

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

WFCM, Churches Feed Families for Thanksgiving

NEWS, PAGE 8

(From left) Chris Camillo, Spencer Hagen and Alexander Moore, of Fairfax County's Health Department, hand out free face masks. With the help of volunteers, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) distributed Thanksgiving Food Boxes to 600 local families in need.



WELLBEING
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Opening Farmers Market During a Pandemic

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2-8, 2020

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Herndon High NJROTC Cadets Donate Meals to Neighbors in Need

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the growing need for food in the area, the Herndon High School NJROTC donated eleven family meals for Thanksgiving and pledged another ten meals for Christmas, for a total of 21 in honor of the Class of 2021. Normally the cadets go house to house asking for food donations to support the area food banks. Because of the restrictions this year, the Cadets wanted to find another way to help neighbors and decided to give a cash donation to Food for Neighbors, an organization whose sole purpose is to support students that are dealing with hunger through their red bag program.

Food for Neighbors is based in Herndon and has since expanded into other areas of Fairfax and Loudoun counties. Despite this historical pandemic, the organization is still able to help families by creating a modified grocery list and establishing new guidelines to keep volunteers safe. If you would like to help local teens struggling with hunger, you can visit the Food For Neighbors website (www.foodforneighbors.org) to learn more about donating food in the Red Bag Program or volunteering.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
 Captain David Adler, the Senior Naval Science Instructor at Herndon High presents a check to Christa Soltis, representing Food 4 Neighbors.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUNASA

Lunasa performing "Celtic Holiday" on Dec. 17, 2020 at CenterStage.

Live Entertainment Returns to CenterStage

BY DAVID SIEGEL
 THE CONNECTION

Where and When

With so much stress due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, CenterStage is "providing arts to help us navigate the uncertainty. And in a manner that patrons can be confident about their health and safety," said Leila Gordon, executive director, Reston Community Center. "The arts can help us heal"

For the upcoming Holiday season, CenterStage will have the Irish musical group Lunasa performing "A Celtic Holiday." The group was formed in 1997 and tours and performs internationally.

"Reston holds a special place in the hearts of Lunasa as it's a gig we've been doing annually since the early 2000s," said Cillian Valley of Lunasa. "We're very happy that we won't have let 2020 go by without getting a visit."

"Over the years, we've gotten to know both the audience and the fantastic staff at the center and while we're really looking forward to playing, we're also looking forward to meeting all our friends there," added Valley. The group is named for an ancient Celtic harvest festival in honor of the Irish god Lugh, the patron of the arts

For "Celtic Holiday," audiences can expect an intimate performance of Irish traditional songs and instrumentals, mixed with stories and chat about the music. "We have a great guest singer this year, Dave Curley from County Galway, and his voice and playing will be a nice bonus for the audience," noted Valley.

Reston Community Center presents the musical group Lunasa: "A Celtic Holiday" at CenterStage, Hunters Woods Village Center. 2310 Colts Neck Rd, Reston. Performance Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020 at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$25 Reston/\$50 Non-Reston. Tickets call 703-476-4500 or visit restoncommunitycenter.com. Note: For the health and safety actions taken by Reston Community Center including seating limitations go to: www.restoncommunitycenter.com

Asked about live performance at CenterStage during these current times Valley said, "Reston Community Centre is going to great lengths to ensure the safety of both the staff and audience and we believe there's nothing to fear in coming out to this concert." He added the patrons "will definitely have a good time, live concerts are very rare at the minute and for the foreseeable future, and it also will be a nice opportunity to escape the nonstop doom and gloom."

Valley went on to say, "Almost everything in the music business has shut down since mid-March so the only thing we've been doing as a group is virtual online concerts. Individually, some of us have been doing local gigs in bars and restaurants and teaching online but the theatre touring circuit has essentially been cancelled worldwide for 2020. We had trips to 10 different countries cancelled. That's what makes our Reston concert so special, as it will be the only concert since the pandemic hit."

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NEWS

Herndon No Longer Torn Between Its Past and Future

Town Council approves its final step toward inking Downtown Redevelopment.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

*A part of the Herndon Downtown
Redevelopment Series.*

The Herndon Town Council approved multiple resolutions and ordinances at its Town Council Public Session on Nov. 17, 2020 but none more significant than the resolution that would reflect the Town's character for the next century, balancing old and new. Resolution 20-G-55 read: "an amendment to the Comprehensive Agreement dated November 1, 2017, between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, to establish the closing date and closing conditions for both parties, establish commencement of construction and outside satisfaction dates, and provide licenses for the operation of public facilities in the interim."

Before Council approved the resolution to amend its comprehensive agreement with Comstock Herndon Venture, it opened the floor for public comment. Council held the meeting virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We need change to bring Herndon to the next level of differentiation and the Comstock design does that," said Town resident Tim Bonnet. "We want a much more vibrant downtown. One that caters to the arts, lots of outdoor living space, walkability, business opportunity, better parking and a town where people just want to be out."

TOWN MANAGER Bill Ashton said this was not the first time a town council considered redevelopment in the downtown. Records indicated other councils considered at least four proposed projects related to the downtown core from the late 1980s through 2008.

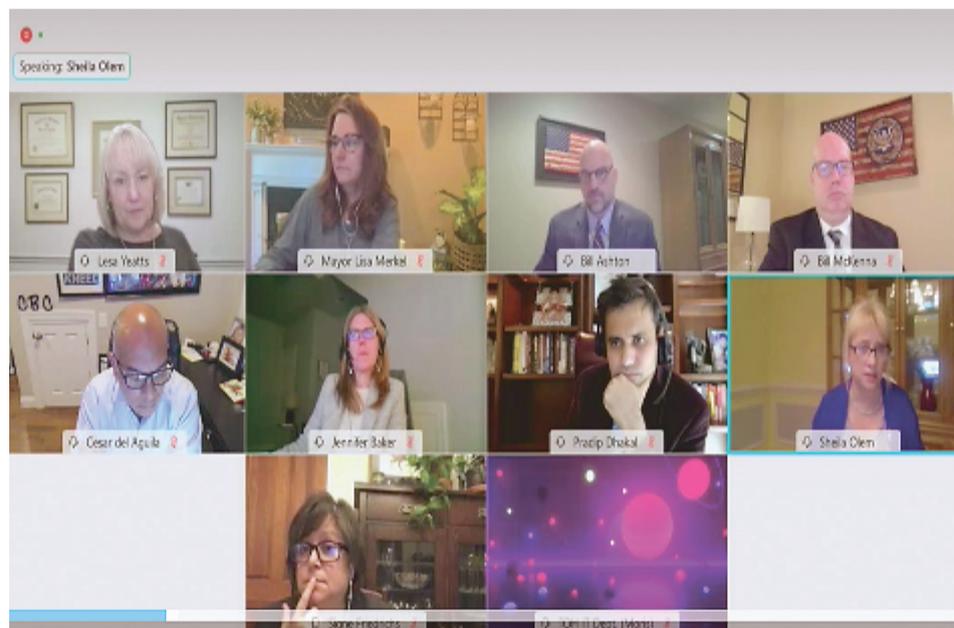
"There's so much work that's gone into this and I'm getting a little emotional. I can't believe we are at this point. It's been such a long time coming," said Mayor Lisa C. Merkel. The Council stood poised to vote on the last hurdle before the town could legally convey the 4.675-acre property of town-owned land to Comstock Herndon Venture LC for redevelopment into a mixed-use project with 273 apartments and approximately 17,000 square feet of retail space, a now reduced 16,265-square foot Arts Center and a 726-space parking garage.

Ashton said, among other things, the amendment would solve some problems town staff, Council, and Comstock had been working on since 2019, such as the labor and commodity cost increases. Ashton said, "We also determined that one of the elements of the comprehensive plan was sorely missing. There was no sunset date in the agreement." According to Ashton, he and the town attorney, Lesa Yeatts, sat down with Comstock's representatives to see how they could amend the agreement and jump-start it.

Yeatts provided a thumbnail of the amendment. Among other elements, it established



The west elevation of the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment, Center Street Buildings A and B by Comstock Herndon Venture LC, as designed by Torti Fallas + Partners.



(Left top to bottom right) Town of Herndon: Attorney Lesa Yeatts, Mayor Lisa C. Merkel, Town Manager William (Bill) Ashton, Town Councilmember William (Bill) McKenna, Town Councilmember Cesar del Aguila, Town Councilmember Jennifer Baker, Town Councilmember Pradip Dhakal, Vice Mayor Sheila Olem and Town Councilmember Signe Friedrichs.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Tim Bonnet, Town of Herndon resident, provided public comment on Nov. 17 during the Town Council Public Hearing on Comprehensive Agreement between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC.

the closing date on or before Dec. 15, 2020, by which the Town and Comstock must close on Comstock's purchase of the 4.675-acre



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

A partial view of the 4.675-acre property currently owned by the Town of Herndon pending its Dec. 2020 sale to Comstock Herndon Venture LC to construct the long-awaited, mixed-use Downtown Redevelopment Project.

property. It moved certain conditions initially anticipated to be accomplished before closing to subsequent. The amendment ad-

justed the outside satisfaction date by which Comstock must have the project under construction to Dec. 31, 2021 and extended certain Comstock's rights to pause commencement of construction up to 24 months.

The amendment also increased the Parent Guaranty of Comstock Herndon Venture LC from \$5M to \$10M if Comstock Herndon Venture LC defaulted. "This is a key component of the amendment and gives the town much more safety than it had previously," said Yeatts. The amendment provided for ArtSpace's continued use on what would be Comstock-owned land and the Town to continue to park the Public Shared Parking program out of the current lot behind the Herndon Commerce Center.

FOR COMSTOCK, the amendment offered, among other things, that Herndon would approve a rebate of real estate taxes from the Town of Herndon beginning from Comstock's acquisition of the property and ending ten years from the commencement of construction. Other economic development incentives would approve a waiver of fifty percent of water and sewer availability fees and building permit fees, totaling a reported reduction of \$2,350,000.

Yeatts said, "Finally and most importantly, the amendment provides priority recordation of a parking easement on the site for a minimum of 162 spaces. What this means is the parking easement will be recorded in front of the deed of trust for the property that comes up now will own for 162 parking spaces to the Town."

Ashton said looking at the investment return for the Town going back to the original \$10M on land, the \$3.6M in cash and fee reduction of \$2.3 M, 'the Town is putting in roughly \$16M in investment. "As for the project's investment return, public parking was at \$9.5M, art center shell \$2.2M, public improvements at \$3.5M, temporary parking, Art Center, and environment at \$1.3M. The estimated return on this \$16M investment is roughly \$16.6M that we hope to achieve (over ten years)".

During discussion by Council, Town Councilmember Jennifer Baker said, "We all recognize there are certain things we could tweak. I'm not sure how this is going to work out and I like what Councilmember del Aguila said, 'It's a bit of a leap of faith...We can't wait for something perfect. I feel really confident that we are voting on something that really is going to be good... for the Town today and 50 years from now."

Mayor Lisa Merkel spoke last before calling the question on the resolution. She said, "I think this is a great moment for the Town. I know there are a few people who are still concerned about the development and is it going to be too big and are we going to look like other places. I don't think we are. I think that we have just the right project for the right time." Council approved the resolution as presented in a vote 7-0.

The Work Goes On...

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



COMMENTARY

S onny Bono wrote a catchy tune reminding us that "the beat goes on...History has turned the page, uh huh."

So it is in the Commonwealth of Virginia: the action of governance goes on. Since 1619 there has been a form of representative government in first the colony and now the state. The legislative branch, the General Assembly, has since 1971 been meeting every year; prior to that time the House of Delegates and the Senate met only every other year. The legislative sessions convene as prescribed in the Constitution on the second Wednesday of January for sixty days in the even-numbered years and for thirty days in the odd-numbered years unless at least two-thirds of the members agree to extend the session for not more than thirty days. The sessions have always been extended but by not more than 15 or so days. There is talk by the minority party of not agreeing to any extension of the session scheduled to start on January 13, 2021.

In addition to the regular session, there is a reconvened session beginning on the sixth Wednesday after the adjournment of the regular session to consider any bills returned by the governor with amendments or with a veto. The governor may call a special session "when in his opinion the interest may require" or when two-thirds of the elected members of both houses request it. There is a regular beat to the work of the General Assembly: regular session, reconvened session, special session. For even a part-time legislature, the work goes on!

But there is much more to legislating than the formal and now virtual floor sessions of the House and Senate. Earlier this week there was a deadline to request drafting of legislation to be pre-filed before the session. There is a limitation on how many bills a legislator can introduce especially after the convening of the legislature. For members of the legislative staff who actually draft the bills, this is the intense period

between Thanksgiving and the opening of the session when 140 members present their best ideas to be crafted into a form that would be suitable to go into the Code of Virginia. The entire support staff of the legislative branch could not be more helpful and deserve our thanks for helping get us through the stressful period of the session.

Pre-session work also includes meetings with advocacy groups (virtually now), monthly meetings of the Appropriations Committee and the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission and other committees on a less regular basis until the session gets underway, and caucuses with our party colleagues. Constituent inquiries and recommendations are very helpful and take time to read and consider.

Prior to the pandemic there was a need to find housing in the Capital city and to arrange to be away from home for the week. The session beginning in January will be virtual so there is the need to make sure your home office has the broadband that will support daily committee and floor sessions. The work is demanding, but I am honored to be part of it. As the song continues, "drums keep pounding a rhythm to the brain." The work goes on!

You Can't Open the Farmers Market During a Pandemic

BY JOHN LOVAAS
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND FOUNDER OF RESTON FARMERS MARKET



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The farmers/vendors and volunteer managers of the Reston Farmers Market.

Back in March and April as the Covid 19 pandemic peaked, we were warned that it was unlikely the Reston Farmers Market could be opened for the 2020 season as scheduled (April 25), if at all.

Fairfax County, sponsor of the Reston Farmers Market, was reeling from its recent decision to close County parks to the public, only to have the order pretty much ignored. Officials feared the virus would spread as a result. Furthermore, I was told that if the County let farmers markets open people would simply violate the rules as they had in the parks, leading to even more infections, with attendant political fallout. I pointed out that the farmers market, unlike parks, would be in a small area with on-site management. I also noted that the market would, in fact, be safer than grocery stores, permitted by Virginia's Covid 19 emergency edict, by virtue of being held outside and not allowing the handling of food products.

It took several weeks of back and forth conversations with the County before they relented and let the Market open under a rigorous set of precautions widely publicized before opening: including: required social distancing, two controlled entrances to the market, handling food prohibited, face coverings strongly recommended, no pets, etc. Shoppers were to keep moving, no gathering. Thus, we could not allow music, master gardeners, or any other socializing! But on May 9 we opened. Community support for open-

ing was a major factor. County staff often mentioned the phone calls and messages they were getting lobbying to open the Reston Farmers Market. That support continued all season long!

After seven months, I am pleased and proud to announce the Market is completing a successful 2020 season Saturday, Dec. 5. It wasn't easy—while we usually only need two to run the market, it took six to manage it under Covid rules! We could not have done it without the amazing volunteers who stepped up to help: Anne Strange, Susan Ellis, Melodie Stehling, Brian Pittack, and Tracey Long.

On opening day, a modest 843 shoppers ventured out to check us out. After that, we averaged more than 1,800 shoppers each Saturday, with a high of 2,101 in July. With only one market to go, the Market has hosted nearly 62,000 shoppers in 2020, the year of the Covid-19 pandemic. And, they said it could not be done!

Condo election update: A local condo association in my area recently held an election for its

governing board. It rivaled the Nov.3 US Presidential election for contentiousness. In fact, as I write this, the outcome is still in dispute. 0.04% of square footage vote was the difference between two candidates for a contested commercial seat. (Note: 14 of 17 commercial owners voted for the candidate, but they own .04% less unit square footage.). Over a month after the voting, neither the reform coalition candidate nor the incumbent is conceding. Sound familiar?

The seat is the swing vote for a Board majority between the governing reform coalition and the old guard seeking a return to power. During its one-year leadership, the reformers contracted a major forensic audit by Ernst & Young which revealed financial management procedure and control problems as well as apparent instances of self-dealing under the prior board. At issue is whether or not the problems cited in the audit will be addressed as recommended or not!



WELLBEING

Have Yourself a Sober Little Christmas

Battling addictions during the holidays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

With the holidays come an increase in imbibing. For battling addiction, the ubiquity of temptations can make attending social events, even those that are virtual or small in-person outdoor gatherings can be difficult, but not impossible, say local mental health practitioners. “Staying sober is a daily, sometimes even hourly, choice,” said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College and a private practitioner in Maryland. “During a pandemic, this may be especially difficult because of loneliness and social isolation. In order to protect ourselves from spreading the virus, so many people are experiencing being lonely, which is hard at any time, but especially during the holidays.”

Advanced planning when anticipating times when there might be triggers or temptations to drink is important.

“Build in activities, set up alternative things that are pleasurable,” said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Marymount University. “Keep yourself busy with tasks or appointments to greet or meet people virtually, by phone or go out on a brisk walk. And tell a trusted loved one that you are planning, too.”

Have plans in place to help with those urges, says Lorente. “I also encourage my clients to make a list of tools that they will use to counteract the urges that I call choosing health and happiness, such as going for a 15 minute walk,” she said.

Give forethought to situations that might lead to temptation. “It is important to have a plan and work your plan,” said Lorente.

Even if conducted virtually, make sure to participate in regular meetings, advises Lorente. “Stay in touch with your recovery support person, whether it is a sober friend or a dedicated sponsor,” she said. “And to counteract the isolation that many of us are feeling, reach out to help another person,”

There are a variety of options for those looking for support. “For instance, call someone you know is alone,” said Lorente. “Meet up for a socially distanced coffee with a neighbor or friend where you each bring your own thermos and blanket.”



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Alcohol can flow freely during the holidays. Develop a plan to maintain sobriety.

“Make a list on your phone of why ... you want to maintain your sobriety and check it whenever you start to get the urge.”

— Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D.

Practice benevolence, suggests Lorente. “Volunteer to help provide food to those that need it,” she said. “When we help others, we help ourselves.”

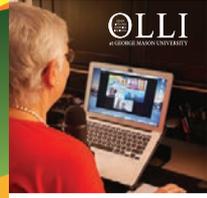
It is important to acknowledge and understand the reasons why sobriety might be challenging during this time of year, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. “It may be difficult for people to

stay sober during a pandemic holiday because many of us are experiencing anxiety, depression, or loneliness and want to feel better,” he said. “We also have expectations that we should enjoy the holidays and do fun social activities. Alcohol and other substances may help us feel better briefly and stop thinking about problems.”

When spending time with difficult family, or navigating gift giving and money shortages, alcohol or other substances might appear to provide temporary stress relief. “Those feelings are fleeting so engaging in or developing hobbies can help fill the void normally satisfied by substances,” said Short.

Maintain one’s physical health, continued Short. “Get adequate sleep, exercise, and nutrition to reduce urges to use substances.”

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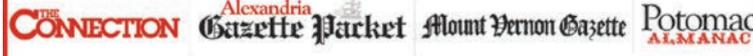
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During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time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

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BULLETIN BOARD

2021 HERNDON FESTIVAL CANCELED

Annually the Herndon Festival is produced by the Town of Herndon's Parks and Recreation Department with assistance from area civic organizations and businesses. The 2021 Herndon Festival is canceled due to ongoing challenges and safety concerns facing the community caused by COVID-19. The health and protection of Festival attendees, volunteers, staff, sponsors, and other stakeholders remain the Festival's top priority. Visit www.herndonfestival.net.

HERNDON TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTS AMENDMENT TO COMSTOCK AGREEMENT

At its public hearing last week, the Herndon Town Council unanimously approved a resolution that amends its comprehensive agreement with Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, to advance the redevelopment of town-owned real estate in Herndon's downtown into a mixed use town center project, arts center and associated parking. Among other elements, the amendment establishes a closing date on or before December 15, 2020, by which the town and Comstock must close on Comstock's purchase of the 4.675-acre property. It also establishes a date by which Comstock must have the project under construction, to December 31, 2021. Comstock does retain rights for up to 24 months to pause construction commencement, due to market conditions or other matters, including delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendment also allows continued interim use by the town of the property following its purchase by Comstock for the existing ArtSpace as well as for public shared parking. A complete outline

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

of the amendment may be found at Herndon-va.gov/Downtown. At its December meeting, the Town Council will vote to appropriate the funds required as per the amended comprehensive agreement.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. 3 p.m. Mark Brutsché is Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Part of the 2020 - 2021 Professional Touring Artist Series (PTAS) at the CenterStage. \$5 Reston/\$10 Non-Reston. All performances take place at the CenterStage, located at Reston Community Center Hunters Woods. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas.

DELIVER FOOD TO SENIORS

Adults are needed to deliver food donations to Fellowship Square residents' apartments. This role requires physical activity: walking, bending, stooping, reaching and lifting objects up to 25 lbs.
Hunters Woods Fellowship House (Reston)
Weekly on Thursdays, 10:00 - 11:30 AM and Fridays, 8:30 - 10:30 AM.
Thursday, December 17, 2:00 - 4:00 PM.
Lake Anne Fellowship House (Reston)
Wednesday, December 23, 2:00 - 4:00 PM.
Questions? Contact Diane Beatley at dbeatley@fellowshipsquare.org

HERNDON COMMUNITY CENTER FALL PROGRAMS

The Herndon Community Center (HCC) and the Bready Park Indoor Tennis Bubble are open. Gradually the HCC is adding more recreation programs this fall. Registration for

classes is ongoing.
NOW OFFERING - with required advance registration or reservation:
ZUMBA, a high-energy dance aerobic exercise class held on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday at 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Small Group Training Classes for youth and adults
Storybook Tales and Crafts, the whole family will enjoy activity bags combining stories read aloud (recorded, available online) with fifteen themed and varied crafts
Personal Training
Bready Park Indoor Tennis Bubble court rentals
For information on fall programs and facilities, visit www.herndon-va.gov/recreation

NOW THRU DEC. 13

Holiday Greenery for Delivery. 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thru Assistance League of Northern Virginia, P.O. Box 209, Herndon. The holidays are just around the corner and Assistance League of Northern Virginia has teamed up with Lynch Creek Farm to offer holiday décor. Purchase wreaths, garlands, and centerpieces for your home or as gifts for family and friends. Your orders will be sent directly to the recipients. Shipments to Northern Virginia should take about 5 business days. Assistance League will receive 15% of the cost of every purchase and 100% of any donations. Those funds will help the charity provide food, new clothing and books to many needy children in our community. Here's the link to shopping: <https://www.lynchcreek-fundraising.com/teams/250781>. Shipping is free. Contact info@alnv.org. Visit www.alnv.org.

Announcements

Announcements

Obituary

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

John Lappin, age 94, retired concert pianist, lawyer, teacher, and author died peacefully on November 22, 2020. Mr. Lappin was born in Washington DC in 1926. He graduated from Wilson High School and attended the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. Following his service in the Army during WWII, he worked for the FBI and in 1952 graduated from G.W. Univ. School of Law. He turned to his true passion in 1979, and began teaching the piano. He is survived by his daughters, Kathleen Glisson, Suzanne Lappin, his granddaughter Becca Ward, his stepson, Mike McGinnis and his grandson, Paul McGinnis, his niece Janet Quinn, and nephew Jonathan Lappin and many grandnieces and nephews. Services to be planned in the future. Full notice and condolences www.adamsgreen.com.

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CALENDAR

TYSONS CORNER CENTER HOLIDAY PLANS

Santa Is Back (Now through Dec. 24). Careful consideration has been given to the Santa set to ensure that they are both healthy and magical to meet the moment. Santa will be seated a distance from his guests to maintain a healthful distance, with a physical barrier to prevent young guests from trying to sit on Santa's lap. Santa and his young visitors will wear masks and maintain a healthful distance, in a contactless visit and photo experience fully re-designed to meet the moment.

Grinch's Grotto (Now thru Dec. 31). Located on Level 2 next to A Christmas to Remember. Guests will meet The Grinch and interact with him right in his cave, as well as pose for a photo. Admission includes a free 6x8" printed photo with a playful Grinch catchphrase. With over 20 sayings to choose from, guests can customize their own Grinch holiday memory. Admission also gets you a collectible Grinch ornament. Each ticket allows admission for up to 5 guests to meet the Grinch as a group. This ticket secures your individual time to meet the Grinch and experience his cave. Social distancing and mask usage will be in accordance with local and mall regulations.

Stuff-A-Truck Event (Friday, Dec. 4, 3 - 7 p.m.) Together with WGTS, the official radio sponsor of the Salvation Army's Angel Program, the Johnny and Stacey show will broadcast live from the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center near the Plaza, encouraging listeners to help "Stuff the Truck" with toys for donation to the Salvation Army.

NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Santa at Springfield Town Center Santa and his reindeer have arrived at Springfield Town Center to kick-off the holiday season. In an effort to create touchless experiences and accommodate varying levels of visitor comfort, Santa will be available at Springfield Town Center via numerous experiences and offerings: Picture with Santa; Virtual Experience; Family Pet Photos on Mondays; Family Photos and Visits with Santa. Reservations are required for all Santa and photo offerings.

NOW THRU DEC. 15

BUMC Holiday Marketplace. Burke United Methodist Church is hosting an online Holiday Marketplace. Proceeds will benefit our Cambodia ministry and the preschool. Includes links to many local crafters. Visit www.burkeumc.org

DEC. 4 AND DEC. 11

Centrestage Spotlight. 6-8 p.m. Virtual Event. Centrestage Spotlight is a virtual show that will feature songs, monologues and scenes performed by Theatre Centreville students. Audience members will receive a link so the show can be enjoyed virtually. The first show can be viewed between Dec 4th and Dec 7th. The second show can be enjoyed Dec 11th through Dec 14th. To purchase tickets, go to <https://www.theatrecentreville.com/wpa/>

FRIDAY/DEC. 4

Holiday Drive-In Movie. At Tysons Corner Center. Friday, December 4 - Elf from 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. Each night, the fun will kick-off at 5 p.m. (movie starts at 7:30 p.m.) and will last until the movie has concluded with food available from participating eateries as well as some live entertainment, trivia, and music prior to the show. Reservation required, with a donation of \$10 or more to Food for Others, a local nonprofit providing food to neighbors in need.

DEC. 4-6

Capital Craft Fair. 12 to 5 p.m. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. A Showcase of Artistry and Craftsmanship - The Capital Craft Fair will feature works of art and fine crafts presented by more than 100 juried artists. Artists will offer a wide variety of handmade art in several mediums. Cost: \$10 Adults (in advance) \$12 (at the door). Visit the website: <https://hubs.la/H0y-gJs0>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Living Nativity. 11:30 to 1 p.m. At St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 6320 Hanover Ave., Springfield. St. Christopher's Living Nativity and unwrapped toy drive is on - drive or walk by. Rev. Connors: "Come experience the joyous Christmas story - and make a child's life a little brighter." Free. Visit the website: www.saintchristophers.net

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Healing with Horses. 9 a.m. At Ohana Equestrian Preserve, 24240 James Monroe Hwy., Aldie. Capital Caring Kids will host a free event for seriously ill, grieving children and their families in the region to be introduced to the special bond between humans and horses. Registration is required by Dec. 1. Call 703-407-2741 or visit the website: <https://www.capitalcaring.org/event/healing-with-horses/>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$5 Reston/\$10 Non-Reston. Mark Brutsché brings his unique spin on this childhood favorite that will be fun for the whole family. Visit the website www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Cookie Cutter Creation - 3D Printing Workshop. 10-11:30 a.m. Online. Get into the holiday STEM spirit and explore the world of 3D design to create your very own cookie cutter. In this virtual workshop, the STEM educators will take you through the process of designing a 3D cookie cutter on TinkerCad. Cookie cutters will be printed on the Children's Science Center 3D printer and available for pick up on Friday, December 18 from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday, December 19 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Cost is \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.childsci.org/events/diy-workshop-cookie-cutter-creation>

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Pancake Breakfast. 9:30-11:30 a.m. At Turner Farm, 10609 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Turner Farmhouse Foundation invites the community to come to its Pancake Breakfast and Fundraiser. Come tour the grounds, visit the milk house and enjoy pancakes, coffee, tea and hot chocolate. They are raising funds to work on the Retreat House, and will start construction once the Special Exception application is approved. Contact Sarah Kirk, skirkbtr@gmail.com, 703-403-3072.

DEC. 5 AND 6

McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival (Virtual). 4 p.m. Free Admission. Founded in 1982, the McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival is a highly anticipated, juried show featuring exceptional regional artisans. These fine, handcrafted works are made by established, high-quality, seasoned artisans as well as new artisans exhibiting innovative concepts. The show includes pottery, glass, jewelry, holiday decorations, mixed media, fashion accessories, wood, fine art, artisanal foods, and more. See behind the scenes and watch how these artists create their masterpieces. Support the arts and buy a unique gift for someone special. Registration is required. Activity No. 2011.220. Visit <http://nvhg.org>

DEC. 5 AND 6

Festival of Nativities. 5-8 p.m. At Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6219 Villa Street, Franconia. Celebrate Christmas at an open house event to view nativities from around the world. This will be a wonderful way to focus on the true meaning of Christmas as the holiday season begins. To promote the health and safety of volunteers and guests, they ask that you sign up for a window of time to attend. Details and the registration link can be found at: www.festivalofnativities.com

SUNDAY/DEC. 6

CIA in Moscow. 2-3:30 p.m. At the Cold War Museum (100% Virtual, Zoom Room. Jonna Mendez, former Chief of Disguise at CIA, will talk about how CIA Technical Services spoofed the KGB so we could run agents in Moscow during the Cold War. Cost is \$20. Call 703-283-4124.

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A Bone To Pick



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that I'm the most-stressed about it, but I am at least stressed about a bone scan I'm having this week. The reason being that thyroid cancer that's metastasized - which mine has, sometimes moves to the bones. And since I have some knee-hip discomfort, particularly when I get up from a seated position, my oncologist ordered this two-step diagnostic process: an injection of something followed a few hours later by the actual scan to assess the damage. Not that I want to look for trouble (since it has already found me) but it's important - though scary, to tell your oncologist about any new symptoms, especially, if this new symptom has persisted for more than a few weeks. Rather than be an idiot and not mention the problem, I mentioned it during our last phone call on Thursday the week before Thanksgiving and tomorrow, Monday, 10 days after the new fact, the bone scan will occur. I imagine I'll receive the results by the end of the week. Waiting for results all the time is another negative aspect of this disease. Very little happens while you wait, if you know what I mean?

I wouldn't say exactly that common sense has prevailed here. It really doesn't take a genius to call a doctor when you're experiencing some new and unusual pain. In fact, the first lesson of oncology 101 is to contact your oncologist if any new symptom presents. It might actually be serious. Moreover, you're never to presume anything. You are to let the doctor know and let him be the judge. Keep the self-diagnosing and self-medicating to a minimum, if at all. You don't know best. In fact, you hardly know at all.

Part of the occasional apprehension I've had in not sharing any new symptoms with my oncologist is fear. If I tell him about a new symptom, it might actually indicate a problem/complication with my disease/treatment. The illogic is: if I don't tell him, my overall medical situation can't get worse - which is obviously stupid, and not true. But since I'll never receive medical confirmation that my health situation has taken a turn, I can continue to delude myself. But my thought process - as a previously diagnosed "terminal" non small cell lung cancer patient stage IV, was just that. What I don't tell him won't hurt me. 'Hurt me' meaning leading to a premature death (I know, any death is premature). I realize even before writing this that it doesn't make any sense. As I have said on many occasions, I'll blame the cancer.

And why I'll blame the cancer is because more than the damage it does to your body, it is the damage (effect really) it has on your brain. In a subconscious kind of way, your brain is totally rewired. After receiving such a life-changing/potentially life-ending diagnosis, you begin to think differently about life. Your obligations change. Your priorities change. Your responsibilities change. Your perspective changes. As such, your answers to questions and preferences no longer seem to be coming from the same place as they were before your diagnosis. It's not so much physically as much as it is emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. You're almost an entirely new person. At a minimum, you definitely become a variation of the previous you. You might look the same, but you don't exactly act - or sound the same.

All your decisions become controlled by your disease, not literally, but made through the prism of your being a cancer patient. It's not that, if you're lucky, you need someone to prepare your meals/assist with your activities of daily living, but you do lose yourself in the disease with all the appointments, scans and treatments. And the worst part of it, none of it guarantees anything other than more appointments, scans and treatment. The bone scan I'm having is a perfect example. And unless I embrace the process, the stress and anxiety is likely to do as much damage as the cancer. Fortunately, I'm up to the challenge. Nevertheless, it's worrisome.

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



(From left) Arun Raj holds open a car door while Yomi Akinyemi, pastor of Zion Worship Center, places a food box inside.



Joseph Ferrara, of Cedar Run Community Church, loads a produce box into a vehicle.

WFCM, Churches Feed Families for Thanksgiving

With the help of volunteers, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) distributed Thanksgiving Food Boxes to 600 local families in need. The event was Saturday, Nov. 21, outside Grace Covenant Church in Chantilly, and the recipients were WFCM clients.

Each family got a turkey, ham or chicken, plus a Farmers to Families food box containing eggs, milk, butter, rolls, cakes and pies. They also received a box of nonperishable items, including canned fruits and vegetables, gravy, stuffing, potatoes, yams, cranberry sauce, fresh fruit, sugar, oil, chicken broth, rice, juice and flour.

Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) coordinated the Farmers to Families boxes coming from Richmond. Centreville United Methodist Church (CUMC) and Lord of Life Lutheran Church each contributed the money for 150 boxes, and Ox Hill Baptist Church funded 50 boxes. In addition, the Westfields Business Owners Assn. (WBOA) donated a significant amount of money toward purchasing the food boxes.

Also funding boxes were the Food Lion



Car after car streamed into Grace Covenant Church's parking lot to receive free food for Thanksgiving.

Feeds Foundation and the Clifton Lions Club, as well as the following churches: Cedar Run Community, Centreville Baptist, Church of the Ascension, Fairfax Church of Christ, King of Kings Lutheran, St. John's Episcopal, St.

Andrew Lutheran and Expectation Church. CUMC, Ox Hill Baptist and the WBOA also paid for the turkeys, butter and other perishable items.

In addition, WFCM provided boxes of non-

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



LaLinda Street, of Grace Covenant Church, brings a turkey to a waiting car.

perishable items, plus gift cards for meat at the local Giant, for Centreville Immigration Forum clients, in partnership with CUMC.

— BONNIE HOBBS

WFCM, Volunteers Distribute Food to Neighborhoods

Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM), in coordination with the Sully District supervisor's office, recently distributed 1,200 food boxes from Farmers to Families to area families in need. Volunteers met at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Centreville and then brought the food boxes to several, low-income neighborhoods, including Fields of Chantilly, Meadows of Chantilly, Bent Tree Apartments in Centreville and Lee Overlook Apartments in Centreville. The boxes contained dairy products, cooked meat and produce.

— BONNIE HOBBS



(On left) Paul Woods, from Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood & Community Services, loads a Fastran bus with food for delivery.



(From left) are Hadyn Khim, with Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood & Community Services, and Dan Dolan of the Sully District supervisor's office.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HARMONIE TADDEO