

# CONNECTION

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Marine veteran Jim 'Horse' Smith salutes during his centennial-birthday parade. The Dec. 9 parade traveled from Old Post Road to Colony Road, where Smith and his family have lived for the past 70 years.

**'We're Better Off Because He Protected Our Country'**

NEWS, PAGE 3

**Fairfax Ballet Co. Presents Reimagined 'Nutcracker'**

NEWS, PAGE 9

**Blacksmithing in Burke**

NEWS, PAGE 6

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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DECEMBER 17-23, 2020

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# NEWS



A friend extends birthday wishes to Jim Smith (center) as his wife Carole watches the parade.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Friends placed these decorations in front of Jim Smith's home.

## 'We're Better Off Because He Protected Our Country'

Fairfax City honors WWII vet with 100th-birthday parade.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

As the Knights of Columbus marched past his Fairfax City home last week, Marine Corps and WWII veteran Jim "Horse" Smith raised his arm and saluted. But in reality, everyone participating in the Dec. 7 parade was there to honor him for his 100th birthday.

Organized by Al Leightley of the Knights of Columbus, it traveled from Old Post Road to Colony Road, where Smith and his family have lived for the past 70 years. And it culminated with proclamations from the Virginia General Assembly and the City of Fairfax.

"Today is a fine example of what community is – that in the midst of a pandemic, we could all come together to honor him," said Fairfax Mayor David Meyer. Indeed, comprising the drive-by parade were many of Smith's friends in their cars, plus the City Police and Fire departments, the Knights of Columbus, American Legion Post 177 and a contingent of motorcyclists from Patriot Harley-Davidson.

And not even the cold, blustery day could dim anyone's enthusiasm. "We were more than happy to honor him," said motorcyclist Larry Larson.

Bundled up in a red-plaid blanket, Smith – who turned 100 on Dec. 6 – watched the parade from a lawn chair in his front yard, surrounded by wife Carole, other relatives and neighbors. And across the street, members of the Fairfax High band played the "Marines' Hymn" and "Main Street, America" among a medley of patriotic songs.

SMITH joined the Marines in 1939 and became a communications specialist. He and his section leader didn't get along, so Smith



Marine veteran Jim "Horse" Smith salutes during his centennial-birthday parade.

got the nickname, "Horse," because he wore a harness to pull a cart filled with his section's communications gear.

He volunteered for the famous USMC unit, "Edson's Raiders," in 1941. And the next year, "Edson's Raiders" deployed to the Solomon Islands, where Smith fought in two battles: Tulagi and Guadalcanal. He earned two Silver Stars for his bravery and commitment to his fellow Marines in each battle; and he was also awarded the Purple Heart for shrapnel wounds sustained during a Japanese grenade attack.

Following the war, Smith got married and took a job with Remington Rand. He settled in Fairfax City, living on Cedar Avenue for many years. He joined the CIA in 1952, serving in Taiwan, Manila, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Germany and England. Returning to the U.S. in 1960, he and his wife were now parents



Posing with Jim Smith (seated) are (from left) David Bulova, David Meyer, Chap Petersen, Page Johnson and Tom Scibilia.

of five. They purchased the first house built in the Old Lee Hills community – where he and Carole still live.

Smith had assignments in both America and overseas, retiring from the CIA in London in 1989 as a Senior Executive Service Officer. He and his family then returned to their home on Colony Road in Fairfax.

After last week's parade, Meyer read a proclamation to him from the City, summarizing Smith's distinguished military and civilian careers. He also noted that one of his Silver Stars was pinned on by famed Admiral William Halsey.

Furthermore, said Meyer, "During his many years in our City, Jim and his family have been faithful members of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, where Jim has been a devoted and beloved member of the Knights of Columbus. He was also a volunteer rugby

referee, as well as a World Champion skeet shooter."

David Whitestone, the St. Leo pastor, told attendees, "I always thought, if I could hear the voice of God, it would sound like Jim." Then Del. David Bulova (D-37) and Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) presented Smith with a proclamation from the General Assembly, recognizing him on his 100th birthday.

"Thank you for all you've done and for giving us the opportunity to celebrate you," said Petersen.

Micheal Thumm, of the Knights of Columbus, said how proud he was to honor Smith for his service to his country, the military, the Knights of Columbus and his church. "We're all better off because he protected our country," said Thumm.

SEE PARADE, PAGE 11

# A Green New Deal

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



COMMENTARY

In accepting the Democratic nomination for president, Franklin D. Roosevelt promised a "new deal" for the "forgotten man." In the midst of the Great Depression the country responded to Roosevelt's promise by electing him president four times. The ensuing legislation in the first hundred days of his administration and throughout the subsequent years as president produced a new deal that transformed the government from a laissez-faire approach to a broader role of government in the economy.

Dozens of bills over as many years set up new agencies of government including the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that put people to work on public projects, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) that provided cash subsidies to farmers while controlling the production of staple crops, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that provided cheap electricity and flood control over seven states. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) acts

moved the federal government actively into monetary policy. There are many more.

Increasing concerns in recent years over climate change and economic inequality have led to a call for a "green new deal." While there have been many statements at the national and state levels as

to what constitutes a green new deal, the most comprehensive definition is a resolution introduced in Congress in 2019 that calls for transitioning the United States to use 100 percent renewable, zero-emission energy sources, including investment into electric cars and high-speed rail systems, and implementing "social cost of carbon" policies as part of addressing climate change. The resolution also addresses universal health care, increased minimum wage, and preventing monopolies as well as the needs of poor and disadvantaged people.

The Green New Deal Virginia is a coalition that includes environmental organizations as well as civil rights and social justice groups and community-based organizations. For the groups that make up the coalition as well as their ob-

jectives, go to <https://www.greennewdealva.com/>. A recent article on the movement written by some of its leaders explains that "Virginians right now are facing a multitude of crises that Green New Deal Virginia directly addresses, including the economic downturn, racial and social inequities and the public health emergency. The Green New Deal is innovative because it is not trying to address each crisis in isolation, but instead it is building community around a collective response to these problems, and prioritizing community voices. . ."

In many ways the challenges facing our country and our state—climate change, income inequality, hunger, COVID19 and health care generally, criminal justice reform and others are somewhat different but at the same time of a similar magnitude as those faced by President Franklin Roosevelt when he promised a new deal to the nation. I support a Green New Deal and like the first New Deal it faces many years of legislative action to be accomplished. A single omnibus bill that promises to meet all its objectives in one action will not be successful. A commitment now to recognize the problems we face and taking the multiple steps to deliver a green new deal can be successful even faster than the dozen years it took President Roosevelt to deliver on his promise.

LETTERS

## Covid Alerts Via Mobile?

To the Editor:

Given the evolving COVID-19 restrictions and guidance in response to another wave of infections, I believe I have an idea for information proliferation. We should leverage mobile device push notifications like we do for severe storms and Amber Alerts. This could reach citizens who don't have TVs, don't watch or listen to local news, and don't follow any state political accounts on social media. We are fighting a ton of misinformation during this pandemic, which necessitates clearer and widespread communication. I urge Gov. Northam, Del. Simon and Sen. Saslaw to consider leveraging this technology that we already use. We need mobile device push notifications, to communicate changes in COVID-19 restrictions and potentially guidance in a way that could reach more people.

Katharine Weintraub  
Vienna

# December is Puppy Mill Awareness Month

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Third article in a series.

A puppy store's assurance that it buys only from licensed breeders is no better than suggesting anyone who has a driver's license is a good driver. Puppy mill breeders are required to be licensed under the national Animal Welfare Act (AWA). However, federal animal regulations for breeders are well known to be woefully lacking, requiring only the most basic care. Inspections are few and random, and violations are not dealt with severely, allowing a cited breeder to continue operations for all but critical problems.

Buyers should be wary of puppy stores' claims that all is well with their sourcing. Under Virginia's regulations, stores can not buy from breeders who are not licensed, or who have had a number of critical violations in recent years. Unfortunately the limited staffing of US Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspectors and the estimated more than 10,000 facilities that must be inspected, mean that inspections are few and chances of problems going undetected are high. The USDA's "risk-based" inspection model translates to inspections as seldom as once every two to three year for many breeding operations.

Neither does the AWA ensure that dogs are happy or live a quality life, only that facilities meet minimum humane standards. Those standards include, for example, cage size must be six inches larger than the size of the dog, no more than 12 dogs in a cage, must be provided food and shelter. Only recently has USDA



PHOTO COURTESY MONICA GOOD

Animal activists picket one of Virginia's only 18 puppy stores

proposed that dogs have a continuous water supply, instead of twice daily water offerings. Further there is no uncaged time requirement, no limit of the number of dogs kept, and no limit on the age or number of times bred. And significantly, no requirement for socialization to humans. What level of care, quality, and socialization to humans do you think is even possible when breeding operations have hundreds of dogs and profit is the operating goal?

For more insights into the dog breeding industry, readers may wish to read, "The Doggie in the Window," by journalist and national Emmy Award-winning television producer, Rory Kress.



# NEWS



PHOTO BY DON SWEENEY/FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Delegate Kathy Tran (front left) presents a copy of the House of Delegates Joint Resolution to the Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team, with Susan Laume, accepting for the group. From left: Volunteers attending - founding members John Wittman and Tim Beron; and members Ava Belmont, Craig & Lisa Schapira & family, Arystan Aitkaziyev, Dana Bukenova, Shane Storer, Karin Lehnigk.

## VA House of Delegates Commends Local Group

### Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team commended in Joint Resolution.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia House of Delegates commended the Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team (PVT) by Joint Resolution 257, delivered by Del. Kathy Tran (D-42), in a brief presentation ceremony on Dec. 12 in the Lorton Park.

The Resolution recognized the Laurel Hill PVT for its “mission to make Laurel Hill Park as beautiful and inviting as possible and to protect the park’s pristine nature, wildlife, birds, and plants...” The group had been recognized by Fairfax County in 2019, with the Elly Doyle Special Recognition Award, as one of the first groups to collaborate with the County Park Authority through the newly established Park Volunteer Team Program. The group stepped forward early to help refine the program model for coordinating park maintenance efforts between county employees and volunteers.

Though formally established as a PVT under the program’s new model in 2019, the volunteers began their efforts in 2018. A half dozen volunteers collected 27 bags of trash from the park in the group’s first public event in recognition of Earth Day on April 22, 2018. The group has since grown to about three dozen active members.

The team conducts several service activities throughout the year, including trash clean-ups, invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and recently, the establishment and maintenance of two pollinator gardens featuring native plants. Events are held the second Saturday of each month for a portion of the year, and service hours are currently offered on Monday mornings, 9-10 a.m. under the direction of a trained team leader.

Readers can read the Joint Resolution, full text at: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+ful+HJ257+pdf>.

*The author is the organizer and leader of the Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team.*



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION  
Delegate Kathy Tran with House Joint Resolution

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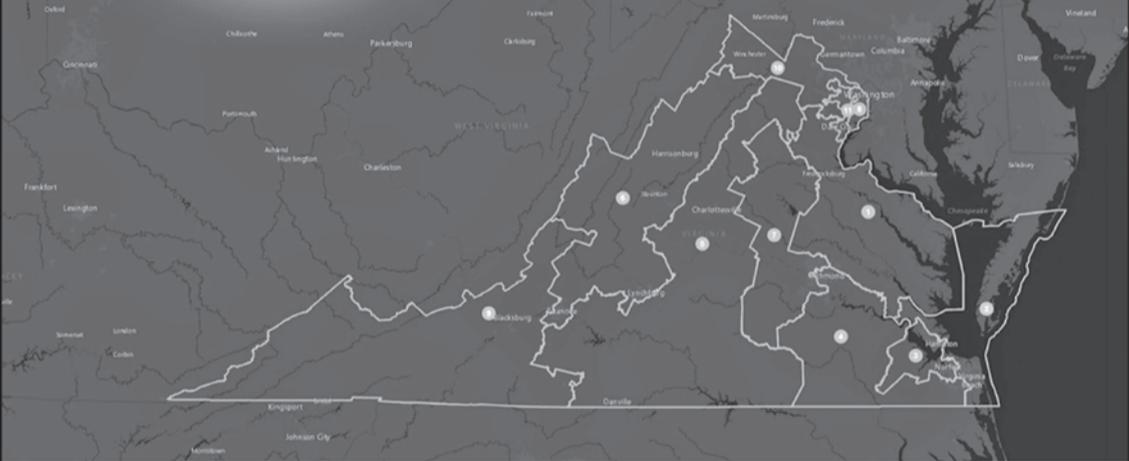
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LaToya Spencer, left, and Aicha Jaani like the boxing workout.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/  
THE CONNECTION

# Boxing isn't Always About the Knockout

Springfield has its own boxing workout gym to try out the jab and the roundhouse.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

Floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee was Mohammed Ali's mantra to capture the heavyweight title back in the 1970s and it's still alive today at the Title Boxing Club in Springfield where all the floating and stinging is burning calories, improving the posture and instilling confidence without bloodying any noses.

"It's the best workout in the world," said Tommy "the hammer" Coelho, an employee of the club that runs around with sparring mitts, giving pointers on landing that jab. "Absolute total full body workout," he said.

LaToya Spencer from Alexandria agreed, as she cooled off after a session. The workouts are divided into an eight-round program led by an announcer, similar to the aerobics classes that attract many. "I love it, a good workout," Spencer said. Aicha Jaani was also in the class. "Helps with your anger, any issues," she said.

The Title Boxing Club is in a shopping center right off Rolling Road next to the West Springfield Police Station, and the inside is full of punching bags, a mini boxing ring, weights, a locker area and a little store where there are sweats, tee-shirts and boxing gloves in the 12-18 ounce size for the punching bag workouts. In the



Tommy "the hammer" Coelho lets LaToya Spencer target the boxing mitts.

ring, a boxer would wear 10-12 ounce gloves, and the mixed martial arts (MMA) uses four ounce gloves.

Even with all this boxing and punches being thrown, there is no actual fighting between participants, it's all about working up a sweat, ducking and weaving for upper body strength. MMA uses a lot of kicks, where boxing is mainly concentrating on the punches.

Some of the punching does bring fighting into the picture too. A little bit rubs off on anyone that's gone through the class. "You learn self-defense, you'll learn the basics here in self-defense," said Jacob Scharf, the general manager. Coelho noted the stance they teach for landing the punch, and noted how he saw it recently when there was an incident in the parking lot and one of the men shifted his weight onto the back foot.

"Somebody's going to get hit," Coelho said.

Coelho's boxing knowledge goes back to when he started boxing at age 10 in Oakland, Calif. He was a three-time Golden Glove State Champion, and rose to the top in the Air Force boxing program out in the South Pacific. In addition, he was a three-time National Roller Speed Skating Champion.

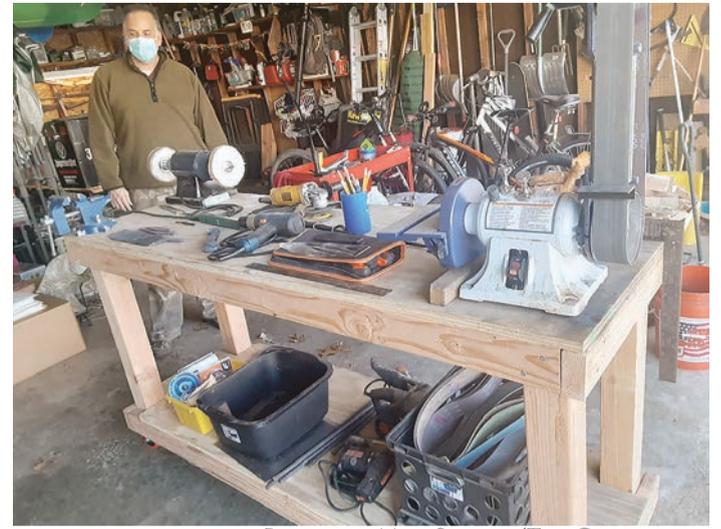
The West Springfield location is one of several in the Northern Virginia area. Others are located in Fairfax, Falls Church, and Ashburn.

Our exercise classes engage the body, mind and spirit by channeling the fundamentals of a true boxer's workout, it says on the website.

Michael Carson, a local MMA pro, has worked out at the Springfield club before.



Tommy "the hammer" Coelho holds the boxing mitts for manager Jacob Scharf.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Jay Coplon shows his handmade tool bench -- a big part of the operation.

## Blacksmithing in Burke

It all started as a Boy Scout badge requirement and is now spitting out knives and swords.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

This holiday season, the Coplon family gathers around the fire pit, heating red-hot steel and pounding it on the anvil, creating an assortment of knives and blades as part of their new hobby of blacksmithing. It started out from a reality television show called "Hell's Fire," and has now turned into a Boy Scout badge, an understanding of forged steel and a new appreciation for a craft that doesn't get much attention.

"I find it therapeutic," said Noah Coplon, a junior at Robinson High School who is honing his skills making knives, tools and a spear with the forging operation they've set up in the driveway. All this is done on a propane fueled blacksmith forge, a special tool bench for grinding the steel, leatherworking tools, and an appreciation for this ancient art.

"We get people come by all the time," said Jay Coplon, Noah's father. "I built this table to support all this," he said, pointing at a tool bench on wheels that has a belt grinder, and an assortment of steel finishing tools. A few of the knives they hammered out are now being used in their kitchen too. Noah's mother Rebecca held out the chopping knife that's been part of

dinner preparation. "Jay made me a knife, I use it all the time," she said.

After watching the show "Forged in Fire," Noah Coplon got interested, so he and his mother attended a class at Nova Labs in Reston to learn blacksmithing. "Noah expressed an interest in this so I signed him up for classes," she said.

The Nova Labs facility in Reston is a membership-driven, all-volunteer makerspace, with the purpose of empowering people to Rediscover the Joy of Making Things, their website read.

The Coplon family finds a certain amount of freedom involved too. Pounding away at hot steel, grinding the blades and picturing the final product is invigorating. They are working on a few knives and a sword for Christmas presents, but Jay Coplon found it too restrictive when he took a few orders for grinding the steel, leatherworking tools, and an appreciation for certain things. One customer ordered a knife to look like something seen in a picture, and Jay Coplon made the knife to fit the order, but he found this type of thing too restrictive. "It took the fun out of it," he said.



Blacksmithing is a family affair for the Coplons: Noah, left, Rebecca and Jay, right.

# NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIANA WOODILL

The Fairfax Pyramid Choral Singers are performing a virtual winter concert.

## Fairfax Pyramid Performs Virtual Winter Concert

The Fairfax Pyramid choral singers performed their virtual winter concert, Dec. 10, but it may still be viewed on YouTube for several months at <https://youtu.be/sgQzLmA1YDw>. The 35-minute concert features singers from the Fairfax Pyramid elementary schools and Lanier Middle School.

Conducting them is Fairfax High Choral Director Juliana Woodill, and the concert is intended to bring joy to everyone during this unique, yet festive, season. It features favorite holiday songs, plus students dressed in creative winter outfits perfect for

the season.

The 60 elementary-school singers will perform a special, holiday-song mashup of “Hot Chocolate,” “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” and “Suzy Snowflake.” And the concert will culminate with a massive collaboration of 250 singers in fourth through 12th grades. In addition, some archive videos will be presented so the audience may enjoy favorite performances from past pyramid concerts.

— BONNIE HOBBS

  
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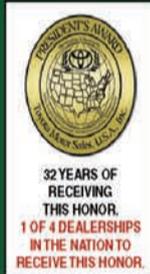
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# NEWS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREA COOK

Waltz of the Snowflakes: (back row, from left) Heather Qian, Grace Reidenbaugh, Chloe Shulsinger, Ava Urben, Meredith Rainhart, Katrina Raab and Nicole Shortle; (middle row, from left) Ana Victoria Smith, Mazeray Bayha, Hazel Lindquist, Amy Martin and Madeleine Gambardella; and (front row, from left) Katie Brescia, Elizabeth Workman, Stephanie Murphy, Clare Yee and Teresa Seraphin.

## Fairfax Ballet Co. Presents Reimagined 'Nutcracker'

The Fairfax Ballet Co. (FBC) presents an all-new, holiday experience with its virtual performance, "Nutcracker: Dancing in the City." The timeless production was filmed in various locations in Fairfax City's Historic District and will be streamed online, Dec. 20-Jan. 3.

"We wanted to incorporate Fairfax City and make it an immersive experience," explained FBC's Andrea Cook, the show's artistic director and choreographer. "So instead of filming it in our studio, we wanted to provide a unique opportunity for our dancers to grow and try something totally new. And they have – it's forced them to really use their artistic expressions as they dance."

Meredith Rainhart, 15, dances the role of Clara, and GMU junior Carlos Martinez performs the part of the Nutcracker Prince. Professional, guest artist Phillip

Smith-Cobbs portrays the Mouse King and Soldier Doll, and former Fairfax City Councilman Michael DeMarco appears as the toymaker, Drosselmeyer. The show also features students from the Russell School of Ballet.

Reserve virtual seats at <https://www.fairfaxballet.org>. Tickets are \$25/household. The nonprofit FBC has been staging "The Nutcracker" since 1991. FBC programs are funded in part by ArtsFairfax and the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

Dancing since age 3, Meredith Rainhart, 15, plays the main character, Clara. "The Nutcracker Prince takes her through the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of Sweets," she said. "And at the end, you're left wondering if it really happened or was it a dream? So it's magical."

— BONNIE HOBBS



Portraying Clara and her friends are (back row, from left) Katie Brescia, Hazel Lindquist, Meredith Rainhart, Teresa Seraphin and Elizabeth Workman; and (front row, from left) Clare Yee, Madeleine Gambardella and Chloe Shulsinger.

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**CALENDAR**

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

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-Werner Heisenberg

**Announcements**

**Legals**

**PUBLIC NOTICE  
NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY REMEDIATION**

Pursuant to the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code section 9VAC20-160-120, 9700 Fairfax Blvd LLC, 1801 SW 3rd Ave, Suite 500, Miami, FL 33129 hereby provides notice of voluntary remediation at the following site:

9700 Fairfax Boulevard  
Fairfax, Virginia 22031  
VRP Number VRP 00766

Environmental investigation has detected chloroform and 1,2,3-trichlorobenzene in groundwater at levels that could pose risk to human health or the environment. The contamination was determined to likely be the result of off-site migration of contaminants from an un-delineated source onto the Site. To address the potential risk, 9700 Fairfax Boulevard LLC applied to and was deemed eligible to participate in the Voluntary Remediation Program. A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) has been reviewed and accepted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The RAP includes the use of institutional controls (ICs) to manage any remaining potential risks associated with the VRP contaminants of concern. These ICs include onsite groundwater use prohibitions; on-site construction worker cautions; the installation of a vapor barrier under the proposed building; and a requirement for the installation of vapor intrusion mitigation systems on any new construction of occupied spaces. On-site ICs will be implemented through the recordation of restrictive covenants in the title records for the Property.

Persons wishing to comment on the voluntary remedial action or request additional information should contact the following person who is familiar with the Site:

JohnRyan MacGregor  
ECS Mid-Atlantic  
14026 Thunderbolt Place, Suite 100  
Chantilly, Virginia 20151-3232  
(571) 471-8400  
jmacgregor@ecslimited.com

Written comments will be accepted until [date 30 days from the date of notice unless DEQ extends the comment period to 60 days].

**Legals**

**Legals**

**ABC LICENSE**

The French Roast LLC, trading as Grounded Coffee Shop, 6919 Telegraph Rd, Alexandria VA 22310. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine And Beer On and Off premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Sebastien Rondier, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

**Legals**

**ABC LICENSE**

Urbar & Utsav LLC trading as Dollar Power, 7012 Commerce St, Springfield, VA 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Beer Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Kattel Umesh, President. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

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**ABC LICENSE**

Tamashi Group LLC trading as Gyu Shige, 2980 District Ave Ste 100, Fairfax, VA 22031-2339. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on Premises Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Kam Wong, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

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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.

## 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.

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

**The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show.** 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join in (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv shows from the comfort of your couch! Register online and a Zoom link and password for the show will be emailed to you. Participants must register two hours in advance of showtime. Visit [www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

**Jane Austen Tea.** 2-3 p.m. Reston Regional Zoom, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Make yourself a cup of tea and celebrate Jane Austen's birthday. They'll discuss her books, her life, and her impact. Zoom invites sent to registrants 1-2 days before the event. Teens-Adults. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7303990>

## THURSDAY/DEC. 17

**Lúnasa, a Celtic Holiday.** 8 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$25 Reston/\$50 Non-Reston. Irish band Lúnasa brings its holiday show to the CenterStage, along with Dublin-born bouzouki player Daorí Farrell and rising star Malinda. Part of the Professional Touring Artist Series. Visit the website [www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas).

## DEC. 18 TO JAN. 4

**Naturescape Narratives: Chinese Brushpainting.** 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Offering a break from the pandemic, 67 brushpaintings by Tracie Griffith Tso are on exhibit at Reston Community Center Hunters Woods through January 4 offering a 6,000-year-old Chinese artform in a nature-based display.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 18

**Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night.** 7-9 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes will be awarded to the winning teams! Register online or by calling OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 19

**Family Holiday Movie.** 2 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden Theater, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Attendees must wear masks and adhere to social-distancing requirements while in the facility. Seating is limited and preregistration is mandatory. Subscribe to The Alden's monthly newsletter (<https://bit.ly/2HSTLhs>) to get the full movie lineup and movie titles. Stay tuned for registration information.

## DEC. 20-30

**A Winter Star.** Encore Stage & Studio is making spirits bright this season by offering a unique theatrical experience outdoors in the comfort of your car in the parking lot of Temple Rodef Shalom (2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church). Performances dates are December 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Showtimes begin every 15 minutes between 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; and 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. All entry tickets must be purchased in advance. Entry tickets are Pay-What-You-Can donations, starting at \$5. Ticket proceeds from A Winter Star will be donated to the Arlington Food Assistance Center and Encore's Theatre for All! Fund which provides scholarships and outreach programs. Tickets are available online at [www.encorestage.org](http://www.encorestage.org). To learn more, visit [www.templerodefshalom.org](http://www.templerodefshalom.org).

## Parade for WWII Vet's Birthday

FROM PAGE 3

Summing up the warm and heartfelt feelings of all those coming out to honor Smith, Meyer said, "We express our profound gratitude to Jim 'Horse' Smith, United States Marine, for his remarkable life of service to our nation and our community. And we extend to him our best wishes on his centennial birthday."

Afterward, Smith said the whole event came as a "huge surprise" to him. "I had no idea," he said. "It was fantastic - it blew my mind. There are some wonderful people in this world." And he credited his longevity simply to "clean living."

**REFLECTING** on his time as one of Edson's Raiders, he said, "The Raiders formed at Quantico; they sent the youngest, unmarried Marines to be part of it. It was a wonderful battalion - the best, fighting unit I

was ever in, with super people."

When he and his family moved to Colony Road, said Smith, "There was no road here then. But we liked it because Fairfax was far enough away from Washington, D.C.'s crowds, yet it was a nice neighborhood. My house was still being built when I bought it."

The grandfather of five then added, "I never thought I'd see age 100. Actually, I was lucky to make it to 21."

*Smith has recorded two videos of his WWII experiences. One is on display in the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, and the other is displayed at the WWII Memorial in New Orleans. He also represented the USMC at the 2000 groundbreaking ceremony for the WW II Memorial in Washington, D.C. For more information about him, go to <https://www.ww2online.org/view/james-horse-collar-smith>.*

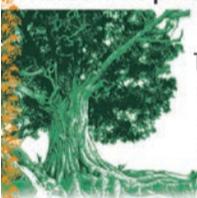
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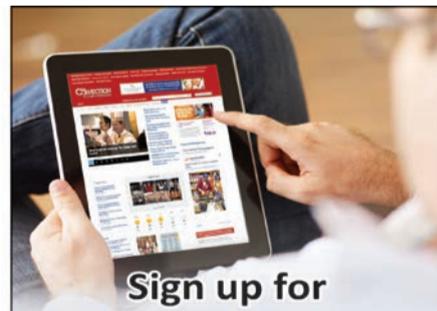
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## Three Strikes ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... and now I'm out - of the Handel's Messiah sweepstakes. The sweepstakes being to write in 50 words or less "Why do you love Handel's Messiah?" All I can answer is one word: Hallelujah, and I don't mean the chorus either. 'Three strikes' refers to the number of times I have now been subjected to this "holiday tradition." The first time I was an attendee - with thousands of other Washingtonians. In a jam-packed National Cathedral one Christmas season. The second time, while visiting my father-in-law in Manhattan during Christmas, he suggested going to Carnegie Hall to listen to Christmas music (not specified). I jumped at the chance to go to Carnegie Hall. Little did I know until I was handed the program that the Christmas music that night was Handel's Messiah. And most recently, I was sitting on my couch at home channel-surfing when I came across a "Handel's Messiah" rebroadcast from some famous venue in Salzburg, Austria featuring a lead singer, a mestro, an orchestra and choir, all of whom shall remain nameless to protect their stature. Whatever criticism/less than glowing reaction to hearing "Handel's Messiah" a third time should be a reflection on me, not the performers.

I freely admit my cultural deficiencies. I am not inclined to tolerate - too well, these intrusions into my rather mundane world. I have never been to the ballet, rarely have seen a play/musical, never attended a concert

featuring the Four Italian Seniors (as but one example) and am not so inclined to listen to the classics on WETA 90.9 FM in Washington, DC either, especially since Dennis Owens retired in 2005. In my defense, I am a card-carrying (Three Stooges Fan Club) member of the hoi polloi. And to be perfectly honest, I don't feel as if I'm any the worse for the wear of it - or the why. However, you all might disagree.

I am not a complete dunce though. I can appreciate the talent and discipline it takes to master the skills necessary to sing, dance, play an instrument, memorize pages of dialogue, et cetera. The closest I've ever got to enjoying this kind of entertainment occurred at Wolf Trap during the summer concert season. Twice, if I'm not mistaken, I attended the yearly July 4th concert when the National Symphony orchestra performed Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with 105mm cannons. It's not exactly equivalent to the old Quaker Oats puffed wheat commercials of my youth but it was entertaining nonetheless. However, having now attended a few times, I'm not so inclined to attend again. And believe it or not, I don't feel at all diminished having said so.

I wouldn't say that the three experiences I've had listening to "Handel's Messiah" has thoroughly convinced me that such cultural forays never be considered again. On the contrary, there is a part of me, a small part, that feels as if I'm missing something. Still, I don't feel incomplete, uneducated or clueless somehow. Instead, I feel like one of the bad guys Clint Eastwood gave an advisory to in one of his "Dirty Harry" movies: "punk. A man has got to know his limitations." And I feel as if I know mine. Perhaps there are cultural areas where I could co-exist but I cannot co-exist with "Handel's Messiah." As I titled an earlier column I wrote for Connection Newspapers while actually attending/hearing "Handel's Messiah" - for the first time, at the National Cathedral one holiday season: "Can't Handel It Anymore."

Two more listens since the original, and I can say with certainty, I still can't "Handel" it. I thought that when I realized what I was listening to at home: "Handel's Messiah," having the freedom to get up, move around et cetera, might possibly enhance the experience. Well, it worked. I didn't feel the least bit trapped so after listening for 10 minutes or so, I got up, turned off the television, left the room, came into my home-office and wrote this column. Apparently, I found a way to "Handel" it after all: stop listening and start writing. I feel better already.

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

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