

Fairfax Station

CONNECTION Clifton & Lorton

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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

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Mark Harrington and his daughter Ana beside a wood stove that dates back to the Civil War Days. Historic Clifton Holiday Homes Tour will be held Saturday, Dec. 2.

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 6, 2017

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Fairfax Water

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 | 6,540 |
| 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.

COME IN FOR OUR SEASONAL Menu

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Giving Homeless a Warm Place to Sleep

FACETS partners with 50 local faith communities in hypothermia program.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The cold weather is here and with that, the FACETS' Hypothermia Prevention and Response Program officially started on Sunday, Nov. 26 and will extend until April 1, 2018. It means every night there is somewhere warm for homeless people to sleep in Fairfax County. It means the homeless won't have to sleep in the woods or their cars or the streets. It means they will have a place to get warm dinners and breakfasts at 50 participating faith communities in Fairfax and Falls Church.

"It's a wonderful, truly collaborative effort between faith communities and FACETS to ensure that everyone has someplace warm to sleep at night," said Brenda Dushko, director of development at FACETS, a nonprofit.

The program started in 2003 in partnership with the Fairfax County government because some homeless people died on the streets on cold nights, she said. "Hypothermia centers started because people were dying in the winter. There was no place to go and FACETS and the faith communities got together and said this shouldn't happen to the homeless," she said.

FACETS works with 50 local churches who take turns each week providing a safe place for people to sleep, a warm dinner and breakfast the next morning. The church venues rotate each week so each Wednesday they announce where the next hypothermia site will be on its website (www.FACETSCares.org). All of the churches are in Fairfax County.

Dushko said last year some 279 people were housed at the hypothermia centers and 180 people received extra services, like getting in touch with social services and medical services — things they needed to start fresh. "Of those 279 people, 35 were permanently housed by the end of the season. So it really is working," she added. "It's a wonderful way to move people from homelessness to home."

Last Sunday, the Annandale United Methodist Church on Columbia Pike kicked-off



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

At the kickoff of the FACETS' Hypothermia Prevention and Response Program at Annandale United Methodist Church are (from left): Cyndi Jones, FACETS point of contact; Brenda Dushko, FACETS development director; the Rev. Dr. Clarence Brown Jr., pastor of Annandale United Methodist Church; and Joe Fay, FACETS' executive director.

the hypothermia program, taking in 50 homeless people and feeding them spaghetti, soup and salad, dinner rolls and dessert; offering a place to sleep; and then breakfast the next morning.

According to the Rev. Dr. Clarence Brown Jr., "Annandale United Methodist has a long history in the community here. A great part of our faith tradition has to do with caring for the least, last, lost and left out. Having the facility that we do allows us to offer hospitality to all of our neighbors, especially those without homes."

He continued, "AUMC has participated with our partners, FACETS, for over 10 years, in the hypothermia program as well as in the '100,000 Homes' effort, which focuses on the most at-risk among the homeless population to provide intensive focus on assisting them on the road to self sufficiency. It is our joy to do so."

FACETS works to prevent and end homelessness throughout Fairfax County by offering a spectrum of services, such as basic needs and financial assistance, counseling and outreach, educational enrichment programs, and permanent housing.

AT THE CHURCH SITES, they provide blankets and sleeping mats, hygiene products, fresh socks and underwear and some-

times even the opportunity to do laundry. They also provide transportation — each person receives two tokens for transportation to and from a safe location. They also have a chance to meet with a case manager to build a relationship with the aim of getting housing.

"That could be getting them into their own apartment, helping with the social services they need or working with veterans and getting them in touch with services," said Dushko.

Some churches hold movie nights and game nights. Some bring in local performers who do live music. Some provide haircuts. The largest age group they serve are homeless people between 24 and 54. The second highest is seniors over age 55.

For the chronically homeless — for one year or as many as 10 years — they look to permanent supportive housing. FACETS also has case managers who work with people with physical or mental challenges, to make sure they get to their doctor's appointments and get their medicines.

Dushko said a hypothermia center is usually the first place they connect with the homeless. It is a place where they might see them for several weeks. Over the course of the winter, they have a chance to make a bond with them, putting them in touch with

the services they need.

"We also have two group homes. We may meet these people at a hypothermia center and find we have a spot for them at a group home," said Dushko. "We also help them with life skills, financial skills, help them get a job. We'll work with them to see if we can get them a job, open a door for a bright future."

"The amazing thing about this program is the extent to which it's operated by the faith community and volunteers," said Joe Fay, executive director of FACETS. "Coming to FACETS, I've been impressed by the number of volunteers, the engagement of the volunteers. Many of the faith communities have been with us for 15 to 30 years. It's truly amazing for the size of the organization that we are, it's much more extensive than the actual staff."

He continued, "We have a small corps of professional staff but then we leverage the volunteers to provide programs that in a way we couldn't afford to do if it had to be done with paid staff ... Our hope for this program is to get people a place to come in from the cold, to have a meal, to engage with case workers."

FACETS works on the logistics end to make sure faith communities have their paperwork in place, make sure they have meals set up, that they have the training they need, that they have volunteers. They provide case managers and facilitators and support with training volunteers.

According to Maria Avila, program director for single adults housing stabilization, Tuesday nights are what's called "reload night." They take their SmarTrip cards and give the homeless a weekly bus pass for \$17.50, that's good for a week. It's essentially free bus transportation for a week that could be a chance for them to go look for a job.

Avila said case managers stop by Mondays through Thursdays from 5-8 p.m. to help polish resumes and help them look for jobs. "We can sit with them and go through the case management process, from everything to calling landlords to filling out housing vouchers. There's different levels for what people need," she said.



FACETS Hypothermia Facilitator Melvin Barfield and volunteer Chris Jones put blankets in bags for the overnight homeless guests.



Volunteers take down the tables used for dinner for the homeless.



One of 50 homeless people who spent the night at Annandale United Methodist Church.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

All aboard for a train ride on the Holiday Express.

Winter Wonderland at Burke Lake Park

Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 2-3, and Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 9-10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring Holiday Express Train Rides, Caroler's Carousel, Gingerbread Man's golf, and visits with Santa, including hot chocolate and more.

Usher in your holidays at Burke Lake Park: all aboard for a train ride on the Holiday Express (for ages 2-adult), take a spin on the Carolers Carousel, experience the Snowman's Wagon Ride, play Gingerbread Man Golf, warm up by the fire, make s'mores, visit with Santa, and enjoy hot chocolate and candy canes.

Passes valid from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. are \$15 through the day before the event; \$20 if purchased the day of event. Pick up passes at the ice cream parlor the day of the event. No refunds, unless the event is canceled. Children age 10 and younger must be accompanied by an adult registered for the same ride package.

Children younger than 2 ride free but must pay for other activities. Limited activity tickets will be available the day of the event at the park. For more information, call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burkelakepark.

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Winter Wonderland at Burke Lake Park features Holiday Express Train Rides, Caroler's Carousel, Gingerbread Man's golf, and visits with Santa.

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NEWS

Representing Robinson in Reston

From left: Volunteers Russian Williams, 16, of Burke; Hyun Woongseo, 15; and Chris Schnizer, 16, of Clifton; represented the Robinson Secondary School track and field team in the 17th annual Gingerbread Man Race at Reston Town Center Friday morning, Nov. 24.



PHOTO BY
ROBERT HEALY
THE CONNECTION

This marks the 27th year Long & Foster is an official sponsor & drop off for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in its TOYS for TOTS campaign.



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OPINION

Careful What To Wish For

Could changes in General Assembly mean some legislative requests from Northern Virginia might not be dead on arrival?

When the Virginia House of Representatives adjourned from its 2017 session, Republicans controlled the house by 66 to 34. The exact count following elections earlier in November is still unclear, but one party or the other could have a 51-49 majority, or even face a 50-50 split.

I don't recall anyone predicting this level of change. Three very close races are likely headed for recount, including one in Fairfax County, and since this is the first time all voters have used paper ballots, it's hard to predict how that will go. But one way or the other, Northern Virginia localities are likely to have more influence.

Fairfax County, along with Arlington and Alexandria, prepare a state legislative wish list each year, made all the more urgent because localities in Virginia have only the powers specifically given to them by the General Assembly. If there is any reasonable doubt whether a power has been conferred on a local government, then the locality does not have that power.

That has meant, for example, localities can only raise revenue from limited sources, can't restrict where people carry guns, can't set their own minimum wage, and can't fully control land use within their boundaries. Some haven't been able to ban discrimination on the basis

of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Not all of these restrictions are based on party affiliation.

Aside from more local authority, the top wish is for more funding.

Fairfax County's draft on funding schools: "Public education funding in the Commonwealth is enshrined in the Virginia Constitution as a joint responsibility of both state and local governments, so it is essential that the state fully meet its Constitutional responsibility to adequately fund K-12 education. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth continues to allow critical gaps to persist between state fund-

ing and the actual costs of providing a high-quality education, placing more of the fiscal burden on localities while substantially limiting local revenue sources, creating a discrepancy that has become increasingly untenable."

The one action that could produce significant funding and services with very low cost to state coffers: expanding Medicaid in Virginia under the Affordable Care Act. Virginia has turned away billions of dollars, plus the jobs and healthier citizenry that come with that.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Next Week: More Local Giving

Next week, we will publish our lists of local nonprofits for holiday giving. If you know of an organization that should be included or whose listing needs updating, please email mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com.

Deadline Extended: Children's Edition

Submissions of student art and writing are due by Friday, Dec. 8, an extended deadline. You can see last year's editions by visiting www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/ and scroll down to Children's Edition. Email submissions 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.

Honoring Patients' Wishes

BY MALENE DAVIS, MBA, MSN, RN, CHPN
CAPITAL CARING

November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, and we encourage Virginians to be more aware of the innovative and compassionate end-of-life care available throughout the Commonwealth.

Capital Caring — a non-profit, community-based, hospice and palliative care organization — was founded in 1977 and is one of the oldest and most experienced non-profit hospices in the

COMMENTARY

United States. Our dedicated staff serve more than 1,400 patients and families every day in the mid-Atlantic region. Our commitment to providing the best medical care for patients with life-limiting illnesses is imperative, and we are fortunate to have skilled medical professionals, caregivers and volunteers in a four-state region.

I would like to emphasize an increasingly-utilized program for honoring patients' wishes that is underway in Virginia. The Virginia POST (Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment) is part of the POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) Paradigm that originated in Oregon in the 1990s to combat the

"failure of advance directives." It is an approach to end-of-life planning that emphasizes advance care planning conversations and shared decision-making which culminates in the POST order set — an actionable set of medical orders that, according to the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, is far better than advance directives in following patient's wishes.

The Virginia POST Collaborative's Executive Committee — consisting of members from hospital systems and other healthcare organizations throughout the Commonwealth — has designated Capital Caring as the organizational home of the program. We are deeply honored by this responsibility and excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Our greatest challenge is the lack of awareness and funding available for this meaningful program. Since the inception of the Virginia POST Collaborative in 2008, the program has existed only because of the in-kind donation of time and personnel by our member organizations. However, full implementation of this important initiative throughout the Commonwealth requires financial assistance from partners so that we can offer comprehensive education, provide expert training, and achieve national certification for our POST program.

Frankly, Virginia got off to a late start with the POST program and is lagging behind other states nationally and regionally. We have made great progress in the past few years, but this month should be a reminder of its importance and need.

Capital Caring has assumed the major costs of education, training, and building awareness for the Virginia POST program. Matthew G. Kestenbaum, M.D., medical director, Health Information & Training at Capital Caring, and associate medical director of the Virginia POST Collaborative (703-957-1768 or mkestenbaum@capitalcaring.org) is our point person. For more details, one can contact Dr. Kestenbaum or visit our website at www.virginiapost.org.

The estimated annual cost for the POST program is \$200,000. Any contributions are tax-deductible, and will directly impact the most frail and vulnerable citizens of the Commonwealth. We need your support, but we also need your dollars to help grow and to sustain this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Malene Davis, MBA, MSN, RN, CHPN, president and chief executive officer of Capital Caring based in Falls Church and the home of the Virginia POST program, can be reached at MDavis@capitalcaring.org.

Fairfax Station,
Lorton & Clifton
CONNECTION

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Filler-Corn Named to Northam's Transition Committee

On Nov. 15, Governor-Elect Ralph Northam announced his bipartisan Transition Committee. This group includes leaders in government, business, nonprofits and social action groups. Among the legislative leaders he appointed was Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41).

In his press release, the governor-elect noted that "This bipartisan group of community leaders reflects the diversity that makes our Commonwealth a wonderful and inclusive place to live." The committee will work with the governor-elect over the course of the next two months to lay the groundwork for a successful Northam administration.

"I am extremely honored to be appointed to Governor-Elect Ralph Northam's Transition Committee," said Filler-Corn "The committee membership reflects the Governor-Elect's commitment to considering a wide range of diverse views on important challenges that he will face in governing the Commonwealth over the next four years."

Filler-Corn is a veteran of several gubernatorial transition committees including those of former governors and current U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine as well as current Gov. Terry McAuliffe. To view the full list of transition committee members,

FAITH NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416.

Grace Presbyterian Church offers Sunday school for all ages at 9:15, and a blended worship service 10:30 a.m. every Sunday morning. Coffee and fellowship follows worship. Nursery care is provided from 9-11:45 a.m. 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. 703-451-2900 or www.gracepresby.org.

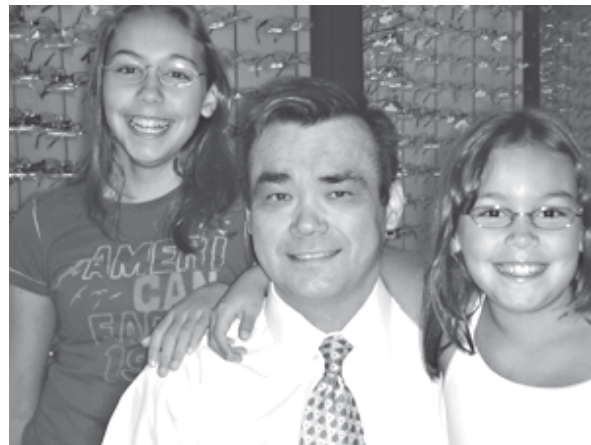
First Baptist Church of Springfield offers Sunday school at 9:15 a.m., followed by both traditional and contemporary worship services at 10:30 a.m. at 7300 Gary St., Springfield. 703-451-1500 or www.fbcspRINGfield.org.

Lord of Life Lutheran offers services at two locations, 5114 Twinbrook Road in Fairfax, and 13421 Twin Lakes Drive in Clifton. Services in Fairfax are held on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8:30 and 10 a.m. Services in Clifton are held on Sundays at 8:50 and 10:50 a.m. www.LordofLifeva.org.

Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton, offers Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. and Cup of Fellowship at 11 a.m. Nursery care is provided from 9:45-11:15 a.m. Christian education for all ages is at 9:45 a.m. 703-830-3175.

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The holiday village set up occupies several levels.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Melissa Milne on her porch overlooking Clifton.

Clifton Homes Tour Has History and Ghost Stories

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When Mona Harrington's sister was over at her Clifton house that dates back to 1771, the door to a cabinet in the second floor room kept mysteriously opening, so her sister got out her cellphone and videoed the whole thing. They both attribute it to the ghost that lives in the house. "You can see the doors opening on the video," said Harrington.

Visitors on the upcoming Historic Clifton Holiday Homes Tour will look for the ghost as they tour Harrington's home, known as the William E. Beckwith House, along with several others that are decorated with period items, one with another ghost, and one with a miniature village that occupies several rooms.

In addition to the Beckwith House, the tour will stop at the Baber Home, circa 1880; the Stein/Davis home, built in 1911; the Clifton Baptist Church, 1875; the Clifton Presbyterian Church, 1870; the Primitive Baptist Church from 1871; and the Wyant Home and the Layfield Homes that were built after 2000. The town holds the homes



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

A Listerine bottle dug up in the Beckwith House yard.

tour every year, but changes the homes each year.

Details

HISTORIC CLIFTON HOLIDAY HOMES TOUR
4-7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 2
Tickets Presale: \$25 adult/\$5 Child under 13
Day of Tour: \$30 adult/\$5 Child under 13
Credit card: \$31
Visit clifton-va.com/ for more.

Melissa Milne is a tour coordinator along with co-chair Darah Curran. The ghost stories don't surprise anyone. "Almost every old house in town has a ghost story, these houses are really old, who knows," said Milne. That's the story with the Beckwith House ghost. "It migrates from upstairs to downstairs, it's peaceful," she said.

CLIFTON BEGAN as a small village situated at a railroad depot on the Orange, Alexandria and Manassas Railroad in the 1860 timeframe, and in the advent of the Civil War, several locations were part of the war, including the Beckwith House where the Harringtons live. William Beckwith died in 1863 and left the home to his slaves, William Harris, his wife Harriet Harris, and their five children.

In March, 1869, the railroad station was constructed and was known as Devereux Station and then the Clifton Station, and the town acquired the red caboose that sits along side of the tracks in 1949. The houses exchanged hands through the years, and eventually the train ceased stopping in Clifton, except during their annual Clifton Day where the train acts as a mode of transportation from a stop in Springfield where there is more parking.

Milne lives in a newer house on a hill overlooking the town, but is still surrounded by the history of the area. When doing some yard work years ago, she found some "very old bottles and the remains of a still from the prohibition days," she said.

The Baber House, which dates back to 1880, and was a boarding home in the 1950s, that may have been the start of the ghost experiences. Owner Kathy Kalinowski has lived in the house since 1980, and knows the ghost story, but doesn't have any personal experiences. "An old lady in the

house who was taking care of a child who died," she said. The house sits on several logs which is consistent with other home foundations from that era. "We've had folks come with their metal detectors and they found bullets," said Kalinowski.

A newcomer to the tour is the Sawyer/Aspesi home, which is technically outside of the Clifton town limits, but is part of the tour nonetheless.

The bus will not stop at the home, but it's on the map and tour-goers can stop on their own. The house was built in 1989 but has an extensive holiday village set up, with one part named the "North Pole," while others are "Christmas in the City," "New England Village," and "Nicholas Nickleby." The North Pole has 62 lighted buildings, a sledding hill and stream.

During this visit to the Beckwith House, a set of car keys vanished, only to turn up 15 minutes later in a high traffic spot that had been looked at minutes before. Everyone present attributed it to the ghost.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The train set has several villages along the way.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON

Mark Harrington and his daughter Ana beside a wood stove that dates back to the Civil War Days.

NEWS

U.S. Marines and Battalion Chief Willie Bailey flank G&C owners Gregg and Christina Caldwell.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Teaming Up To Benefit Toys For Tots

For the past 13 years Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department has been a partner with the United States Marines Toys for Tots Program. This year, G&C Express Tire and Auto Service at 14008 Willard Road in Chantilly will serve as a hub for businesses

that want to help collect toys. G&C will also serve as a toy drop off site. Representatives of businesses that want to be a collection site may stop by G&C for a box and poster. The fire stations in Fairfax County will start collecting Toys for Tots on Friday, Nov. 24.

Santa, Motors, and Gifts For Children in Hospitals

As Christmas approaches, children everywhere will be watching the skies for Santa Claus. Here in Fairfax County some very special children won't have to wait until Christmas Eve. Since 1988, Santa and his elves have been rumbling down the streets of Fairfax County on motorcycles picking up and delivering toys to children in local hospitals.

Once again this year, Santa will temporarily trade in his sleigh and reindeer for a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and police escort. The Fairfax County Police Motor Squad, along with with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, Virginia State Police, Fairfax City Police, the Town of Vienna Police, and the Herndon Police will escort Santa on his annual "Ride for Children" – according to FCPD Media Relations Bureau.

During the second week of December, Santa and his elves will collect donated toys from local police stations, other government facilities, and eight Fairfax County Schools. On

Dec. 13 and 14 Santa and his helpers will deliver toys to children at INOVA Children's Hospital Child - Life Services Center and the Georgetown Hospital Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Some of the toys that are not handed out on the day of Santa's visit are left with the Child Life programs at each hospital. Those toys are used throughout the year to provide the children something to keep their mind off being in the hospital. Toys will also go to various local charities including Life with Cancer and the Herndon-Reston F.I.S.H. (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help).

Anyone wishing to make a donation can bring a new, unwrapped toy, game, book, or other gift to any Fairfax County Police Station, Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters, Fairfax County Print Shop at the Government Center, or the lobbies of the Pennino and Herrity Office Buildings. All donations should be made before 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 11.

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Protesting Gun Violence

Universal background checks tops the list for NRA protesters.

BY MARTI MOORE
THE CONNECTION

More than 70 people stood their ground on gun violence Nov. 14 and reminded the National Rifle Association of the need for tougher laws in the wake of another mass shooting two weeks ago in Texas — where 26 churchgoers were slain and 20 wounded in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs.

Northern Virginia residents held protest signs for motorists driving past the powerful lobby's national headquarters at 11250 Waples Mill Road in Fairfax.

Participants in these protests said they have seen cars speed past them in the turn lane during previous protests, and watched some drivers make other ill-mannered gestures.

"There are people coming into the NRA who don't like us," says Kris Gregory of the Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence. Although she believes association employees are respectful, Gregory



Activists against gun violence line the sidewalk Nov. 14 in front of the headquarters of the National Rifle Association at 11250 Waples Mill Road in Fairfax, where they hold protest signs for passing motorists as part of their awareness campaign. This regular gathering is an open-action protest and signs are provided to those who want to participate on the 14th of each month.

understands the NRA is open to the general public. She is aware visitors of the National Firearms Museum and firing range may not

appreciate the sight of protesters.

GREGORY NOTES some motorists respond favorably to their pub-

lic awareness campaign by shouting words of encouragement, beeping their car horns or giving a thumbs-up gesture in approval.

The presence of local law enforcement is low-key, she believes, "Because we are peaceful and non-violent." Fairfax County Police keeps a watchful eye as cruisers patrol Waples Mill Road. Only joint-action protests, Gregory states, warrant a large police presence — such as the CodePink "die-in" demonstration held Tuesday, June 21, 2016.

Gregory says her grassroots organization in Falls Church formed after the Dec. 14, 2012 massacre in Newtown, Conn. — where 20 school children and six adults were fatally shot inside the Sandy Hook Elementary School. The 20-year-old gunman first shot and killed his 52-year-old mother, a gun enthusiast, at home. Online reports say among the firearms used by the gunman was the Bushmaster AR-15 military-style assault rifle.

The soft-spoken volunteer activist states Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence and other advocacy groups in Northern Virginia meet in front of the NRA on the 14th of every month in

SEE VICTIMS, PAGE 11

PHOTO BY MARTI MOORE/THE CONNECTION

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The Children's CONNECTION 2017

This keepsake, award-winning issue will be filled with the artwork and writings of local children starring their families, friends, pets, schools and more. Our family readers are your best customers, who take time to savor this edition during the holidays and beyond.

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During the last week of each year, The Connection devotes its entire issue to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families.

The edition has won many awards. We welcome contributions from public and private schools, individuals and homeschoolers. We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens, or other creative efforts. To submit material, identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school if applicable, name of teacher and town of school location. E-mail to editors@connectionnewspapers.com. To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the CD to Children's Connection, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please send all submissions by December 27.



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Victims Remembered

FROM PAGE 10

memory of the lives lost in the Newtown slaying and to “raise awareness of gun violence and the toll it takes on all of us,” Gregory says.

She points out “So many people here are unaware the NRA headquarters is in our backyard.” Gregory believes the lobby has done a very good job of confusing people with claims that gun safety laws undermine the Second Amendment rights of citizens under the U.S. Constitution.

For example, most Americans understand people who purchase firearms are screened by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, run by the FBI since 1998. Gregory claims the process is voluntary in Virginia, and retailers and private dealers aren’t required to conduct background checks. She adds local gun safety advocates are calling for “universal background checks at the federal and state levels for all sales and transfers of firearms.”

Gregory isn’t opposed to the lawful ownership of weapons under the Bill of Rights. “A convicted felon or domestic abuser should not have the same gun rights as law-abiding citizens,” she maintains.

Gregory points out state legislator Del. Kenneth “Ken” R. Plum (D-36) of Reston is the lawmaker who has stood consistently with gun safety advocates each month, since their first protest Jan. 14, 2013.

“I find these mass shootings to be so offensive,” said Plum. The retired school teacher hasn’t forgotten about the souls lost at Virginia Tech and Sandy Hook.

“And the list grows longer and still nothing is done,” he explains Nov. 20.

The theme of the regular vigil at the NRA — “we are never going to forget the need for sensible gun laws” — is what propels Plum to attend as often as he can. He and other participants of the protest feel the urgency to keep reminding folks the killings are still going on. The state lawmaker emphasizes “We need to take action.”

“Nobody is proposing taking away everyone’s guns,” Plum maintains, “but we can take action on enacting sensible gun safety measures.” In January, the delegate will make his fourth try at General Assembly to introduce a statewide universal background check bill to remove loopholes in the purchase of guns.

Plum — the longest-serving member of the Virginia House of Delegates — is encouraged by re-



Kris Gregory of the Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence in Falls Church stands on the sidewalk Nov. 14 at 11250 Waples Mill Road, and remembers victims of last week's mass shooting in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.



Carol P. Luten of Falls Church shows a proposed state license plate Nov. 14, she says is designed as a “moving billboard from city-to-city and state-to-state to help create awareness and a movement for change.” Learn more online about the new vehicle tag at www.stopgunviolence.info, and visit www.csgv.org and www.concernedcitizensva.org for details about their movement to stop gun violence.

cent winners of the Nov. 7 General Election, led by executive branch team Gov.-elect Ralph S. Northam, Lt. Gov.-elect Justin E. Fairfax and the re-elected Attorney General Mark R. Herring. Plum states in his recent written opinion a more evenly split partisan composition in the legislative branch has worked out in the past to help state lawmakers focus on problem solving versus “simply getting credit.”

NEXT MONTH'S PROTEST at the NRA headquarters marks five

years since the killing spree at Sandy Hook Elementary School. An interfaith prayer vigil, led by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, is planned for Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. to noon by the Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

“We have been here without fail since Jan. 14, 2013,” Gregory said, “for all victims and survivors of gun violence.”

PHOTOS BY MARTI MOORE/THE CONNECTION

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Fairfax County Parkway Widening Fairfax County

Public Information Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2017

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Presentation starts at 7 p.m.

**VDOT Northern Virginia District Building
Potomac Conference Room
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030**

If the event is cancelled due to inclement weather, the alternate date will be **Wednesday, December 13, 2017.**

Find out about plans to widen Fairfax County Parkway (Route 286) from four to six lanes between Route 29 (Lee Highway) and Route 123 (Ox Road). The project will also include an interchange that will consolidate Popes Head Road and/or the future Shirley Gate Road extension, improvements to the existing Fairfax County Parkway Trail, and a new shared-use path to fill in gaps along the existing trail.

Stop by between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to view displays and learn more about the project and its preliminary design, including interchange options. VDOT will hold a presentation beginning at 7 p.m. Project staff will be available to answer your questions.

Review project information at the VDOT project website (www.virginiadot.org/projects), at the information meeting, or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call ahead at 703-259-2377 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Give your written comments at the meeting, or submit them by **December 17, 2017** to Ms. Angel Tao, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference “Fairfax County Parkway Widening” in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0286-029-259, P101
UPC: 107937

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

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

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 santaexpresslane.com.

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.

DEC. 1-24

"Peekaboo! A Nativity Play." 8 p.m. at The John Swayze Theatre, New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. The Hub Theatre presents "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play." Call 703-674-3177 or visit www.thehubtheatre.org.

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.

Holiday Extravaganza. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at South County High School, 501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Cookies with Santa, Child ID and fingerprinting by Fairfax County Sheriff, Santa's Book Emporium and craft vendors. Call 540-847-1467 or visit www.southcountypptso.org.

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



Art Exhibit

On Saturday, Dec. 2, "Jimi Hendrix," by Michael Edwards is part of the 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. Exhibit closes Dec. 30. Email ssreichbart@verizon.net.

and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. \$20. Call 703-922-6438 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. Email concerts@kirkwoodpres.com, 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.

Autism Awareness Fundraiser. 5:30 p.m. at the Epicure Cafe, 11104 Lee Highway, Fairfax. This show will have student performers as well as SPUR, Donna Frost (Nashville), and others performing holiday music in addition to raffles for prizes including a new electric guitar, and donations. Visit spuronline.com/jjball or call 703-352-9193.

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.

TUESDAY/DEC. 5

Genealogy Speaker. 7 p.m. at the Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road. Burke Historical Society speaker will be Beach Carré, who will begin a four-part series called "Genealogy In-Depth" with a tutorial



Holiday Extravaganza

On Saturday, Dec. 2, Santa will be on hand for the Holiday Extravaganza, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at South County High School, 501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Cookies with Santa, Child ID and fingerprinting by Fairfax County Sheriff, Santa's Book Emporium and craft vendors. Call 540-847-1467 or visit southcountypptso.org.

on using Census records. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

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 mkravcr@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.

The Messiah - The Northern Virginia Chorale. 8 p.m. at St. Mark's Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. Orchestra and professional vocal soloists will perform an evening of selections from Handel's Messiah. \$25 for Adults; \$10 for students (12-24); Children under 12 free. Visit www.northernvirginiachorale.org or call 703-239-2180.

Carolers and Stage Performers. 8 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Performers from the Workhouse Cabaret and Theatre series take the stage to perform the most loved music of the season. \$15 adults; \$10 student. Visit workhousearts.org.

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 www.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. 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.

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/.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

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

MONDAY/DEC. 18

Bob Brown Puppets Holiday Show. 10:30 a.m. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Friday Morning Music Club. noon-1 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fmmc.org.

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

'The Nutcracker' at Center for the Arts

Creative partnership of Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Ballet.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax Symphony and The Fairfax Ballet are combining artistic strengths to spotlight talented local artists, musicians and dancers, with a performance of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" at the Center for the Arts. "Both organizations have a long history of producing quality performing arts and arts education programs that help build community and develop a capacity for creativity," said James McKeever, Board Chairman, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO). "The arts are vital to building a balanced, successful society."

Fairfax Ballet Artistic Director Margaret Virkus said that "by performing together with Chris Zimmerman conducting Tchaikovsky's masterpiece, the audience has a rare opportunity to experience live orchestral accompaniment together with this timeless holiday dance classic."

"The Nutcracker" at the Center for the Arts will include 50 musicians and nearly 60 dancers. The performance will have an



RACHEL NEVILLE/COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Lindsey Croop, Dance Theatre of Harlem, in performance.

innovative, digital backdrop to create memorable scenes,

This performance of "The Nutcracker" will welcome two guest performers from the renowned Dance Theatre of Harlem; dancers Lindsey Croop and Anthony Santos.

"I'm excited by this unique opportunity



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Clifton's Ana Victoria Smith, 16, in performance.

to dance the role of Sugar Plum with The Fairfax Ballet and Fairfax Symphony. I look forward to performing for the local community and providing support to the student dancers," said Croop.

"I know a lot of national attention has been drawn to ballet's lack of diversity

Where & When

"The Nutcracker" presented by the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet at George Mason University, Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Performance Dec. 16, 2017 at 4 p.m. Tickets: \$39, \$53, \$65. Call 703-993-8888 or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. Performance information also available at Fairfax Symphony www.fairfaxsymphony.org and Fairfax Ballet at www.rsbdance.com.

which extends from its aristocratic European roots. I'm so happy that this is given more awareness," added Croop. "But I also want to make sure my narrative includes how beneficial ballet has been for me throughout my life. It's been a backbone throughout my life that has kept me looking forward; continuing with belief and aspiration for the future. Dancing as a member of Dance Theater of Harlem has taught me to celebrate my heritage rather than try to hide it or blend in. I think that's the unique power of art."

Clifton's Ana Victoria Smith, 16, is performing the key role of Clara, the ballet's young heroine. "It is truly an honor to perform such an iconic role that most every young ballerina dreams of dancing. I am certainly one of those."

"Performing with a live orchestra is an incredible experience. You become surrounded by the intensity of the music. It brings the artistry of the performance to a whole other level," added Smith.

A partnership of two of Fairfax County's long-standing performance organization are ready to light-up the holidays with their "Nutcracker."

Fantasy Adventure for the Holidays

The Providence Players to perform "The Phantom Tollbooth."

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

"For our 20th anniversary season, we wanted to do something non-traditional in the holiday time slot. We have always liked the idea of presenting a fantasy rather than a traditional holiday show," said Chip Gertzog, director, Providence Players' production of "The Phantom Tollbooth."

Adapted by Susan Nanus from the classic young adult novel by Norton Juster with illustrations by Jules Feiffer, "The Phantom Tollbooth" centers upon Milo who is dealing with the tedium of school and learning, along with pressures to act out from the Demons of Ignorance. Then Milo goes on a fantastic journey with his trusty timekeeping companion dog named Tock. The journey takes them through adventures in the Land of Wisdom. As they travel, Milo and Tock meet many memorable characters. And Milo learns many valuable lessons to take through life.

"Audiences, young and old, will be captivated by both the fantasy aspect of the play and by the sophistication and hu-

mor," said Gertzog.

Veteran actor Talia Cutler, 12, plays the central character Milo. For Cutler, "Milo is very bored and never knows what to do. What Milo does have is curiosity. So, Milo goes on a marvelous adventure in exploring and discovering strange lands far and wide."

Long-time Providence Players member Derek Bradley portrays The Humbug – a character who is undependable, caring only for himself. But, Bradley plans on making the character "fun and part of the pure entertainment" of the show.

Susan Kaplan, another long-time member of the Providence Players portrays two characters; the kindly Spelling Bee who treasures education as well as Everpresent Wordsnatcher, who points out the importance of word choices. For Kaplan, the play "offers good lessons for today's world; the importance of education and kindness, the



PHOTO BY CHIP GERTZOG/

COURTESY OF PROVIDENCE PLAYERS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Amanda Ranowsky as Tock the Watchdog and Talia Cutler as Milo in the Providence Players of Fairfax production of "The Phantom Tollbooth."

Where & When

Providence Players of Fairfax present "The Phantom Tollbooth" at James Lee Community Center Theatre, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. Performances: Dec. 8 to Dec. 16, 2017. Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets \$17 (General Admission). Call 703-425-6782 or visit www.providenceplayers.org/tickets/

Note: "The Phantom Tollbooth" is co-produced with The Young Hearts, a group of teens, who raise funds to battle blood cancers and other diseases. Half of all net proceeds from this production will be donated by The Young Hearts to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

need to work together and for compromise, as well as the need for tolerance and acceptance."

Amanda Ranowsky portrays Tock the Watchdog. "Tock is a hybrid of a clock and a dog, literally, a 'Watchdog.' Tock is a friend, protector, and sidekick for Milo," said Rasnowsky. "There's something for everyone to enjoy with this show. Adults will appreciate the wittiness, and the many little 'play-on-words' that pop up through our characters and dialogue. Kids will love the fantasy and adventure of it all."

"The cleverness of "The Phantom Tollbooth" and the humor and sophistication of the language is marvelous. We want young and old alike to enjoy themselves and have fun," said Gertzog.

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Announcements

Obituary

Dennis "Denny" B. Moore, age 68, of Woodbridge passed away at home with his wife and daughter at his side, on November 24, 2017. Devoted husband of 45 years and best friend of Linda C. (Gorham) Moore, hero of daughter, Valerie A. Moore and future father-in-law of Jason Crawford. He is survived by his mother, Sally R. Moore, formerly of Alexandria. Denny was preceded in death by his father, Norman R. Moore, in-laws, Carlton H. and Vivian M. Gorham of Alexandria, brother, Richard W. Moore of Alexandria, and faithful granddog, Prowler. Graduate of the 1967 Class of GW High School, he later served in the US Army where he was awarded the Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam. He later retired from Lucent Technologies after 33 years. The family requests contributions be made to ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer (www.zerocancer.org) or Capital Caring Hospice (www.capitalcaring.org).

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Announcements

LETTERS

Being Grateful Every Day

To the Editor:

The omnipotent invading smell of apple pies and turkey wafts up to your nose as your mouth waters and after waiting hour after hour you finally hear the front door burst open. Laughter and greetings fill the air as family and friends enter the warm cozy hearth of your home from the crisp cold night outside. You rush down to meet them and you are greeted and enveloped into a flurry of loving warm hugs. This is Thanksgiving, the holiday of thanks and one of my most favorite holidays.

Thanksgiving is a special holiday, in which everyone gets together and celebrates the blessings bestowed upon them by God and thanking Him for them. In Islam there is no one single day where we give thanks, instead we are expected to give thanks and be grateful every day. The Holy Quran states, "Then seek sustenance from God, and worship Him, and be grateful to Him. Unto Him will you be brought back" (29:18). Not only are we expected to be grateful to God but to others as well. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be Upon Him) said, "One who is not grateful to others is not grateful to God."

This Thanksgiving it is important to keep in mind the true meaning behind the holiday, and remember the importance of gratefulness, not only on this day but on every other day as well.

Khafia Choudhary
Springfield

Caring for Each Other

To the Editor:

In response to the article recently written by Mary Kimm ("Give Locally in Fairfax County," Connection, Nov. 15-21), in regard to giving to those in need during the holidays, I think that it is important for articles like these to be written.

While it is obvious that we should give to the less fortunate, our society tends to forget about helping others because we are so consumed with ourselves. I really like the encouragement of donating locally because it allows people to start small and gives them a realistic goal. It also allows us to be more involved in the community around us.

A thing to consider is that people may not be willing to help those who are poor because they believe it's their own fault. This goes to

show how stereotypes are detrimental to our society and cause division rather than unity. It is important to realize that many homeless people and people who are struggling financially are in the situation that they are in due to no fault of their own.

I am not saying that you must help out or you are a bad person, however I believe that it is important for our society as a whole to be more caring to each other.

Bryan Kim
Student, James Madison University

Public's Role in Reducing Gun Violence

To the Editor:

Thanks for your article "Protesting Gun Violence," which focused on the persistent efforts of a number of groups to reduce gun violence. I applaud the author's recognition that these organizations focus on gun violence prevention rather than "gun control." How we talk about this problem is one key to solving it.

Just as the language and duration of media coverage of suicides influences subsequent copycat suicides, so does coverage of mass shootings. Unrelenting focus on the motive of the murderer, the body count, and weapons used only fuels the next murderer. The term "gun control" merely draws resistance from those who mistrust government in all its forms. Instead, we must be honest about the costs to our community and what is standing in the way of preventing future tragedies. Moreover, we must support legislators when they focus on proven, evidence-based measures to prevent future gun violence.

The Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act/Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act (S.1539/H.R.3207) seeks to close the outrageous loopholes in federal law that allow stalkers and non-spouse romantic partners convicted of domestic abuse to buy and possess firearms. I strongly urge all readers to call Senators Kaine and Warner, and Representatives Beyer, Comstock, and Connelly and insist that they sign on as co-sponsors without delay.

Mass shootings gain national attention, but every life lost to gun violence is tragic. Statistics show that the holiday season is a particular time of increased risk for domestic violence involving guns. There are ways to reduce gun violence to make every season safer for families, but change won't hap-

pen until the public demands that it does.

Gun violence is a public health crisis, not a challenge for the next shooter, and we must begin to address it as such.

Luci Cedrone
McLean

Gun Violence and Domestic Abuse

To the Editor:

No one approves of gun violence. I think we can safely start with that assumption. The issue seems to be whether any government – state or federal – has a role to play in setting policy that would seek to reduce gun violence.

Clearly, this question raises a lot of angst on all sides of the issue. I sincerely hope that if we can take a practical approach and ask legislators on both side of the aisle to work together, perhaps we can find compromise.

What a novel idea in politics today, working together to find compromise! I, for one, am grateful for any politician willing to work with the other side to find common sense solutions.

Del. Kathleen Murphy has done this. In 2016, she worked with Republican legislators in the Virginia House of Delegates to pass a bill that reduces the likelihood of a violent family member shooting someone in the household. Thanks to her, any person convicted of second domestic violence offense will be guilty of a felony and prohibited from possessing a firearm. This change in the law required the support of both parties in the Virginia General Assembly. The outcome is a textbook example of a common sense compromise.

In the past session, Del. Murphy introduced legislation that would further limit gun ownership by those convicted of domestic abuse. It is refreshing to see Murphy's continued commitment to the issue and her belief that people of good will can come together and get things done.

Kate Phillips
Vienna

Write The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Send to:

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Alexandria VA 22314
Call 703-917-6444
or email
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

BULLETIN

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

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 for more.

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 homestops 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. Visit www.NOVAReliefCenter.org

- City of Fairfax – City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St.
- 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
- Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 530, Fairfax
- Springfield Governmental Center, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield
- Office of Supervisor John Cook, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke
- Franconia Governmental Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria

MONDAY/DEC. 4

Advocacy Day. 6-9 p.m. at the Gatehouse Center, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church. Fairfax County Council of PTAs (FCCPTA) is hosting its first ever Advocacy Day event just for you as a PTA member. This free event is designed to provide an opportunity to meet, engage, and build relationships with local elected officials on the Fairfax County School Board and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Visit www.fcpta.org for more.

TUESDAY/DEC. 5

Blue Christmas Service. 7:30 p.m. at the Pohick Episcopal Church is located at 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. A Blue Christmas service recognizes the difficulties of the season for those experiencing grief, sadness, or loss. Eucharistic service of meditation, music, candle lighting, and prayers of consolation and healing calls to mind the comfort, hope, and encouragement of the season. Visit www.pohick.org or call 703-339-6572.

MONDAY/DEC. 11

Community Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Braddock District Supervisor John Cook and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will host a community meetings focused on specific sections of Braddock Road this fall. This meeting is on the Burke Lake intersection. The goal of the Braddock Road Multimodal Study is to develop commuting improvements for the corridor from Guinea Road to I-495 to Ravensworth Road. Visit fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/braddockroadmmstudy/.

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Giving Thanks for the Going



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Four hours up north with moderate hassle first thing Thanksgiving-Thursdays morning. Dinner and all the fixings with family and friends upon arrival, after a midday break. Conversations and such with young, medium and old (with yours truly being the oldest of our generation) until 1:15 a.m., (a recent time record for many). Up at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast with more casual talk and noshing. Out the door at 9:15-ish heading back for an immediate day-after return trip home scheduled to make an early Friday afternoon chemotherapy infusion. Infusion completed and on the final way home, a stop at the supermarket at 4 p.m. – since we had no Thanksgiving leftovers (turkey sandwiches in particular) to satiate the deprived. Dinner as soon as possible since we were both hungry and tired after our up-and-back. Turkey breast, mashed potatoes and peas for our own leftovers, off-and-on television and napping and then we both called it at 9:15 p.m. or so.

Twelve hours later, we were both awake. What a sleep! What a 24 hours! What a wonderful holiday! I wouldn't characterize it as an ordeal. However, it was a bit of an undertaking given my Friday afternoon commitment; my first-ever, post-holiday, having-to-rush-back-from-out-of-town excursion. Though in previous years, we may have occasionally travelled up and back in the same day, when our route was two-hours to Pennsylvania where the in-laws lived, we are older and presumably wiser now and somewhat less able and inclined to travel with as little margin and rest.

Compounded of course with Kenny-with-cancer being mostly behind the wheel, a permanent designated driver since I don't drink and still see pretty well at night. Still, I'm hardly the driver I used to be and the affect of the holiday festivities on my fellow drivers is always cause for concern.

But all's well that ends well, except for the piles of Thanksgiving day-afters left where we last saw them, miles away. Nevertheless, we are happy to have made the effort, despite the less-than-ideal timing. As difficult as this kind of schedule was/had to be, I can't let, as much as possible anyway, my cancer stuff: infusions, 24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, quarterly scans and yearly MRIs and quarterly appointments with my oncologist impact my semi-normal life. In fact, my oncologist has been a major proponent of my "quality of life," an advisory he has regularly encouraged.

I've always felt, from the beginning of my diagnosis/prognosis, that I was not going to live my life any differently than I had previous to 2/27/09. As challenging as that proved to be on many occasions, my goal has been to try and integrate my life around my chemotherapy – and vice versa, and to not let too many chips fall along the wayside. Moreover, my philosophy has been not to bucket a list either, but rather to simply live my usual and customary life and not be affected by my "13-month to two-year prognosis." If I was doing bucket list-type things, things that I would ordinarily not be doing, I felt that would be reinforcing a negative: that I was going to die prematurely, rather than encouraging a positive: that I am going to live.

For me, maintaining the status quo and continuing to do the little things that characterize who I am and what I value seemed more appropriate and more Kenny-like. Not sharing Thanksgiving dinner with relatives with whom I've shared a table going on nearly 40 years wouldn't have helped at all. Not now, or ever.

Finding balance – and sanity in the midst of a battle royal – vs a "terminal" diagnosis, stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, is all it's cracked up to be. A little fun, make that a lot of fun, never hurt anyone, especially those of us fighting for our lives.

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

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