don't mind having spirited debates with people because they understand the power of knowledge and information. And I've always felt if ev-



One of the world's best selling authors, David Baldacci of Fairfax County.



Audience members get comfortable in the Herndon Middle School auditorium for the Book Launch of "A Minute to Midnight- an Atlee Pine Thriller" by David Baldacci.

ery community, every street had a library packed with books, and people went there every day and read books, we'd have a far better world than we do today," said Baldacci.

IN 2003, Baldacci co-founded the Wish You Well Foundation with his wife, Michelle. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is "supporting family literacy in the United States by fostering and promoting the development and expansion of new and existing literacy and educational programs." Based in Reston, the Foundation partnered with Feeding America on the Feeding Body & Mind Initiative to address the connection between literacy, poverty and hunger. Hosts of the Nov. 19 Book Launch collected new and gently used books at the event to be distributed through food banks to families in need.

Wish You Well Foundation
12359 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 360
Reston, VA 20191
Office: 703-476-6032
wywf@wishyouwellfoundation.org
www.wishyouwellfoundation.org/

CALENDAR

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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News

Holiday Parade Held at Reston Town Center

FROM PAGE 3

day hay wagon. Joining Supervisor Hudgins today are Lady Fairfax, Janet Bradshaw, and her friends from Island Walk," said Goff.

A few moments later, the first parade balloon floated along Market Street. "Here is a giant Gingerbread Man that is always a big hit. He is a whopping twenty-eight feet tall and is brought to us by Reston Town Center Association," said Goff.

Reston Youth Cheer showed off their "stuff," with a performance in front of the VIP bleachers, according to Goff. "With a mission of training young athletes in all aspects of cheerleading, stunts, jumps, tumbling, and dance, Reston Youth Cheer is part of the Reston Youth Association. It is Reston's only recreational cheerleading program with enrollment from kindergarten through eighth grade," she said.

Cub Scout Packs 32 and 1160, as well as Boy Scout Troop 1137 followed, with South Lakes High School Army JROTC closing in fast. "The Seahawk Battalion here today is an "Honor Unit with Distinction," signifying that it is one of the best JROTC programs in the country," said Goff as the crowd gave them a welcoming cheer.

"This is another wonderful Reston Holiday Parade tradition, the beautiful and talented Conservatory Ballet," said Goff. "Founded in 1972, the Conservatory Ballet has become the premier dance academy in the Washington D.C. area. The Conservatory's students learn to embody the three E's - Excellence, Experience and Earnestness - under the watchful eye of a trained and caring faculty. Making holiday magic come to life, they'll now perform for us on Market Street," said Goff.

FRIENDS OF RESTON, celebrating their twentieth anniversary and the tenth anniversary of their flagship project: Nature House at the Walker Nature Center brought along mascots, Earl the Squirrel and Walker the Woodpecker. Girl Scouts from Troop 51067 joined them.

A few participants later # 47 appeared, the giant Christmas Stocking. "This is twenty-five feet of stocking filled with nine-hundred cubic feet of helium...If toys and treats are here, that means our guest of honor must be on his way. Get those jingle bells ringing," Goff said, who next welcomed the Spirit of Reston, the South Lakes HS Marching Band under the direction of Grayson Fore. "The Spirit of Reston is a Virginia Honor Band and has won numerous awards. This year they will travel to the National Concert Band Festival in Indianapolis as one of sixteen bands selected from across the United States," said Goff. "Spirit of Reston has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Virginia Music Educators Conference."

Nearly one hour after the parade started, friends and characters, Restonians and visitors, jingled 10,000 bells and called out, Santa, Santa. "Let's make some more noise and welcome the jolly couple from the North Pole to Reston.

"Ho, ho, ho, Santa and Mrs. Claus. Thank you, everyone, for being here today. We've had an amazing twenty-nine years because of our residents, tenants and visitors like you. Happy holidays, and enjoy shopping, dining and having fun at Reston Town Center," said Goff.

Before the parade started, Goff thanked the more than 200 volunteers who made the event happen, including Mazda and Brown's Dulles Jeep for trans-

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Performing their way along the parade route is the troupe Morenada Boliviana.



The crowd enjoys the 2019 Reston Parade.

portation of the VIPs in the parade. She highlighted parade sponsors: Community Partner, Reston Community Center for the Macy's style balloons and Reston Town Center Association. "Thank you to our wonderful host, Reston Town Center, and all of the team at Boston Properties Reston Town Center for bringing this celebration to Reston once again and presenting the twenty-ninth annual Reston Holiday Parade. Today we're bringing in a 'Candy Lane at Reston Town Center' with the parade, and 'Holidays are Here' all through the season," Goff said.

Celebrate the holidays at Reston Town Center. Festivities continue throughout the season. Visit www.restontowncenter.com

for more information about the horse-drawn carriage rides and mini-train rides.

BULLETIN

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

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meetings in 2019

12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Dec. 10 Committee Meetings
♦ 9:30 a.m. - Health, Housing and Human Services Committee
♦ 11 a.m. - Development Process Committee
♦ 1:30 p.m. - Transportation Committee
♦ **3 p.m. - General Assembly Annual Reception and Work Session**

MONDAY/DEC. 9

Fraud Watch Prevention. 12-2 p.m. At Loudoun Bible Church, 44675 Cape Court, Ashburn. Presented by AARP & Sorority, Inc., Loudoun Co. Chapter. Every day, hundreds of local residents lose their hard-earned money to a variety of fraud schemes. In fact, every 2 seconds, a con artist steals someone's identity. To strike back against scammers, AARP Virginia and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Loudoun Co. Alumnae Chapter are bringing together experts to inform the community on how to prevent scams and protect their loved ones. In this session, we will share an inside look at how scammers think, how to safeguard against identity theft and fraud, first-hand accounts from victims, and what to do if you or someone you know has been a victim. Contact: Amber Nightingale-Sultane at aaprva@aarp.org

TUESDAY/DEC. 17

DMV2GO at the Library. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. The wireless office on wheels offers all DMV services: driver's license and ID card applications and renewals, driving records, vehicle titles, license plates, decals, order disabled plates, and more. Information on all services available at dmv.virginia.gov/general/#dmv_2go.

BUS SERVICE SURVEY EXTENDED

Fairfax County Department of Transportation has extended the Fairfax Connector Reston-Herndon bus service online survey until Dec. 27, 2019. Residents may provide input on the service alternatives by completing the survey at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/herndon-reston-service-review. Comments can also be mailed to Fairfax County Department of Transportation, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22033. Providing opportunities for engagement and input about improvements to bus service in Herndon and Reston and to future Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 stations, is integral to FCDOT's effort to hear from residents and Fairfax Connector riders about how they would like to see bus service improved and restructured to accommodate service to the new Metrorail stations. Visit www.fairfaxconnector.com to stay informed with the latest news and information.

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK PROGRAM

The Reston Historic Trust & Museum will be celebrating its commemorative brick program. Members of the community are encouraged to support not only the Reston Historic Trust & Museum on Giving Tuesday – but to do so by ordering a commemorative brick which is a great way to leave your mark on Reston or give as a gift to friends, family, teachers, neighbors, organizations, or even a pet. Commemorative bricks can be ordered at <https://www.restonmuseum.org/bricks>. The bricks are ordered only once a year. Bricks to be installed in 2020 must be ordered by Jan. 8, 2020. Bricks are then reviewed by the Lake Anne Condominium Association and Reston Historic Trust & Museum. They are displayed and

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False Sense of Security



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I never want to look a gift-oncologist in the mouth or take a “stable”-type CT scan with a grain of salt, however; self-preservation is a funny instinct. It can change from day to day (heck, even hour to hour) and dominate your pre-occupation or intrude your thinking not at all. You can rationalize away the good, bad or indifferent (results) or irrationalize away the less-than-expected or the more-than-anticipated. Results from lab work and/or diagnostic scans are the axis on which your entire life revolves. You either roll with the punches or you get knocked down by them. For a cancer patient, the punches often keep coming.

The punches thrown in my direction occur bi-weekly when I have my pre-immunotherapy lab work for my every-other Friday 30-minute opdivo infusion. (Although the actual lab work and even the infusion is more of a jab.) The left hook/right cross combination occurs quarterly. That's when I slide through the computerized tomography scan and wait for results (as I had been for most of the last week). Since I have generally been asymptomatic - other than for miscellaneous side effects from the various medicines with which I've been infused, the tale of the tape, to continue the boxing references, happens when my oncologist emails the radiologist's report to me with a brief sentence summary: “a little worse” (this time), “stable,” or something less discouraging that needs to be discussed at our next face-to-face appointment which generally is scheduled a week or so after the previous week's scan.

Regardless of what these mostly cryptic emails have said, until I hear exactly what my oncologist says, I am neither too high or too low. Granted, hearing “stable” is extremely encouraging whereas “a little worse, not so much. Nevertheless, the fight goes on. Cancer treatment is a series of actions and reactions (punches and counter punches, you might even say) so depending on how one's body reacts, determines what action is recommended. I am living proof, literally. Over my nearly 11 years of treatment, I have been infused with upwards of a dozen different medicines. Once one treatment loses its luster, we change to another hoping it will be more effective, and so on. It's science, not arithmetic. As such, any guarantees left the building with Elvis.

Being a cancer patient is not for everybody. One has to make the most of the least. It's easy to let the hard facts make you soft. Unless you find a way to be up, the cancer will take you down. Somehow, even when it's doing the worst to you, you have to be at your best. Being positive generates positivity in return. When I look at people, I try to smile so that they'll smile back (I'm being selfish, really). Do you remember George Costanza describing the look of disappointment on his mother's face when he told her he wanted to play the accordion? Like that, only the complete opposite.

When I interact with people, I don't want them to feel “poor, poor, pitiful me” to quote Warren Zevon from his song first sung in 1976. And I don't want them to see cancer either. I want them to see everything about me. I may be diagnosed with a terminal form of cancer: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, but I don't want to be defined by it. Just because I'm living with cancer doesn't mean it's who I am. It's what I have, that's all.

And what reminds most me that I have cancer and what challenges my reactions to it more than anything, is when I have these quarterly CT scans (and the annual MRI, too). As much as I try to fend off the possible effect on my mortality (my true sense of insecurity), I'd be lying if I said I was always successful. In truth, I'm always worried about it. How could I not be? I guess I'm not quite ready to throw in the towel. I suppose that means, regardless of what my oncologist says at our next meeting, I'm still ready to live and fight another day.

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'The Greatest Humanitarian Crisis in the World'

Kicking off Blanket & Coat Drive for Syrian Refugees 2019

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

I am pleased that Fairfax County has once again hosted this important humanitarian effort by partnering with local organizations and jurisdictions to help provide winter coats and warm blankets to Syrian refugees abroad...The Syrian Blanket Drive is special to me," said Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Nov. 21, at the Fairfax County Government Center, to announce the start of the Blanket & Coat Drive for Syrian Refugees 2019.

According to Mark Gibb, President and Executive Director of NOVA Relief Center, the drive originated seven years ago when he and a small delegation of local leaders from Northern Virginia, among them Chairman Bulova, traveled to Turkey in part to encourage friendship and understanding with local governments. The American Turkish Friendship Association headquartered in Fairfax, formed to address the social and cultural needs of Turkish and American people living in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area arranged the trip. "(It) forever altered the lives of all those who went there that day," said Gibb. NOVA Relief Center is coordinating the Blanket & Coat Drive. This year's donations will be distributed to three camps in Jordan: Mafraq, Jerash and Irbid. According to the organization's website, since 2011, Syrians have been trying to escape the civil war at home, with a reported 6 million people displaced within Syria and another 5 million seeking haven as refugees, especially in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan.

"I am always impressed with how generous, caring and compassionate our community is. Since we began this drive, Northern Virginia has sent more than 300,000 blankets and coats to Syrian refugees overseas. It is a great example of what happens when people of all faiths and backgrounds come together," said Bulova.

The Northern Virginia delegation went to a city in the southern part of Turkey called Adana, Gibb said. As part of the tour, the mayor and governor of the region asked if they would like to visit a Syrian refugee camp. "I'm not sure if any of us knew exactly what we were being invited to see," said Gibb. "The war in Syria was not a large news item here in the United States, and Syrian refugees were barely a blip on our radar screen. ... We discovered a fenced, tent city of more than 50,000 people, the majority of which, 60 percent, were children under the age of 12. To say they had nothing would be an understatement. We discovered that these were normal, average,



Kicking off the Blanket & Coat Drive for Syrian Refugees 2019: Brody Buhler, Oakton Stake President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Abdun Nafey Matin, Assistant Regional Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic Region, Helping Hand for Relief and Development; Nausheen Baig, All Dulles Area Muslim Society; Rabia Baig, All Dulles Area Muslim Society; Martin Nohe, member of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors and member of the NOVA Relief Center Board of Directors; Asif Khan, Director of Public Affairs, Helping Hand for Relief and Development; Jeff McKay, Chairman-elect of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and current Lee District Supervisor; Mark Gibb, President and Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Relief Center; Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Mary Kathleen Paxton, Manager, Paxton Van Lines.

every day, people- policemen, firemen, teachers (who) through no fault of their own, had become refugees of this tragic war — no place to call home, no country to pay allegiance. They were all in need of the basic necessities - food, water, clothing. We were invited to go to one man's tent who had a family of four children. There was nothing in the tent except for some old ground covering rugs...As we talked to this man through a translator, we asked (him)... how we could help... He told us it was getting cold. Could we send him some blankets?" "That broke our hearts," said Bulova.

According to Gibb, given the gentleman's request, when the delegation returned home to the United States, they launched the first Northern Virginia Blanket Drive in coordination with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions, faith-based organizations and businesses. That first year they filled an entire 55-foot Paxton Companies moving van with blankets which they shipped overseas at no cost to the same refugee camp. "A few of us were fortunate enough to return to that camp and met the same man again who had requested the blankets. We told him we didn't bring just a few blankets we brought 50,000. This man wept, said we were from God as we delivered this precious cargo," said Gibb.

"So here we are today to continue our efforts to assist these somewhat forgotten people. It has been described as the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world. A few



Mark Gibb, Executive Director of NOVA Relief Center, presents Mary Kathleen Paxton, Manager, Paxton Van Lines with a gift in recognition of the ongoing free shipping services the company provides to support the Blanket & Coat Drive for Syrian Refugees. Lee District Supervisor and Chairman-elect Jeff McKay and Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, look on.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

years ago, we added coats as well as blankets, and over the six-year period, we have collected enough blankets and coats to fill over 12 full moving vans. The numbers of coats and blankets are staggering, but the needs are still more than our collective efforts...We cannot do this alone. We partner with a worldwide nonprofit group by the name of the 'Helping Hand for Relief and Development.' Without their assistance, we could not accomplish this task."

Gibb said he learned another significant need is education. "The children are not receiving any education as they are not allowed to attend the local school system as the number of children would completely

overwhelm the schools... We are asking this year, in addition to our Coat and Blanket Drive, that a small monetary donation be made to help with teachers, building structures and school supplies for these refugee children. We have added a donation button on our website, www.novareliefcenter.org, for this purpose. All donations will be used to help educate these refugee children."

"In this country, the holiday season is a time for giving. And there is nothing more meaningful than helping our brothers and sisters around the world find warmth and comfort during difficult times," said Bulova. She thanked the many individuals and organizations that are making this year's drive possible: "Mark Gibb and the NOVA Relief Center for organizing this drive every year; the faith communities and organizations in the private and public sectors for helping children and families as they seek safety from violence; elected officials across Northern Virginia who are using their offices as donation sites and finally, a special thank you to Bill Paxton and Paxton Van Lines of Springfield, Virginia for donating their time, manpower and equipment."

LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR and Chairman-elect Jeff McKay said he was happy to support and participate in the effort. "I've always held the belief that we, as a community, must help those most vulnerable whenever we have an opportunity. We must not forget all of those who face hardship, especially those who flee from persecution in other countries. In this time of divisiveness, it's important that we remember our humanity and come together to help our fellow man. Through the NOVA Relief Center's Blanket and Coat Drive for Syrian refugees, we can ensure that Syrian refugee camps will have supplies to stay warm this winter. It's a small, but necessary and important role we can all play," said Supervisor McKay.

Bulova's office and other sites such as those of elected officials, including several members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, serve as drop-off locations for gently used coats and blankets. Participants can stop by her office, Suite 530 of the Fairfax Government Center (5th floor), any time between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday with donations. "There is nothing more meaningful than helping our brothers and sisters around the world find warmth and comfort during difficult times," said Bulova.

The Blanket & Coat Drive for Syrian Refugees 2019 is currently underway and extended to Dec. 15, according to Mark Gibb. Visit, www.NOVARELIEFCENTER.org, for a complete list of drop-off locations and to donate to the education fund.