

# THE CONNECTION

CENTREVIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna



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Great Falls volunteers Christie Shumadine, Avery Perez and Lissa Perez. 22 volunteers and elves dressed in red with bells and hats scurried to collect and wrap over a thousand gifts, stuff 100 stockings, and prepare gift cards to be delivered to 190 recipients.

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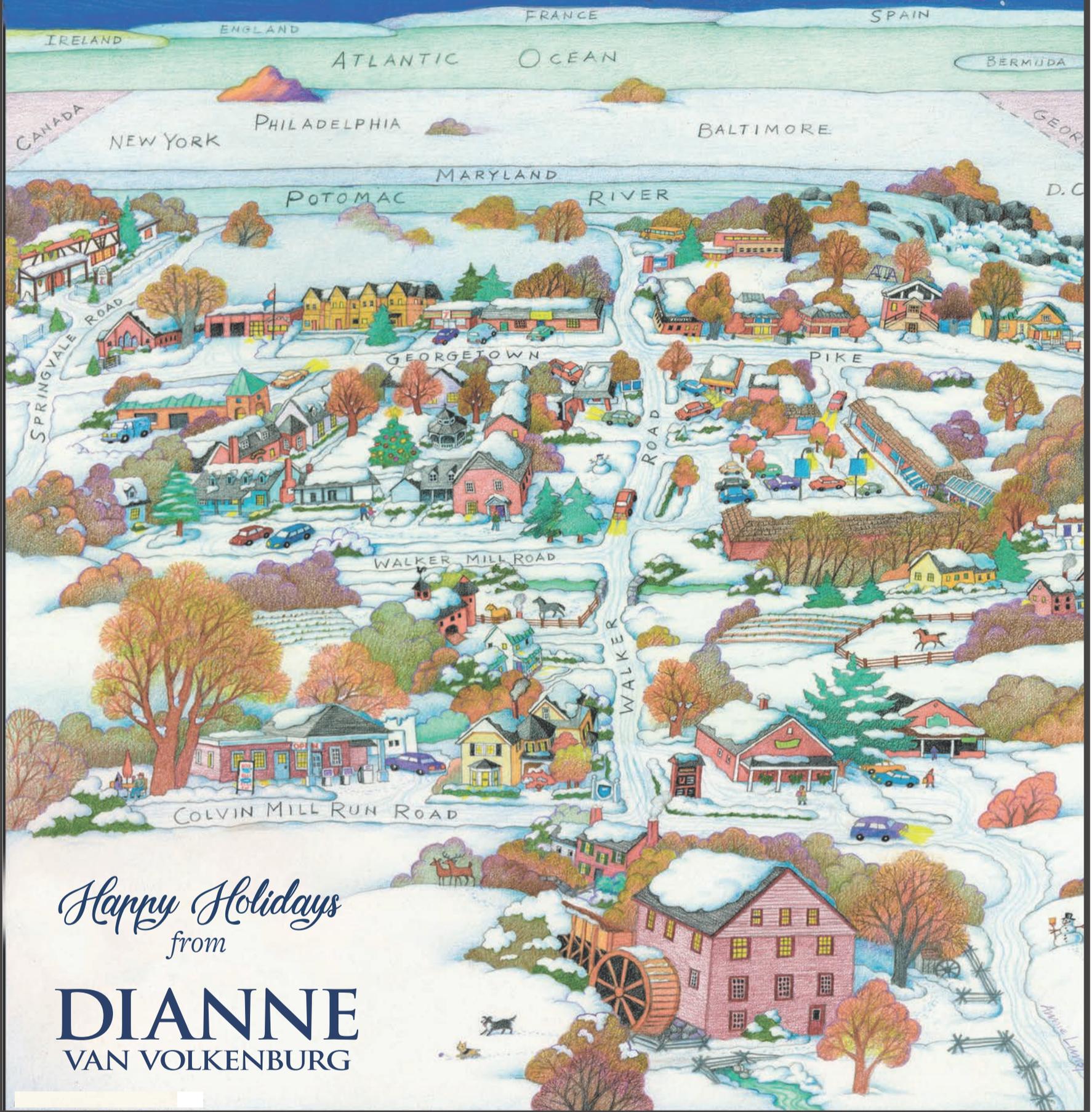
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PHOTO BY JUSTIN SHUMADINE  
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DECEMBER 13-19, 2023

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# GREAT FALLS



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Dianne Van Volkenburg donates a portion of each sale to the Embry Rucker Community Shelter





The Sentimental Journey Singers, a choral program for singers with early to mid-stage cognitive change and their care partners, perform at the Northern Virginia Dementia Care Consortium's annual caregivers conference Nov. 10 at Korean Central Presbyterian Church in Centreville.



Lauren Elcesser of ElderLink and Tammi Cave of Fairfax County Family Services' at the 37th annual Northern Virginia Dementia Care Consortium's caregivers conference Nov. at Korean Central Presbyterian Church in Centreville.

# Dementia Care Consortium

## 37th annual conference supports caregivers.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE CONNECTION

**H**undreds of attendees turned out for the Northern Virginia Dementia Care Consortium's 37th annual caregivers conference, the largest dementia conference in the region specifically for family members and professional caregivers of those with memory decline.

Held Nov. 10 at Korean Central Presbyterian Church in Centreville, the sold-out conference focused on the theme, When Caregiving Calls: Building a Framework for Resilience, and featured Aaron Blight, Ed.D., as keynote speaker.

Blight is the founder of Caregiving Kinetics and has been recognized as a "Top 100 Healthcare Leader" by the International Forum on Advancements in Healthcare.

Founded in 1986, the Northern Virginia

Dementia Care Consortium provides educational resources for caregivers who provide care and support at home or in a facility. Sponsors included Goodwin Living, AARP of Virginia, ACC Family & Akota, LionHeart ElderCare & Consulting, Retirement Unlimited, Synergy Home Care and Graceful Care, who provided free home care services for

caregivers to attend the conference.

The Sentimental Journey Singers, a choral program for singers with early to mid-stage cognitive change and their care partners, performed at the conference under the direction of Dr. Mary Ann East, the director of arts for life with Encore Creativity for Older Adults.

[www.nvdcc.com](http://www.nvdcc.com)

# Vouchers Help Erode Barriers to Affordable Housing

## One option to open the door to the county's lowest income residents.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series on affordable housing.

**O**n March 22, 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors raised the bar for affordable housing. The board announced they were "doubling their goal from producing a minimum of 5,000 units by 2034 to creating 10,000 net new units affordable to households earning up to 60 percent area median income."

Sylisa Lambert-Woodward is the CEO of Pathway Homes which provides housing and supportive services to adults with serious mental illness and other co-occurring disabilities. Lambert-Woodward said that using [Housing Choice] vouchers is one strategy with the potential to address the economic and racial discrimination of the county's lowest-income rental residents. Individuals considered at 30 percent of the 'area median income' (AMI) can earn up to \$31,650 for a one-person household.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determines the scale annually for the D.C. region. However, [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

tential renters at or below 30 percent AMI may not qualify to rent a unit operated by a management company or an individual due to poor credit, long wait list times, and other conditions.

Nevertheless, the option for a voucher is nonexistent at this time. Fairfax County Housing and Community Development states on its website, "The Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List is currently CLOSED. The FCRHA will provide notice on this site and through a variety of media outlets when it reopens."

According to HUD, "Since the demand for housing assistance often exceeds the limited resources available to HUD and the local housing agencies, long waiting periods are common. In fact, a [Public Housing Authority] PHA may close its waiting list when it has more families on the list than can be assisted in the near future."

It is documented that rental tenants with low- to very low-income levels in Fairfax County face hardship due to high housing rents across the region. This increases their risk of eviction, unstable housing, and homelessness.

Within Fairfax County, the towns of Clifton, Vienna, and Herndon, as well as the City of

Fairfax, are the four local jurisdictions with their respective planning and zoning departments upholding and enforcing regulations to ensure their municipalities grow and develop in ways that advance their goals. Due to the by-right development restrictions, low inventory of municipal-owned properties that could be used for low-income housing and bring down construction costs, and a need to update their zoning and planning ordinances, low-income housing availability is limited in these jurisdictions.

For instance, the Town of Vienna's last significant zoning code changes occurred fifty years ago, in 1969; a significant portion includes regulations that date back to the 1956 zoning ordinance. Vienna Town Council adopted an update to the zoning and subdivision code on October 23, 2023, that will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2024. Chapter 18 will replace the existing chapters 17 and 18. You may preview this code by clicking here and the updated zoning map here.

The Oct. 5, 2020, Herndon Planning Commission Staff report states Herndon "is deficient of housing options for the AMI levels below the missing middle."

The Town of Herndon's 2030 Comprehensive Plan was last amended on May 24, 2022. Herndon is in the preliminary stages of launching the Herndon 2050 Plan, which will replace the existing comprehensive plan. The town anticipates a multi-year public-facing plan development process.

Comstock Company's pending downtown redevelopment project with 247 rental units has zero affordable units. The application by FMI Herndon Corporate Center, LLC, by developer Stanley Martin Companies, LLC for 85 townhomes and 56 2-over-2 condominiums states there is the intent to market to the "missing middle," defined by the Congress of New Urbanism as those earning between 60 and 100 percent of the average median income (AMI).

"There needs to be a concerted effort to address the lack of affordable housing from different angles," Lambert-Woodward said. "One of the key steps is addressing the lack of an elevated living wage ... to be able to afford housing." She added, "And if people are not paid a living wage that allows them to support that, it is imperative that we become innovative and embrace and advocate for vouchers for anyone unable to afford the 'affordable housing' of the Fair Market Rate in that region."

Lambert-Woodward spoke of "innovative and flexible vouchers" that could be applied to people with low to extremely low incomes who share a rental unit. For example, consider when one person on the lease must leave before the rental contract ends due to a job or other circumstances. A flexible voucher could ensure that the renter who remains is housed, can still pay the rent owed, and does

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PHOTOS BY KEVEN LEBLANC



Rabbi Ahron Fajnlend of the Chabad Jewish Center of Reston- Herndon lights the oil pots on the menorah in the Town of Herndon. It serves as a symbol and message of the triumph of freedom over oppression, spirit over matter, light over darkness.



Sharon Nachman and her granddaughter, Caroline Nachman, reflect a moment after the menorah's five oil pots are lit during the Public Menorah Lighting and Chanukah Celebration in the Town of Herndon.



Fairfax County Fire & Rescue, Frying Pan, Station 436, takes Rabbi Ahron Fajnlend skyward to drop pieces of gelt, golden chocolate coins, to the children below.

# Looking for Miracles- Public Menorah Lighting

Five oil pots lit commencing the 5th day of Chanukah.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

One of the traditions that is widespread among people of faith is celebrating the holidays with light. As sunset neared on Dec. 10 in the Town of Herndon, a crowd gathered in the pouring rain near the Old Town Hall on Elden Street, where an unlit menorah stood.

"It's a good mix of community, not just those of the Jewish faith," said town councilmember Keven LeBlanc, who attended the event.

According to speaker Sheila Olem, mayor of the town of Herndon, who welcomed the crowd, brothers Arthur and Howard Nachman brought the menorah lighting to the Town Hall Square many years ago. Olem thanked the families of the Nachman brothers for donating the menorah for the public lighting.

Sharon Nachman survives her husband, Arthur. Nachman told the crowd that Chanukah is about a miracle, and when she and Arthur lived in Memphis, they

celebrated Chanukah with a couple who were very special to them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Diament were living their own miracle. They were Holocaust survivors," Nachman said. "Mrs. Diament would say, 'When you have been through what we have been through, every day is a miracle.' She would remind us that miracles happen every day all around us and that we should look for them."

Nachman said that last December when Arthur's health was failing, he knew that he was not physically able to light the menorah every night. "The miracle of friendship, Lisa and Keith Goldman, and Jen and Jon Savitch stepped up to help. Arthur and I were very grateful," she said.

Arthur Nachman died in July of this year after a thirty-year battle with cancer. Due to health concerns, Howard Nachman could not attend this year's menorah lighting. In commemorating the miracle of Chanukah, Rabbi Ahron Fajnlend lit the five oil pots on the menorah after sunset with Nachman and Olem beside him.

"Thank you for helping Arthur continue the tradition for the community," Nachman said.



The crowd celebrates with classic potato latkes and donuts protected from the rain by the donated tent.

# Cornerstones Opens Food Hub

Other nonprofits can supplement their resources.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

A challenge existed for Cornerstones: wasted food, tons of it destroyed in the communities the nonprofit organization served, yet people were going home and going to sleep at night hungry.

Staff and supporters of Cornerstones, like Bob Van Hoecke, signature partner, looked at adopting a different perspective.

"It's not a supply problem, it's a logistics problem," Van Hoecke said. "We have more than enough food to feed everybody. We

need to get that food into the mouths that need it," he said.

Supporters and staff at Cornerstones, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Reston, cut the red ribbon to ceremonially mark the start of operations of its FREE from Hunger Center on Monday Nov. 20. The center's 10,000-square-foot warehouse area in Sterling serves as a distribution location for its food hub. To be clear, the center is not a "food pantry."

Partners of Cornerstones may utilize the hub as a resource center to supplement their current food supply and pantry operations.

The hub is a fully-equipped warehouse with loading platforms that are easily accessible and ample cooled and uncooled spaces.

"A lot of small pantries don't have the space to store their donations. What we are talking about here, in my mind, is transformative. We have the ability to evolve how we're going to deal with this problem," Van Hoecke said. He compared the Free from Hunger Center to the scope and organization of an Amazon warehouse. FREE from Hunger Center is closing the gap between

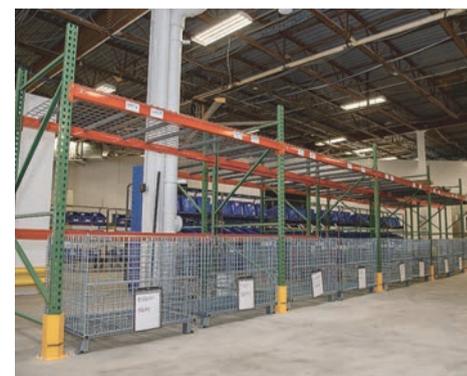


PHOTO BY CHIP MCCREA PHOTOGRAPHY  
Inside the warehouse.

SEE CORNERSTONES, PAGE 5

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# Cornerstones Opens Food Hub

FROM PAGE 4

locally wasted food and local food insecurity by redistributing excess food daily.

The Capital Area Food Bank Survey 2023 Hunger Report estimates that 24 percent of the population residing in Fairfax County is experiencing food insecurity. “Food insecurity disproportionately impacts people of color, households with children, and those with lower educational attainment and incomes.” [Source: Capital Food Bank Hunger Report 2023]

Larry Schwartz serves as chair of the Cornerstones Food Hub Task Force. According to Schwartz, the center provides Cornerstones with the physical capacity to expand their food programs in ways they were previously unable to, and it is also an opportunity to simultaneously reduce food waste, food insecurity, and carbon emissions.

“About 40 percent of food produced, processed, and transported in the U.S. is wasted and ends up in our landfills,” according to Rescue Leftover Cuisine, nonprofit food rescue organization operating across the United States.

Marking the milestone, speakers at the event included Kerrie Wilson, Cornerstones CEO. “This is not about interrupting existing supply rescue chains; it’s about figuring out how to be smarter ... How can we change the picture by empowering and resourcing



Cornerstones Food Hub Task Force (from left) Ted Lewis, Jim Kinley, Bill Threlkeld, Larry Schwartz, Joe Bellman, Roberta Gosling, and Bob Van Hoecke.

PHOTO BY CHIP MCCREA PHOTOGRAPHY

other partners who can get food to people in need? That’s what we want to do and stand behind,” Wilson said.

According to the Capital Food Bank 2023 Study, even among households making \$120,000 — the median for a household in the region — food insecurity is affecting one in five families and slightly more than three in five families whose household income is about \$55,700 and under. Yet, “employment rates are essentially equal between food insecure and food secure individuals: 76 per-

cent of people facing food insecurity were employed, compared to 73 percent of those who did not experience food insecurity ... High rates of employment suggest that the types of jobs that food insecure individuals have are simply not enabling them to make ends meet.”

“We’re excited to be a part of something that is set up to empower other organizations in their mission to feed the hungry,” said Brody Buhler, who serves as stake president for the Oakton area for The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “It is astounding that in this population that is so affluent, we are surrounded by people who need food. Cornerstones is helping to fill an urgent need, and it is a remarkable opportunity to be a part of that.”

Wilson said they are thrilled with the Sterling location, given that it is well positioned between Fairfax and Loudoun counties. It allows food pantry partners in both counties to easily use the space and work together to find solutions to end hunger in the region. She described how finding the right location for the FREE from Hunger Food Center was a long process.

“We had to find a place that was big enough, provided loading docks, and that could accommodate modifications for the installation of cooling units, as well as enough space in the front of the building for collaboration and community rooms for use by the Dulles Corridor region’s nonprofit community,” Wilson said.

Recognizing all the members of local government, houses of worship, and chambers of commerce in attendance, Sen. Jennifer Boysko, who represents parts of Fairfax and Loudoun, said, “This is the way we work in Northern Virginia — which is collaborative and making sure we’re taking care of one another .... We’re proud that Cornerstones has been a cornerstone of our community.”

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# Christmas Plea: Affordable Housing for All

BY KEARY KINCANNON



As the holiday season descends upon us, our hearts are naturally drawn to tales of compassion, kindness, and the spirit of giving. It is during this festive time that we reflect on the age-old story of Mary and Joseph, seeking refuge on that fateful night in Bethlehem, only to find no room in the inn. The echoes of that desperate search for shelter resonate eerily close to home in Fairfax County, where the pressing need for affordable housing has become an urgent call to action.

According to Fairfax County School Board Member Karen Corbett-Sanders, there are currently 1,000 homeless children enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. These are young souls facing the harsh reality of not having a place to call home, a situation that is not unlike the plight of Mary and Joseph all those centuries ago. What will their Christmas be like in the shelters, motels, and homeless encampments where they lay their heads at night for sleep?

Michael is a young man navigating the harsh reality of finding himself homeless and on the streets of Fairfax County. He finds solace and sustenance at Rising Hope Mission Church where he comes for lunch every day and seeks assistance in securing a place to live. He is energetic and resourceful, working two jobs in the retail service industry. He is not unlike many in our community who work hard (often more than full time) yet cannot afford a place to rent. According to the County's Rental Housing Summary, the average rent for a one-bed-

room apartment is \$1,755 a month, requiring an hourly wage of \$33.75. Michael is fortunate to make half that salary. His story is a testament to the struggles faced by many in our community who can find "no room in the inn" of Fairfax's affordable housing supply.

While the County has made some recent progress with the opening of 700 new units of affordable housing at North Hill (Mount Vernon), Ovation at Arrowbrook (Dranesville), and Oakwood (Franconia), and the 500 units in the pipeline at Dominion Square West (Hunter Mill), the magnitude of the need is staggering. The Board of Supervisors has set a commendable goal of establishing 10,000 new units of affordable housing by 2034. However, the harsh reality is that as many as 31,000 units are needed immediately to address the current needs of our community members like Michael and the children in our public schools.

This holiday season, we must open our hearts to the urgent need for affordable housing throughout Fairfax County. It is our moral duty to urge the County Board of Supervisors and our legislators in Richmond to take decisive action on three crucial fronts:

**Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing:** The demand for affordable housing is overwhelming, and we must respond with an increased supply. It is essential to accelerate the development of new, affordable housing units to provide refuge for those in need.

**Increase Funding for Affordable Housing:** A dedicated commitment to funding is crucial for the success of any affordable housing initiative.

By significantly increasing funding, especially through a robust housing trust fund, we can ensure that the financial resources are in place to support those in need. Fairfax County needs to increase its commitment to affordable housing to two cents on every real estate tax dollar. And the General Assembly in Richmond needs to add \$150 million to the Virginia Housing Trust Fund as recommended by the Virginia Housing Alliance.

**Preserve Existing Units of Affordable Housing:** As we strive to build new housing units, we must also prioritize the preservation of existing affordable housing. This entails preventing the displacement of vulnerable communities and maintaining the affordability of current housing stock.

This holiday season, let us not only exchange gifts and gather with loved ones but also extend our compassion to those less fortunate. By advocating for increased affordable housing, we can embody the true spirit of Christmas and ensure that everyone in Fairfax County has a warm and secure place to call home. As we gather around our festive tables, may our hearts be moved to create a brighter future for all our neighbors in need.

*Rev. Kincannon is the Founding Pastor and Pastor Emeritus of Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church on the Route One Corridor. He has served on the Fairfax County Governing Board to Prevent and End Homelessness and currently serves on the County's Affordable Housing Advisory Council and the Steering Committee of Ventures in Community – an interfaith coalition in Mount Vernon. This article reflects his views and not necessarily the positions of the committees on which he serves.*

# Human Rights Everywhere Every Day

**“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”**

BY DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

Last Sunday was Human Rights Day and the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights advancing the promise to all of freedom, equality and justice. Take a look at the pledges that are being made to accomplish these goals at ohchr.org.

Thinking about universal human rights at a time when there is an unbelievable amount of strife, pain, torture and sorrow to overcome may seem unrealistic. But if not now, then when. War crimes, retribution, torture, centuries-old disagreements, etc. stand in the way of resolution and peace. Who will strike the last blow before we realize the ways we have been living stand in the way of equality for all. Too many geopolitical decisions are made to enrich some parts of society at the expense of others.

As I contemplate how my life has

been spent, I come to the realization of just how important that line Thomas Jefferson inserted in the Declaration of Independence — that all men (I am sure that if he was writing it today he would say “humankind”) are created equal — has been to me. Not physically or talented, but in the eyes of their creator humans have certain rights that cannot be taken away that include, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Making this promise a reality will take centuries, but we aspire to it.

As a child on a school field trip, maybe to Jamestown or to the nation's capital, I bought a souvenir copy of the Declaration of Independence. It was printed on parchment paper in the long hand in which it was first written. I treasured it as though it was the original. I folded the edges to get it to fit into a frame and hung it above my bed for nearly two decades. I still have it! One of the messages for me as a young person I came to believe is that I

did not have to resort to a poor life with limited opportunities. That ambition led to me being the second longest member to ever serve in the more than 400 years of the House of Delegates.

My goal has been to try and see that others can do the same,

regardless of race, religion, color, with whom they live and all the other things that tend to separate us. The United Nations effort with Human Rights Day reminds us that we all have a part in extending human rights to everyone. That's part of what I am going to work on as a private citizen. Please join me.

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# Don't Leave Keys, Valuables in Your Car

## Auto Crimes detective discusses vehicle thefts.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith auto crimes a continual problem in Fairfax County, Police Chief Kevin Davis established the Auto Crimes Enforcement (ACE) unit in March 2022. And in its first year, its officers charged more than 175 people with felonies and seized 20 guns.

The unit has six detectives and two supervisors who investigate vehicle thefts, track these cars and apprehend the thieves. And Det. Jen Habig recently told the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) what they're facing and how they're responding.

"Last year, more than \$26 million worth of cars were stolen in this county from people, businesses and car dealerships," she said. "Of the 1,183 vehicles stolen, we recovered 919." And often, these thefts are crimes of opportunity – made easier by the vehicles' owners.

"We see people leaving their keys in their cars, with the motor running, and going into Starbucks, 7-Eleven," said Habig. "Thieves are looking for that; all they're waiting for is that split second. You jump out and your car's gone." It happens with remote-start cars, as well. "And when people leave the push-to-start keys in their cars, it's a lot easier for thieves to steal them," said the detective.

Another problem is the theft of catalytic converters sold to scrap-metal dealers. "Depending on the car, they go for \$800-\$2,000 in cash, just for one," said Habig. "They're quick to steal in less than 3 minutes. Priuses and electric cars are targeted because they have more platinum in their metals and are worth more. Also, large vehicles like F-150



Det. Jen Habig tells the Sully CAC about auto crimes.

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

trucks because the catalytic converter is bigger, so they can get more money for it."

But when the VIN (vehicle identification number) is etched onto the catalytic converter, it helps tie it to its vehicle. That way, when a scrap-metal dealer runs that number, it'll come back as stolen.

As for the weapons seized from stolen vehicles, some are ghost guns. "Roughly a quarter of the guns we see on the streets are ghost guns," said Habig. "They have plastic handles and no serial numbers, so they're not trackable – there's no record of them. Usually, they're 3D-printed. We see them mostly in the hands of juveniles because they know they can't legitimately get a firearm in Virginia – and then a lot of these guns come back stolen."

Another thing the ACE unit is seeing is a rash of temporary, fraudulent, license tags.

"They're all over the place, and it's been a huge problem since COVID because of the DMV closing down and then doing appointments and making it hard for people to register their cars," explained Habig. "It gave criminals an easy excuse to start printing fraudulent tags, and it's a good way to hide a stolen car."

"You slap a temporary tag on it, it doesn't come back when the police run it [through their national data system] and it doesn't stand out. It looks like just another car. So that's something we look for when we're out driving around to make sure that temporary tag comes back in the computer system and is on the car it's supposed to be on. That's because a lot of people will steal them and put them on another car – hoping that nobody notices."

The detective said criminals will also place a brand-new VIN number on cars. "It's like money laundering for a vehicle," she said. "For example, they stole a bunch

of BMWs from a dealership in Mount Vernon. And we found one driving around because the license plate didn't match the car and came back blank in the computer. When we stopped it, the VIN in the window didn't come back, either – it didn't exist. We had to dig underneath the car to find the legitimate VIN."

People owning push-to-start vehicles should also be aware that, with the right equipment, their keys may be cloned. "Thieves get a blank key fob and buy the equipment that dealerships use to program your key if you lost it," said Habig. "And just like that, they have the key to your car – and you still have your keys."

Fraud and identity theft are happening at car dealerships, too. "People will come in with IDs that have been faked or changed just enough that they're able to pass a credit check," said Habig. "They have fake, credit-report numbers and they'll buy high-end cars like Chargers, Audis and Jaguars from these dealerships."

"They'll finance them, and then – when it's time to make those payments – that person doesn't exist and there's nobody to go after," she continued. "So the bank's got the money, the dealership's out the car and they can't turn it into a legitimate profit. And that person is driving around in a stolen car."

SEE AUTO CRIMES, PAGE 14

## Detectives Investigating Fatal Car Crash in Centreville

**A**n early morning car crash last week in Centreville killed a 30-year-old man and sent another to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel declared Sohail Iqbal of Manassas dead at the scene.

Police officers from the Sully District Station responded last Monday, at 12:04 a.m., to the intersection of Route 29 and Clifton Road in Centreville. There, they found a 2013 BMW M3 and a 2012 Hyundai Sonata with severe damage.

According to police, detectives preliminarily determined that the BMW's driver was traveling southbound on Stringfellow Road, approaching its intersection with Route 29. (Across Route 29 there, Stringfellow becomes Clifton Road).

Police say the BMW "struck the Hyundai, which Iqbal was driving southbound on Route 29. The collision forced the Hyundai across the intersection, onto the embankment and into a concrete, utility-pole foundation."

Iqbal died following the impact, and the BMW driver – who police did not identify – was taken to the hospital. Police say speed is believed to be a factor in this fatal collision, and detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate to determine if alcohol was a factor, as well.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact 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).

– BONNIE HOBBS

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# WinterMarkt 2023 Community Event in the Town Herndon

Crowds and engagement reach new heights.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Herndon WinterMarkt 2023 showcased the charm of a European Christmas and drew just under a reported 12,000 visitors to the town's historic downtown on Saturday, Dec. 9. The one-day market, which opened at noon, took place at the intersection of Lynn and Station streets and aimed to highlight the town's diversity and that of the neighboring D.C. metro area.

The family-oriented event, with hands-on activities for children, boasted 52 vendors, a packed entertainment schedule, and activities for all ages. Alte Washintonia Alpen Horns provided the opening fanfare for WinterMarkt. The George Mason University Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble followed along with other musical acts until the 7 p.m. closing.

"It brings so many people, not just from our community but from as far as Pennsylvania. It's incredible," said Keven LeBlanc, chairman of the WinterMarkt committee. LeBlanc is also a Town of Herndon councilmember.

LeBlanc welcomed the audience to the market on behalf of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, the WinterMarkt Committee, and the event sponsors, among them Platinum Sponsor Northwest Federal Credit Union and the Town of Herndon, as well as all the volunteers who made the day possible.

Northwest Federal Credit Union's senior vice president of retail, Jeff Margeson, said that the credit union has been a platinum supporter of the Wintermarkt since the event's inception five years ago. "It is wonderful to see the holiday spirit alive."

Thank you to everyone on the WinterMarkt Committee and Dulles Chamber for bringing this event to life," Margeson said.

As night fell, sparkling lights lit up the market stands, and a chill spread through the air. People rushed to get one more mug of hot



The Herndon WinterMarkt Arch welcomes all to the one-day event.



Jeannette Berdel, Colonel Jörg Dronia, the commander of the German Armed Forces Command in Reston, Reagan Wagner, and Allison Wagner, formerly of Herndon, show their enthusiasm to be at the Herndon WinterMarkt 2023.



Amelia Schmidt, 13, Lyndsey Schmidt and John Harder of Leesburg. Put the chocolate bomb in a mug and pour hot milk over it, and it explodes and makes hot chocolate. "This is our second year here. It was fantastic last year, and we sold out. So this year we brought double, 800 bombs," said Harder.



From left, Keven LeBlanc, chairman of the WinterMarkt Committee and emcee; Jeff Margeson, senior vice president of retail at Northwest Federal Credit Union; Nohman Ishaq, vice president of retail business development at Northwest Federal Credit Union; and Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon take time to visit with a staff member of Nothing Bundt Cakes.



Deese Snell volunteer, Tempestt W. Harmon, store manager, Alicia Kane Liddle NWFCU relationship manager.



Wendy Coyle of Herndon holds hot glühwein in the collector's mug offered to her by WinterMarkt volunteer Elysa Berman of Herndon, a member of the Rotary Club of Herndon-Reston.

German glühwein, finish their holiday shopping at the market rather than online, and enjoy the last performance.

Little ones, their parents, and others danced in the street and on the sidewalks under the twinkling lights to the merry music of the local band, the Fabulous Retro-nauts, performing on the steps of the town's municipal center. It provided a fitting conclusion to the family-friendly WinterMarkt held in Old Town Herndon, which embraced the community.

PHOTO BY  
MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION



The line for authentic German bratwurst by The Fermented Pig moves quickly.



The WinterMarkt 2023 is the first time the Fuentes family, Jacob, 5, Doris, and Ashlyn, 11, attended the event.

PHOTOS BY FAIRFAX COUNTY



Supervisor John W. Foust holds the resolution recognizing his honorable service. He is retiring on Dec. 31, 2023.

# Supervisors Recognize Outgoing Dranesville Supervisor John Foust

Thank you for years of dedication and service to Fairfax County!

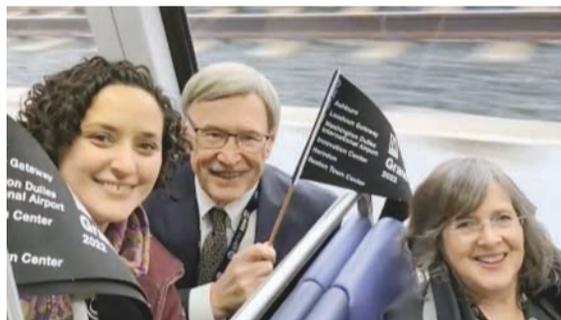
By MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

At its Dec. 5 meeting, the Fairfax Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution honoring Dranesville District Supervisor John W. Foust for his community service. First elected in 2007, Foust served four consecutive terms on the board and then did not seek re-election.

Chairman Jeff McKay read the resolution recognizing Foust, who chaired the board's Housing Committee and Economic Advisory Commission. In addition to representing Fairfax County on several regional boards and commissions, Foust was vice chair of the Budget, Health and Human Services, and Transportation committees. He moved the county forward in transportation, economic development, the environment, and affordable housing.

Foust oversaw the expansion of full-day kindergarten throughout the county, increases in teacher compensation, the acquisition of funds for the widening of Route 7, the construction of numerous road and pedestrian improvements, and other capital projects in Dranesville.

McKay enumerated several of Foust's other accom-



Center, Supervisor John Foust (Dranesville) celebrates the opening of Phase 2 of the Silver Line with Supervisor Dalia Plachik (Providence) and Supervisor Kathy Smith (Sully)

plishments: two renovated and expanded libraries and three new fire stations. Foust advanced the county's efforts to combat climate change by concluding numerous stream and stormwater projects and installing sound walls along the Beltway and other major thoroughfares to safeguard established neighborhoods. In addition to constructing 82 affordable housing units for seniors at the Lewinsville Center and a new senior center, Foust enhanced and expanded park and recreational facilities.

"John's sense of humor lightens the load here for all of us," McKay said. "John, I've enjoyed working with you every day that we've been here, and I've enjoyed the way in which you approach the work here with passion and, with drive, with a can-do attitude, not always dwelling on the challenges but trying to find a path forward to solve them."

## BULLETIN BOARD

### NOVEC OFFERING FREE CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) will accept post-holiday cut Christmas trees and greens at its Gainesville Technical Center at 5399 Wellington Branch Road, near

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

Interstate 66 and U.S. 29. Residents can begin leaving trees and greens on Tuesday, Dec. 26, and NOVEC will continue to accept them through Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024. Residents should leave greens in the section of the parking

lot marked by orange safety cones; drop off does not have to take place during business hours. Greens must be free of all decorations, ornament hooks, wires, and light strings.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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# COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY LISSA PEREZ

From left, volunteers from Great Falls, Amelia Neo, 7th grade, Alicia Neo, 5th grade and Sophia Usman, 5th grade, stuff stockings.



PHOTO BY LISSA PEREZ

Great Falls volunteers John Shultis, Avery Perez, Christie Shumadine, Anthony Arno-lie, and Geoff Birchard.

# Angels Soar in Great Falls

**Wish List Project 2023 benefits Fairfax County foster care, The Women's Center, Second Story, Herndon ES and Aldrin ES.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

As part of the Wish List Project in its 23rd year, donors brought hundreds of gift items they purchased to the Perez family home in Great Falls on Saturday, Dec. 9. According to Lissa Perez, Wish List project co-chair, the family supports charitable organizations with a goal to use the gifts to spread holiday cheer for those in need throughout the region. Donors spent \$100 to \$150 per the 190 gifted individuals named on the lists. For many, the items would be their only gifts this year.

This year's charitable holiday gift-giving initiatives benefit select individuals at Herndon Elementary School in the Town of Herndon, Aldrin Elementary School in Reston, The Women's Center, Second Story, and Fairfax County Foster Care.

According to Perez, twenty-two volunteers and elves dressed in red with bells and hats scurried to collect and wrap over a thousand gifts, stuff 100 stockings, and prepare gift cards to be delivered to 190 recipients.

"The generosity is terrific to see, and many teens and other elves from local schools didn't mind giving up a Saturday to help," said Perez, who shares the co-chair responsibility with Christie Shumadine.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN SHUMADINE

Great Falls volunteers Christie Shumadine, Avery Perez and Lissa Perez. 22 volunteers and elves dressed in red with bells and hats scurried to collect and wrap over a thousand gifts, stuff 100 stockings, and prepare gift cards to be delivered to 190 recipients.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

NOVEC's Vegetation Management employees will turn the trees, wreaths and garland into mulch to reduce holiday landfill waste.

For more information about recycling holiday greens, contact NOVEC's Vegetation Management department at 703-335-0500, ext. 1600, or [VegetationMgmt@novec.com](mailto:VegetationMgmt@novec.com).

### HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The votes are in, and the people of

Vienna have determined which of this year's holiday displays shine brightest! The results were announced at the Mayor and Council Holiday Reception at Vienna Town Hall last week.

Trousseau finished first in the business category, followed by Simply Social Coffee in second place, and Blue Ribbon Barbershop in third place. Trousseau will receive one hour of Mayor Linda Colbert's time as a guest employee.

New this year for the business category is the honorable mention award, which goes to a business that was the most thoughtful and creative

in including Vienna Elementary School in its display. Trace: The Zero Waste Store took home this award for including snowflake ornaments created by students at Vienna Elementary.

The first-place winner in the residential display category goes to residents of 121 Casmar St., SE, followed by 317 Patrick St., SW, in second place and 524 Walker St., SW in third place. Winning residents received a gift card from a local business and a 2023 Town of Vienna holiday ornament.

Members of the Town Business Liaison

Committee judged the business entries and residential winners were determined by popular vote from the community. The popular vote also determined the business winner of the People's Choice Award: Pennywise Thrift Shop.

The contest hit a new record this year with 1,167 votes cast. For the second year in a row, contestants could earn bonus points by including Vienna Elementary School in their display, commemorating the school's 150th anniversary, which was celebrated earlier this year.

To see the holiday display map and

images of this year's entries, visit [www.viennava.gov/holiday](http://www.viennava.gov/holiday).

### AEROMEXICO TO LAUNCH SERVICE FROM DULLES TO MEXICO CITY

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority announced that Aeromexico will begin new nonstop service between Mexico City (MEX) and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) on July 1, 2024. Flights will operate daily year-round. With the start of this and other routes, Aeromexico will serve 36 U.S. markets by July 2024.

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ROUNDUPS

## Presentation on Personal Safety for Teen Girls

Fairfax County police will offer an empowering and informative Teen Girls' Personal Safety Presentation to equip teens with the knowledge they need to feel confident in any situation. It'll be held Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 6:30-8 p.m., in the community room of the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

The instructor will cover a wide range of crucial topics, including crime prevention, situational awareness, observing your surroundings, reducing the risk of an attack, developing a plan of action, and knowing when to use force. Each teen, ages 13-17, must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. There will be no physical maneuvers or scenarios. To attend, people must register in advance at <https://bit.ly/teengirlsafety121923>.

## Food Lion Grant Helps WFCM's Food Clients

Shortly before Thanksgiving, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) received \$2,700 from the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation to help nourish neighbors experiencing hunger. The Feeding the Hungry grant supports WFCM's efforts to provide fresh, healthy food options in its client-choice food pantries in Chantilly and Centreville.

In these pantries, people in need who've been referred to WFCM are able to select their own food items during appointments every 30 days. The value of the food is approximately \$60/person in the household and is aimed to last two weeks. With WFCM meeting their food needs, these families can use their incomes for rent and utility bills and focus on improving their financial stability, without the fear of hunger.

The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation supports families facing food insecurity across 10 states. Since its inception in 2001, it has awarded more than \$18.1 million in grants.

## Take Survey on Land Use in Centreville

Fairfax County's Department of Planning and Development wants to learn what makes the Centreville community so special to its residents and hear their ideas for its future land-use development. Toward that end, they're invited to participate in an online, public survey (in English, Korean and Spanish).

It has six questions and should take about 5 minutes to complete. The survey will be available from now until mid-January 2024. To take it, and for more information, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/centreville-study>.

## Vouchers Help Erode Barriers

FROM PAGE 3

not add to the unhoused numbers."

Also, while she praised the "amazing developers" coming into the local county communities and building so many units, only a small portion of the inventory addresses individuals on the low and lowest percentage of the area median income.

Most affordable housing in Fairfax and nationwide, Lambert-Woodward said, are 'landlord mom and pop entities' with four units or less.

Pathway Homes is strategic in Herndon and other areas and develops partnerships with landlords. The nonprofit creates extensive deposits and additional dollars to incentivize the mom-and-pop landlords to cover incidental costs and things of that nature. Then Pathway can write the vouchers for potential individuals who want to rent who might have poor credit scores.

"I just think that the relation-

ship with landlords, a living wage that's elevated to prevent these issues from occurring to begin, and then the innovative vouchers that can be provided as a wraparound in circumstances where crises or emergencies happen as a preventive eviction strategy, I think, are all critical ingredients and being involved to assure that no one is unhoused in our community," Lambert-Woodward said. "I have said this many, many times at every opportunity that I have to speak: housing is a right, not a privilege. a human right."

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, individuals and families with a Housing Choice Voucher "generally must contribute the higher of 30 percent of its income or a "minimum rent" of up to \$50 for rent and utilities. The voucher covers the rest of those costs up to a limit (called a payment standard) set by the housing agency that is based on HUD's fair market rent estimates."

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### Public Notice

#### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/ RTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	11/14/2023
MONTGOMERY	28886	314	DUCK PON DR/ RTE 314	STROUBLES CREEK	11/9/2023
PATRICK	13342	677	WILLIS GAP RD/ RTE 677	EAST FORK JOHNSON CREEK	10/27/2023

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact [haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov).

*The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.*

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# ENTERTAINMENT



The Bull Run Festival Lights takes place at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville through the holidays.



The Reduced Shakespeare Company's Ultimate Christmas Show will be held Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023 at Reston Community Center in Reston.

## 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 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. 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. 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/>

## 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](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts).

## SCHEDULE

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 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.

## 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](http://www.1ststage.org) or call 703-854-1856.

## DEC. 7 TO FEB. 17

**McLean Project for the Arts' Winter Exhibitions.** At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will open its winter exhibitions—Moving Beyond Beauty: Reverence and Reclamation (Emerson Gallery) and To March is to Love: Weavings by Janel Leppin (Atrium Gallery)—on December 7, 2023. Both shows will run through February 17, 2024, with an Opening Exhibition Reception on Thursday, December 7, 2023 from 7-9 p.m. Bringing together five artists—Adjoa Jackson Burrows, Jacqui Crocetta, Maggie Gourlay, June Linowitz, and Elzbieta

Sikorska—Moving Beyond Beauty features work that is at once aesthetically pleasing and philosophically compelling.

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 13

**Foreign Language Film.** 6:30 p.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden's foreign language movie series is curated by Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff, with more than a little help from you, our audience members! The series has a few surprises thrown in. The schedule is subject to change. Check [aldentheatre.org](http://aldentheatre.org) for more details.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 14

**Winter Wonderland 2023.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. At The Lake House, 11450 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston. Proceeds will benefit Fellowship Square, an organization improving the lives of older adults who struggle to make ends meet by providing affordable housing and supportive services.

## ARTSCREEN: A FREE FILM SERIES CELEBRATING THE ARTS

Join in a free film series on Friday evenings in the City of Fairfax at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. Doors open at 7 p.m.; Films begin at 7:30 p.m. Free popcorn, candy, refreshments and door prizes, too!

December 15: The Princess Bride. (1987) PG - A bedridden boy's grandfather reads him the story of a farmboy-turned-pirate who encounters numerous obstacles, enemies and allies in his quest to be reunited with his true love.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 16

**Reduced Shakespeare Company.** 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center's CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The fruitcakes of the Reduced Shakespeare Company take you on an irreverent yet heartwarming trip through the holidays in The Ultimate Christmas Show (abridged). It's festive, funny physical family fun as these Three Wise Guys send up and celebrate

your favorite winter holiday traditions. The only holiday show you'll ever need to see! In the spirit of Shakespeare's comedies, RSC shows contain comic depictions of violence, mild innuendo, bawdy language, and the occasional rude word.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 16

**250th Anniversary Commemoration of the Boston Tea Party.** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At the Grounds of the Freeman House Store and Museum, Vienna. The Fairfax County Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Fairfax Resolves Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), in conjunction with Historic Vienna, Inc., will honor the bravery of the Sons and Daughters of Liberty with a commemoration ceremony. Highlights will include a historical portrayal of Daughter of Liberty, Sarah Bradlee Fulton, by Mary Ann Jung, color guard presentation by the SAR, a Proclamation read by Vienna Mayor Linda J. Colbert, photo opportunities with historic figures, and period refreshments served at the Freeman House Store and Museum. In the event of inclement weather, the event will take place at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna.

## DEC. 16-17

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet, Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.** 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Tchaikovsky's unforgettable music is performed live by the Fairfax Symphony, together with the magical dance by The Fairfax Ballet and soloists from New York City Ballet. The FSO production is unique in the Washington, D.C. region to feature live, musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage. Audiences delight in The Fairfax Ballet's magical dance performance with original choreography with guest soloists from New York City Ballet, as the Fairfax Symphony under the direction Christopher Zimmerman performs Tchaikovsky's captivating score live.



The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet perform Dec. 16-17, 2023 at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

**DEC. 16-17**

**Collection for Becca's Closet.** At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Potomac School students and McLean Community Center are collecting gently used prom and homecoming dresses, shoes and accessories for Becca's Closet. This nonprofit gives donated dresses to girls who may not otherwise be able to attend these events. Donations may be dropped off at McLean Community Center on Dec. 16-17. Visit [www.beccascloset.org](http://www.beccascloset.org)

**MONDAY/DEC. 18**

**The Old Firehouse Winter Break Trip – Ice Skating & A VR Experience.** 8 a.m.- 6 p.m. Come lace up your ice skates and glide around the rink with us. Following the rink, we'll grab some lunch then head over and dive into the immersive world of Virtual Reality. A signed waiver is required to participate. Admission to all activities and lunch is included in the fee.

**TUESDAY/DEC. 19**

**G.F. Handel's Messiah Sing-along.** 7:30 p.m. At Chapel of Saint John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston. Enrich your holiday season by singing the glorious Christmas portion of G.F. Handel's Messiah. The sing-along will feature guest soloists Emily Casey, soprano; Kristen Dubenion-Smith, mezzo soprano; Andrew Brown, tenor, and James Shaffran, bass. Bring your Messiah score or rent one onsite. Be an angel and receive a \$5 discount on admission or one free Messiah score rental. Simply bring a donation of non-perishable food items or toiletries for the South Lakes High School Pantry.

**WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20**

**Old Firehouse Center, Winter Break**

[www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

**Trip to Dave & Buster's.** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eat, drink, and play games! Dave and Buster's offers one of the best dining and entertainment experiences around. Buffet lunch and a \$25 game card with unlimited arcade game play are included. Bring additional money for ticketed arcade games as desired.

**WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20**

**Longest Night Service of Worship.**

7:30 p.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. If you have experienced loss in the last year all the holiday festivities can make your grief even more poignant. Grieving the loss of a loved one or coming to terms with so much loss happening in our world will be centered in this worship service. This service will intertwine music with scripture, candlelight and reflection. This event is free and open to the public, and all are welcome!

**FRIDAY/DEC. 22**

**Virginia National Ballet's The Nutcracker.** 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, Tysons Corner. Don't miss VNB's new Nutcracker! You'll love the new characters including The Rat King, The Nutcracker, the Chinese Lion, and many new costumes for Flowers, Mice, and more. You'll also see gorgeous new backdrops that are 30 x 50 feet with legs (matching side curtains) and borders across the top, and many new props and scenery. Much of the choreography has also been upgraded to match all of the new scenery, sets, and costumes.

**SUNDAY/DEC. 24**

**Christmas Eve Service.** 11 a.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The youth and young choirs will present "The Light Before Christmas," featuring the music from

the Joseph Martin musical. Enjoy cocoa and cookies before and following the service and feel the warmth of Christmas. This event is free and open to the public, and all are welcome!

The traditional Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will feature a baroque orchestra and the Chancel Choir performing Johann Sebastian Bach's "Wachet Auf" Cantata. The service of worship featuring beautiful music of the season will begin at 7:00 pm.

If you want a different kind of Christmas Eve service, perhaps you would like to come to our Jazz Christmas Eve service which begins with festive music at 9:15 p.m. This service, also a candlelight communion service, will feature a jazz quartet and our young adult alumni choir.

**DISCOVER THE JOY OF THE HOLIDAYS IN A PARK**

**Embrace the magic of the season with the Fairfax County Park Authority.** Enjoy the company of friends, family and community at any of our festive activities and events throughout the holiday season.

**Holiday on the Farm** Fridays-Saturdays, Dec. 15 and 16, Frying Pan Farm Park, \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door

Come celebrate the holidays with an evening of wagon rides, indoor activities, food, animal interactions, campfires and visits with Santa. Bring the whole family and see the farm in a festive way.

**Winter Wonderland** Saturdays-Sundays, Dec. 16-17, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Burke Lake Park, \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door

It's all aboard for the Holiday Express train ride. Take a spin on the Carolers Carousel, play Gingerbread Man mini golf and toast s'mores

by the fire as you kickstart your holidays. Plus, meet Santa, sip hot chocolate, and munch on candy canes! \$15 Pass on Sale (Available through Wednesday before the event), Day-of Event Passes is \$20.

**Ugly Holiday Sweater Family Skate and Dance Night**

Saturday, Dec. 16, 6-9 p.m., Franconia Rec Center, \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door

Light up the night with your tackiest holiday sweater as you roller skate and groove to music by a DJ. Challenge your family and friends to see who can drum up the most holiday spirit with their loudest holiday sweater. Take a spin around the gym floor on your roller skates and jump on the dance floor as the DJ plays some holiday classics and other good tunes. The event features snacks, drinks, holiday decorations and promises an all-around jolly good time.

**Candlelight Holiday Tour at Sully Historic Site**

Saturday Dec. 16. Choose times between 4:45-7 p.m., Sully Historic Site, \$12

Enjoy an elegant walk-through tour of Sully, the 18th century home of Richard Bland Lee, Northern Virginia's first congressman. Tour by the glow of candlelight as it illuminates the house. Make a holiday craft and enjoy a hot beverage and cookies based on a historical recipe.

**IONA Holiday Concert** Friday, Dec. 29. Spots available 1-1:45 p.m., 2:15-3 p.m. or 3:15-4 p.m., Sully Historic Site, \$15

One of the top-rated pan-Celtic groups in the world treats its audience to high-energy entertainment featuring Scottish fiddling, percussion and vocals. Refreshments served in the 18th century kitchen.

**Puppet Show at Frying Pan Farm Park** Friday, Dec. 29. Spots available 10:15-11 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.,

Frying Pan Farm Park, \$15  
Join Master Puppeteer Bob Brown in a jolly, fun-filled romp through a winter wonderland as his delightful, trick marionettes perform incredible feats of skill and daring that will leave your young audience shouting with laughter! Fun and fantasy, mirth and merriment, giggles and amazement all mixed together to the sound of your favorite holiday music! He will be retiring after 60-plus years, so come and enjoy his final performance. To find out more, or to register for programs, visit the Seasonal Events in the Parks website.

**TUESDAY/DEC. 19**

**Barter Players "Frosty".** 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Family friendly. In this one-hour musical, Billy discovers magic in a stolen hat that brings his snowman to life. Their quest through NYC to find Billy's family shows them that the real magic of the season is love.

**SUNDAY/DEC. 31**

**'Noon Year's Eve' Event.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Town of Vienna and Cedar Park Shopping Center, 260 Cedar Lane, Vienna. Town of Vienna in partnership with Cedar Park Shopping Center will host a daytime celebration for family and kids to ring in the "noon" year as we say goodbye to 2023 and celebrate the arrival of 2024. This family-friendly event features a pop-up artisan market, live music, games, giveaways, face painting, crafts, and a noon countdown celebration. Some activities will take place under a heated tent. Free. Rain or Shine.

**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](http://workhousearts.org).

**New Year's Eve Musical Theater Performance – The Who's Tommy** Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m., Workhouse Arts Center

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.

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# NEWS

## Auto Crimes

FROM PAGE 7

Another scam involves fake-key swaps. "When people go for test drives, they'll take a blank key, do some sleight-of-hand, put the car's real key in their pocket and hand back the blank one to the dealer," said Habis. "Then they'll come back later that night and steal the car."

Regarding cars stolen outside people's homes, she said most thefts occur between 5-9 p.m., but some people looking to steal cars will come here in the early morning hours and pull on the door handles to find unlocked vehicles they can steal. Or they'll see the push-to-start keys left in the cup holder.

"They'll jump in, and they're gone," said Habis. "Then they'll use [some of] these cars in robberies, shootings and homicides. So if we can stop it before they can use it, that's the ideal."

She said the county's use of Flock cameras to scan license plates has been helpful in retrieving stolen vehicles. "They alert us to stolen vehicles, missing adults and juveniles, and serial-larceny suspects - any type of crime tied to a car," said Habis. "And that alert will notify us where that car is; we've gotten lots of apprehensions that way."

The most important things residents should do to help both themselves and the police, she said, is to lock their car doors and take their keys with them. "In 45 percent of the cars that get stolen, the keys were left in the car," said Habis. "Or they're hop-ins for Door Dash drivers, customers running inside a restaurant to grab pizzas or whatever. It's a pain but, unfortunately, the world is the way it is. And don't leave valuables in the car in plain sight."

Cameras in driveways and outside homes are also helpful in providing police with clues to a criminal's identity. "We can see what these guys look like, what kind of cars they're driving and how they're coming in and out [of a street]," said Habis.

"Tracking services in cars also help, as do GPS trackers in older models. And an air tag hidden in the car will allow your phone to know the last place it pinged - which gives us something to go on."

She then told the residents, "You know your neighborhood - what's normal, what's not. If something pops up, call us. Report suspicious behavior, but don't engage these guys. Your car's not worth your safety."

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAIRFAX SYMPHONY & FAIRFAX BALLET

Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Ballet present Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* Dec. 16 & 17 at 4 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts.

## See *The Nutcracker* with Live Orchestra

Two Fairfax County arts institutions — the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and The Fairfax Ballet Company — collaborate to present their seventh production of the holiday masterpiece, Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. This Fairfax production is a cherished, annual tradition, with two performances on Dec. 16 & 17 at 4 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts.

The FSO production is unique in the region to feature live musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage. The Fairfax Ballet's magical dance performance soars with original choreography and guest soloists from New York City Ballet. The Fairfax Symphony, under the direction Christopher Zimmerman, performs Tchaikovsky's captivating score live.

"Audiences delight in the incredible dancers on stage, while Tchaikovsky's unforgettable music is performed live by our orchestra musicians," said Jonathan Kerr, Executive Director, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. "The dance, live music, plus the stunning, digital scenery creates a winter wonderland in a magical production that's perfect for the entire family."

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and The Fairfax Ballet Company showcase renowned guest soloists from New York City Ballet dancing the lead roles this year. The Fairfax Ballet was established in 1971 to develop in each student a love of dance, a strong technical foundation, and an artistic education. Karla Petry serves as Executive Director of The Fairfax Ballet and owner of The Russell School of Ballet.

"Audiences love this special treat as we welcome our professional guest soloists from premier dance companies together with our local stars," said Petry.

Andrea Cook is Artistic Director for The Fairfax Ballet Company, and she leads the choreography in one of the most complex theatrical ballets in the Company's repertoire. She is a Fairfax County native and Chantilly HS alum. Her leadership has helped the



Company maintain its long-held reputation for high-quality training and service, while building on its performances with new cho-

reography. More than fifty dancers and students ranging from ages 7-18 will take the stage.

## Ho Hum



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The totally wrong attitude to have, if even for a second. What I am specifically referring to is my reaction the result of my PET scan from Nov. 27, that I wrote about a few columns ago. The column entitled "Uncertainty" was "much ado about something" since it was written before the results of a potentially life-changing scan was known. Well, the results came electronically as they always do. Initially, the patient receives the actual report from the radiologist (written in medical jargon) that is also sent to the doctor. Typically, I'll receive the report before my oncologist has even had a chance to read and review it meaning I'm left to my own non-medical devices to try and interpret its meaning. Subsequently, I will receive an email from my oncologist deciphering the report and breaking it down into language I can understand. That language, fortunately said the following: "Scan looked good." And with that three-word summary, I can once again breathe normally and return my seat to its upright position and live a semi normal life, that is until the next medical hurdle which in the cancer world comes around regularly. Nevertheless, I never look gift oncologist in the stethoscope so I will rejoice until that next hurdle. But to the extent, one takes amazingly good news like I received today with a grain of salt - because I've received mostly good news over these last nearly 15 years since I was diagnosed, is a colossal error in judgment. No doubt you're familiar with the expression "any port in a storm?" Cancer is not just 'a storm,' it's category five hurricane with tornadoes on the side.

Still, after so many years of treatment/scans, et cetera based on my original stage IV non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis, with its "13 month to two years" prognosis - given in late Feb. 2009 at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, I have learned to take nothing for granted and to cherish each and any bit of good health news with a shaker full of salt. However, in an attempt to minimize any anxiety waiting for results and furthermore to try and think positively and powerfully to affect those results, one can hope/anticipate even, that the results will be the kind the patient can live with, pun intended. But until one reads those few words or hears those words over the phone or receives them in person from your oncologist, it's impossible to go about your business as per usual. It's sort of a mental road block. Oh sure, you can compartmentalize that anxiety, but such life-affecting news can only be delayed for so long. Eventually, and much sooner than later - if you know what's good for you, you have to face your demons and access your email/call your doctor. Ignoring your cancer-related news/lab work/scan result only buys you so much time. There is no future pretending that the results don't matter somehow. They matter. Your life's at stake. You can take your time, but not too much of it.

This column's title has more to do with the patient's reaction after the fact, the fact being that your "scan looked good." Thankfully. Because cancer is one of the scariest words. It means trouble with a capital "T." Just because one has had a reasonably - and unexpectedly good run, as I have doesn't mean for a second that health circumstances can't change (I didn't say won't. I'm no fool). One can never lose sight of their medical roots, so to speak. I received a "terminal" diagnosis at age 54 and a half - not three months after my widowed mother died had at age 86, that I would probably not live to age 57. Not having thought about my own death too much, instead having been focused on my parent's deteriorating health, I kind of thought I'd live to at least the ages that they did, 87 and 86, respectively. Hearing my prognosis was disappointing to say the least. To say the most it was surreal, which is a word/description often associated with incredible/unbelievable/out-of-the-blue news like being told you're going to die in the next two years. Then, when you don't die in those two years, and lo and behold, you're still being cancer-treated/scanned nearly 15 years later, it occasionally becomes easy (certainly wishful thinking) to begin to take it all in stride, as if its normal/no big deal. This column is meant to remind me that the absolute last thing my recurring scans are is normal/no big deal. Every day I'm alive, especially given my medical history is a 'big deal.' And the biggest deals are the days when I receive encouraging/stable scan results which enable me to extend my warranty (euphemistically speaking) and remain in the game a little bit longer. And when I go through this identical experience next June (awaiting the results from my next scheduled PET scan) or next week when I have my first renal ultrasound, I must be mindful of how lucky I've been and how grateful I should be, always. Taking any of it for granted is the last thing I should be taking.

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



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