

Fairfax Station **CONNECTION** Clifton & Lorton

This branch on Newington Road could pose a problem. All around Northern Virginia, there are probably dozens of situations like this, so it conjures the "what if," question.

If a Tree Falls on the Road

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Planning Changes to
Planning Commission
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Northern Virginia'
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NEWS

Transform Empty Office Space?

The equivalent of 308 football fields of office space are vacant in Fairfax County.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

There are a lot of empty office buildings around Fairfax County — the equivalent of more than 400 acres of floor space.

More than 18.4 million square feet of office space remains vacant, according to the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA), which reported a 15.8 percent direct vacancy rate in 2016 and a double-digit percentage since 2007.

The Planning Commission on Thursday, Nov. 16, recommended approval of a plan amendment that would pave the way for using vacant office buildings for other purposes, such as residential or schools.

"I think there is a pent-up demand that is out there and we've been approached by a number of people that are waiting for this amendment to go through," said Scott Adams, land use attorney with McGuire Woods.

"The flexibility offered, we think, is going to incentivize revitalization in Fairfax County," he said.

The Board of Supervisors will hold its own public hearing before voting on the proposal on Tuesday, Dec. 5.

"IS THERE POTENTIAL here for public private partnerships for converting and repurposing some

of these buildings?" asked Dranesville Planning Commissioner John W. Ulfelder, during an hour-long public hearing the Planning Commission held on Nov. 2.

"The answer to that has to be yes, whether that's schools or other facilities," said attorney Gregory Riegle, who chairs the Tysons Partnership. "I'm certainly encouraged in seeing the county be more creative in terms of those solutions."

Opportunities could include converting office buildings to uses such as makerspaces, food incubators, urban farming or flexible live/work units, schools and e-lofts, which can accommodate work or residential uses, or both.

The repurposing of existing buildings is frequently more sustainable than the demolition and replacement of structures and can shorten the time of bringing the building to market, according to county documents and planner Sophia Fisher.

Changes to these uses have often required an authorization of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors if the proposed use is not consistent with the planned use.

"There's no short-circuiting of the public process?" asked Providence Commissioner Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner.

The amendment would bypass the necessity for a site specific comprehensive plan amendment, Fisher

SEE OFFICE BUILDINGS, PAGE 6

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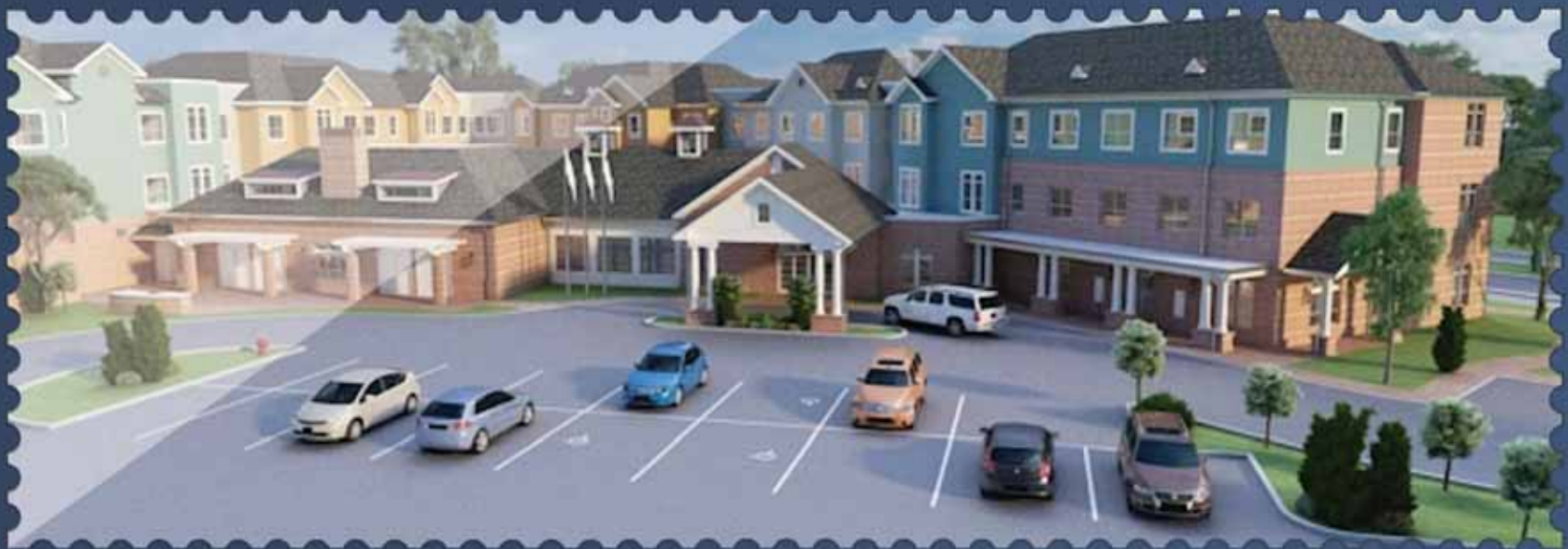
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‘A Disaster for Northern Virginia’

Connolly holds roundtable on congressional tax plan.

BY ANDREA WORKER

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) says that he and his Democratic colleagues are more than willing to work in a bipartisan effort on meaningful tax form. “As a leader of the New Democrat Coalition, a group of pro-business Democrats, I have written on several occasions to Speaker Paul Ryan and Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady asking them to partner with us ... to simplify the tax code, create revenue ... and provide middle class tax relief.”

Speaking at a roundtable gathering that the congressman hosted at the offices of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) on Monday, Nov. 13, to discuss the consequences of the GOP tax plans, Connolly says those overtures have been rejected.

“Congress had a real opportunity to pursue neutral tax reform that would lower corporate tax rates and benefit the middle class,” Connolly expressed “deep disappointment” at the House and Senate bills being proposed, categorizing both as “shameful, corporate giveaways” that will have unprecedented and far-reaching negative effects on Northern Virginia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nation.

Connolly reported that by using “dynamic scoring” – a method of analysis that includes the potential feedback effect certain tax cuts can have, and that he said Republicans often advocate “because it provides more generous deficit projections for tax cuts” — the proposals actually increase the country’s deficit to \$1.5 trillion over 10 years, “and somebody has to pay that bill.”

An assessment of the tax plans by Congress’ nonpartisan Joint Taxation Committee released on Monday, Nov. 20, seems to support the congressman’s concerns. The committee’s analysis projects that some 13.8 million moderate-income American households would actually see a tax increase as a result of the Senate plan by 2019. Households earning less than \$200,000 per year would face increases of \$100 to \$500. The tax liability rises even more for earners between \$75,000 and \$200,000. According to the analysis, tax increases would be felt by 21.4 million households by the year 2025.

Connolly likened the plans to previously failed “trickle-down” attempts at tax reform and economic stimulus.

“1981, 2001, 2003. The Reagan and Bush tax cuts. So disastrous that they had to enact tax increases in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1987 and 1990” to raise the needed funds. “Then in the early 2000s, President George W.



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) meets with local leaders to discuss the consequences of the proposed Senate and House GOP Tax Reform Bills. Connolly admitted from the start that he wasn’t there to “sing their praises.”



Bob Adamson, chairman of the board of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, views the proposed legislation as “unfair to homeowners,” and that they will have a negative “ripple effect” on the local economy and residents of the community.

Bush took the record surpluses of the Clinton era and created record deficits.” Connolly added that the trickle-down theory is based on “the hope and the prayer that such tax cuts will someday pay for themselves,” but that history has already proven “that assumption to be false.”

TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT of the proposed legislation on the Northern Virginia region, Connolly convened a group of local business leaders, economists and financial experts, as well as participants representing social service providers, persons with long-term medical and care needs, economists, parents of students with significant student debt, and seniors.

Connolly set the stage for the discussion with a few more facts and figures, although he cautioned that “we still haven’t seen the whole of either proposed legislation.”

* The plans either repeal or limit several tax breaks that are crucial to Northern Virginians, including medical and dental expense deductions, premiums for long-term care insurance, in-home and nursing home care, and mortgage interest deductions.

* The state and local income tax (SALT) deductions would be limited or even repealed. In Connolly’s 11th District, 50 percent of tax filers claim the SALT deduction,

with 75 percent of the claimants being in middle income tax brackets. The number of SALT claimants throughout Fairfax County is as high as 280,000 households.

* The plans call for the repeal of Estate Tax, which only applies to about the wealthiest 5,000 decedents each year, while cutting adoption tax credits and credits for small businesses that invest in accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities.

* According to the Tax Policy Center, after-tax income for the top 1 percent of earners would rise by about 2.6 percent by 2027, while those at the bottom 80 percent would see after-tax increase of between 0.0 percent and 0.6 percent.

After Connolly’s remarks, Bob Adamson, chairman of the board of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, was the first of the gathering to offer comments.

Representing some 12,000 Realtors in the region, Adamson stated that the NVAR “wants to be part of the solution,” but finds the proposed legislation to be “unfair to homeowners,” disproportionately placing the burden of “filling in the financial gaps” directly on them.

NVAR Chair-elect Lorraine Arora agreed, adding that “real estate bolsters the economy” with so many related jobs and services, and that any plan that suppresses

home buying will cause a “ripple effect of harm.”

The Realtors at the table also worried that the proposed tax reform will actually lower existing house values. NVAR CEO Ryan Conrad said that in the NoVa region, that decrease could be as much as \$30,000 lost in home equity.

ADDITIONALLY, THE REALTORS foresee a decrease in housing stock that is already an issue, and even see Fairfax County’s successes toward ending and preventing homelessness, slip into reverse, as developers are less able than ever to profitably build affordable housing.

Continuing the “ripple effect” theme, JoAnne Carter, managing director of PFM Financial Advisors, LLC, said that the proposals threaten the means by which municipalities, nonprofits and other businesses fund their services and investments in improvements and expansion.

“Eliminating Private Activity Bonds and causing cuts to ‘advance refinancing,’” said Carter is severely hampering the ability to finance the basics, like “schools, roads, hospitals, transportation, airports, sea ports, all of it.” That in turn “increases the burden on the counties,” said Adamson, while potentially depleting their main source of revenue. For municipalities like Fairfax County, that are, in essence, only able to raise funds through property taxation, the choices are dauntingly few. Either raise those taxes significantly, or reduce expenditure on infrastructure and public and social services.

“And if we damage our AAA Bond rating,” added Carter, “it costs more for these municipalities and service providers to borrow.” According to Carter, Fairfax County could save between \$3-12 million when re-financing with a Triple A Bond rating. “Losing that could mean that public structures just don’t get built.”

Nancy Mercer, a licensed clinical social worker and the former executive director of the ARC of Northern Virginia, and Ridge Multop, an economist, former AARP Congressional Affairs and former House Budget Committee staffer, both discussed the impact the proposed tax bills could have on seniors, those with long-term care and/or medical issues, and those most in need and most vulnerable in the community.

Multop “put a face” on the discussion, speaking about an economist friend. “He’s 85 years old, on a fixed income, in assisted living. He looked at how these bills would impact him based on his 2016 tax filing and said it would raise his taxes by more than \$3,000. How do people like him cope with that?”

Eliminating tax deductions for medical expenses and long-term care would be harmful to seniors, Multop said, possibly forcing more into custodial care and placing an additional burden on municipalities and nonprofits. “We are cutting our social safety network, one strand at a time,” said

SEE ROUNDTABLE, PAGE 11

OPINION

Shop Locally, Give Locally

Every day is for shopping small and shopping locally.

An effort to support locally owned businesses has resulted in the recognition of Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This year that is Nov. 25. Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, is promoted as a day of national zeal for shopping. Presumably the next day shoppers can focus on local shopping.

EDITORIAL There is a joy to shopping in local stores at the holidays, to walking along a sidewalk with the streets decked out for the holidays, to being greeted by someone likely to be the owner of the store, to finding gifts that are not mass-produced.

We all benefit when local stores thrive, when local business districts beckon.

Locally owned retail shops, services, restaurants depend on vibrant local communities to thrive. Most small, locally owned businesses invest in community, helping to transform our towns and communities with a sense of place.

Supporting small businesses, locally owned businesses, has to be more than a one-day affair. And in this area, there doesn't have to be anything small about shopping locally.

But still, local families will shop and exchange gifts during the next month, spending tens of millions of dollars in a variety of

places.

One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of your shopping in some of the area's locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambiance available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season. Small retail shops are part of defining any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that no chain can.

The small business owner is often the leader for fundraising for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

Local shoppers should be sure to save some shopping time and dollars for local stores. Spend some time shopping in your own community, and also plan an excursion to a nearby town to check out the holiday spirit there.

See Connection's Holiday Calendar for great celebrations near you.

❖ **Fairfax County:**

www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2017/nov/16/holiday-calendar-2017/

❖ **Arlington:**

www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2017/nov/15/arlington-holiday-calendar-2017/

❖ **Potomac:**

www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2017/nov/15/potomac-almanac-holiday-calendar-2017/

❖ **Alexandria:**

www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2017/nov/20/alexandria-holiday-calendar-2017/

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Short Deadline for Children's Edition

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

We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent via email, dropbox or google drive or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg

format.

We welcome contributions from public and private schools, individuals and homeschoolers. To be published, we must have first and last name of the student. Please include the student's age and/or grade, school attended and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Provide submissions by Friday, Dec. 1.

Email submissions for the Children's Edition to the following editors:

❖ For Burke, Clifton, Fairfax, Fairfax Station, Great Falls, Herndon, Lorton, McLean, Reston, or Springfield, email to Kemal Kurspahic at kemal@connectionnewspapers.com.

❖ For Alexandria, Arlington, Centreville, Chantilly, Mount Vernon, or Potomac, Md., email to Steven Mauren at smauren@connectionnewspapers.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Focus on Community Policing, Positive Outreach

To the Editor:

In response to: www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2017/nov/08/commentary-independent-progressive-doublespeak-imm/

Fairfax County police officers do not conduct immigration enforcement sweeps or stop individuals solely to inquire about immigration status. Fairfax County police officers follow General Order 601 and cannot arrest someone unless there is reasonable suspicion that a crime was committed or is being committed.

Operation and policy decisions regarding the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center fall under the authority of the Sheriff, an elected constitutional officer, independent

of the Board of Supervisors. Per Code of Virginia 19.2-83.2, when individuals are arrested and booked into the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, their computerized fingerprints are automatically transmitted to the Virginia State Police's Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), regardless of their immigration status. The Virginia State Police forwards the information to other state and federal databases per their guidelines. From there, it is up to ICE to determine who is a priority for deportation. Before 2016, ICE operated under the Priority Enforcement Program and focused its efforts on deporting undocumented immigrants with serious criminal records. Under

the Trump Administration, the Priority Enforcement Program no longer exists, and any immigrant who is in the country illegally may be selected by ICE for deportation.

If ICE places an arrest warrant and an order to detain on an inmate in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, the Sheriff's Office will hold that inmate for up to 48 hours (not counting weekends and holidays) past his or her scheduled release date. If ICE does not take custody of the inmate within that time frame, the inmate will be released.

The Board of Supervisors, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Office and all Fairfax County government agencies comply with state and federal laws, and immi-

gration is a federal matter. Any changes regarding deportations or the focus and direction of ICE must come from the federal level. On the local level, we continue to focus on community policing through positive outreach and building trust with the residents we serve. All residents of Fairfax County should know that Fairfax County police officers are here to protect and serve any and all community members, regardless of citizenship. No person should be afraid to call the police out of fear of deportation — our police officers are not in that business.

Sharon Bulova

Chairman,
Board of Supervisors

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Lorton & Clifton
CONNECTION

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NEWS

Fairfax Station Railroad Museum to Host Holiday Craft Day, Victorian Tea

Holiday crafts and paper ornaments reminiscent of by-gone years can be created at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum on Sunday, Dec. 10, 2017 from 1-4 p.m. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Admission: Museum members and under 4, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Craft supplies included in the admission cost. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or www.facebook.com/FFXSRR. Call 703-425-9225.

❖ The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will host a Victorian Tea on Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017 from 1-4 p.m. Enjoy the exhibits and artifacts while sampling different teas and small sweets with family and friends. No reservations necessary and the tea is included with admission. Museum members and under 4, free; ages 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or www.facebook.com/FFXSRR. Call 703-425-9225.



Fairfax Station Railroad Museum



Holiday Craft Day promises fun for all ages.

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NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The night of celebration and reflection focused on Northern Virginia's transportation problems, policies and funding solutions.

NVTA Celebrates 15th Anniversary

On the evening of Thurs-day, Nov. 9, several of Virginia's elected leaders gathered to reflect on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's (NVTA) 15 years of accomplishments in regional transportation planning and congestion relieving investments to the region's transportation network. The NVTA was created by the Virginia General Assembly Senate Bill 576 on July 1, 2002 to serve as Northern Virginia's transportation planning, programming and funding entity.

The night of celebration and reflection focusing on Northern Virginia's transportation problems, policies and funding solutions took place at the City of Fairfax's Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center. The program was led by WTOP reporter Max Smith. Guests enjoyed several speakers, including keynote addresses from U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Justice William C. Mims of the Virginia State Supreme Court.

Mims reflected on the vision behind the creation of the NVTA. He commended many of the authority's original members and supporters who helped establish the authority, including the NVTA's

first chairmen.

"The NVTA has been a region-wide effort," said Mims. "It is a success story with many individuals who deserve credit for making the Authority what it is today."

Connolly applauded the authority on the impact of the transportation investments it has delivered. The congressman remarked on how the authority's accomplishments are evidence of politicians putting aside their party's obligations and parochialism to work together for the greater good of Northern Virginians.

"NVTA managed as a region to agree on a list of projects and prioritize them," noted Connolly. "That meant everyone had to give something. People had to overcome parochialism. People had to understand the greater good and they did. That happened and it continues to happen at NVTA. It is unsung work."

NVTA Chairman Marty Nohe noted the authority's many accomplishments would not be possible without regional collaboration and coordination with its member jurisdictions and transit agencies, members of the General Assembly and stakeholders alike.

Office Buildings

FROM PAGE 2

said, but the remaining steps in the zoning process would still require public hearings and a vote by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

"You're doing all of this with the trust in your own process and all the procedural protections that case by case review in this building allows," said Riegle.

RESTON ASSOCIATION requested to be exempt from the plan amendment.

Reston advocates said that

they have just been through a transit area planning process, and that the mix of residential and commercial is a more delicate balance in Reston.

Commissioner Ellen "Nell" Hurley (Braddock) who made a motion to exclude the exemption, said it would be unworkable to have the option to convert vacant office space to other uses in all but one part of the county.

The board recommended approval of the motion, with Hunter Mill Commission Frank de la Fe and at-large commissioner Tim Sargeant dissenting.

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Notice of Public Hearing

NOTICE OF BUDGET AND WATER RATE PUBLIC HEARING

December 14, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2017, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2018, include the following:

1. An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,100 to \$4,150¹
2. An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$11,685 to \$13,420
3. An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,240 to \$1,260¹
4. An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$2.81 to \$2.94 per 1,000 gallons of water
5. An Increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$44 to \$45
6. An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge
7. An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$35 to \$36

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

Fairfax County Water Authority (Fairfax Water) is proposing a \$178.7 million budget² for calendar year 2018. Revenues are expected to be \$178.7 million in 2018. Water sales are expected to provide \$155.8 million. Approximately \$22.9 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2017	2018
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 54,270	\$ 55,983
Power and Utilities	10,468	10,670
Chemicals	6,846	7,732
Purchased Water	7,677	6,340
Supplies and Materials	4,850	5,102
Insurance	1,186	1,200
Fuel	595	655
Postage	611	614
Contractual Services	11,252	11,610
Professional Services	990	1,025
Other	2,280	2,503
Sub-Total	101,025	103,634
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(9,991)	(10,248)
Total	\$ 91,034	\$ 93,386

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:	
Debt Payment	\$42,981,000
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$31,087,000

² Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes to the rates can be viewed on our website at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates. A copy of the proposed budget can be found at www.fairfaxwater.org. Those wishing to speak or receive a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017.

Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

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

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 13, 2017 to be included in the record of the public hearing.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

This car was not so lucky during a past storm that roared through Fairfax County.

If a Tree Falls on the Road ...

Although drivers and trees avoid each other, a fall could be fatal.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Drivers using the Newington cut-through, from I-95 to Telegraph Road in southern Fairfax County, pass under a branch that could cause some serious damage if it fell. Although the tree looks healthy, wind or ice could put extra stress on this branch, and the results could be fatal.

All around Northern Virginia, there are probably dozens of situations like this, so it conjures the "what if," question. Paranoia?

According to John Townsend, the manager of Public & Government Affairs at the Mid-Atlantic division of the American Automobile Association, it does happen.

"In September 2016, a Northern Virginia man was killed when a tree fell near his pickup truck in Woodstock after a mighty gust of wind knocked the tree down. The three passengers were outside the truck when the tree fell onto them, killing the victim," said Townsend.

On July 17, 2012, a "64-year-old Reston man was killed when a 100-foot oak tree" fell on his car in Great Falls, crushing him to death, added Townsend.

Is it an "act of God?" in the insurance world, or is anyone responsible? According to Townsend, tree limbs that fall on a house or other insured structures on the property would be covered for both the damage the tree(s) inflicts on the house and the cost of removing the tree(s), generally up to about \$500. In addition, if a tree fell on a house or car, and the owner is insured, in most cases they're covered. If a tree falls on a house, homeowners insurance will cover removal of the tree and home repairs. However, if a tree falls in the yard, but doesn't hit anything, the homeowner would pay for its removal in most cases.

The county and state have an eye on trees



This branch on Newington Road could pose a problem.

too, along with drivers, said Jennifer McCord at the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). If a driver or resident sees something alarming on the roadside, they can report it to VDOT at my.vdot.virginia.gov, or 800-367-7623.

Also the assorted VDOT maintenance teams that are out on the road every day report issues as they ride the roads, said McCord. "We also have an arborist who examines and marks trees of concern for maintenance or tree contractors to address," she said.

There are eyes on the trees on the county level as well, said Keith Cline, director of the Fairfax County Urban Forest Management Division. In the county code, 46-1-1, "trees or parts thereof in danger of falling" are listed under health or safety menaces. "We do investigate it if it's threatening to the public at large," Cline said. The county also addresses tree danger "on a complaint basis," said Cline, and works with VDOT to remedy the situation near roads.

If the tree is on private property, they work with the property owner, and on rare occasions, call in a contractor to cut it back, and then they bill the homeowner. "This doesn't happen very often," said Cline.

James Donegan at Donegan Tree Service has worked with Fairfax County to take care of roadside tree hazards, and cited the ash tree problem with the emerald ash borer pests that have decimated the ash tree population in the county.

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

ONGOING

Santa's Flight Academy. Through Dec. 24, at various times at at Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Santa surrounded by a space motif. Visit www.santaexpresslane.com.

Toy Collection. Through Dec. 10, Sheehy Auto Stores throughout the Washington, D.C.-metro area will collect new and unwrapped toys as part of the company's annual Sheehy Cares Toy Collection to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, which will distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted. Sheehy's Toys for Tots drop-off locations include:

- ❖ Sheehy Volkswagen of Springfield, 6601 Backlick Road, Springfield
- ❖ Sheehy Ford of Springfield, 6727 Loisdale Road, Springfield
- ❖ Sheehy Subaru of Springfield, 6571 Backlick Road, Springfield
- ❖ Patriot Harley-Davidson, 9739 Fairfax Boulevard, Fairfax

NOV. 25-26

Fairfax Ballet Company's Nutcracker. Nov. 25, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Nov. 26, 2 p.m. at W.T. Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax. Fairfax Ballet Senior company member Ana Victoria Smith of Clifton, dances the role of Clara. Company members, along with students from the Russell School of Ballet and professional guest artists. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-665-9427.

NOV. 30-DEC. 2

Holiday Book Sale. various times at the Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce St., Springfield. Over 10,000 like new books in all categories both rare and popular most at \$2 or less, plus loads of CDs, DVDs and special gift offerings. Over 3,000 children's books. Funds raised will pay for library children's programs and more. Email rbfriends@gmail.com or call 703-451-8055.

FRIDAY/DEC. 1

Guitarist Peter Griggs Holiday Concert. 7 p.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath St., Springfield. Show is called "Music For An Old English Christmas." Visit www.gracepresby.org or call 703-451-2900.

Dinner Theatre. 7 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. The City of Fairfax Theatre Company and the Truro Anglican Church present "The Little Match Girl" and "The Velveteen Rabbit." Visit fairfaxva.gov/.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Pancake Breakfast with Santa. 8-11 a.m. at Fire Station # 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. \$10, ages 3-12 \$5; and, under 3 free. All proceeds benefit the FVFD. Visit fairfaxva.gov.

Christmas Traditions Concert. 9:30-11 a.m. at St. Stephens United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The St. Stephen's United Methodist Women Maranatha Singers will present a morning of holiday music. Free. Call 703-250-5013.

Holiday Sing-A-Long Luncheon. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. \$20. Call 703-

Ring in the Holidays with 'Peekaboo! A Nativity Play'

Fairfax's Hub Theatre brings cheerful musical for Christmas season.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Local playwright Anne M. McCaw has created her own cheerful, musical vision for the Christmas season. It is a contemporary retelling of the Biblical Nativity story titled "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play." The play is having its world premiere at the Hub Theatre

"Peekaboo! A Nativity Play" is hilarious and also honest and heartfelt," said Hub artistic director Helen Murray. "The Hub is producing the show because it is everything Hub is about – hope, love, family, music, comedy and magical moments.

"I want people to feel closer to each other when they walk away from Peekaboo!. I want them to hold their families and friends close, to celebrate the season, and to be filled with hope," added Murray, who is also directing "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play."

With its focus on how to protect a newborn the whole world has been pinning its hopes on, "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play" follows the Bible quite closely in its modernized comic tale with music under the direction of Jonatan Feuer. A diverse ensemble will portray Mary, Joseph, the Angel Gabriel, Herod and the Wise Men.

Hub veteran Katie Jeffries Zelonka plays Mary. "The opportunity to retell the Christmas story in a way that is fresh, funny, but still carrying a powerful message of hope is very appealing to me.

"Mary is a determined, resourceful, funny, hopeful girl with your typical teenaged flair for the dramatic and a bit of a temper," added Zelonka.



PHOTO BY HELEN MURRAY/THE HUB THEATRE

Katie Jeffries Zelonka as Mary and Anderson Wells as Gabriel in "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play."

"At the core of it all, she has a big heart and loves completely, which is the driving force behind most of her actions."

"We know the story and the characters of the Nativity. Or do we?" asked Jacob Yeh, who portrays Herod. "Have we really ever stepped into the shoes of Mary, Joseph, or Gabriel? What about the drummer boy? How would they tell or even sing the story of what happened?"

When asked about the Herod character, Yeh described him as "a loud, despotic, boorish, vain, misogynistic man who sends his goonish sons to do the dirty work in his desperate attempt to hold on to power."

"Peekaboo! A Nativity Play" is for those especially interested in "a new perspective on the Nativity story without compromising the beauty of the story of Christmas," said Murray. "It will kindle the sense of hope and wonder of Christmas." And jolliness is included.

Where & When

The Hub Theatre presents "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play" at The John Swayze Theatre, New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. Performances: Dec. 1 to Dec. 24, 2017, Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets \$32 and \$22 (students and seniors). Call 703-674-3177 or visit www.thehubtheatre.org. Note: There is construction occurring next to The New School of Northern Virginia parking lot. There is plenty of parking, but be careful of changing lanes.

922- 6438 or email Springwmconn@yahoo.com.

Velveteen Rabbit. 2 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. The City of Fairfax Theatre Company and the Truro Anglican Church present "The Velveteen Rabbit." Visit fairfaxva.gov/.

Festival of Lights and Carols. 2-7 p.m. at 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Children ages 12 and under can enjoy lunch with Santa at Sherwood Community Center. Lunch seatings will be offered at 11:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m., must pre-register. Listen to live holiday music and enjoy s'mores and hot cider at Old Town Square from 2-7 p.m. Enjoy caroling and lighting of the Christmas Tree at Old Town Square at 6 p.m. Visit fairfaxva.gov/about-us/special-events/festival-of-lights-and-carols.

Christmas in Brass. 3 p.m. at

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield. Featuring the Barclay Brass Quintet. This ensemble will present a program of secular and sacred seasonal music that will appeal to a broad audience of all ages. Visit www.kirkwoodpres.com, or call the church office at 703-451-5320.

Little Match Girl. 4 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. The City of Fairfax Theatre Company and the Truro Anglican Church present "Little Match Girl" Visit fairfaxva.gov/.

Town of Clifton Holiday Homes Tour. 4-7 p.m. at 7140 Main St., Clifton. Five homes in Town and a bonus home outside of Town, in addition to the caboose and two historic churches that will be open to the public. \$25 adult pre-sale, \$30 on Dec. 2; \$5 child; credit cards are more. Visit clifton-va.com or email

melissa.milne9@gmail.com.

Dinner Theatre. 7 p.m. at Truro Anglican Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. The City of Fairfax Theatre Company and the Truro Anglican Church present "The Little Match Girl" and "The Velveteen Rabbit." Visit fairfaxva.gov/.

Art Show and Reception. 7-10 p.m. at Fairfax Art League Village Gallery, 3950 University Drive, Fairfax. Stories by Michael Edwards, painter, sculptor and mixed media artist. Enjoy the exhibit, music by Dj Master Renegade, wine, food, and an original poetry reading by Deb Wright. Email ssreichbart@verizon.net.

DEC. 2-3

Arts and Crafts Show. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sunday at the Audrey Moore RECenter, 8100

Braddock Road, Annandale. Call 703-321-7081.

SUNDAY/DEC. 3

"Hansel and Gretel" Opera. 2 and 5 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Mason Opera will present Engelbert Humperdinck's take on the Brothers Grimm fairytale "Hansel and Gretel." Tickets: \$12, \$8, \$5. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

Home for the Holidays Concert. 4-6 p.m. at Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. Main Street Community Band plays a mix of seasonal favorites. Visit www.fairfaxband.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 4

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Fun with Mr. Skip. Free. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Smoke free, all proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

Flutist in Concert. 8 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Celebrate the Sounds of the Season with the Columbia Flute Choir in the Christmas Concert. Free. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Christmas at George Mason's Gunston Hall. 10-7 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. A full day of holiday activities starts with a visit from Santa and games and crafts for all ages. Call 703-550- 9220 ext. 240 or email mkcraver@gunstonhall.org. **Lunch with Santa.** 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Call 703-385-7858.

Lunch with Santa. 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Children ages 10 and under can enjoy lunch with Santa. \$6. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

DEC. 9-10

James and the Giant Peach. Shows at 12:30, 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the GMU Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that grows a tremendous peach that rolls into the ocean and launches a journey of enormous proportions. Visit afyp.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Ornament Craft Day. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

James and the Giant Peach. Shows at 12:30, 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the GMU Harris Theatre, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. See Dec. 9-10 description. Visit www.afyp.org.

Frosty Follies Show. 6 p.m. at Springfield Town Center, Spring Mall Drive, Springfield. Metropolitan School of the Arts will present their annual Frosty Follies shows in the Springfield Town Center in the Main Court. Visit metropolitanarts.org/.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Frank de la Fe,
Hunter Mill District



Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner,
Providence District



Peter Murphy, chair,
Springfield District



Janyce Hedetniemi,
at-large



James Hart, at-large



Karen Keys-Gamarra

Planning Changes to Planning Commission

Twelve-member commission endures multiple changes through grief, triumphs, retirement and more during 2017.

BY KEN MOORE

Two seats on the 12-member Fairfax County Planning Commission remain open.

And earlier this month, Hunter Mill District Supervisor Catherine M. Hudgins announced Frank de la Fe's decision to retire at the end of the calendar year.

"After 16 years of dedicated service, the Hunter Mill District Planning Commissioner Frank de la Fe has announced his intention to retire," Hudgins told the Board of Supervisors at its meeting on Nov. 2. De la Fe has served on the planning commission since 2001, and currently is vice chair.

Hudgins will appoint a new commissioner to begin on Jan. 28, 2018.

"We will have lots to say about Frank in the future," said Hudgins.

Sully District Supervisor Kathy L. Smith will also search for a new planning commissioner.

"I guess it's a day for Planning Commission announcements," she said at the supervisors' meeting.

Smith's Planning Commissioner Karen Keys-Gamarra announced her resignation effective Oct. 25. Keys-Gamarra won a special election in August to fill the at-large School Board seat vacated by Jeanette

Hough two years into serving her four-year term. Hough resigned after her husband accepted a position overseas.

Of Keys-Gamarra, Smith said, "As much as I would have loved for her to continue as my planning commissioner, it's just not possible to do both jobs."

Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity followed.

"I have no news on my planning commissioner," he said. "That is good."

Herrity's Planning Commissioner is Peter Murphy who also serves as chair of the Planning Commission and was first appointed to the commission in 1982.

MURPHY ANNOUNCED at-large commissioner Janyce Hedetniemi's immediate resignation at the opening of the Planning Commission's public hearing on Oct. 26.

"It's a great loss to the commission, she knows it, we all know it," said Murphy. "We appreciate everything you have done for us." Chairman Sharon Bulova appointed Hedetniemi in 2013 and plans to appoint her successor at the Board meeting on Nov. 21.

Murphy read a full version of Hedetniemi's statement to the commission:

"Tonight, I step away from this wonderful experience as an at-large member of the Fairfax County Planning Commission. ...

From capital improvements to land use and parks, schools, the environment and more, here it is, we give it all, through regulations, procedures, judgement and intuition, always in public view, and sometimes until 2 in the morning." "I am proud to have shared the title of commissioner with my esteemed colleagues," she wrote. "Commissioners, the honor has been mine. I wish you all the best in your continuing efforts for the betterment of Fairfax County."

THE PLANNING COMMISSION on Sept. 14 voted to change the start time of public meetings in January from 8:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., in part to encourage additional citizen participation and to keep meetings from lasting as late into the night.

The Planning Commission advises the Board of Supervisors on all matters related to land use in Fairfax County, a particularly busy time right now reviewing redevelopment along the Silver Line. The commission holds public hearings, often multiple times a week, and often brings together residents, developers and county planners to work through concerns and conflicts.

This includes the location and character of public facilities; amendments to the Comprehensive Plan; amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, the Public Facilities Ordinance, and the Subdivision Ordinance; rezonings and special exceptions; approvals of final development plans; and also sometimes advises the Board of Zoning Appeals. Planning commissioners are appointed by the Board of Supervisors for four-year terms on a staggered basis. Each of the nine supervisory districts has a rep-



Kenneth Lawrence,
former
Providence
District
commis-
sioner

resentative, and three members are appointed at-large.

PHILLIP NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER replaced Kenneth Lawrence as the Providence Planning Commissioner on Jan. 11, 2017.

Lawrence died in December 2016 after serving 13 years on the Planning Commission. "Ken had a difficult role, responsibility for Providence District at an exciting time, doing new and ambitious things in Tysons and elsewhere," said colleague James Hart, at-large planning commissioner.

"His public service responsibility was a part of his core being. He gave the County all he had," said Hart.

Hart and Lawrence were sworn in on the same day 13 years ago.

"I could count on one hand the number of votes Ken and I disagreed in that 13 years. I couldn't begin to count the number of hours we spent in meetings together, so many topics," he said. "Ken's legacy added so much to Fairfax County. ... We absolutely will have more and better parks in Tysons thanks to him. His commitment improved our quality of life."

COMMUNITIES OF WORSHIP

Worship Gathering - Sunday 8:45 & 11 AM
Sunday School 10:10 AM
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Family Night - Wednesday 7:15 PM
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Cookies with Santa - 9:30a-12:00 noon FREE
Greeting For the Troops - 9a-3p FREE - Sponsored by PCSgrades.com
Child ID & Fingerprinting - Fairfax County Sheriff's Office FREE
Santa's Book Emporium - 9a-3p

8501 Silverbrook Rd Lorton
Facebook.com/SCHSCraftShow

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

Announcements

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FAIRFAX CONNECTOR SERVICE

In observance of the Thanksgiving

Holiday, Fairfax Connector will
operate Sunday Service on
Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23 and
holiday weekday service on Friday,
Nov. 24, 2017.

- ❖ Thanksgiving Day — The following
routes will operate Sunday service:
101, 109, 151, 152, 161, 162, 171,
310, 321, 322, 371, 401, 402, 423,
463, 505, 551, 558, 559, 574, 605,
630, 640, 650, 721, 937, 950, 981,
983, RIBS 1, RIBS 2, RIBS 3, RIBS 4
and RIBS 5. Routes not listed above
do not operate on Sundays and
therefore will not operate on
Thanksgiving Day.
- ❖ Day after Thanksgiving — The
following routes will not operate:
231, 232, 335, 393, 394, 395, 422,
432, 461, 494, 495, 556, 585, 599,
624, 634, 644, 724 and 985. Route
980 will run every 12-15 minutes
instead of every 6-8 minutes.

All other routes will operate regular
weekday service. For schedules and
more, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/
connector/routes/holiday.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/routes/holiday.htm).

THURSDAY/NOV. 30

**Rolling Road Widening Project
Public Information Meeting.**

6:30-8:30 p.m. at Rolling Valley
Elementary School located at 6703
Barnack Drive, Springfield. Visit
VirginiaDOT.org for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Future Quest. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at GMU's
Johnson Center, 4400 University
Drive, Fairfax. College and career
conference for area middle and high
school students with disabilities, as
well as their parents, teachers and
other professionals. Featuring more
than 40 workshops and exhibits
related to successful life after high
school. Free. There is free parking in
Lot K, or in the Mason Pond Parking
Garage for \$8. Visit

www.futurequestgmu.org to register or
email futurequestnova@gmail.com.

Coffee with Del. David Bulova. 9-11
a.m. at Main Street Bagel, 10268
Main St., City of Fairfax. Del. David
Bulova (D-37) will continue a
tradition started in 2006 by holding
informal office hours, constituents
are invited to talk about issues of
interest and to ask questions about
legislation affecting the community.
Visit www.davidbulova.com.

THROUGH DEC. 3

Coat and Blanket Drive. Nova Relief

Center is holding a blanket and coat
drive for Syrian and Iraqi refugees
who have fled their homelands to escape
the violence from the civil war in
Syria. Paxton Van Lines and Maersk
are donating their services this year.
Donated blankets and coats should
be new or gently worn, and may be
dropped off at any designated drop-
off location below. To make a tax-
deductible donation, visit NOVA
Relief Center's website at
www.NOVAReliefCenter.org

- ❖ City of Fairfax — City Hall, 10455
Armstrong St., Fairfax
- ❖ Northern Virginia Community College,
8333 Little River Turnpike,
Annandale
- ❖ Virginia International University, 4401
Village Drive, Fairfax
- ❖ Paxton Van Lines, 5300 Port Royal
Road, Springfield
- ❖ Merrifield VA CITGO, 8318 Lee
Highway, Fairfax
- ❖ American Turkish Friendship
Association, 11200 Waples Mill Road,
Suite 360, Fairfax

Roundtable

FROM PAGE 3

Mercer.

Multop donned his economist's hat once more to also note that so far he had heard no mention from the GOP plan makers of the debt service on the increasing deficit. "That's another \$200 billion in interest costs that I don't hear them having accounted for." Multop's concern is that Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security benefits will become the targets to shore up the financial levee in the wake of these tax cuts and the domino effect of their implementation.

Another personalized example of the the proposed reforms was offered by attendee Edythe Kelleher. The executive director of Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, Kelleher could have spoken about impacts to development in that region, but instead, told how cuts to student loan interest deductions and a proposal to tax teacher's assistant stipends would affect her graduate-school son.

"He works, he goes to school, he lives frugally. We provided him with a cheap car." Kelleher says that if a tax on the modest teacher's assistant stipend is adopted, "that's \$6,000 more each year, and he doesn't know where that money will come from."

Connolly responded to this story by saying the need to educate for competitiveness in the world's marketplace is greater than ever. The congressman said that making getting an education even more difficult means "some will have to leave school. That's hardly 'making America great again.'"

As the session came to a close, NVAR CEO Conrad asked Connolly, "What's your advice? What do we do next?"

In addition to the rally call to NVAR membership and AARP members, Connolly replied, "Run, don't walk and immediately express your concerns to your representatives" at every level of government, and "tell everyone you know. This plan does not reflect our values and priorities. We can and should do better than this."

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Students from six Fairfax County public schools have been named to the 2017 All-Virginia Jazz Band and Ensemble. Students named to the 2017 All-Virginia Jazz Band and Ensemble include **Luke Mrini, Eugene Song,** and **Aiden Rodeschin** from Lake Braddock Secondary School.

Vocal musicians from 14 Fairfax County public schools have been named to the Virginia Honors Choir for 2017. Thirty-four Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students were selected for the choir, and five students were named as alternates. This select choir is open to the top 125 singers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career. FCPS students named to the 2017 Virginia Honors Choir include: **Beatrice Thurgood** from Lake Braddock Secondary School and **Morgan Freeman, Mackenna Gordon, Olivia Brennan, Shelby Kaufman, Mia Peri, Sofie Peri, Jack Hopewell, Paul Hardin, Hunter Browning,** and **Luke Brennan** from Woodson High School.

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Welcome to the Club



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Some club," as my late mother would likely scoff. And the club to which I refer is, to spin an old Groucho Marx joke: a club you'd rather not join especially if they'd have you as a member. This is of course, the cancer club, a club whose membership continues to grow despite worldwide efforts to the contrary. According to Medscape.com, one in two men and one in three women will be affected by cancer in their lifetime. Hardly a statistic to be ignored. And so, even though I had a rather uneventful/healthy upbringing and further on into adulthood, in late middle age, 54 and five months, Feb. 27, 2009, I was impacted and rudely awakened with a non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV diagnosis - out of the blue, and given a "13 month to two-year" prognosis to boot. As a life long non-smoker with no immediate family history of cancer, whose parents both lived well into their 80s, I was more inclined to worry about the Boston Red Sox pitching depth than I was about cancer.

But cancer, for the past nearly nine years has been my life and amazingly, so far anyway, not the cause of my premature death (what death isn't 'premature?'). And what brightens my day and lifts my spirits more than anything else (other than a Red Sox World Series Championship) is when I meet a newly-diagnosed lung cancer patient who exhibits the can/will do positive-type attitude necessary to endure the inevitable ups and downs to follow. To be selfish, it empowers me and strengthens my own resolve to live life to the fullest (it's not as simple as saying it) and damn the torpedoes.

Within the last few months, I have met, over the phone, two such individuals. The first man, Lee, I met before he even had his first infusion. The second man, Mark, a bit more experienced, I met a year and a half after his first infusion. Each man was engaging, outgoing, confident, enthusiastic and quite frankly, happy to make my acquaintance. You see, after being given a less-than-desirable prognosis, it's helpful to meet someone who, despite having received a similar diagnosis, has nevertheless managed to live almost nine years post diagnosis. (If he can do it, I can do it kind of feeling.)

As for me, the nearly nine-year survivor, meeting cancer patients who are at the beginning of their respective cancer journeys, helps me to reconnect with my roots, so to speak, and share and share alike some memorable experiences, both cancer-related and not. In a way, we get to live vicariously through one another which for me reinforces how lucky I've been to survive for as long as I have. And not that I need reminding, but it's easy to take for granted one's good fortune and forget - occasionally, the seriousness of my situation and the cloud that hangs over my head. The sword of Damocles has got nothing on me, literally or figuratively. Living with cancer is akin to nothing really. The chance that you'll survive beyond your prognosis, maybe even have your tumors shrink, or see your scans show "no evidence of disease," creates a kind of tease that cause your emotions to run the gamut. The possibility of living after being told you're dying - and vice versa, perhaps more than once, over your abbreviated - or not, life expectancy, is simply too much to handle/absorb sometimes. It's a roller coaster for sure, but one that rarely comes to a complete stop and never allows you to get off. Moreover, it's not multiple rides, it's one long, endless ride with no guarantees about what happens next - or where it even happens.

Meeting people who are ready, willing and able to confront their cancer future is just as important and stimulating as meeting someone like me who hasn't succumbed to this terrible disease. It's a win-win situation. Particularly significant when at date of diagnosis, it appeared to be a lose-lose. I'm proud to be a member of the cancer club, especially so when I meet people like Lee and Mark.

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

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