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Promises of a Blue VA: 'A House for all Virginians'

NEWS, PAGE 3

Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) pictured outside of the Virginia State Capitol. Del. Filler-Corn is the first woman and first Jewish Speaker-designee in Virginia House of Delegates' 400-year history.



OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

CONNECTION ARCHIVE PHOTO

A Millennium Old Hebrew Bible on Display

NEWS, PAGE 5

Holiday Fun

CALENDAR, PAGE 8

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2019, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2020, include the following:

1. An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,260 to \$4,320¹.
2. An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$15,285 to \$18,030.
3. An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,300 to \$1,370¹.
4. An increase in the Account Charge from \$39 to \$40.
5. An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$12.20 to \$14.40¹.
6. An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.07 to \$3.20 per 1,000 gallons of water.
7. An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.80 to \$3.85.
8. An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$48 to \$49.
9. An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and the Peak Use Charge.
10. A decrease in the Overhead Charge for Labor from 105% to 104% and the Overhead Charge for Materials from 16% to 13%.
11. An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$38 to \$39.

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

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$192.5 million budget for calendar year 2020¹. Water sales are expected to provide \$166.2 million and the remaining \$26.3 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2019	2020
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 56,839	\$ 60,020
Power and Utilities	10,890	11,060
Chemicals	7,241	7,878
Purchased Water	7,510	7,812
Supplies and Materials	5,418	5,713
Insurance	991	1,165
Fuel	685	730
Postage	612	622
Contractual Services	12,635	13,103
Professional Services	829	1,290
Other	2,353	2,562
Sub-Total	106,003	111,955
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(10,380)	(10,313)
Total	\$ 95,623	\$ 101,642

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$43,000,000
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$36,099,000

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

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our website at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Karen Barnette at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

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

All written comments must be received by close of business on **Wednesday, December 11, 2019** to be included in the record of the public hearing.

NEWS

VDOT's Plan at Popes Head Road Comes Together

Design public hearing planned for Dec. 12.

By Mike Salmon
THE CONNECTION

Anyone who has traveled on the Fairfax County Parkway during peak travel times has experienced the back up at the Popes Head Road signal. From either direction, the traffic backs up on the parkway so far it's difficult to even see the traffic light that's causing the whole thing.

It's on the Virginia Department of Transportation's radar screen though, and another meeting is planned to look at the solutions their engineers have come up with for this \$290 million project. The first public information meeting was held in December 2017, and there was a series of meetings up until early November 2019, and now it's moved into the "design public hearing" stage, which is a more official point in the road building process.

According to VDOT, this section of the Fairfax County Parkway from a point just north of Lee Highway to Ox Road gets about 85,000 vehicles a day and Popes Head Road averages about 4,000 vehicles a day.

The plans are to widen about five miles of Fairfax County Parkway from four lanes to six through this corridor, and redo the Popes Head Road interchange using triple roundabouts that will allow traffic to flow freely via two new bridges over the parkway. At that interchange, there will be access to the future Shirley Gate Road extension and Patriot Park as well.

Public Hearing Dec. 12

The design public hearing will be held Thursday, Dec. 12 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at James W. Robinson, Jr. Secondary School, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. A presentation will begin at 7 p.m. If cancelled due to inclement weather, the meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 16.

tion and Patriot Park as well.

The project will also include improving the Route 123 interchange, the Fairfax County Parkway/Burke Centre Parkway intersection, and a section of a shared-use path. This is a missing segment on the shared-use path between Burke Centre Parkway to Route 123.



THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The project area is a busy part of the Fairfax County Parkway.



At Popes Head Road, eliminating the traffic signal will improve the traffic flow through here.

Promises of a Blue VA: 'A House for all Virginians'

Democrats continue to focus on education, transportation and economic equality issues.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On the evening of Nov. 5, 2019, voters in Virginia paved the way for a historic legislative shift from red to blue in January 2020 when the Virginia General Assembly convenes. Democrats had turned the tables resulting in Democratic State House and Democratic State Senate whirlwinds as members selected their leaders, sensitive to culture, gender and geographic diversity in Virginia. Democrats have pre-filed priority bills and a resolution for the January Session, to create an early voting system, universal background checks/gun safety, housing nondiscrimination for LGBTQ+ and ratification for the Equal Rights Amendment. They pledged to work on current critical needs in education, transportation and economic equality issues.

"We will be walking our own new path moving forward, of (a) Virginia that represents & listens to all people no matter what they look like, the color of their skin, the language they speak at home, the religion they practice or not, or who they love," tweeted House Speaker-designee Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41).

All 40 seats in the Virginia State Senate and all 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates had been up for grabs in the 161st Virginia General Assembly and Virginia Democrats picked up four House District seats, 40 (in Fairfax County), 76, 83 and 94 defeating the four Republican incumbents. Democrats won two other House seats, 28 and 91 in open races. They also picked up two State Senate seats, 10 and 13.

The Democrats would have full control of the state legislature when the Virginia General Assembly session convened on Jan. 8, 2020. All three arms of the state's government would be theirs. With the newfound power of a blue-controlled lower chamber of the Virginia Assembly alongside the Virginia State Senate coupled with a blue Governor's mansion, Democrats could pass their agenda Republicans blocked for years including gun safety, higher minimum



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lisa Sales, Equal Rights Amendment activist, State Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33), Kathy Stewart Shupe, Virginia Equal Right Coalition and activist Sonia Ballinger focus on Virginia ratification of the ERA.

wage and ratification of the Equal Right Amendment.

This also allows Democrats to wrest back control of the redistricting process after the 2020 Census, the shifting and drawing of the new maps for congressional and state legislative districts.

Democratic Agenda

The day after the election with new Democratic power base on the horizon in the state legislature, Governor Northam (D) told CNN's John Berman on "New Day" he planned to reintroduce a slate of "common-sense pieces of legislation" for gun control. "Getting rid of bump stocks, high volume magazines, red flag laws (extreme risk protective orders). I will reintroduce those in January, and I'm convinced with the majority now in the House and the Senate, they will become law. And because of that, Virginia will be safer... Another issue that is very important is women's reproductive health care and stopping the discrimination against the LGBTQ community," Governor Northam said.

Later that day, Governor Northam met with his cabinet and reporters. "Virginia is blue, and I want everyone to know that," he said. Northam stated he wanted to bring back eight bills in January, including decriminalizing marijuana, increasing support for early childhood education, more training for high schoolers to enter the

workforce, and reducing the recidivism rate. In addition, Northam said he hoped the Equal Rights Amendment would be brought to a floor vote and thought progress could be made with raising the minimum wage.

Caucus Leadership Elected

On Saturday, Nov. 9, the new House Democratic Majority Leadership announced the election of Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41) as Speaker-designee. The full House of Delegates would officially vote the first day of the 2020 legislative session. The House also announced Del. Charniele Herring (D-46) as Majority Leader. She became the first woman and the first African American to serve as Majority Leader. And they elected Del. Rip Sullivan (D-48) as Caucus Chair.

"Not only did Virginia just elect the most diverse House of Delegates in its 400-year history, but House Democrats have made history again by nominating a diverse leadership slate to truly represent Virginia," said House Democratic Caucus Executive Director Trevor Southerland. "Finally, we will be able to move forward with a House for All Virginians."

"We are a unified caucus with the shared priority to move our Commonwealth forward, address our most critical challenges, and ensure transparency for all Virginians," said Speaker-designee Filler-Corn. "We are stepping up to lead and understand the value of making our schools better, our communities stronger, our economy fairer, and our Commonwealth the envy of all the states. The firsts are not lost on me - the first woman and the first Jewish person elected Speaker designee in our 400-year

VIEWPOINTS

Legislators on Expectations, Priorities

The Connection asked local Virginia State Senators and Delegates:

- ❖ *What changes do the 2019 election results bring to the General Assembly?*
- ❖ *What do you see as the top five legislative priorities in the next session?*
- ❖ *What are your personal legislative priorities in the next session, and what are their prospects to pass in General Assembly?*

Delegate Ibraheem Samirah (D-86)

"It's hard to understate how unprecedented the 2019 results are for the General Assembly and the Commonwealth. This could be the first time in modern history, really, when we will have a law-making majority that holds basic progressive values like fairness, inclusion, equity and the pursuit of justice for all. We will also have the most diverse General Assembly in Virginia's history.

For the new majority as a whole, I think ratifying the ERA, strengthening voting rights, raising the minimum wage, preventing gun violence, and fair redistricting are at the top of the list. I hope to also move the conversation around affordable and available housing, workers' rights and the legalization of marijuana, including expungement of records.

As a medical professional, reining in the cost of healthcare and improving public health more broadly are my top priorities. I've already introduced legislation this month that is aimed at improving maternal health and mental health. I have more legislation on the way that will work to make affordable, quality health insurance a possibility for uninsured and underinsured Virginians. I'm also planning to help address the outrageous price of prescription drugs. If these ideas get a fair hearing, and the overwhelming evidence around why the healthcare system is so expensive is heard, I think these bills will be able to move through the General Assembly."



Senator Barbara Favola (D-31)-Incoming Chair of Rehabilitation & Social Services:

"The Democratic majorities will honor Virginia's history as a forebearer to the Bill of Rights and a state that included an equality amendment in its own constitution by ratifying the ERA. This will be a momentous occasion. Gun safety measures such as universal background checks and red-flag bills will pass, a women's constitutional right to privacy as defined in Roe v Wade will be protected, and important criminal justice reform measures will pass.

I will be submitting legislation to require paid sick days. Too many families are struggling because they cannot care for themselves or their sick children. I will also be submitting legislation to protect a patient from high medical care bills if he/she received emergency care from out-of-network providers. In collaboration with the Zero Carbon Virginia group, I will be implementing important actions to address climate change. Voters spoke very strongly in 2019 about the need for a new direction in the criminal justice system. One piece of legislation that I have continually sponsored is the expungement of non-violent felony convictions from the records of juveniles. I am confident that this legislation will now pass.

It is noteworthy that the composition of the General Assembly more closely reflects the diversity of our great state, and women are taking their place in the power structure.



ians," said Speaker-designee Filler-Corn. "We are stepping up to lead and understand the value of making our schools better, our communities stronger, our economy fairer, and our Commonwealth the envy of all the states. The firsts are not lost on me - the first woman and the first Jewish person elected Speaker designee in our 400-year

legislative history. ..We have the most diverse House Caucus in our history, which includes cultural, gender and geographic diversity. It also means diversity of experience and perspectives on issues that affect Virginians in all regions.

SEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
PAGE 10

OPINION

Jump into the Children's (and Teens') Connection

Please send all submissions no later than Friday, Dec. 13, 2019. Earlier is better!

During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette, Children's Almanac and Children's Centre View) is a tradition of well over a decade.

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

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

Some suggestions, but don't be limited by these:

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

- ❖ Short answers to some of the following questions: If you could give your parents, family or friends any gift that didn't cost money what would that gift be? What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming year? What is one thing that you would change about school? What do you want to be when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite toy? What makes a good parent? What makes a good friend? Describe one of the best or worst things that ever happened to you? What is the best gift you've ever been given? Ever received?

- ❖ Your opinion (around 100 words) about traffic, sports, restaurants, video games, toys,

trends, politics, etc.

- ❖ Poetry or other creative writing.
- ❖ News stories from school newspapers.
- ❖ Photos and text about activities or events.
- ❖ Were you involved in November's elections? What did you think?

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

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Home schoolers' contributions are welcomed.

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

Please send all submissions by Friday, Dec. 13, 2019.

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

Email submissions for the Children's Edition to kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Q&A

State Sen. Scott Suovell (D-36) on expectations from new General Assembly.

Q: What changes do the 2019 election results bring to the General Assembly?

A: Nov. 5, 2019 results will bring unified Democratic control to the House of Delegates, Senate of Virginia and Governor's Mansion for the first time since 1991. This will end partisan roadblocks that have prevented progress on common sense firearm violence prevention, women's rights, worker's rights, and other measures that will bring Virginia up to speed with the rest of the United States.

Q: What are your personal legislative priorities in the next session, and what are their prospects to pass in General Assembly?

A: My top legislative priority is funding transit improvements in the U.S. 1 and I-95 Corridor. We need to finalize funding for the U.S. 1 bus rapid transit, Yellow Line extension to Hybla Valley, start planning to extend the Blue Line to Potomac Mills Mall, and fund the construction of a new Long Bridge over the Potomac River to expand both VRE and higher speed rail service from D.C. to Richmond, Norfolk and Charlotte. I hope to finally pass hands free legislation, driver's permits for all Virginians, create a Prince William County Public Defender's Office, lead on criminal justice reform, and lay the groundwork for clean energy in Virginia.

Q: What do you see as the top five legislative priorities in the next session: What do you think can be achieved, and what is the timeline?

A: ❖ Increasing funding for free preschool,



Scott Suovell

K-12, and higher education are top priorities. Virginia's teachers' salaries have dropped exponentially from the top third in the country to the bottom third in the last three decades. This is detrimental to teacher recruitment and retention, which ultimately impacts the quality of education for our youth. We will work for progress in

implementing universal preschool along with lowering tuition rates at Virginia's state-supported colleges.

- ❖ I hope to expand access to voting including no excuse early voting for 45 days before any election.

- ❖ We will become the 38th and final state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in the first two weeks.

- ❖ I also hope we can codify Roe v Wade to protect against a backwards looking U.S. Supreme Court along with repealing the need for ultrasounds before women can exercise their constitutional reproductive rights.

- ❖ This will be a big session for predatory lending reform. Online lenders who charge 400 percent interest rates and hide behind out-of-state Native American tribes will face regulation. Car title lenders who currently charge 267 percent interest rates authorized by Virginia law will likely face lower rates.

State legislators are currently preparing for the 2020 General Assembly session which will begin Jan. 8 and end in March. Public support is critical and feedback from constituents is important to make sure the Virginians' voices are heard throughout the legislative process. I look forward to receiving comments and encourage constituents to reach out to my office.

Springfield
CONNECTION

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The Washington Pentateuch on display.

PHOTOS BY DENISE LEW/
THE CONNECTION



Millennium-Old Hebrew Bible on Display

Area residents help bring 1,000-year-old Washington Pentateuch to Museum.

BY DENISE LEW
THE CONNECTION

The Washington Pentateuch, an ancient Hebrew Bible, was revealed for the first time in a thousand years to the public in “A Fence around the Torah” special exhibit at the Museum of the Bible on Thursday, Nov. 7. An Arlington resident, Jeff Kloha, who is chief curatorial officer at the Museum of the Bible, headed the team.

The Washington Pentateuch, dating back to the 10th or 11th century, contains the first five books of the Jewish Torah. The leather-bound artifact is the only intact Hebrew Bible manuscript on public display in the U.S. and features the Masoretic Text, which is “the authoritative text of the Hebrew Bible in Jewish and Western Christian tradition, said Herschel Hepler, a curator at the museum.

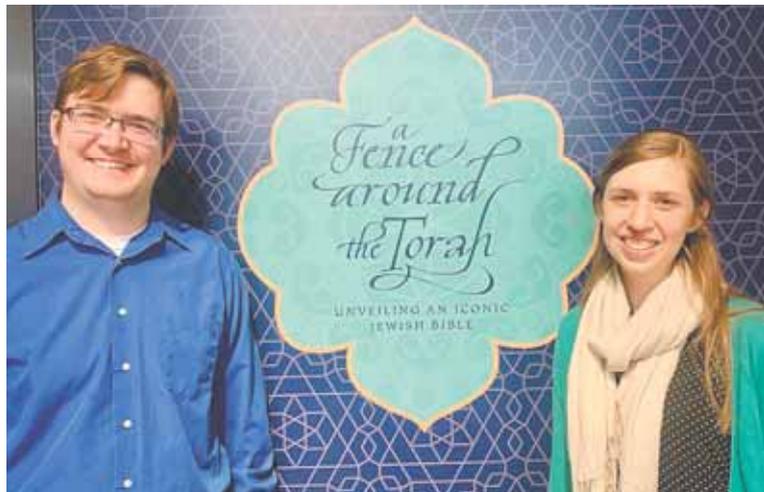
“This artifact is a window into an era, a millennium ago, that serves as a basis for how we understand and still talk about the Bible today. Everyone who has the opportunity to come and see this exhibit will witness a significant

thread in the Bible’s history; one that has endured for more than a thousand years,” said Kloha.

The Arlington resident has been instrumental in leading the exhibition teams and curators in analysis, planning the exhibit, and development programs at the museum. “We have a talented and amazing team at the Museum of the Bible, many of whom live in northern Virginia,” said Kloha. Another team member, Allison Mullins, is a Springfield native who works as an education program developer at the museum.

Future plans for the museum include continued sponsorship with the Washington Theological Consortium, which the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria takes part in. Kloha and his team are already planning events for the spring. “We hope that this important artifact will provide another reason for people to come to visit the DMV and see the amazing history and culture that is unique to the area,” said Kloha.

For more information on “The Fence around the Torah” special exhibit on display through Nov. 25, 2020, please visit www.museumofthebible.org.



From left, Andrew Binkley and team member Allison Mullins both, both from Springfield.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARLINGTON TURKEY TROT

Mimi and Rob Mortimer will be among thousands of runners at the 14th annual Arlington Turkey Trot.

Ready to Trot Seniors among those joining turkey trots on Thanksgiving.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
 THE CONNECTION

As part of a world-wind trip, Mimi and Rob Mortimer flew from Ethiopia to Paris last week before heading back to Arlington. They wanted to spend Thanksgiving at home with family. Their holiday tradition however, involves more than turkey and dressing. At the crack of dawn, long before the feast, Mimi, 81, and Rob, 82, will lace up their running shoes and join thousands of other runners at the 14th annual Arlington Turkey Trot.

"We first began running in our early 30s," said Mimi. "We started doing 10k races years ago but now do only the Arlington Turkey Trot with our family, children and grandchildren."

The Mortimers are proving that age doesn't limit their ability to pound the pavement on Thanksgiving morning to raise money for charity. In fact, the number of older runners has increased over recent years, says Arlington Turkey Trot race director, Mark Riley, as have donations with runners raising more than \$120,000 for Arlington nonprofits that provide food and clothing for those in need.

"We see people who range in age from babies in

strollers to 90 people who are in the 90s," he said. "This is a well-regarded festival and there are people who've been doing it for years."

Alexandra Danza, who is 72, ran in the Bethesda Turkey Chase last year, but will be in Florida this year for the Seniors First Turkey Trot. "I love doing turkey trots and this one will be fun because people will be dressed in costumes or hats with a Thanksgiving theme," she said.

"There's even an award for the oldest runner." Marsha Edgell is also hoping to do a turkey trot. Two years ago she was out of shape and overweight. Her fitness program entails cycling, hiking and yoga.

"I did a hike in Scotland," she said. "I never could have done that two years ago."

"20-30 years ago I'd run the occasional 5k charity race for fun," continued Edgell. "I got in shape because I want to be capable and able to [run in a turkey trot] if I feel like it."

Riley says that older runners are motivated by different factors.

"For some it's become a family holiday tradition," he said.

"Running each year preserves that tradition."

"We're motivated by the love of the sport," said Mimi. "Will continue as long as we can."

THE CONNECTION Newspapers & Online Prepare for Holiday Happenings 2019



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BULLETIN BOARD

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. 3, 2019 9:30 a.m. - Full Board of Supervisors Meeting
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

TUESDAY/DEC. 3

Open House. 7:30-10:30 a.m. At Main Street Child Development Center, 4401 Sideburn Road, Fairfax. Tours at 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Stop by Main Street for coffee and a quick breakfast. Stop by for a tour or just come by for a quick visit. RSVP encouraged but not required: cschwarten@MainStreetCDC.org or 703-273-1192.

Fairfax Lions Club Dinner Meeting.

6:30-8:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 177, upper level. 939 Oak St., Fairfax. Visit a Lions Club dinner meeting. Enjoy a buffet dinner, speaker, and club announcements. Guests are cordially invited – meet members and learn

about Lions community service. Free. Visit www.fairfaxlions.org or call 703-879-5795.

THURSDAY/DEC. 5

Transportation Meeting. 7-9 p.m. At Garfield Elementary School, 7101 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will hold a community input meeting to encourage public input on alternatives developed to provide enhanced Fairfax Connector bus service (Routes 310, 321, 322) in the Franconia and Springfield areas. The service alternatives were developed based on the first round of public input received through community engagement, stakeholder engagement and technical analysis. After this round of public engagement, FCDOT staff will develop a preferred service plan based on public input received and further technical analysis to provide better access to destinations, improved travel times, increased schedule reliability and more dependable service. The community will have an opportunity to review and comment on the preferred service plan in Spring 2020. Residents are encouraged to provide input on the service alternatives by filling out an online survey. (Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/franconia-springfield-optimization>) The survey will be open from now thru Dec. 17, 2019. Mail comments to Fairfax County Department of Transportation, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22033.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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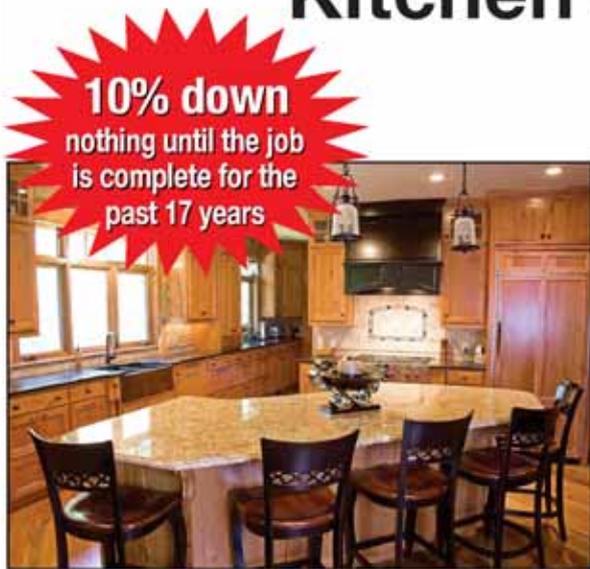
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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

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. 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.

Event in Reston

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

Reston Holiday Parade. 10 a.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston. The 29th annual Reston Holiday Parade – one of USA Today's 10 Best – plus tree lighting, sing-along, horse-drawn carriage rides, and more all day. Rain or shine. Schedule: 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.: Visits and photos with Santa & Mrs. Claus; 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.: Mini-train rides on Market Street; 5 p.m.: Dance Performance at Fountain Square; 6– 6:30 p.m.: Tree Lighting & Sing Along; 6:30– 10 p.m.: Horse-drawn Carriage Rides. Visit www.restontowncenter.com/holidays.



Nicole Shortle, a sophomore at Oakton High School, dances the role of Clara; and Carlos Martinez, George Mason University Dance, dances the role of the Nutcracker Prince.

"The Nutcracker"

NOV. 30-DEC. 1, 2019

"The Nutcracker." Nov. 30, 4 pm, and Dec. 1, 2:30 pm. At W.T. Woodson High School, Fairfax. The Fairfax Ballet Company members, along with students from the Russell School of Ballet and professional guest artists, take the audience on a magical journey through a festive party, an epic battle scene, a winter wonderland of sparkling snowflakes, and a Land of Sweets that includes a delicate Sugar Plum Fairy, a dashing Cavalier, graceful Mirlitons, and waltzing flowers. Fairfax Ballet Senior company member Nicole Shortle, a sophomore at Oakton High School, dances the role of Clara. Carlos Martinez, a sophomore in George Mason University's dance program, portrays the Nutcracker Prince. Professional guest artists, Cody Beaton and Mate Szentes from the Richmond Ballet, dance the roles of the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier. Philip Smith-Cobbs dances the roles of the Mouse King, Mechanical Doll, and Arabian Coffee. Tickets are available for purchase at <http://fairfaxnutcracker2019.bpt.me>. Tickets will also be available at the door beginning one hour before each show. Group discounts are available for qualifying organizations with 10 or more guests. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-665-9427.

SATURDAY/NOV. 30

Build a Holiday Gingerbread House. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Enjoy a family tradition of making your own gingerbread house. The first seating will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the second seating will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Each seating has a limited number of houses available. The price for each house is \$40 (\$35 for museum members). Local guest pastry chefs Laurent Lhuillier and Sergio Mueller will be on hand with volunteers to help you with your masterpiece. Make reservations at <https://squareup.com/store/fairfax-station-railroad-museum>. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225.

NOV. 30-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>

SUNDAY/DEC. 1

Messiah Sing Along. 3 p.m. At Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main Street, Fairfax. All are welcome. Bring a score, or borrow one here, and join in the Messiah Sing Along...or simply come and enjoy the music. Free. Visit the website: fairfaxpresbyterian.org

SEE HOLIDAY, PAGE 9



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HOLIDAY

FROM PAGE 8

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 4

Blue Christmas Eucharist and Healing Service. 7 p.m. at Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Hwy., Lorton. This special Blue Christmas service recognizes the difficulties of the season for those experiencing grief, loneliness, or loss. This service of meditation, music, candle lighting, and prayers of consolation and healing calls to mind the comfort, hope, and encouragement of the season. Visit the website www.pohick.org or call 703-339-6572.

DEC. 6-7

Norwegian Christmas Festival. Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Christ Lutheran Church, 3810 Meredith Drive, Fairfax. Free Admission. Live music, dancing, fjord horses on Saturday. Food and craft demonstrations. Imported foods (nokkelost), fresh lefse and krumkake made onsite, Nordic Cafe, huge gift selection including books, linens, authentic Scandinavian sweaters. Free. Visit the website www.norwaydc.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Christmastide at Gunston Hall. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. At George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Celebrate a holiday tradition at Gunston Hall! Daytime activities include children's crafts, a visit from Santa, games, and even an indoor snowball fight. The evening hours provide a romantic holiday experience by candlelight as guests are invited to sample period food in the kitchen, explore the grounds, enjoy 18th century music, and chat with characters from the past. Cost: \$15 adults, \$10 children (ages 6-18), and members receive a 50% discount. Visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/event/christmastide-at-gunston-hall/>

Christmas Party. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Twins Ace Hardware, 10310-B Main Street, Fairfax. Fun-filled activities include: Live grill demo from celebrity Ace grilling chef Jason K Morse of 5280 Culinary; BBQ Provisions & Team Traeger Grills; free goodie bags to the first 150 people at 11 a.m.; delicious apps and deserts; special appearance from children's author Lindsay Barry; photos with Santa; letters to Santa activity; decorating ideas; giveaways, demos and more. Visit the website: www.twinsacehardware.com.

DEC. 7-8

"The Nutcracker." 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. At Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Metropolitan School of the Arts' Nutcracker brings to life the gift of imagination with Clara and her Nutcracker in a magical journey from her Victorian home through the Land of Snow and into the Land of Sweets, with dazzling dancing, a larger-than-life Christmas tree, more than 100 dancers, and Tchaikovsky's glorious score. Tickets \$26 to \$28. Go to www.metropolitanarts.org to purchase tickets.

Winter Wonderland. 12 p.m. 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



The Cathedral Brass will put on a concert on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Living Savior Lutheran Church in Fairfax Station.

The Cathedral Brass Concert

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Cathedral Brass Concert. 6-7 p.m. At Living Savior Lutheran Church, 5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Join in a family friendly, free Christmas concert featuring The Cathedral Brass. All are welcome. Visit the website: www.livingsaviorlutheran.org

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. Visit the website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.

"The Nutcracker." Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. At Centreville High School, 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Mia Saunders School of Ballet presents "The Nutcracker." The 2019 production of "The Nutcracker" marks the first for new MSB Artistic Director Hannah Woodruff, an alumna of MSB and 2017 graduate of University of Virginia. Proceeds for this annual giving tradition will benefit CVHS Drama Scholarships and the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. Enjoy this holiday classic with your family and support local dancers and CVHS students. Tickets are \$12, (cash or checks payable to CVHS Drama Boosters only) and are available at the door. Visit the website: <http://miasaundersballet.com/>

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

"Little Drummer Dude." 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Jubilee Christian Center, 4650 Shirley Gate Road, Fairfax. A children's musical, "Little Drummer Dude" takes place during the time Jesus was born and we see the story through the eyes of the wise men, a traveling band and a little drummer dude. Free. Visit the website: jccag.org.

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10-11

Moscow Ballet's "The Nutcracker." 7 p.m. At GMU's Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The Moscow Ballet "Dance with Us" cast will perform their ancillary roles as Party Children, Snowflakes, Mice, Snow Maidens and Variation Dancers. The aspiring ballerinas and danseurs, ages 7 to 17, perform in ancillary roles developed for their age and skill level by dancer, choreographer, and Julliard graduate Mary Giannone Talmi, also co-producer of Moscow Ballet's North American tours. Tickets are \$34 to \$180.

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

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

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 renowned pianist, Bro. Jeff Corry. Free. Call 703-239-9111.

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. Donations of new toys or canned food accepted. In the evenings, enjoy a magical train ride through a forest decorated with holiday-themed lights and scenes. 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.

Bethlehem Walk. 3-7 p.m. At Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale. Walk 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. Re-enactors, live music, children's crafts, games. Live nativity scene. Free. Ample parking. Reserve advance tickets at www.parkwood.org. For details call 703-978-8160.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MSA

Frosty at the Santa Spectacular by the Metropolitan School of Arts.

Metropolitan School of the Arts Spreads Holiday Cheer

BY DENISE LEW
THE CONNECTION

Upcoming Performances

The Metropolitan School of the Arts rings in the holiday season with "Santa Spectacular" shows in Alexandria, Springfield and the National Harbor in the next few weeks until Christmas. A full production of The Nutcracker Ballet will be held at the Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center in Annandale on Saturday, Dec. 7 and Sunday, Dec. 8.

The "Santa Spectacular" features popular holiday characters including Santa, Rudolph, Frosty and friends in a 25-minute show, with a brand new number called "Peppermint Stick Parade." The school will perform at charities and communities during the holiday season. Founder of the college preparatory performing arts school, Melissa Dobbs, says she hopes that audience members will "leave performances feeling uplifted, inspired and full of joy."

Now in its 15th year, The Nutcracker production will feature professional guest artist Stephen Hannah, former principal dancer from the New York City Ballet, and nearly 130 young dancers. A number of participants are from Fairfax County, including Anya Jones and

Santa Spectacular shows (free): Nov. 30, 11:30 a.m. at National Harbor in Washington, D.C.; Dec. 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the Springfield Town Center; and Dec. 22 at 12 and 1 p.m. at the Kingstowne Town Center.

The Nutcracker Ballet: Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike on Sat., Dec. 7 and Sun., Dec. 8; 12:00 p.m. and 5 p.m. both days. Tickets at www.metropolitanarts.org

Danielle Jones, who both play Clara, and Jacqueline Doherty, who is the artistic director.

Dobbs founded the school 20 years ago while trying to find a quality dance program for her daughter. To that end, she decided to start a school that would be nurturing and joyful, reflecting the "flourishing arts community" she had grown up in to become a professional dancer. "I hope that Metropolitan brings joy to the lives of our community through the arts. Whether by way of taking a dance class, learning to sing or play piano or watching The Nutcracker, my goal is for anyone and everyone who encounters MSA to leave with a heart full of light and joy," said Dobbs.

For more information on upcoming events and tickets, visit www.metropolitanarts.org



The Nutcracker performed by the Metropolitan School of the Arts.

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Announcements

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NEWS

Change in the General Assembly

FROM PAGE 3

Our work will not be easy, but I am prepared and eager to serve the people of the Great Commonwealth of Virginia alongside Majority Leader-elect Herring, Democratic Caucus Chair-Elect Sullivan and all of our colleagues," Filler-Corn said.

Del. Mark Levine (D-45) posted, "This is the most diverse caucus that there has ever been in the General Assembly's 400-year history. No General Assembly majority has ever looked more like the people of Virginia than the current House Democratic majority."

Transition Team Announced

As the days after the election rolled forward, on Nov. 14, the blue wave surged. Speaker-designee Filler-Corn announced her transition team, 18 key advisors, to assist as she transitioned into the office of Speaker of the House of Delegates. She selected Wayne Turnage as Chair and Suzette Denslow as Transition Staff Director. She chose other members for her team, including Walter Tejada, a member of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Board of Directors and Ilryong Moon of Fairfax, the first Asian American elected to a public office in Virginia. "People across the Commonwealth told us they wanted to move our Commonwealth forward, address our most critical challenges and ensure transparency for all Virginians," posted Filler-Corn. "I am truly honored to have guidance from these leaders from across Virginia to develop leadership to make our schools better, our communities stronger and our economy more fair."

Chairs of Key Legislative Committees

House Speaker-designee Filler-Corn announced her picks for the key legislative committees in a news release Thursday, Nov. 14. Choices reflected racial, gender and geographic diversity of the Democratic caucus. She named Del. Luke Torian, (D-52), as chair of the Appropriations Committee; Del. Jeion Ward, (D-92), as chair of the Commerce and Labor Committee; and Del. Roslyn Tyler, (D-75), as chair of the Education Committee. All three are members of the black caucus. House Filler-Corn also announced Del. Vivian Watts, (D-39), as chair of the Finance Committee. "These impressive leaders will be important al-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Senate Democratic Press Conference on ERA, Senate Finance Committee, Harrisonburg, Va., Thursday, Nov. 21.

lies as we shape our policy agenda for the commonwealth in 2020 and beyond."

First Bills and Resolution Filed

Shortly after midnight on Monday, Nov. 18, Democratic lawmakers began to file bills minutes into the opening date of pre-filing for the 2020 General Assembly session. State Sen. Jennifer L. McClellan (D-9) submitted her first legislation moments after filing season opened at midnight, putting passage of the ERA at the symbolic head of the list for that chamber.

The weekend after the filing, Democratic Caucus Chair Rip Sullivan (D-48) shared his thoughts on party's intention for the first three House Bills and resolution, "We tried to send a signal of our highest priorities, in terms of the top," he said.

Democrats filed:

❖ HB1: No-excuse in-person and mail absentee voting; Patron: Del. Charniele Herring (D-46).

❖ HB2: Universal background checks; Patron: Del. Ken Plum (D-36). This bill would require universal background checks for any firearm sales or transfers.

❖ HB3: LGBTQ+ Housing Non-discrimination; Patron: Del. Delores McQuinn (D-70). The bill defined sexual orientation and gender identity.

❖ HJ1: Equal Rights Amendment; Patron: Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2) ratifies the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed by Congress in 1972. "Today, I filed a resolution to have Virginia be the 38th and final state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution for the upcoming 2020 General Assembly session. It's time to be on the right side of history. It's time to finally ratify the #ERA," Foy tweeted.

VA Senate Democrats Elect leadership

On Nov. 20, VA Senate Democrats elected leadership ahead of the 2020 legislative session.

From the Senate Democratic Caucus:

Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-Fairfax)-Majority Leader

Sen. Mamie Locke (D-Hampton)-Caucus Chair

Sen. Scott Surovell (D-Mount Vernon) Caucus Vice Chair

Sen. Jeremy McPike (Prince William)- Caucus Vice Chair

Sen. Barbara Favola (D-Arlington) Caucus Co-Whip

Sen. Lionell Spruill (D-Chesapeake) Caucus Co-Whip

Sen. Jennifer McClellan (D-Richmond)- Caucus Secretary

Sen-elect Ghazala Hashni (D-Chesterfield)- Caucus Treasurer

Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-Fairfax)- Caucus Sergeant at Arms

Sen. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth)-President Pro Tempore-designee (first African American and the first woman to serve as President Pro Tempore)

Senate Democrats announced Committee Chairs for the 2020 legislative session:

Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources: Senator Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax City)

Commerce & Labor Committee: Senator Dick Saslaw (D-Fairfax)

Courts of Justice: Senator John Edwards (D-Roanoke)

Education & Health: Senator L. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth)

Finance: Senator Janet Howell (D-Fairfax)

Rules: Senator Mamie E. Locke (D-Hampton)

Rehabilitation & Social Services: Senator Barbara Favola (D-Arlington)

General Laws: Senator George Barker (D-Fairfax)

Local Government: Senator Lynwood Lewis (D-Accomack)

Transportation: Senator Dave Marsden (D-Fairfax)

Privileges & Elections: Senator Creigh Deeds (D-Bath)

With the appointment of State Senator Janet Howell (D-Fairfax) as incoming Chairwoman of the Senate Finance Committee and Del. Luke Torian (D-Prince William) as chair of the House Appropriations Committee, the state's purse strings and its power rested in Northern Virginia.

On Nov. 21, incoming House Speaker Filler-Corn announced decisions for Chairs of two additional committees Del. Mark Sickles (D-43)- Health, Welfare & Institutions Committee and Del. Delores McQuinn (D-70) Transportation Committee.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

PN Support Group. 2-4 p.m. At Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. PN Support Group monthly meeting. Dr. Sarah McQuide addresses lifestyle changes around chronic pain, anxiety and depression of PN. Visit the website: www.dcpnsupport.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Low Cost Rabies Vaccine Clinic. Noon-2 p.m. at West Springfield Governmental Center, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield. Cost is \$15 per pet, cash and check only. Dogs, cats, and ferrets must be vaccinated at the clinic. Dogs must be on leashes; cats and ferrets must be in carriers. All pets will receive a 1-year rabies vaccination. To obtain a 3-year vaccine, bring pet's rabies certificate (not tag) showing the current rabies vaccination expiration date. 2019 county dog licenses will be sold for an additional \$10 per license. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/communityassistance/rabiesclinics for more.

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 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.

TUESDAY/DEC. 18

Fairfax Lions Club Dinner Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 177, upper level. 939 Oak St., Fairfax. Visit a Lions Club dinner meeting. Enjoy a buffet dinner, speaker, and club announcements. Guests are cordially invited – meet members and learn about Lions community service. Free. Visit www.fairfaxlions.org or call 703-879-5795.

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 worshiping 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.

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. 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.nam-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.

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Lost in the Shuffle



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As difficult as the last few weeks have been, with Chino's at-home hospice-type care and ultimate passing, and the "Catch-22 A" realities of "reverse-mortgaging" my house "perplexed" by the "derelict" stable/shed on my property, my upcoming quarterly CT scan hasn't even "blipped" the radar. Though it will have occurred already by the time this column prints, it's quite possible, due to the Thanksgiving holiday, its results won't be known for much longer, 12 days in fact, than has been customary. And so far, between my wife, Dina and I, none of this has even been discussed. Yet, as I sit and write on Sunday, the scan is on Wednesday, three days away. Close enough to where it should have been front and center instead of where it's been: back and off to the side.

But so what, really? My attitude is, and has always been, to quote John, a close friend: "It is what it is, and it will be what it will be." By the time I slide forth and back under the CT scan's arch, or earlier I imagine, the damage to my body such as it is - or isn't, will have been done. Either the cancer has grown/spread or it hasn't. Certainly hearing and/or reading results from the oncologist will confirm facts at present not in evidence but there is, without being particularly negative about my circumstances, an inevitability to it. One day, my amazing nearly 11-year run is going to come to a walk and eventually to a lie-down. And I will deal with it when the time/results come. In the interim however, this next scan is merely another stop on the less-than Merry Go 'Round.

I don't mean to make light of an extremely heavy burden that we cancer patients have to carry: the prospect of death. As Lee J. Cobb said in "The Exorcist": "I only mention it in passing." Cancer causes enough internal problems (physically), one doesn't need, if possible - and so far for me, it has been possible, to cause external (emotional) problems as well. Maybe it's a kind of resignation or some kind of accommodation or acceptance of reality that has enabled this one to have lived so long beyond my original "13 month to two-year" prognosis (offered up on Feb. 27, 2009), an accomplishment I am proud to say occasionally has led to my oncologist showing me off to his medical students; his prize cow I call myself.

Honestly, what's the point, really? I'm only in control of so much. Focusing on things I can't control seems a waste of time and energy. Life is precious. Why dwell on things beyond my reach? Grasping at straws, if you can even find one, is likewise counter-productive. And setting oneself up for failure or disappointment is counter-intuitive almost. Why do that? The cancer is already causing enough havoc in your body. Don't let it affect your mind too. "Piling on," as the NFL referees used to call this major infraction. Now I believe its called "Unnecessary Roughness." For cancer patients, doing anything, physically or emotionally to hasten your demise/adversely affect your quality of life is most definitely unnecessary roughness and should be penalized.

Learning to live with what ails you seems a more prudent plan than "woeing" is me or bemoaning the process. Sure we'd all love to be on the President's plan where you're examined in the morning, scanned in the afternoon and operated on in the evening. But none of us are on the plan and wishing we were, to quote Jean Luc Picard from "Star Trek: Next Generation," is not going to "Make it so." But I can live with that. I have lived with that - for almost 11 years now, and counting. I'll learn the results from my scan soon enough. Good or bad, life goes on. To quote my friend John's daughter, Melanie: "Whatever."

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

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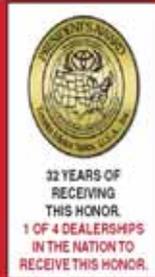
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