

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

Seasonal Joys

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Elves and dogs on paddleboards escort Santa to the pier at Lake Anne in Reston for Jingle on the Lake.

Housing the Most Vulnerable

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Madison's Season Ends 13-2

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Teen Sentenced In Death of Friend

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**1639 Macon Street
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**2204 Beacon Lane
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Curious what your home is worth? Call to chat with JD and Ed today!

Closing Rental Housing Gaps for County's Most Vulnerable Adults

Dedicated housing vouchers announced for an additional 50 individuals in Reston and Herndon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series.

The Connection speaks with Sylisa Lambert-Woodward, CEO of Pathway Homes, discussing the nonprofit organization's Housing First Model program, vouchers and what is on the horizon for residents in North Fairfax County.

Housing is a human right. So states the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sylisa Lambert-Woodward is CEO of Pathway Homes, Fairfax-based nonprofit organization that reaches out to some of the county's most vulnerable adult residents. The organization serves adults experiencing homelessness or who are unhoused and with severe mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders, such as substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and physical disorders. "The mental health conditions manifest in a way that impacts their ability to function," Lambert-Woodward said.

These county residents confront financial inequalities. Pathway serves people whose income level is 30 percent to 0 percent of the area average median income. An AMI of less than 30 percent is considered extremely low-income. Racial inequities are documented in the Fairfax County 2022 Point-in-Time Count, which found 1,191 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Fifty percent of those experiencing homelessness identified as Black or African American, even though only 10 percent of Fairfax County's general population identifies as Black or African American. The Point-in-Time count of people experiencing homelessness is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at least every other year for any Continuum of Care (CoC) program, like that of Pathway, designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

A tent city on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2023 sees dozens of additional tents erected on the hill to shelter residents who are experiencing homelessness in North Fairfax County.

On Nov. 22, Lambert-Woodward said that homelessness is distressing in and of itself. There are trust difficulties to address. One of Pathways' most significant markers of success is ensuring that the individual's choice of where they reside and what community they call home is emphasized. The ability of their clients to succeed and remain independent and active in the community is dependent on it, and it improves significantly when the individual is empowered.

Attempting to navigate Fairfax County's array of rental assistance services programs can be challenging for many people, but more so if the person is living with persistent severe mental illness and co-occurring disorders as well as health conditions. A prevalent characteristic among the individuals served by Pathway is that their mental health condition significantly impairs their functional capacity, necessitating supplementary levels of support or assistance, such as with medication management, to be independent. Support services are critical to Pathway's services.

In the absence of an informed advocate or case manager, such as those at Pathway who collaborate with the willing person, the journey to housing can be mentally exhausting and anxiety-provoking.

Even more so if the burden of eviction proceedings is underway in their current rental or if the person is unhoused or unsheltered.

Lambert-Woodward reports that the majority of Pathway's clients are either unemployed or rely on a minimum fixed income of 15 to 10 percent AMI, or \$700 to \$800 per month in disability benefits.

"Unfortunately, in Fairfax County, there is a mismatch between the price and availability of modest rental housing and the wages of residents with extremely low income, at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), Lambert-Woodward said. "So these individuals are just simply not going to be able to afford the cost of any type of housing unit in the county without subsidy or a form of voucher."

"Pathway Homes is the largest recipient of HUD Continuum of Care dollars in the region and provides subsidies to individuals so that they can live in the community," Lambert-Woodward said. Pathway has over 508 subsidies that specifically subsidize income so that individuals pay only 30 percent of their fixed income, or if they are not earning anything, they pay 0 percent, and the subsidy pays 100 percent.

Pathway Homes, Inc. provides



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Sylisa Lambert-Woodward, CEO of Pathway Homes.

its clientele with supportive services and individual units of stable, affordable housing located throughout the county. Pathway had expanded to a network of 427 owned, leased, or managed properties by the end of FY2022. Pathway Homes reports that it owns or leases over 500 homes in Northern Virginia as of 2023.

According to Lambert-Woodward, Pathway has observed that rents in Fairfax County have increased by \$300 or more per month since lease renewals a few months ago. This has prompted Lambert-Woodward to express concern to keep serving their clients. In order to defray the expenses, Pathways either conducts fundraising or relocates individuals who are unable to renew their leases, thereby forcing them to uproot and transition to another location.

"The rent increases are phasing individuals out of their category and out of certain leasing markets even with the leasing subsidies because the subsidies are not keeping up with the increasing FMR, fair market rates," Lambert-Woodward said.

For Pathway, it is a significant concern that 'affordable' rental housing remains affordable and does not soar in cost, making it no longer available by being inconsistent with the subsidies the organization receives.

On a positive note, though, Pathways is expanding its boundary. According to Lambert-Woodward, Pathway received a contract to not only provide Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services but they are also going to be providing supportive housing through dedicated

vouchers for an additional 50 individuals in North Fairfax County, meaning Reston and Herndon. Lambert-Woodward is talking about 1-bedroom rental units, which are the preferred housing option for individuals who come to Pathway from a homeless situation or an unhoused state with serious mental illness.

Pathway is committed to its Housing First Program, meaning there are no conditions that have to be met before the person moves in, according to Lambert-Woodward. Using this model, Pathway maintains a housing retention rate of at least 89 percent with clients who have traditionally been viewed as treatment-resistant and "not ready for housing."

Housing services at Pathway Homes spans a continuum of care from highly intensive to highly independent. Most housing options have subsidies available to make housing affordable to anyone within the community. The organization also provides supportive services to others, allowing them to retain their own housing.

This Sunday, Dec. 10, celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1948. The Declaration set out, for the first time, a set of fundamental human rights, among them housing, to be universally protected.

Article 25 of the Declaration provides, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including ... housing."

Stable, supportive housing is merely the first step towards reintegrating into their community, rebuilding family relationships, reconnecting with their faith fellowships, and experiencing an improvement in overall physical health and psychological well-being.

After receiving housing first, every client is matched with a support team (Assertive Community Treatment Team, Veterans Housing First Team and/or Permanent Supportive Housing Team) comprised of psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, certified addictions counselors, employment specialists, and peer health specialists. The team works together to provide comprehensive community-based treatment and support services around the clock, with a focus on integrating both health and social well-being into the recovery plan. These vital interventions are designed to empower client choice and support successful independent living.

Seasonal Joys Blanket the Region

Spotlighting festive events offering a deep-rooted sense of home.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Whatever December holiday you celebrate, there are events throughout Fairfax County to get you in the holiday spirit. The Connection covered multiple happenings on the weekend of Dec. 3 and 4.

The weeks ahead are jam-packed with

fun, including stunning light shows; check out the one at the Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. There is ice skating at Reston Town Center's ice skating pavilion.

WinterMarkt is happening in the Town of Herndon, and there is even a Candlelit Guided tour of Mount Vernon. Visit The Connection's calendar and bulletin items and Visit Fairfax at <https://www.fxva.com/blog/post/things-to-do-this-december-in-fairfax-county/> to learn more.

Holiday Homes Tour of Herndon

The tour began in 1979 as one of many events held to commemorate the town's centennial and has been an annual event since 1985. A volunteer group collaborates with the community to identify tour homes representing the diversity of community members, architecture, home ages, and holiday celebrations that illustrate how the town has changed over time and reflect everyday life and families.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION



Docent Jabar Baig volunteers to oversee the tour's "Bonus Home," the privately-owned Arts Barn of Allen and Mercia Hobson. He welcomes tour participants Missy and Stephanie Barber of Herndon, Ann Greenwood of Vienna, Jade Rubin of Reston, and Andrea Wallenhorst of Herndon. "I love seeing all the local homes and the beautiful decorations as it makes me feel connected to the community," said Missy Barber, who attended the event.



Rich and Cindy Michaelson of Herndon listen as docent Jeffrey Fairfield of the Rotary Club of Herndon-Reston gives insider information on objects in the home of Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon. Olem's son gave his mother a caricature of herself when she was first inducted into office as mayor, and the pennant is the one she received on the opening day of the Herndon Metro Station.



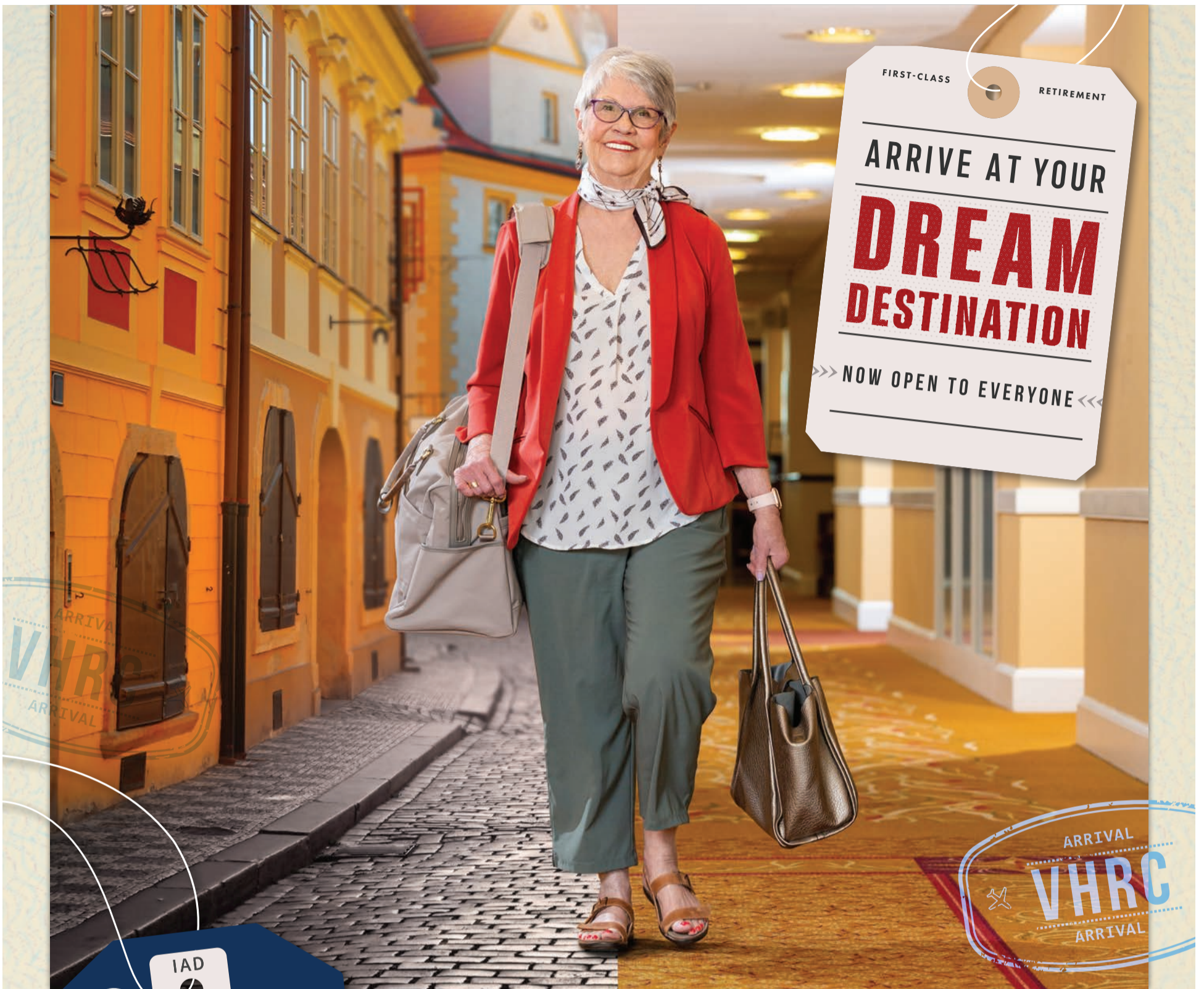
From left, members of the Herndon Fortnightly Club, Vicki Herman of Herndon, Georgianna Knotts of Herndon, Marcia McMahon of Reston, Mary Burger of Herndon, Yvonne Johnson of Herndon, and Cathy Foster, volunteer as docents at the home of Jordan and Melanie Tatum. As tour crowds dwindle, the docents take a break and join Jasbinder Singh, a former Herndon Town Councilmember, before giving him a guided tour of the residence.



The Tatem family receives the framed pen and ink drawings of their home by artist Pat Macintyre, who holds the artwork, during the after-tour party for event participants, volunteers, and supporters. Event co-chairs Keven LeBlanc and Susan Anselene flank the group.



Co-chair of the Homes Tour committee, Susan Anselene (right), presents Reston artist Pat Macintyre, a highly esteemed and beloved arts advocate, with a framed piece of art showcasing photographs of a selection of the hundreds of original pen and ink drawings of houses that Macintyre has been creating for nearly four decades, to gift homeowners on the tour.



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OPINION

Much Remains To Be Done

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

[This column originally appeared in April of this year.]

In my farewell speech to the House of Delegates I reflected on the changes that had occurred in Virginia during the 44 years I was honored to be a member. In addition I thought it important to share my thoughts about much that remains to be achieved. Following are excerpts from my speech stating my priorities as to what still needs to be done.

When we as Democrats reformed Virginia's voting laws, making them some of the best in the country, Republicans went out under those new laws and won the governorship and a majority in the House of Delegates. Why now do they seek to turn back the clock and make it harder to vote? Do you fear that you need to limit the

electorate when you cannot win on the merits of your positions?

You railed for decades against Roe v Wade that was settled law on the difficult issue of abortion. You appear to be like the dog that chased cars until he caught one and then did not know what to do with it. Ducking, bobbing, and moving past the issue will not save you. Women's reproductive rights need to be fully restored. Let me remind you that Virginia elected the first Black governor in the country not simply because he was the most capable of the candidates but because he was prochoice and the man he defeated was not.

How much longer can you as Republicans stay with the pro-gun advocates when the death toll from gun violence continues to escalate? More children die from gun violence than any other reason. I must tell you that it is a little pathetic to witness when well-researched commonsense

bills to end gun violence are presented and there is no discussion but rather kowtowing to what the NRA and the Virginia Citizens Defense League lobbyists have to say. What do you say to your children and grandchildren to explain your vote against commonsense gun safety laws? Do not try to put it off on the Second Amendment as if the Founding Fathers intended to protect this kind of gun violence in the Constitution.

These are especially challenging times in our schools. The number of children who need mental health assistance and the need to reduce anxiety among our youth is only getting worse. At the same time we are talking about taking more than a billion dollars in available revenue and dividing it up among the people who need it least. I think that kind of action is unconscionable!

We have ministers, rabbis, and religious leaders come in to give

a prayer each day at the start of the session. Uniformly without reference to any particular religious doctrine they offer us direction on caring for the most vulnerable and needy in our society. Do we act any differently because of what they have to say? We have separation of church and state, but we should never separate legislating from morality and ethics.

The good old days were never as good as we sometimes make them out to have been. I am honored to have been part of making the days in Virginia ever better for all. I know that you as members of the oldest legislative body in the Western Hemisphere will work to overcome prejudices, conspiracy theories, misinformation and lies to make Virginia a leader among the states.

To listen to my entire speech, go to <https://www.facebook.com/kenneth.plum/videos/670005431487255>

Reston Political Scene as 2023 Ends

BY JOHN LOVAAS
INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

I cannot believe that we are about to go over the cliff into 2024! To me it seems like we need more of 2023 just to get ready for potentially cataclysmic 2024. We are too close to Washington, the focal point of a national election campaign many fear puts us on course to ending our representative democratic form of governance. A former president, already found guilty of massive fraud in NY and indicted on 91 criminal counts including attempting our first ever coup d'etat, is poised to return to power. Meanwhile our incumbent president who early on achieved great things, including transformative legislation to create a new industrial framework and to build an environmentally sound infrastructure, is badly fumbling Mideast

policy and seems one misstep from defeat in 2024.

In 2023, Reston experienced a generational shift in our Virginia General Assembly contingent with the retirements of venerable Del. Ken Plum and State Senator Janet Howell, both Democrats. Imagine, they had served 76 years between them!

Karen Keys-Gamarra (D) handily won the race to replace Plum as Delegate. State Senator Jennifer Boysko was easily re-elected in a district re-drawn to include Reston, and promptly announced she was running for Congress to replace retiring Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton. Democrats in Reston were part Democrats taking control of both the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate.

While many of us are concerned with the continued shortage of affordable housing in Reston and Fairfax County's inaction in ad-

ressing it, a quite different issue took center stage in late 2023. Comstock, the lead developer of the Wiehle Metro Station area, is leading a major lobbying effort to put a casino next to Google at that signature entry to Reston. News of the proposed casino triggered an uproar of opposition. A well-publicized fundraiser held by casino advocates for some Democratic legislators deepened the concern. Reston's elected officials Supervisor Walter Alcorn, Del. Keys-Gamarra, and Sen. Boysko have all sworn to oppose any casino. However, other Democrats like State Senator Dave Marsden and new Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell, likely among others, are supportive of the gambling houses. Surovell got a reported \$20,000 contribution.

While Reston electeds oppose casinos, it is not clear how the approval process for a casino would work.

For example, might a referendum be required? Countywide or only in Reston? That is not yet clear, but I am concerned that this is likely one of those circumstances where Reston's being unincorporated, i.e., not existing as a town or city, is a major disadvantage. If the issue gets to referendum stage, the casino's fate might be decided by all Fairfax County voters. And, you can count on the casino lobby being very well funded for a campaign to vote yes.

What actions should Restonians take to head off the approval of a casino and all that comes with it? Supervisor Alcorn needs to be working his fellow supervisors to support his opposition and all of us should call Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay (who has yet to take a public position) insisting he oppose a casino in Reston! Chairman McKay's office number is 703-324-2321.

Children's and Teen's Connection

Our annual Children's Connection, including the Children's Gazette, has been a long-standing tradition. We are once again welcoming contributions from children, youth, and teens in public and private schools, as well as homeschool, after-school care, and other programs, art and writing classes, and from individuals.

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more. We welcome

written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

Visit <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/PDFs/> and scroll down to the Children's Edition to see last year's editions. Our plan is for the Children's Connection/Gazette to publish the week of December 20, 2023, with overflow possible in January 2024.

Submission Directions

Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format. These can be submitted via Google

Drive. Writing should be submitted in text format (docx or Google Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

Identify each submission as follows:

<First Name> <Last Name>, <Age>, <Grade>, <Residence Location (Reston Herndon, Springfield, etc.)>, <Title of the Work>, <Medium or Type of Writing> | <School/Center Name>, <School Location>, <Teacher Name>, < Title>

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Spring-

field, Summer Morning, watercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS

Writing example

Martina Alvarez, 17, Junior, Alexandria, I'm Not Just a Teen, essay | Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, VA, Gratia Rodriguez, English Teacher, HS

Please email your submissions by 6 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023, [Earlier is Better] to Editor and Publisher Mary Kimm at kimm.mary@gmail.com and fill in the Subject Line as Children's Connection 2023.

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

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ROUNDUPS

Centreville Car Crash Kills Man, 28

Detectives from the Fairfax County Police Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating a fatal, single-vehicle crash that happened Sunday, Nov. 26, near Cox Farms. Killed was Emmanuel Alexander, 28, of Aldie.

Officers responded that day at 4 a.m. to a single-vehicle crash in the 15600 block of Brad-dock Road in Centreville. There, they and county Fire and Rescue personnel found a 2017 Jaguar XF fully engulfed in flames and worked quickly to extinguish the flames. The driver and lone occupant, Emmanuel Alexander, 28, of Aldie, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives are continuing to investigate to determine if speed and alcohol were factors in the crash, and they'd like to speak to anyone who may have information about this incident. Call the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

Donate New Toys, Books for Hospitalized Children

Officers at the Sully District Police Station are getting ready to spread some joy to lots of hospitalized children. They want to make the annual Santa's Ride extra special but need the community's help to make it happen. From now through Dec. 10, they're inviting people to turn their lobby at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly into a toy wonderland.

Just drop off new, unwrapped toys, books and games into the Santa's Ride box there to help make a child's holiday dreams come true. The lobby is open 24/7, and all gifts collected will be delivered by Santa and the Fairfax County Police Motor Squad officers directly to the Inova Children's Hospital Child Life Unit.

Car Seat Inspections, Dec. 14

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, Dec. 14, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis, and everyone is eligible. Participants should install the child safety seat themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly, in the future.

Longer Turn Lanes on Clifton, Stringfellow Roads

As part of the Route 29 widening project, drivers on Clifton and Stringfellow roads in Centreville now have longer left-turn lanes to Route 29. The southbound Stringfellow left-turn

SEE ROUNDUPS, PAGE 15

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G. STEPHEN DULANEY

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SEASONAL JOYS BLANKET THE REGION

The 17th Annual Herndon Holiday Model Train Show & Caboose Open House

The Herndon Historical Society and Arts Herndon featured an N-Scale operating layout by the Northern Virginia NTRAK.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

From left, John Dudzinsky, a retired community forester/arborist, holds Oshi, the traveling Pom, and joins Venkat Guntupalli, Anika Guntupalli, 5, Anya Guntupalli 5, Sowjanya Kunala, and Jo Ormesher, president of Arts Herndon, with her sweet Corgi pup named 'Lilibet,' after the late Queen Elizabeth.

Gifts from the HeART Shopping Event at Lake Anne

This is a holiday gift-shopping event with original artwork, ceramics, jewelry, and other one-of-a-kind items sold by the artists.



MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

Quilt-maker Preeti Harris displays her STEM-influenced work depicting a diversified group of children.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK.COM

Santa, his elves, and Rudolph took time out of their busy days to stop by as children made ornaments.

JINGLE ON THE LAKE

Jingle on the Lake Christmas Festival, presented by the Lake Anne Washington Plaza Merchant Association. The day-long holiday extravaganza featured the Grinch and Santa, who arrived on different decorated pontoon boats flanked by elves and dogs on paddleboards.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION



Serenity Weber, 3, tells Fred Weber of Reston what she will ask Santa to bring to her, "a real T-rex."



The Vienna Singing Princesses are a group of Vienna-based students who perform together out of a shared passion for musical and theatrical productions. Meet Ice Queen Grace, Arabian Princess Eva, Ice Princess Kailyn, and Warrior Princess Haley.



The Grinch arrives at Lake Anne in Reston before Santa.



To see Santa, 6-year-old Cohen Coulomb of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., traveled with his family to Lake Anne in Reston. It made his day.



Elves and dogs on paddleboards escort Santa to the pier.



PHOTO BY PAUL GRUNDY

Santa on the boat. First year Santa is George Broderick of Lake Anne, enjoying the role.



PHOTOS BY PAUL GRUNDY

Maureen Broderick, Santa's actual wife, with Santa

The Town of Vienna displays holiday lottery winners



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK.COM

The first-ever holiday display lottery winners for the Town of Vienna place their menorah and dreidel next to the Christmas tree on the Town Green. The winter solstice display should be up soon. The menorah lighting will take place on Dec. 10 at 5 p.m.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



The front of the line starts with bags and bags of food for those in need.

Food Lines Resemble Bread Lines of Great Depression

2,000 people in need show up for help.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The images capture the extreme needs of local residents in North Fairfax County, especially in the Town of Herndon, in early December 2023.

Over 2,000 people flooded the Town of Herndon's downtown district on Saturday, Dec. 2, to benefit from the distribution of 26,000 pounds of food as well as clothing, according to Herndon Town Council member Cesar del Aguila. The Stars & Stripes NOVA Committee, supported by the Green Lizard Foundation, produced the massive undertaking to support the local community.

"Volunteers began arriving at dawn Saturday morning," Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick said. "The need was great — at one point, people were lined up around the block waiting to receive canned food, dry goods, fresh produce, and winter clothes."

"The need was great — at one point, people were lined up around the block waiting to receive canned food, dry goods, fresh produce, and winter clothes."

— Herndon Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick

Although open to all current and former service members, first responders, their friends and family, Steven Booski, co-chair of the committee, called the effort "a humanitarian mission." It impacted the people who desperately needed it — those in the Herndon community.

"It was the most humbling experience of my entire life," Booski said.

His comment was echoed by that of Hendrick: "I'm humbled and inspired by the efforts of the Stars and Stripes NOVA Committee to provide for our community."

According to Beth Meyer of Green Lizard Cycling, the "Lizard" was a part of the Stars and Stripes NOVA food and clothing giveaway. The day before the distribution, on Friday, Dec. 1, employees of Green Lizard Cycling, volunteers from The Green Lizard Foundation, and the Swim Team Dads joined the Stars and Stripes volunteers in sorting and bagging donations. Herndon Vice-Mayor Clark Hedrick and council member Cesar del Aguila joined the other volunteers in distributing food and clothing.

Sponsors and other supporters included Costco, Giant, Harris Teeter, Lowes, Mission BBQ, and Parsons Xtreme Golf.



Behind the building, volunteers assist with additional food and clothes for those in need.

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Cael Yates #12 prepares to pass the ball to Cord Yates # 5



Freedom Woodbridge receiver Jachai Hughes dives for the end zone with Madison defender Darren Knicely #11 providing tight coverage

Madison Ends Season 13-2

PHOTOS BY
WILL PALENSCAR

Coach proud of team that never gives up.

BY WILL PALENSCAR
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Almost a year ago the same teams matched up for a showdown in the VHSL Class 6 State Championship. This year the two teams met in the state semifinal game on Saturday 12/02. Madison fresh off a Regional final win over Westfield and Freedom Woodbridge a regional final win over Battlefield. The winner would face the winner of the Lake Braddock - Highland Springs semi final game. The State Championship is being held in Charlottesville on the campus of the Virginia Cavaliers on Dec. 9.

Freedom Woodbridge would jump out to an early 7-0 lead when Jeff Overton ran in from about 2 yards out with 7:27 to play in the opening quarter. With 5:06 to play, the Freedom Woodbridge QB would keep the ball and run in for a 12 yard touchdown. However, Madison would block the point after and the score remained at 13-0.

Jeff Overton would score his second touchdown on a 35 yard touchdown run with 9:18 in the 2nd quarter, but Freedom Woodbridge would fail on the two point conversion. Freedom Woodbridge was now ahead 19-0. Freedom Woodbridge would add to their lead with 8:06 in the 2nd quarter when they went 58 yards for a quick score. After a successful extra point the lead was now 26-0.

Madison would get on the board with a Dominic Knicely 2-yard touchdown. Danika Pflughardt was successful on the point after and the lead was now 26-7 with 7:02 to play before halftime.



Cord Yates #5 waits for Madison snap



Joseph Gore #39 dives at the legs of Freedom Woodbridge running back Jeff Overton



Danika Pflughardt #37 successfully converted on both of her extra points



Dominic Knicely #1 prepares to stiff arm a Freedom Woodbridge defender

With 3:45 to play in the half Jeff Overton would score on a 15 yard run. Freedom now firmly in control 33-7. Jeff Overton would score on a 57 yard touchdown reception, and after a successful 2 point conversion, the score was now 41-7 with just ten ticks before halftime.

Freedom Woodbridge would score on a 7 yard touchdown reception to Aaron Duncan

on the opening drive of the 3rd quarter with Freedom Woodbridge up 48-7.

Cord Yates would score on a 40 yard touchdown reception from Cael Yates with 6:27. Danika Pflughardt would again add a successful point after and the score was now 48-14.

Kameron Courtney would score on a 51 yard touchdown and after a successful point

after the score would now read 55-14 with 6:15 to play in the game.

The Warhawks Coach Justin Counts told his team he was proud of them for continuing to play and never giving up. Madison's season ends with a record of (13-2). Freedom Woodbridge (13-0) will play Highland Springs who were 35-10 winners over Lake Braddock.

BOOKS

Former Centreville High Teacher Writes Children's Book

Partial proceeds will aid Maui wildfire relief.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Falling snow can be a magical thing – beautiful, exciting and ethereal – especially to a child. But for 5-year-old Kiki, who lives in Hawaii, it's only a dream. Still, she hopes to experience snow for real someday; and a family trip to Michigan may be just what's needed to make her dream come true.

That's the premise of the new children's book, "Kiki's Dream," by former Centreville High English teacher Susan Coryell. A picture book for ages 2-7, it was released Nov. 24, just in time for holiday gift-giving. But equally important, partial proceeds from the book will aid wildfire relief in Maui through the Hawaii Community Foundation.

Coryell began the first two years of her 30-year teaching career in Hawaii at the private school, Hawaii Baptist Academy. And "Kiki's Dream," her second picture book, is inspired by her family members who still live in Hawaii and have connections to that school.

"My youngest son and his wife teach there now, and both their daughters attend it," she said. "I got my idea for 'Kiki's Dream' from my granddaughters in Hawaii who had never seen snow until they went to Michigan for a family visit." And now, thanks to its publication by Two Sisters Press, Coryell is excited to share her book with everyone, while also helping a worthwhile cause.

She taught in FCPS for 28 years, 11 of them at Centreville. "I began teaching there in 1990, shortly after I published my YA [young adult] novel, 'EagleBait,'" said Coryell. "Then-Principal Bill Trussell told me he had an opening, and I was delighted to move to high school after teaching 17 years at an intermediate school."

There, she taught the first class of Transitional English ever offered at Centreville. "It was designed to help the ESL students assimilate with high-school English courses," she explained. Coryell also began and sponsored



PHOTO COURTESY OF NED CORYELL
Susan Coryell holding her new children's book, "Kiki's Dream."

the school's Authors Club and initiated Centreville's annual Writers Conference. During the full-day event, 100 students who'd submitted their original writings were able to have their work critiqued by published authors in their genres.

"I loved the energy and collegiality of CVHS," she said. "It was only about four years old when I began teaching there, and it accumulated more honors and victories than many more-established schools in Fairfax County, in areas including sports, music, drama, debate, forensics and art."

"The teachers, support staff and administrators were top-notch professionals and were a joy to work with. The students represented every facet of American life, and the Centreville community supported the school in every possible way. I retired in 2001, and I am still in touch with many of my former students."

As for "Kiki's Dream," it's available in bookstores or may be ordered online in paperback, hardcover or e-book formats, from both Amazon and Barnes and Noble. "Early orders are crucial to sales in today's book market," said Coryell. "So I thank everyone in advance for their support."

To purchase it, go to https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CJVX-1YGK?ref_=cm_sw_r_cp_ud_dp_371WKHARFE1Q3C8ZTSPZ or to <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/.../kikis.../1144168469>.

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ENTERTAINMENT

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN LAUNCH HOLIDAY DONATIONS DRIVE

The Democratic Women of Clifton and Northern Virginia (DWCNV) is coordinating with Fairfax County Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue Organization <https://www.ffandfriends-2therescue.org/> to collect unwrapped toys for local needy children throughout Northern Virginia. The toy drive is the highlight of the holiday season for both the first responders and the young gift recipients. The project is headed up by Retired Deputy Chief, Will Bailey. In addition to toys, the organization will accept monetary donations to purchase at a discount new winter coats for area children. Each year, the department distributes as many as 3,000 new coats to more than 50 schools, shelters, and non-profits throughout Fairfax and Alexandria. To donate to Operation Warm to buy new coats: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/operation-warm-inc/team-up-with-firefighters-and-friends-to-the-rescue>.

Unwrapped new toys for younger children can be picked up at your convenience. Email: Donna Netschert to coordinate a time and place: villagetimesaver@aol.com or text 703-887-7147. Or they can be dropped off at Donna Netschert's at 12724 Chestnut Street (side porch) in the Town of Clifton by December 8.

Gift cards from Target, Best Buy, Old Navy or Walmart are welcomed for teens in amounts from \$25-\$40. They can be picked up or mailed to: DWCNV, P. O. Box 143, Clifton, Virginia 20124.

Monetary donations may also be mailed to the DWCNV at the above address with checks made payable to: "Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue".

Britepaths <https://britepaths.org/> is the other organization supported annually by the DWCNV. This organization provides programs that help stabilize families by giving them short-term food and financial assistance. Britepaths also offers classes, workforce development services, mentoring, and guidance to help families become financially independent and resilient. The organization welcomes donations of gift cards from local food stores such as Giant, Shoppers, Wegmans, Target and Walmart which are given to the families to pick out food during the months of January and February when holiday giving has come to an end and the need is greatest. In addition to donating grocery store gift cards, you may write a check payable to "Britepaths" and gift cards will be purchased for the families they serve. Mail grocery store gift cards and checks to DWCNV, P.O. Box 143, Clifton, VA 20124. DWCNV will collect for this project until Dec. 31.

Donations to both organizations are tax deductible and receipts will be provided for tax purposes. If you have questions, email cliftonwomens@aol.com

ONGOING

Bull Run Festival of Lights. At 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. Drive through 2.5 miles of festive light displays. Open from now until just past New Year's Day. Drive the festival route from the comfort of your car; turn off your headlights and follow the magical glow. Hours are Friday, Saturday, Sunday and



Willie Bailey with Democratic Women of Clifton Co-Chairs Jane Barker and Barbara Levine.

Holidays from 5:30-10 p.m.; Monday to Thursday 5:30-9:30 p.m.

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO OUR PARKS

Enjoy the spirit of the holidays with Santa at Fairfax County Parks beginning this weekend. For years, Santa has made the rounds in our parks, creating cherished moments for families of all ages. Don't miss out on a fantastic experience at the park with a special appearance by our favorite "jolly old elf."

Holiday on the Farm at Frying Pan Farm Park. Fridays and Saturdays (Dec. 8, 9, 15 and 16) from 4:30-7:30 p.m. on Fridays, and 4:30-7:45 p.m. on Saturdays, Frying Pan Farm Park offers wagon rides, indoor activities, food, animal interactions, campfires and visits with Santa. Secure your \$15 pass during presale or \$20 at the gate for a festive experience!

Winter Wonderland Event at Burke Lake. Saturdays and Sundays (Dec. 9, 10, 16 and 17) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Burke Lake promise holiday fun with train rides, Gingerbread Man Golf, and s'mores by the fire. Get your \$15 pass by Wednesday before the event, or purchase day-of for \$20. All passes include a visit with Santa, hot chocolate and candy canes.

NOV. 9 TO DEC. 24

Photo with Santa. At Tysons Corner Center. Lower Level - Fashion Court/Nordstrom Wing. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. / Sun. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tysons Corner Center's Santa Claus will arrive on November 9th, and be available for photos and personal time daily through December 24th.

STARTING NOW

Sip & Stroll. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Shopping with a Twist will be in effect daily during center hours (10 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat. /11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun.), although individual restaurant hours may vary. Adult beverages must be in a logo'd disposable cup provided by the restaurant where the drink was purchased. Only alcoholic beverages purchased from participating restaurants may be taken outside the restaurant and into the shopping center. No outside alcohol is permitted.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH

SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into

the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

FUNDAY MONDAY

"Funday Monday is open to children of all ages, however is best suited for the preschool set! Funday Monday runs from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and — unless otherwise noted — is held at Fairfax Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There are plenty of free parking lots/garages in Old Town Fairfax. Stroller access is available at the side entrance Old Town Hall facing Route 236/Main Street. For more information visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts."

SCHEDULE

Dec. 11 -- My Gym
Dec. 18 -- TBD

BONITA LESTINA FAIRFAX

OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

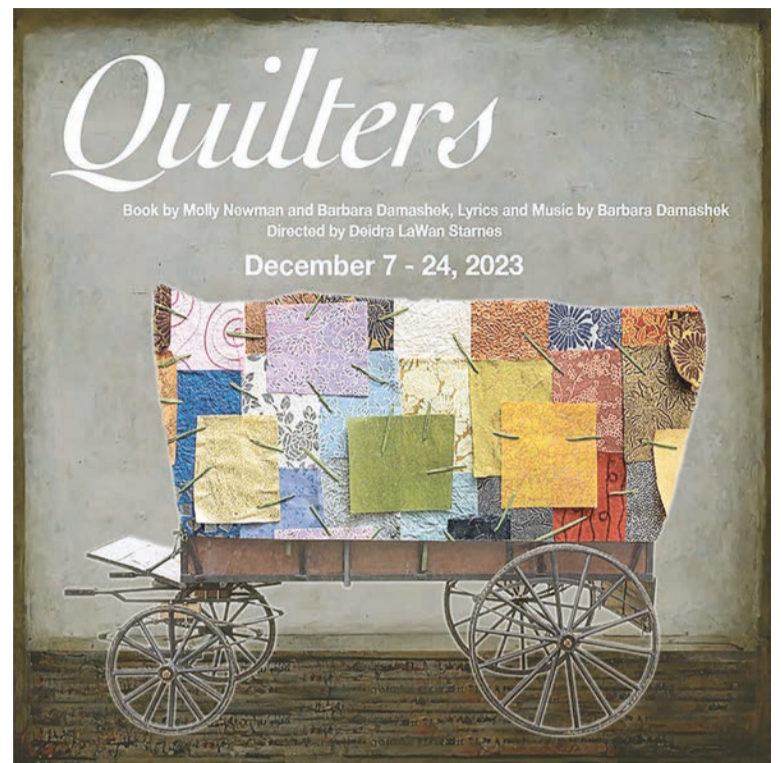
Enjoy an evening of music showcasing a variety of genres in the elegant interior of historic Old Town Hall (3999 University Drive) in the heart of Fairfax City. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and performances begin at 8 p.m. and run from October to April. Admission is free. Visit: www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts.

SCHEDULE

December 8: Marcolivia - Classical String Duo
January 5: Baltimore Composers Forum - Modern
January 19: Navy Band Wind Quintet - Classical
February 2: Kadencia - Puerto Rican Orchestra (part of the Chocolate Lovers Festival!)
February 16: Matt Trkula - Classical Guitar
March 8: Mandoleers - Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra
March 22: James & Victor - Jazz Duo/Steel Pan
April 5: Francesca Hurst - Solo Piano
April 19: Sylvan Waters Duo - Harp/Brass

NOV. 3 TO FEB. 4

Eleanor Mahin Thorp: Metopic Ridge. At Tephra ICA at Signature. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents Metopic Ridge, a solo exhibition



"Quilters" can be seen at 1st Stage in Tysons Corner from Dec. 7-24, 2023.

by artist Eleanor Mahin Thorp. Thorp's paintings take us on an immersive site visit to examine the Blue Ridge Mountains exploring stability and change, the seen and the hidden within rocks. Through her discerning gaze rocks are more than geological entities; Instead, they metamorphose into vessels of history and human connection. Drawing inspiration from the fascinating transformations depicted in Persian miniatures, Thorp traces the hidden figures and forms in the rocks. Her paintings reveal the duality of rocks' existence as both a firm witness to time and a medium for that which is intangible.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AT THE WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

The Workhouse Arts Center will present several holiday events and activities in November and December for visitors to give back to the community, shop for holiday gifts, attend performances, take a class, and more. For more information, visit workhousearts.org.

Toy Drive - Now through Dec. 11
The Workhouse Arts Center is partnering with OAR NOVA, a local non-profit restorative justice organization, to give back to our community. Join us in helping families impacted by the criminal justice system by donating a new, unused toy in its original packaging. Toys can be dropped off in the Workhouse Visitors Center.

WinterWorks - Season Celebration - Saturday, Dec. 9, 6-9 pm
Our festive WinterWorks event will feature holiday merriment, fun photo opportunities, carol singers, a Raku ceramics activity, dance demonstrations, hot chocolate bar, smores by a fire pit, and more! Admission is free. Art activities, food, and beverages available for purchase. Workhouse Arts Center Campus.

Holidays...Hallowdays Movie Screening - Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 pm
While incarcerated at the Lorton Correctional Complex in the 1960s and 1970s, Rhozier "Roach" Brown

led the prison theatrical troupe THE INNER VOICES. They performed original plays, skits, and social dramas at a variety of venues including the Apollo Theater and the Smithsonian Institution. Cost: In place of an admission fee, guests are asked to bring a new unused toy to donate to the Workhouse Toy Drive. Building W-3 Theater.

New Year's Eve Musical Theater Performance - The Who's Tommy Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm
Based on the iconic 1969 rock concept album, The Who's Tommy is an exhilarating story of hope, healing, and the human spirit. The story of the pinball-playing boy who triumphs over his adversities has inspired and amazed audiences for more than 40 years. The New Year's Eve show includes a post-performance reception with midnight champagne. Tickets \$50. Building W-3 Theater. See the website for ticket prices for additional dates and times. Show runs through Feb 11. Fridays and Saturdays 8 pm and Sundays, 2 pm.

New Year's Eve Comedy Show with Antoine Scott - Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm
The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafavi, a special New Year's Eve comedy celebration. Time to laugh off 2023 and bring in 2024 with an abundance of joy! Join headliner Antoine Scott and a host of other hilarious comics for a one-show-only New Year's Eve comedy event. Tickets are \$50; \$60 front row reserved seats. McGuireWoods Gallery in building W16.

DEC. 1-10

Commedia Christmas Carol adapted from Charles Dickens. Tickets are now available for Commedia Christmas Carol, which runs weekends Dec. 1 - Dec. 10 at Traveling Players Studio in Tysons Corner Center. Performed by Traveling Players high school students, the play is an adaptation of Charles Dickens' haunting and heartwarming tale of traveling through time and learning the importance of kindness. To

ENTERTAINMENT



The Beau Soir Ensemble will perform on Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

purchase tickets, and for more information about the show, visit <https://www.travelingplayers.org/performances/>

DEC. 7-24

“Quilters.” At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Set on the American frontier, this moving musical tells the story of a group of women who come together to create a quilt that reflects their shared history, struggles, and triumphs. Visit www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.



The McLean Project for the Arts’ Winter Exhibitions can be seen Dec. 7 to Feb. 17, 2024 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

surprises thrown in. The schedule is subject to change. Check aldentheatre.org for more details.

THURSDAY/DEC. 7

“Tři Ořišky pro Popelku” (“Three Wishes for Cinderella”) Foreign Language Film. 1 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A retelling of the “Cinderella” story in a wintery landscape and with hazelnuts rather than a fairy godmother. This 1973 movie has become a holiday classic all over Europe and is annually shown on TV from Spain to Russia.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

American Red Cross Blood Drive. 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Join MCC and support the community with your lifesaving blood donation. All donors will receive a \$10 Amazon Gift Card via email. For an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor word: HEARTOFGOLD or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Eligibility Questions: Call 1-866-236-3276. Questions? Contact Melanie Hurley at melanie.hurley@heartogold.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

5th and 6th Grader Ugly Sweater Party. 7-9:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Partygoers can enjoy free catered food and beverages, a DJ spinning the latest tunes, an open dance floor and a variety of other attractions and activities.

DEC. 8-10

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At the Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. More than 300 juried artisans will be taking over two Dulles Expo Center halls. The Capital Art & Craft Festival (www.CACFart.com) will feature handcrafted, one of a kind art in more than a dozen mediums

including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. It has always been the largest indoor arts festival in Northern Virginia and now increases to two of the Expo Center’s facilities with 36,000 square-feet of exhibit space. Hours are Friday, Dec. 8 and Saturday Dec. 9: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday Dec. 10: 10 a.m. -4 p.m. Ticket information: www.CACFart.com

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

“The Snowman in Concert.” 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At James Madison High School, Vienna. The JMHS Choral and Orchestra Departments will again host this magical family holiday event. Watch the film based on Raymond Briggs’ “The Snowman” book but with live choral and orchestra music accompaniment. After the film, walk through the winter wonderland and enjoy crafts and a chance to take pictures with the Snowman and Santa! Purchase tickets on the Madison High School website using the link in the features section - or by typing Snowman into the search bar. Tickets will only be available at the door if the event isn’t sold out.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Featuring the American Festival Pops Orchestra with Peter Wilson, conductor. The American Festival Pops Orchestra presents Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season, a cherished tradition and Center for the Arts audience favorite. Gather ‘round for this annual concert that is sure to warm hearts and spread cheer.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

The Wonder of the Season. 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Experience The Wonder of the Season with a concert of sacred and secular holiday music, from Donny Hathaway’s This Christmas and a Nutcracker Ballet-inspired twist on Jingle Bells to Francesco Durante’s Magnificat. Adding to the delightful mix of music in this family-friendly concert, they’ll be joined by members of South Lakes High School Vocal Arts at the 4 p.m. show, and the Treble and Youth Choirs of Saint John the Beloved and Saint John the Apostle at the 7 p.m. show. Tickets: \$30 Adults 18-61 | \$25 Seniors 62+ | Free Youth 17/under & Active Duty Military.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

“It’s a Jazzy Christmas.” 7 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. “It’s a Jazzy Christmas” is nonstop entertainment with a house band and a parade of notable DMV jazz artists. Tickets are \$30 for the general public, \$25 for students and seniors and \$20 for MCC district residents. Hosted by NBC4 News Reporter Mark Segraves, the show features headliner Saxophonist Lil’ Maceo, an award-winning indie jazz saxophonist, whose performance style has been praised as “masterful class.” Visit the website, aldentheatre.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Christmas Concert. 4 p.m. At RCC Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 14

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Go to qrco.de/beMvvf, or follow the link at mcleancenter.org

DEC 7

Presented by The Alden

Foreign Language Film Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1 p.m.

Free admission

DEC 8

Donors Needed!

American Red Cross Blood Drive Friday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

Visit www.redcrossblood.org to make an appointment.

DEC 8

The Old Firehouse Center

5th and 6th Grader Ugly Sweater Party Friday, Dec. 8, 7-9:30 p.m.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents. Preregistration is recommended.

DEC 9

Presented by The Alden

“It’s a Jazzy Christmas” Saturday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

\$30/\$25 seniors \$20 MCC district residents



Presented by The Alden, Chamber Music Series

Beau Soir Ensemble Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 p.m.

\$10/\$7 seniors \$5 MCC district residents

DEC 10

Presented by The Alden

Foreign Language Film Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.

Free admission

DEC 13



The McLean Community Center mcleancenter.org

Home of The Alden Theatre aldentheatre.org

1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101

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Legals

ABC LICENSE
 Emmie, Inc. Trading as Thai Mom, 330 Maple Avenue W, Vienna, Fairfax County, VA 22180-5612. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Restaurant License; beer and wine on and off premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Emmie Niamnuam, President and 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 or (800) 552-3200.

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VLSI Director - Build circuit layouts for processors and controller architectures. Design circuits, optimize circuit output, and resolve issues. Specialize in application-specific integrated circuits & implementation of Graphical Processing Units (GPU), Central Processing Units (CPU), and Systems on Chip (SOC). Work with standard semiconductor implementations tools like IC Compiler, Design Compiler, Primetime, Conformal and Tweaker. Worksite: Herndon, VA. Telecommuting is available. Send resumes to HR, Lancesoft, Inc., 2121 Cooperative Way, Ste. 130, Herndon, VA 20171.

Employment

Vice Principal - Assist principal to dev/implement personnel policy, supervise/eval classroom instruction, dev testing schedules, lead/promote student behavior to implement instruc program, act as principal in absence of same. Req'd Bachelor of Educ + 1yr exp. Resume by mail to Pinnacle Academy, 14120 Newbrook Dr, Chantilly, VA 20151. No calls/walkins.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Road, Reston. Don't miss a moment of the music being made this year by The Reston Chorale. Join your friends and neighbors, bring the family and savor the musical feast. Experience the wonder of the season when The Reston Chorale presents two performances of holiday favorites. It's a musical treat for all ages! Free for active duty military and for youth (17 and younger) with a ticketed adult. Tickets are available at the CenterStage Box Office and online.

DEC. 9-10

"The Nutcracker." 3 p.m. At Centreville High School, Clifton. The Mia Saunders School of Ballet will celebrate the 29th anniversary of its winter tradition of performing as a gift for others with The Nutcracker. Tickets are available at MiaSaundersBallet.com for \$10 for children under 5 and \$12 for ages 6 & up. Proceeds benefit CVHS Drama Scholarships and The Plummer Home.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Beau Soir Ensemble. 2 p.m. At The McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This McLean-based trio returns by popular demand. This special concert will feature a flute, viola and piano trio!

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Magic at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. From 11-12:30 p.m. enjoy holiday crafts, hot chocolate and do some shopping in the gift shop. At 1:00 p.m., Mark Phillips of the Magic Duel will perform. After the show, children can create a gift for a parent or grandparent or just enjoy the Holiday Express Train that will be running that day. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 for special events); seniors 65+ and military (active and retired) \$4. For more information: <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Mariachi Herencia de México: A Mariachi Christmas. 3 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Representing a new generation of mariachi artists, Mariachi Herencia de México is a vibrant group of Mexican American musicians propelling the art and traditions of mariachi music to new heights. For the holidays, the ensemble brings the Latin American tradition of Las Posadas to the Center with songs of the season, such as "Feliz Navidad," "Los Peces en el Río," "Ave Maria," and more!

TUESDAY/DEC. 12

Holly Jolly Networking Mixer. 6-8 p.m. At First National Bank Tysons Branch, 1497 Cornerside Blvd., Suite 1500, Vienna. Get ready for an evening filled with more cheer than Santa's laugh and more networking opportunities than a Christmas tree has ornaments. They promise a sleigh-load of fun, laughter, and a chance to mingle with the who's who of the business world. Think of it as the North Pole of networking - but with fewer elves and more business cards. Join them in spreading joy, making connections, and celebrating the holiday season in style.

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Four More Months in Jail for Cruz Colindres

Vienna teen sentenced for Fairfax man's death.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It was a tragedy all around – and it never should have happened. Two friends had spent all night playing video games and drinking themselves blind. They were having fun but, unfortunately, there was a gun nearby. And when a brief argument erupted, Darren Cruz Colindres, 18 of Vienna, shot and killed Javier Gomez, 20 of Fairfax – devastating not only the victim's family, but the perpetrator, as well.

The incident occurred March 25, in Gomez's home in the Fairfax Village Apartments. Fairfax County police initially charged Cruz Colindres with second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. And for the past eight months, he's been held without bond in the Adult Detention Center.

The firearm charge was eventually dropped; and, on Aug. 14 in Circuit Court, Cruz Colindres pleaded guilty to the lesser felony offense of involuntary manslaughter. He returned to court last Friday, Dec. 1, to learn his punishment; and at that time, Judge Richard Gardiner added four more months to his sentence.

At the outset, Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Clingan called one of the victim's older brothers, Alexander Gomez, to the stand to testify. There, he explained how Javier's death has affected him.

"I can't describe his loss," said Gomez. "It's an emptiness – a hole inside, like a part of me was lost. Javi was amazing; he helped our mom pay rent and wanted to buy her a house someday. He was there to help and take care of others, more than he did himself."

Crying, Gomez said, "All this pent-up anger about his death makes me lash out at my friends. I'd take Javi to school – he looked up to me. He was creative, energetic, ambitious and confident." Saying he doesn't care about his own life anymore, Gomez added, "I have no motivation to keep going. I'm lost; I don't feel like I have anything to hold onto."

Indeed, Clingan told the judge, "There's a level of sadness that accompanies this case – shared by everyone, including the defendant, who knew the victim. And there's also a shared sense of anger because this didn't have to happen."

He said the two young men were friends, but still basically boys – and good ones who didn't get into fights or have drug issues or gang ties. "That night, they'd been drinking

heavily – 31 cans of spiked, iced-tea lemonade – so the defendant didn't know what transpired," said Clingan. "They were sleep-deprived and intoxicated and came across a gun."

"The victim was killed, and there's a family who's been traumatized because of the defendant's recklessness," he continued. "And his actions that led to the death of an individual deserve to be addressed. This [incident] involved a loaded gun that demanded a level of maturity and responsibility."

"The defendant brought it into the apartment, but with no nefarious intentions. He probably wanted to show it off. But you don't have to put bullets in it and handle it – especially when you've drunk 31 cans of spiked-tea lemonade."

Clingan noted that the state sentencing guidelines for this case are probation because Cruz Colindres had no prior criminal record. But he said these guidelines should be exceeded, and he explained why.

"It was a tragic accident that no one anticipated."

— Public Defender Dawn Butorac

"The defendant showed an utter lack of a sense of duty and responsibility," said the prosecutor. "A period of incarceration, around two years, is appropriate, plus three years' probation. When you use a gun and alcohol – and someone's killed because of your recklessness – there has to be a penalty."

But Public Defender Dawn Butorac asked that Cruz Colindres be sentenced to his time already served. "At the time, Darren was 18 years old," she said, also stressing that the 31 drinks he and Gomez drank that night in Gomez's bedroom included BuzzBallz – a potent mix of fruit juice and alcohol.

"The victim's brother heard the shot, came into the room and saw Darren on the ground, attempting to render aid to Javier," said Butorac.

She noted, as well, that the bullet took an unusual path within Gomez's body. "It entered through the left, upper chest and traveled downward to the right, mid back," she said. "That [trajectory] is indicative of

an accidental shooting," said Butorac. "It was a tragic accident that no one anticipated. By then, they'd probably been drinking for eight hours straight. They had a brief argument, started pushing each other and the gun went off."

Then, trying to illustrate Cruz Colindres's otherwise good character, she told the judge, "Darren began working at a young age to help his family make ends meet. And 23 letters of support from all facets of his life were submitted

on his behalf, including one from his manager at Wegmans, who said Darren worked two shifts and took multiple modes of transportation to reach his job."

Butorac said the charge of involuntary manslaughter legally recognizes "the foibles of being human – because it was clearly contrary to Darren's intent. He was young and dumb, and his immature brain didn't consider the consequences of 31 drinks. Teenage boys often lack impulse control and make poor decisions because their brains haven't yet fully matured."

"Darren is incredibly remorseful – he lost a friend," she continued. "He'll now be a convicted felon, with all that entails. It's a significant consequence for his future." Then, besides asking for time served, she suggested Judge Gardiner also require Cruz Colindres to receive anger-management training and cognitive behavioral therapy.

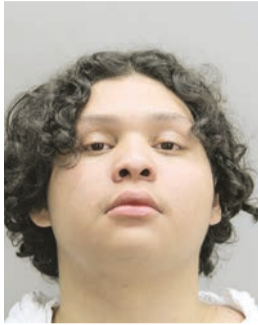
Clingan, however, didn't buy Butorac's explanation for the defendant's actions. "There's a whole county full of 18-year-olds who didn't do what he did," said Clingan. "Otherwise, we'd have an epidemic of teen crime. This was someone who made a bad choice that led to the death of a friend."

Then, before sentencing, Cruz Colindres stood and apologized for causing his buddy's death. "I accept responsibility," he said. "I know there's nothing I can do to bring him back, but I apologize to his family for the grief I've caused. I'm sorry for what I've done."

Ultimately, Judge Gardiner had the last say. "They were friends, but this was recklessness to the nth degree," he said. "I agree, the guidelines should be exceeded. However, I also take into account that the defendant surrendered himself to the authorities and acknowledged what he'd done. I also acknowledge the letters of support and that he was a hard worker before this incident happened."

The judge then sentenced Cruz Colindres to four years behind bars, suspending three years – leaving the defendant with four more months to serve. Gardiner also placed him on three years' active probation.

Speaking directly to Cruz Colindres, he said, "The conditions of probation are that you are to have no alcohol, whatsoever, and be regularly tested for alcohol use. You are to receive cognitive behavioral therapy while on probation, plus be gainfully employed. You are remanded to the custody of the sheriff."



Darren Cruz Colindres

"Daze" Gone By



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As of the first week in Dec. 2023, I will have been "churning out the dribble," as my late brother, Richard, teasingly characterized my columns me a few years back, for 26 years. Almost without fail, except for one week in Aug., 15 when I was hospitalized for a week due to fluid build-up in my lungs (almost four liters worth). The fluid problem was a side effect of my cancer medication. (Imagine that, a side effect from cancer medication that nearly kills the patient. Who would have thought?) I was told by the attending physician that this side effect caused my lungs to collapse – with no guarantee that they would reinflate. Fortunately, a few days after my surgery to drain the fluid from my lungs, they miraculously re-inflated (later than the doctors had hoped/anticipated, but everybody was happy nonetheless, especially me). But then I was on my way to recuperating and the following week I was home eating solid food again and semi back to normal ('normal' being a relative term, as I was a lung cancer patient after all).

I have been writing a column in "The Connection" for almost exactly 26 years. Multiply the years times the 52 weeks per year the paper published means that I've been at this pursuit of my happiness (writing/publishing columns) without fail – except that one week I spent in SICU for my lungs (actually I did write a column that week while in hospital bed. However, I typed it on a device which due to operator error, never sent my column to the paper for publication), a grand total of 1,352 weeks/columns, if anyone is counting. And I certainly am if you're not. Remembering that my initial (inauspicious) appearance in The Connection was hardly met with any fanfare (I was told I was filler, and a one-column inch filler at that), I summarize that beginning simply and with a nod to Bob Dylan: I was so much younger then, I'm older than that now. Thank God! And still, undergoing cancer treatment. And moreover, "still churning out the dribble."

And I'm especially still thanking God, always a prudent precaution to take, because when I started writing this column, I was cancer-free and years away from becoming the "victim of soycumstance" you read about regularly. That unfortunate circumstance/diagnosis of stage IV non-small cell lung cancer (a terminator if there ever was one, not named Arnold Schwarzenegger) became my official reality late Feb. 2009, 12-plus years after I started publishing my slice-of-life-type column ("Daze of My Life") in the first place. To say this diagnosis was a shock is to minimize any and all things that shock. But I persevered and though I didn't sing it, I did invoke Diana Ross a time or two ("I will survive"). And lo and behold, here I am in 2023, slowly creeping up on my 15th "cancerversary." (You bet I'm going to 'creep,' I don't want to bring any unnecessary attention to the fact that I'm still alive, especially around Christmas where lists are often checked twice.)

Considering that a "13 month to two-years" prognosis – at age 54 and a half (out of the blue, a lifelong non-smoker, and minimal exposure to second-hand smoke), came along with the diagnosis, I figured I had to roll punches somehow and buck up and find a way to be positive about this horrifying negative. As a dear friend who exhibited this attitude would often say when prompted: "My attitude is just like my blood type: B+." I don't know what my blood type is exactly, but I do know what my attitude is. However, during those first few months of learning this diagnosis and then starting every-three-week chemotherapy, lab work, diagnostic scans, and face-to-face, in-person appointments, your dominant feeling/reaction to your predicament (mine anyway) is disbelief. Though I certainly was curious how this could have happened to me (given what I thought I knew about lung cancer and its cause, very little after all) I never wallowed in "woeing." I saw no future in dwelling on the past.

And for the past 13 years, ever since I shared my diagnosis with you in my June 2010 column entitled "Dying to Tell You, Sort Of", published approximately four months after I began treatment, I have written extensively, if not almost entirely about cancer. And oddly enough, writing about it, whether it's good, bad, or indifferent news still gives me a lift somehow. Since I don't woe is me, neither do I drone on about my challenges. Oh sure, I'll update you readers about any major, potentially life-altering cancer-related news. When I do so however, it's not important that it's me that's being written about (it's never about me, really). It's important because it's about the cancer. As I used to say when asked about my column's subject matter before I was diagnosed: "I'm just the driver. I'm writing about the car."

And even though the car, metaphorically speaking, has some major problems, it's still able to get me where I want to go. Of course the ride can get a bit bumpy at times, but I'm still driving, if you know what I mean?

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

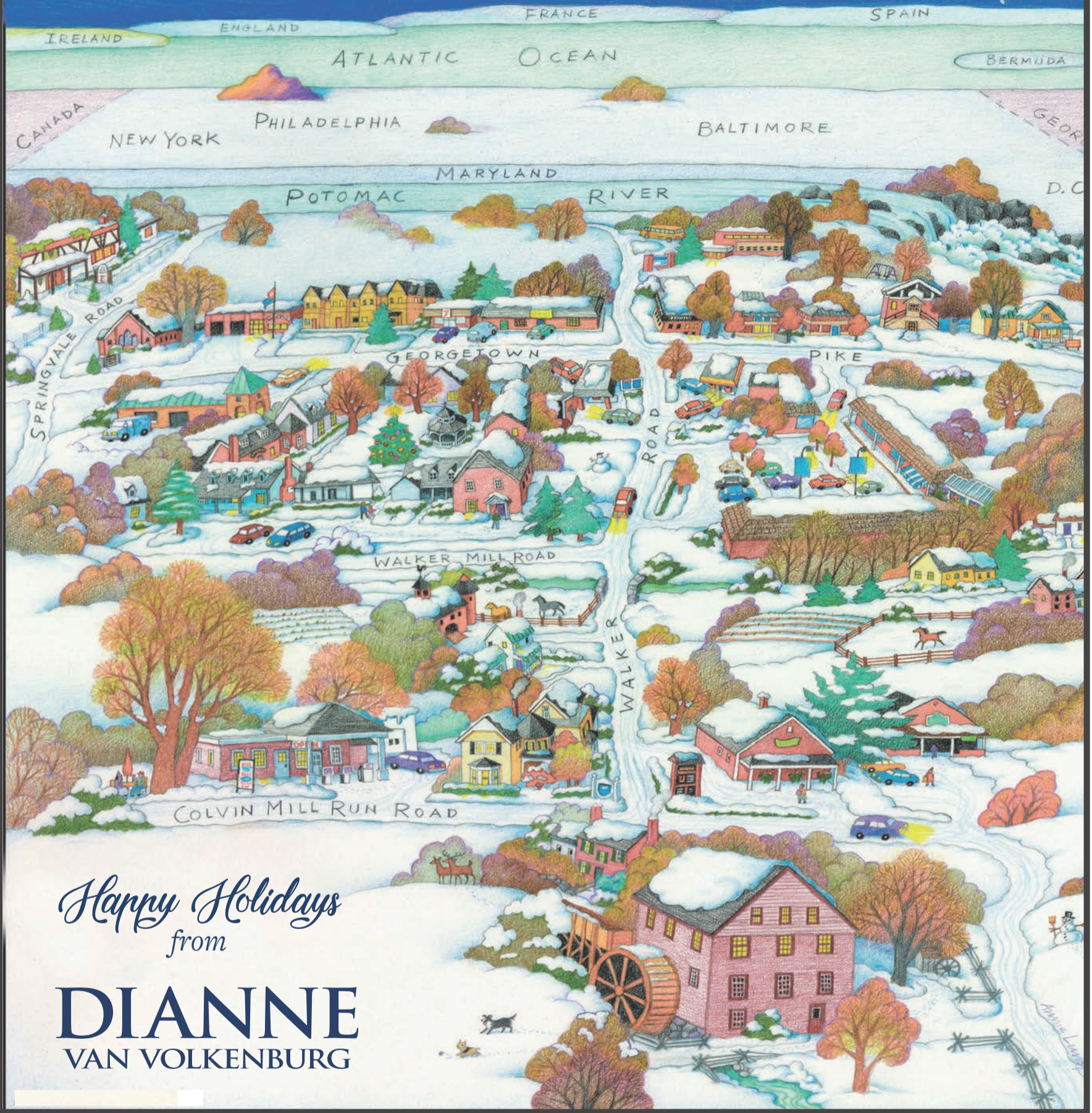
ROUNDUPS

FROM PAGE 7

lane to northbound Route 29 has been extended by about 600 feet, and the northbound Clifton Road left-turn lane to southbound Route 29 was extended by about 165 feet.

The widening is making changes along Route 29 between Union Mill Road and Buckleys Gate Drive to improve safety, traffic flow and bicyclist and pedestrian accessibility and connectivity. Construction activities will continue throughout the project area, and lane closures will be in place during off-peak hours as crews relocate utilities, install stormwater-management infrastructure and do additional work along Route 29. The entire, \$97 million project is slated for completion in spring 2026.

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