

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Loudoun ♦ Clifton

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ GIVE LOCALLY, PAGE 11 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 14

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAYNOR VAN DER MERWE



Performing in the "Snow" song are (back) Claire Youk, Anika Ahamed and Ethan Brower; (middle) Sam Wolff, Saaya Patel and Nadiya Vandrapu; and (front) Dewi Vollmer.

Tragedy on the Road

PAGE 2

High Rents, Low Income

PAGE 3

Encore Arts
Performs 'Santa's
Special Delivery'

PAGE 8

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Centreville Motorcycle Crash Kills Lorton Man, 27

A crash between a car and a motorcycle last week took the life of a 27-year-old Lorton man. It happened on Route 28 north in Centreville, and the person killed was Zafeer Piracha.

Fairfax County police officers from the nearby Sully District Station responded to the crash last Thursday, Nov. 16. at 9:01 p.m. Preliminarily, detectives determined that the driver of a 2016 Acura TLX was traveling northbound on Route 28, prior to Westfields Boulevard, as was Piracha on a 2022 Kawasaki.

According to police, the Acura “struck Piracha, causing him to separate from the motorcycle.” Piracha was pronounced dead at the scene, and the other driver was taken to a local hospital for treatment of injuries not considered life-threatening. While officers try to sort out the details leading up to this fatal collision, they’re continuing to investigate whether speed and/or alcohol were factors in the incident.

Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit would also like to speak with anyone who may have witnessed the crash or has any information about this case. They’re asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477) or by going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>.

— BONNIE HOBBS

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2023

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www.DelRayArtisans.org
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One Juvenile Passenger Has Died

One of the juvenile passengers from the Nov. 20, 2023 crash on Pioneer Lane in McLean has died from injuries sustained in the crash, according to a police report on Nov. 27. Four of the juvenile occupants remain hospitalized. Other occupants have since been released from the hospital.

On Nov. 20, 2023, at 4:56 a.m., officers responded to a single-vehicle crash in the 2600 block of Pioneer Lane. Six of the seven juvenile occupants were taken to the hospital with injuries considered to be life-threatening.

Preliminarily, detectives determined the 17-year-old driver was traveling southbound in a 2003 Lincoln Aviator on Shreve Road at a high rate of speed. As he crested the top of a hill, he lost control of the vehicle and struck a tree near Pioneer Lane. The vehicle then spun, ejecting five of the teenagers from the vehicle. One teen was

trapped and was extricated from the vehicle. The five passengers ejected from the vehicle were not wearing seatbelts. All six passengers remain hospitalized with serious injuries.

Initially, the driver was arrested on scene for Driving Under the Influence. After consultation with the Office of the Fairfax Commonwealth’s Attorney, he will not be charged today, and charges are pending as the investigation continues. Detectives believe speed and alcohol were factors in the crash.

Detectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit are continuing to investigate and working closely with the Office of the Fairfax Commonwealth’s Attorney to determine when charges will be placed.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.



Join us for this special visit to Christmases of the past.
Saturday, December 2nd, 10am - 5 pm

With games, live music, crafts, Santa, and more, peek into holiday celebrations at Gunston Hall in the 1920s and the 1780s.

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NEWS

Impact of Fairfax's High Rental Costs and Low Income

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series.

Evicition court is Friday in Fairfax County. Some county residents who are living on the edge cannot keep up with the area's high rental costs, given their low incomes and eviction proceedings are underway. It is causing immense stress for families and individuals and fractures their dreams.

In Fairfax County District Court, if the tenant does not comply with the 5-day non-payment notice, the landlord brings proof of the notice to the General District Court to obtain a Summons for Unlawful Detainer, which is a civil claim for eviction. The landlord and the tenant will appear in court.

Joe Fay, the executive director of the non-profit FACETS in Fairfax County, said that on the Friday morning before Thanksgiving, 319 cases were on the docket in Fairfax County Court for eviction. Most individuals who appear in landlord/tenant court do not have an attorney representing them, and the process can be confusing.

County residents are stuck in cycles of poverty with this year's elevated inflation and rising household debt.

"There are a few things that you have to pay for if you cut to the bone," Fay said on Tuesday, Nov. 21. "You need to eat, a place to sleep, and the power and water on. ... And there are other things if you are trying to work. You have to figure out child care, which has become a challenge. If you are on public transportation, you take the bus," he said.

FACETS is one of the "largest social safety nets for our most vulnerable and marginalized neighbors, providing emergency shelter, life-saving services, and assistance in securing housing for neighbors in need," according to its website.

In 2023, Fairfax County has 64.7 percent higher Fair Market Rents for 2-bedroom housing at \$1,838 than the average of Virginia at \$1,116, according Virginia Fair Market Rents, USHousingData.com. Virginia Fair Market Rents rated Fairfax County the most expensive jurisdiction to live in out of the 133 counties in Virginia.

"Thirty percent AMI [area median income] for a family of four in Fairfax County is \$45,200," Fay said. At the \$15 an hour minimum wage, that would be a yearly salary of around \$30,000. You will not rent a \$2,000-a-month apartment in the county," Fay said.

FACETS's programs offer basic needs assistance and comprehensive case management, along with an emergency pantry and a hot meals program for people who are experiencing homelessness. The organization's Changing Lives Campaign raises flexible funds to provide emergency response to people in need. This emergency financial assistance includes help with rent, utilities, medical bills, transportation, childcare, and

other urgent needs that can be a tipping point for a crisis that could push people into homelessness. During the winter, FACETS operates a hypothermia prevention and response program in partnership with Fairfax County and 34 faith communities.

On April 12, 2023, Leah Tenorio, Director of Hispanic Ministry and Community Outreach at Good Shepherd Catholic Church testified at the Fairfax County Budget Hearing about evictions and their heavy cost. Tenorio is in charge of the Emergency Assistance Program taking calls and walk-in requests mostly for rent and utilities. Tenorio was surprised at how many callers had court notices, eviction notices and/or unlawful detainers. She said that people who called for rent assistance were short \$150 on their rent and that they were issued a notice on day six of the month that they must appear in court. "They are being charged additional fines, fees and penalties – all of which we end up helping to pay – which takes away funds that could have helped another family," Tenorio said.

The collective noun "the homeless," is dehumanizing. It can create negative stereotypes and stigma. In day-to-day life, people, including policymakers and advocates, have used the word "homeless" as a noun for years. Instead use construction like "people without housing," states the newest Associated Press Stylebook. Other variations are "those struggling with homelessness" or "people experiencing homelessness."

So who are the people experiencing homelessness? Some are individuals and families who sleep on the couches of friends and family, saying it is just temporary. Other individuals experiencing homelessness may be sleeping in tents and vehicles. Living in automobiles parked in a public right-of-way is illegal, according to Fairfax County Police, adding another element of uncertainty.

There were 1,310 people experiencing homelessness in Fairfax County on a single night in January, according to the 2023 point-in-time count. There are limitations to a point-in-time count, though, as it cannot reach all people who are experiencing homelessness in the community.

Officials in Seattle, Washington, released a report in December 2021 questioning the point-in-time counts claiming they undercount the number of people without housing in their area. Seattle officials developed



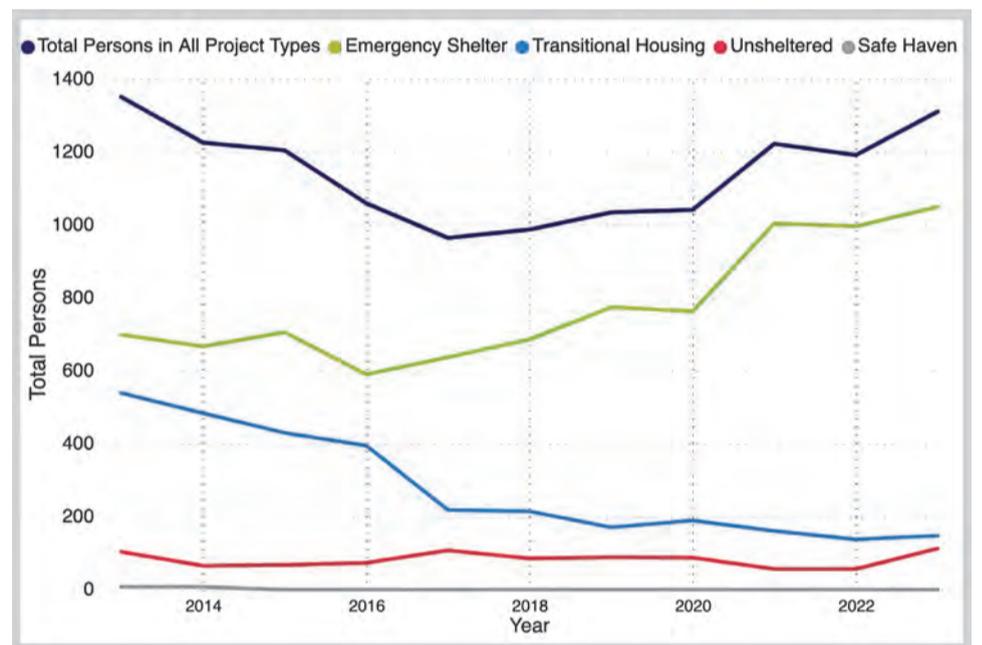
FACETS

Staff at FACETS



LINKEDIN PHOTO

Joe Fay



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Point-in-Time Count - 2023, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness

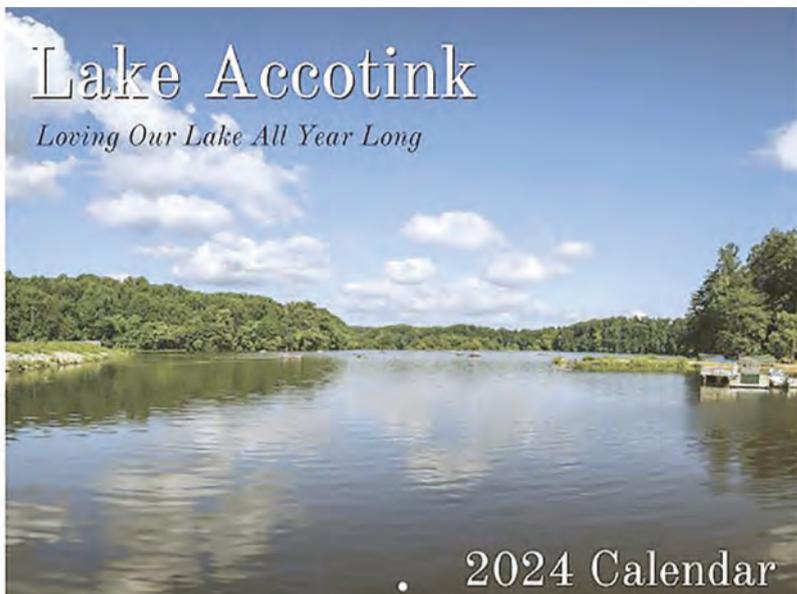
Year	Total Persons in All Project Types	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Safe Haven
2023	1310	1049	148	113	0
2022	1191	996	138	57	0
2021	1222	1004	161	57	0
2020	1041	763	190	88	0
2019	1034	774	171	89	0
2018	987	686	215	86	0
2017	964	637	219	108	0
2016	1059	590	395	74	0
2015	1204	706	430	68	0
2014	1225	667	484	66	8
2013	1350	699	539	104	8

SCREENSHOT FAIRFAX COUNTY

Point-in-Time Count - 2023, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness

what they believe is a more accurate way of counting individuals who are unhoused than the federal count. "Integrating data from systems beyond those focused on homeless response enables better estimates of homelessness," states the report.

Compared to the 11,700 people counted under the federal Point in Time Count method for one night in January, Seattle officials say they estimate more than 40,800 people experienced homelessness in Seattle "at some point in the year."



The 2024 calendar, just in time for a holiday gift this year.



Ongoing outreach to save the lake.

Lake Accotink Dredging: Still on Minds in Springfield

A colorful 2024 calendar's mantra: "Loving Our Lake All Year Long"

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Over the last few years as the silt piled up in Lake Accotink, heated discussions on what to do with the lake amounted in a resolution to let it be and through time, it will become more a wetlands park than a lake park with boating, fishing and watersports.

This decision was based partly on the expense that dredging it again would entail, but also which is more environmentally friendly.

Lake Accotink supporters are not done though, and have launched the sale of a 2024 Lake Accotink calendar to keep this community centerpiece on everyone's mind. Shirley Marshal Kesler is a lake supporter who lives nearby, and she gathered the photos and created the calendar.

"All the images are a lens of how people are celebrating the beauty of the park," Kes-

ler said. "We're saying 'look how beautiful it is, it's worth it.'"

Over 40 pictures were used to create the calendar and the photographers are listed on the site as well. "We aimed to use as many photos from those park-loving photographers as we could to capture their different perspectives of the beauty of Lake Accotink," it says on the calendar website.

Kesler worked with a calendar creation company called "Year Box," and came up with the final draft. Throughout the years, lots of lake visits resulted in pictures of all types and many people sent them in for the calendar, although many were not the right resolution for a print product. The smaller ones were still used at the bottom of some of the months as well as some quotes that were collected at the meetings.

Fate of the Lake

Although the calendar focuses on the lake and all the good times at the lake, it

didn't start out as a "save the lake," tool, but a last-ditch effort couldn't hurt. A final decision is expected in December so there is a glimmer of hope. "We're hoping it reminds people of what's at stake," Kesler said.

In late fall 2023, county officials met again and arrived at a plan for the lake, taking in consideration of resident's comments, staff recommendations from the Board of Supervisors and the cost, it said on the county website. "The dredging of Lake Accotink would cause significant environmental and social impacts and cost approximately \$400 million over the next twenty-five years. The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) staff recommend that Lake Accotink not be dredged and that a smaller offline lake not be constructed," their resolution, dated Oct. 30, 2023, stated on the county website.



The March page screams springtime at the lake.

The lake supporters are still hanging on though, and there is one bit of text on the calendar that urges people to contact their county supervisor with their message about Lake Accotink. "People need to understand that this extra step is needed," Kesler added.

Recognizing Pedestrian Safety as a Public Health Concern

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is a global event that takes place annually on the third Sunday in November. This year, on Nov. 19, Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets hosted a World Day of Remembrance event at Wakefield High School in Arlington. Fairfax County Health Department staff participated in the event to share new data on the state of pedestrian safety in the county. Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets is a non-profit organization whose mission is to end pedestrian and cyclist fatalities and injuries caused by motor vehicles.

On average, there are 172 crashes involving pedestrians every year in Fairfax County and Black and Hispanic people are both injured and killed at more than double the rate of white people.

— Fairfax County Health Department

The World Day of Remembrance event recognized the 18 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in Arlington, Alexandria, and

Fairfax County since November 20, 2022 as well as unnamed pedestrians who were killed or seriously injured in the region. Sev-

enteen of these 18 deaths occurred in Fairfax County.

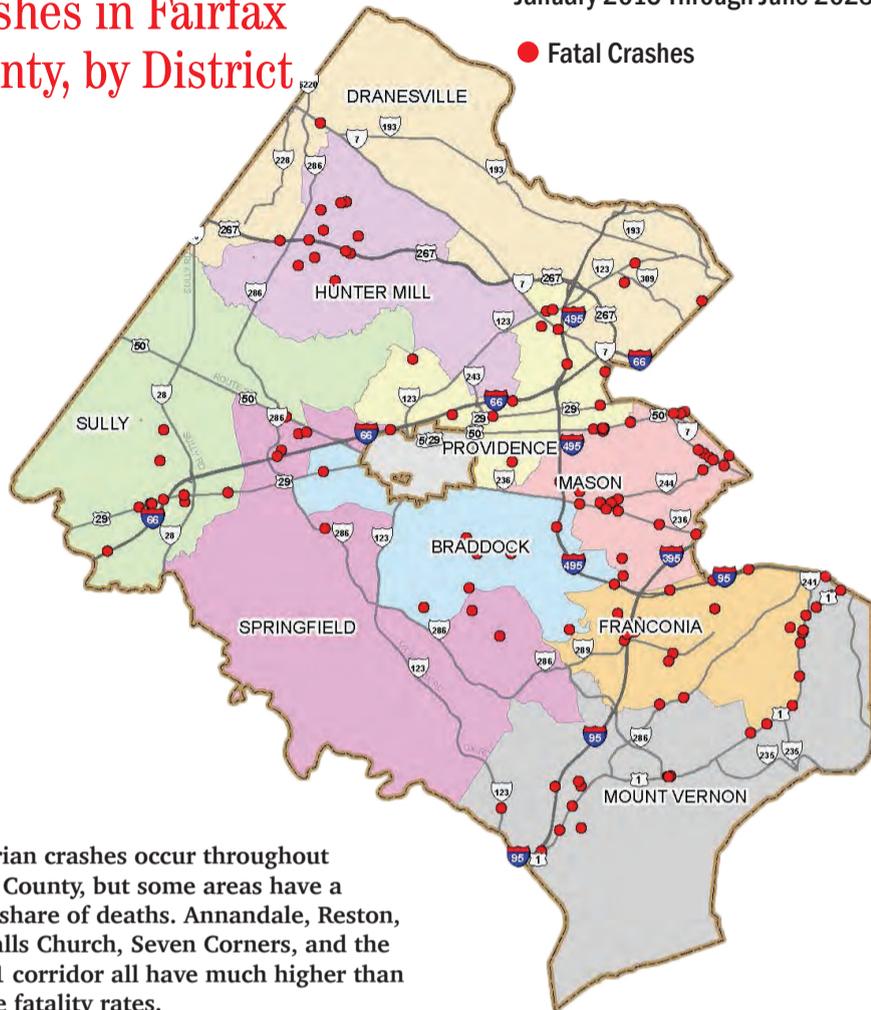
On average, there are 172 crashes involving pedestrians every year in Fairfax County and new data shows that Black and Hispanic people are both injured and killed at more than double the rate of white people.

"We have analyzed the past eight-and-a-half years of traffic crash data and see traffic safety, especially for pedestrians, as a health issue that requires a multidisciplinary, systems level response," said Anna Ricklin,

SEE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, PAGE 5
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Fatal Pedestrian Crashes in Fairfax County, by District

134 Fatal Crash Points from January 2015 Through June 2023



Pedestrian crashes occur throughout Fairfax County, but some areas have a higher share of deaths. Annandale, Reston, West Falls Church, Seven Corners, and the Route 1 corridor all have much higher than average fatality rates.

FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Pedestrian Safety

FROM PAGE 4

MHS, Health in All Policies Manager at the Fairfax County Health Department. A forthcoming pedestrian and bike safety report will take a deeper dive on the state of pedestrian and bicycle safety in Fairfax County as well as recommended actions to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Traffic safety is recognized as a public health concern in the U.S. and across the world. Healthy People 2030, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, set a target to reduce deaths from motor vehicle crashes by 10%.

In recognition of this solemn day, the Fairfax County Health Department developed a fact sheet, Pedestrian Safety Isn't Just a Transportation Problem, to highlight factors related to pedestrian safety as a public health concern. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/pedestrian-safety-fact-sheet-2023.pdf>

Source: Fairfax County Health Department

BULLETIN BOARD

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

AEROMEXICO TO LAUNCH SERVICE FROM DULLES TO MEXICO CITY

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

VIENNA TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTS REVISED ZONING CODE

After an extensive, three-year process to update the Town of Vienna's zoning code,

the Vienna Town Council adopted the revised plan at its regular meeting last week at Town Hall. The newly adopted ordinance will take effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The purpose of the project referred to as Code Create Vienna was to clarify, simplify, reorganize, and update key chapters of the Town code. Among other things, the update provides opportunities for residents to enhance outdoor living space to accommodate modern lifestyles, requires more green space in commercial areas and gives businesses greater flexibility to explore more commercial opportunities. To learn more about the recently adopted zoning and subdivision code, visit www.viennava.gov/codeupdates.

MCLEAN NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS

The club was founded in 1969 to create new

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

Fairfax Water

NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 14, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2023, 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, 2024, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,640 to \$4,800*
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$22,090 to \$22,910.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,790 to \$1,830.*
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$44 to \$47.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$14.95 to \$15.60.*
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.65 to \$3.84 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$4.00 to \$4.10.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$53 to \$57.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
- An increase in the Overhead Charges for Labor from 102% to 104%.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge Inspection Fee from \$42 to \$46.

*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 Water is also proposing a \$241 million budget for calendar year 2024¹. Water sales are expected to provide \$212 million, and the remaining \$29 million is expected from connection charges, investment income, and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2023	2024
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 63,208	\$ 67,746
Power and Utilities	14,457	15,190
Chemicals	12,068	13,625
Purchased Water	7,511	8,913
Supplies and Materials	5,591	6,449
Insurance	1,471	1,330
Fuel	821	930
Postage	602	620
Contractual Services	12,253	12,855
Professional Services	1,236	1,480
Other	2,295	2,739
Sub-Total	121,513	131,877
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(11,141)	(11,014)
Total	\$ 110,372	\$ 120,863

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$49,244,258
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$58,974,000

¹ 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.

Visit fairfaxwater.org/rates to view a copy of the proposed changes.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Susan Miller at 703-289-6018. 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, 2023, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

Fairfax Funds Innovators

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

I am pleased to share that Fairfax County recently announced the winners of the first ever round of grant funding for the Fairfax Founders Fund, one of many County programs designed to help businesses grow in Fairfax County. The five companies chosen represent a group of visionary startups that exemplify local innovation and entrepreneurship. Winners were selected for the potential of their innovative tech products and demonstrated business growth opportunities. Each business will receive up to \$50,000 that will provide a significant boost to their ventures and showcase the region's dynamic and thriving startup ecosystem. As a serial entrepreneur, I strongly supported this program when it came to the



Board for consideration and equally strongly support the need to develop and grow "Made in Fairfax" companies. I am proud that one of the five chosen is in the Mount

Vernon Woods area, Anapact – The Smart Headgear company makes headgear for boxers with sensors to help protect against head injuries. The Fairfax Founders Fund is

a Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives program designed to support early-stage, high-growth startups. The program provides grants and technical assistance to product and technology-based companies on the path to seeking institutional investments or awards and expanding their customer base. The primary objectives of the fund are to stimulate economic development, connect startups with local resources and partnerships, and promote economic mobility by ensuring that early-stage capital is accessible to entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds.

Applications for the second round of funding are now open through Jan. 8. Learn more about eligibility requirements, how the program works and how to apply here: <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/economic-initiatives/>

[fairfax-founders-fund](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/economic-initiatives/fairfax-founders-fund-inaugural-cohort-winners). Read more about the winners here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/economic-initiatives/fairfax-founders-fund-inaugural-cohort-winners>.

Did you know the County provides support and funding opportunities for local small businesses and entrepreneurs? From BizEx that provides a step-by-step guide to starting your own business, to having our own Economic Development Support Fund that directs investments into three kinds of projects: capital development projects, purchasing real estate and programming support for economic development activities identified in the Economic Success Plan, the County is here to help you and your business. Learn about these and many more business support programs here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/economic-initiatives/about-us>.

Our Neighborhood's Special Role in Saving Babies from Norovirus

BY MARIO BARRO

In our little corner of the world, we're surrounded by giants in healthcare: the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and colleges and universities filled with top-notch labs and researchers. And for someone like me, who has investigated diseases and developed vaccines for decades, there's no better place to live.



Mario Barro

Early in my career, I worked in Cuba (where I was born and raised) and would collect blood samples from people with Hepatitis C. At the time, it wasn't even called Hepatitis C; no one quite understood what it was. I talked with doctors who had patients with significant liver damage. Years later, my father-in-law would die of Hepatitis C. I have seen how prevention can halt tragic consequences, and I've been proud to play a part in developing those preventive measures.

Right now, I head up a small company that's working on creating a vaccine to protect babies against rotavirus and norovirus. Both cause diarrhea in small children, which can imperil their health and lives.

Before the early 2000s, when a rotavirus vaccine began to be widely used in the US, it's estimated that about 60,000 American children were hospitalized every

year with the disease. You may have had a child who ended up in the ER for exactly that reason. In 2010, The New England Journal of Medicine noted that rotavirus was the "most important cause of severe childhood diarrhea globally and annually cause[d] more than half a million deaths among children under 5 years of age."

But rotavirus vaccines changed everything. Both in the US and around the world, hospitalizations and deaths from rotavirus plummeted. Millions of kids have now been vaccinated against rotavirus.

Norovirus, by contrast, is famous as the scourge of cruise ships, making hundreds of guests suffer through stomach pain and diarrhea. And many parents know it as a threat to their newborns and young kids; it sends tens of thousands each year to the ER.

Our team came up with a way to piggyback a vaccine for norovirus onto a rotavirus vaccine. If we're successful, then, with one vaccine, we'll protect tens of thousands of children from both viruses.

I've joked with my researchers that the 2011 movie "Contagion," starring Matt Damon and Gwyneth Paltrow, marked a setback for virologists like us because the movie depicts lab work almost immediately translating into vaccines. In reality, it takes a long, long time

to develop something worthwhile. Probably a decade. And, for most researchers, that's a big chunk of their lives to devote to one project. But it's worth it.

I wanted to share with you, as a neighbor, that our whole community is really involved in this quest to conquer norovirus. Because the money to fund my work comes from biotech funds which, in turn, work for institutional investors that include pension funds. So there's a chance that anyone reading this - if they have savings in a pension fund - could be making my work possible. Thank you.

Now I know that's not a donation. People invest because they want to retire securely. They count on our vaccine to someday be profitable, which it can be. Fortunately, it will still be affordable to families, thanks to insurance.

Most medicines go generic about 14 years after they launch, which is enough time for investors to make money from their investment. Then the medicines often become very inexpensive, saving money for all of us by lowering what we pay for insurance.

But policymakers recently passed a law that worried me and might worry you. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 imposes price controls on some drugs 9 years after they launch, a much shorter period than the 14 years that patents and prior laws allowed. (A new bill, SMART, proposes imposing price controls on all drugs just 5 years after they launch.)

That might sound good, except no one is going to want their pensions invested in companies that won't be profitable. Patents allow medicines to have about 14 years on the market because it takes some time to make enough money to justify to investors the risk and expense of developing a drug. The reason that insurance exists is to make these medicines affordable to patients. When they aren't because insurance demands high out of pocket costs, we need to fix insurance.

Most of what we spend on insurance, our premiums, actually goes towards hospitals, where costs keep rising. Only about 10 percent is spent on existing branded medicines, which spurs the development of new drugs. Since medicines can keep us out of hospitals, they're an investment that saves money.

The Inflation Reduction Act changes the way our community works together to create new medicines, making it unappealing for anyone to invest in new medicines. That means that we're likely to spend a lot more on hospitals, while our children continue to suffer from conditions like norovirus.

I don't think many people realize that their money is funding work like mine.

Others don't realize that we rely on insurance to make medicines affordable to patients. Our team certainly isn't working on this vaccine expecting that any child will have to go without it. We all get

angry when people are denied a medicine they need.

What the Inflation Reduction Act gets right is lowering out of pocket costs for seniors and making sure that some drugs, called biologics, really do go generic when they are supposed to. But cutting off the incentives for investors to fund development of a wide range of new medicines - including cancer drugs and treatments to slow Alzheimer's - isn't a good idea.

My hope is that we all recognize the value of continuing to work together through insurance, investing, and research to keep coming up with affordable medicines that keep us all healthy and out of hospitals. Maybe we can hear from others in our neighborhood who have embarked on similar quests.

And I hope to write a letter to you all someday with an update on how our work is progressing. With continued support from investors, we may someday report data from a clinical trial showing that we are saving children from norovirus. If that comes to pass, it will be a victory for our whole community.

Mario Barro is a scientist and father living with his family in Vienna. He's worked at BARDA and Sanofi Pasteur, been involved in development of medicines for too many decades, and is now the CEO and founder of GIVAX, a company developing a vaccine for norovirus and rotavirus, and is a venture partner with the biotech investment firm RA Capital Management.

Children's and Teen's Connection

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

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more. We welcome written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

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

Submission Directions

Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format. These can be submitted via Google Drive. Writing should be submitted in text format (docx or Google

Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

Identify each submission as follows:

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

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Springfield, Summer Morning, watercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS

Writing example

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

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

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

friendships, provide opportunities for socializing and acquaint residents with the community. It sponsors many group activities including: Anything with food, Armchair Traveler, Book Club, Bunco, Canasta, Crafty Ladies, Genealogy, Golf, Let Us Lunch, Mah Jongg, Mah Jongg NY Style, Movie Lovers, Museums/House and Garden Tours, Nature Walks, Restaurant Critics, Sing for Fun and Tech Forums. Application forms may be mailed to: Membership McLean Newcomers and Neighbors, P.O. Box 6166, McLean, VA 22106. Visit the website: www.mcleannewcomers.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-mindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportu-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

A GAYLORD HOTELS ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE



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Encore Performers Present ‘Santa’s Special Delivery’

Dazzling songs and dances in a holiday-themed story.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Filled with the joy and wonder of the holiday season, Encore Theatrical Arts Project presents “Santa’s Special Delivery.” This Broadway-style extravaganza features some 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, colorful costumes and nearly two dozen musical numbers.

The show runs Saturday, Dec. 9 and 16, at noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 10 and 17, at noon and 4 p.m., in the Richard Ernst Theater at NOVA’s Annandale campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike. Encore is a nonprofit, and tickets range from \$25-\$40. To purchase them, and for Girl Scout program details, go to www.encore-tap.org.

In the story, Mr. Price, the greedy CEO of Holiday Toy Co. wants his company to be number one in the world. But it’s second to the Kringle Corp. at the North Pole. Infuriated, he sends an assistant disguised as an elf to the North Pole to find out Kringle’s weakness and sabotage its success.

The cast has been rehearsing since July and, said Director/Choreographer Raynor van der Merwe, “The dancers have all made sacrifices to be 100 percent in this show,



Encore dancers pose for the “Yule Be Swinging” number.

and their commitment and passion shines through. It’s an exciting, fast-paced and magical production that truly has something entertaining for everyone.”

Encore alumni Paige Williams and Becca Perron wrote the script, which van der Merwe describes as “intelligent, well-written and having a different rhythm” than previous ones. The scenes take place at the Holiday TV studio, plus inside and outside Santa’s workshop.

Chantilly High senior Anjali Ashok, a dancer since age 3, has spent 15 years with Encore. “After a long, stressful day, it’s a place to express and refresh myself,” she

said. In this story, she plays Cocoa, the elf who distributes cocoa to all the other elves.

“She loves her job and has a bubbly personality,” said Ashok. “I enjoy playing her because she becomes an integral part of the show. She has a sense of responsibility and takes pride in what she’s doing.” Ashok’s favorite number is “Rockettes” because “It’s precision dancing and we have a kickline at the end, which is always exciting and energetic.”

“This show has a huge storyline with singing, dancing and acting, with professional-quality costumes, props and intricate sets,” added



From left are Anjali Ashok, Georgia Dawson, Lola Farkas, Ginny Shaw, Olivia Royall and Kelly Walsh.

Ashok. “And all these things together make it really special.”

Ginny Shaw, a senior at Centreville High, calls dancing “an athletic way to get some exercise while sharing my passion.” Playing an elf named Snowflake, her character is witty and considers gift-wrapping the best part of being an elf. “She also thinks she’s the best one at her job – which makes some other elves not like her as much,” said Shaw. “She’s fun to play because she’s so clever, and she and I both like sharing facts with people. And she’s enthusiastic about what she loves, as am I.”

Shaw especially likes the song,

“Let Yourself Go,” because “It’s a high-energy, prop-filled, almost militaristic number. It’s one of the dances in a Christmas parade.” Within this musical, she said, “Young dancers show their talent and joy of the art. We’ve put in so much dedication, and we’re all excited to share our hard work with everyone.”

Dancing since age 2, Centreville High senior Olivia Royall has been with Encore for seven years. “Dancing lets me get out my stress and connect with other people,” she explained. “When I’m dancing, I feel

SEE DAZZLING SONGS, PAGE 10

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAYNOR VAN DER MERWE

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) a native tree to our area, is often used for holiday decoration, its berries enjoyed by birds.



Rose hips of *Rosa multiflora* (*Rosa polyanthus*), are edible for most and contain high amounts of vitamin C, often used in tea.



Leaves of *Rosa multiflora* take on an icy beauty on frosty mornings.



Invasive vines of Oriental Bittersweet are easy to spot for removal this time of year with their distinctive colorful berries.



Fruit of this invasive Callery Pear tree (*Pyrus calleryana*), looks like large globe balls on a holiday tree, though not usually found are large and juicy as these located in an area park.



Berries of Amur honeysuckle (*Lancer maackii*), another non-native invasive plant, are mildly poisonous if eaten, though enjoyed by birds.

Nature’s Holiday Decoration

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

You may have waited to begin hanging your seasonal decorations until after Thanksgiving Day. Mother Nature has no such compunction. Having discarded most of her vibrant fall leaf colors, she has her next attention-getting display of bright colors ready for notice. You can enjoy the pleasures of her holiday looks and migrating birds can partake of the bounty.

Cedar Waxwings (*Bombicilla cedrorum*), add to nature’s ornamentation with their stylish black masks outlined in white and head crests, seen gathering in large flocks to eat berries, as specialized fruit eaters

<https://xerces.org/leave-the-leaves>
www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Switch to Battery Powered Leaf Blower (or a Rake)

In an effort to reduce the county’s carbon footprint, the Park Authority and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services plan to set an example by cutting their use of gas-powered leaf blowers in half over the next year.

In alignment with our vision for a greener future, we’ve ended the purchase of gas-powered blowers and are exclusively investing in battery-powered alternatives in our Fiscal Year 2024 budget. We are set to replace 55 gas-powered leaf blowers with electric ones.

This initiative is not only about environmental conservation but also about safeguarding the health and well-being of residents, in line with the Countywide Strategic Plan.

Contractors and residents alike can consider embracing battery-powered blowers. Or if your

yard is quite small, maybe a rake.

WHY CHOOSE BATTERY-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS?

1. Eco-friendly: Battery-powered lawn equipment significantly reduces harm to the environment compared to their gas-powered counterparts.

2. Health benefits: By eliminating emissions that can heighten respiratory conditions such as asthma, battery-powered blowers contribute to a healthier environment and improved air quality for all.

3. Noise reduction: Battery-powered blowers operate at much lower decibel levels, creating a quieter and more peaceful environment for everyone.

4. Cost-effective: Electric versions of lawn equipment, including leaf blowers, offer a more economical choice for both battery-powered and plug-in models.

LEAVE THE LEAVES?

Fall Cleanup in Moderation

If you’ve provided native and diverse habitat for pollinators during the growing season, helping those same pollinators and invertebrates in the winter is almost as simple as doing nothing, according to the Xerxes Society. Leave those habitats alone for winter. Great spangled fritillary and woolly bear caterpillars tuck themselves into leaf piles for protection from cold weather and predators. Red-banded hair-streaks lay their eggs on fallen oak leaves, which become the first food of the caterpillars when they emerge. Luna moths and swallowtail butterflies disguise their cocoons and chrysalises as dried leaves, blending in with the “real” leaves. Bumble bees create nests in

cavities underground, in trees, or in brush piles. They prefer abandoned rodent burrows. At the end of summer, mated queen bumble bees burrow only an inch or two into the earth to hibernate for winter. An extra thick layer of leaves is welcome protection from the elements. Close to one-third of native bees are tunnel-nesting, such as leafcutter and mason bees. These solitary-nesting species need narrow tunnels or other tiny spaces in dead wood, hollow stems, or brush piles.

Leaving the leaves and other plant debris doesn’t have to mean sacrificing your yard to the wilderness, according to the Xerxes Society, advocates for pollinators. The leaves don’t need to be left exactly where they fall. You can rake them into garden beds, around tree bases, or into other designated areas. Too many leaves can kill grass, but

ALEXANDRIA symphony orchestra 23 24
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Ribbon cutting at the SWoodlands Stewardship Education Center on Nov. 18.



Woodlands Stewardship Education Center cost \$8.8 million.

Ribbon Cut on Sully Woodlands Stewardship Education Center

The Fairfax County Park Authority celebrated the completion of the new Woodlands Stewardship Education Center with a ribbon cutting on Saturday, Nov. 18. Designed for adults and children alike, this interpretive facility demonstrates principles of environmental stewardship that make a world of difference in the way we interact with and affect our natural environment.

From the use of reclaimed construction materials and sustainable energy and water sources to experimentation with simple machines and natural observation spaces, this stewardship education center provides a platform for demonstrating technologies and

processes that can reshape our individual relationship with the environment around us.

County leaders, project benefactors and residents from the surrounding community participated in the inaugural event followed by tours of the features of the site, designed to meet the rigorous standards of the Living Building Challenge – an achievement attained by only a small number of projects worldwide.

“When looking at the concept for this project, we knew we wanted to raise the bar to a whole new level,” said Park Authority Executive Director Jai Cole. “Every aspect of this facility is an exhibit that illustrates our connection to the natural world and creates

an experience that will ignite the imaginations and creativity of young people through hands-on experiences and play.”

The standards of the Living Building Challenge require meticulous attention to the development of a project in seven performance categories including Place, Water, Energy, Health and Happiness, Materials, Equity and Beauty. Every aspect of the project. The Park Authority will be eligible to apply for Living Building Challenge certification after one full year of operation.

General project features include an interpretive center with multipurpose spaces, kitchen and restroom; an educational kiosk and plumbing room; outdoor amphitheater

and observation deck; a large activity play space with connecting trails, native plantings and related site improvements.

The total project cost was \$8.8 million and included \$7.2 million in park bond funding, \$1.1 million in proffers, and \$500,000 in financial contributions through the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

The Woodlands Stewardship Education Center is located within Ellanor C. Lawrence Park at 5301 Walney Road in Chantilly.

For more information, visit the Woodlands Stewardship Education Center webpage <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence/woodlands-stewardship-education-center>.

Dazzling Songs and Dances in a Holiday-Themed Story

FROM PAGE 8

the energy in the room increase and it makes me happy.”

In this show, she’s Ribbon, an elf who works at a crisis hotline at the North Pole and helps whenever the elves have an emergency. “She wants to be good at her job but doesn’t get many calls,” said Royall. “It’s fun playing her because she’s not a typical elf. She’s not afraid to speak her mind and show when she’s discouraged or upset. And she doesn’t always think before speaking, so she’s a dynamic character.”

Royall’s favorite song is the “Frosty the Snowman” section of the opening number. “We wear white costumes and top hats and put all our energy into those characters,” she said. “Overall, audiences will like this show’s different variety of numbers and costumes, plus all the effort everyone put into it – including all the people working backstage. And that’s what makes it so magical – it’s like all the pieces of a puzzle coming together.”

Lola Farkas plays Minty, a bubbly elf. “She’s enthusiastic about what she does,” said Farkas. “She’s not the smartest but tries hard and really loves Christmas. I love playing goofy characters, and elves are fun because they’re the epitome of silli-



From left are Noah Hamadé, as Price’s assistant, Simon, and Matthew Randall as Mr. Price.

ness.”

She likes the “Dig That Crazy Santa Claus” number best because “It’s such an upbeat, fun song. There are times where I can let my character’s personality shine and communicate with the other elves onstage through our dancing. I feel the most free dancing; it allows me to express emotions I can’t do out loud – which is why I love it.” And since this production has a new storyline and Broadway-inspired dances, Farkas said, “It’s just like watching a Broadway show, except it’s at NOVA with dancers ages 10-18.”

For Georgia Dawson, “Dancing

gets your energy out. It’s also social; I quickly became fast friends with the other dancers.” She’s portraying an elf named Candy, who’s excitable and helps train the reindeer. “She’s almost bossy, but is outgoing and is best friends with Minty,” said Dawson. “Candy’s like I wish I could be – she commands attention.”

Her favorite number is “Toyland Ball” because “I’m a ragdoll in it, and we have lots of partner dances with the boy ragdolls. We also do lifts with them, which is fun. People will also enjoy this show because it has a unique premise and

a shocking twist.”

Playing a dancer in Mr. Price’s holiday TV show is Kelly Walsh. “My character’s hardworking and wants to power through until the end of the program, but the crew takes lots of breaks, and Price makes everyone do things over until they’re perfect,” she said. “It’s fun because she’s snooty and complaining and bosses everyone around.”

A dancer since age 3, Walsh saw her older sister dancing and wanted to do it as soon as she could. “Encore classes are fun, and you connect personally with the other



Dancers in the “Snowflakes” number strike a pose.



Performing in the “Snow” song are (back row, from left) Claire Youk, Aniqah Ahamed and Ethan Brower; (middle row, from left) Sam Wolff, Saaya Patel and Nadiya Vandrapu; and (front) Dewi Vollmer.

dancers,” she said. “We’ve formed strong bonds, so performing together is even more special. It feels like you’re doing your favorite thing with your family.”

She especially likes the “Reindeer” song because “We dress as reindeer, and our fun dance gets everyone in the mood for a good time. Audiences will enjoy this Christmas show because the jokes are funny, and the captivating dancing styles and Broadway feel will appeal to all ages.”

WHERE TO GIVE LOCALLY

Where to Give for Local Impact

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally. Here are a few ideas of where to give. Please let us know what we have missed and any corrections. Send corrections or updates to mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com with "Give Locally" in the subject line.

❖ Alice's Kids (@alicewillhelp) aliceskids.org P.O. Box 60, Mount Vernon, VA 22121 When a child is raised in poverty they suffer both publicly and privately. When that same child can't afford to pay for the band field trip, a pair of glasses, a chorus outfit or a new pair of shoes, these are indignities that are evident to their classmates. Alice's Kids pays for these relatively inexpensive items in the hopes of preserving the dignity of the child. <https://aliceskids.org/>

❖ Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. Assistance League's philanthropic programs touch the lives of thousands of children at 11 Title I schools in Northern Virginia, serving children most in need at selected schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria. To learn more about volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, contact info@alnv.org or visit www.alnv.org

❖ Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area operates clubs in two of the neediest areas of the county, Culmore, Mount Vernon/ Route 1 corridor, and Chantilly/Herndon, focusing on character and academic success. <https://www.bgcgw.org/club-page/fairfax-county-region-our-impact/>

❖ Britepaths Britepaths' services stabilize low-wealth working families, build resilience through financial empowerment and workforce development, and provide supports for children.. Britepaths.org <https://britepaths.org/>

❖ Centreville Immigration Forum, a safe, organized center where residents and contractors can negotiate work arrangements with day laborers. Centreville Square Shopping Center, 5944 Centreville Crest Ln, Centreville, VA 20121. Phone: (703) 543-6272
website: www.centrevilleimmigrationforum.org and email contact@theCIFva.org

❖ Closet Of The Greater Herndon Area is a nonprofit thrift shop in downtown Herndon. The Closet recently awarded over \$20,000 in grants to seven local non-profit organizations: Cornerstones, Fellowship Square, Herndon-Reston FISH, Meridians Recovery, Mobile Hope of Loudoun, South Lakes High School PTSA Food Pantry, and Herndon Woman's Club in support of Wreaths Across America. The Closet is a source of low-cost clothing and household necessities and also gives away clothing at no cost to truly needy individuals. 845 Station Street Herndon, VA 20170 (703) 437-7652. Email TheClosetInc@verizon.net Web: theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/

❖ Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE) ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. Mailing address: 4201 Wilson Blvd., #110-284, Arlington, VA 22203, CFC #33011, Phone 703-591-4965, cause-usa.org

❖ Committee for Helping Others (CHO), Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. Coming up, holiday bike drive. 703-281-7614, www.cho-va.com

❖ Community Foundation of Northern Virginia www.cfnova.org The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia works to respond to critical need and seed innovation in our region. Your gift helps us make grants in our focus areas of interest while also bringing a spotlight on the benefits of community philanthropists www.cfnova.org/for-donors/donate-now

❖ Cornerstones, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org.
Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive. www.cornerstonesva.org

❖ Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO), 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families. www.echo-inc.org.

❖ FACETS helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area, a partner in efforts to end homelessness in Fairfax County. FACETS is always in need of donations and volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities.

Contact Haylee Davis at hdavis@facetscares.org.
703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030

❖ Fairfax City Area FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) FISH provides funds and volunteers to serve the needy and elderly in the greater Fairfax City area of Fairfax County. FISH responds to requests for life's necessities: food, clothing, financial assistance for delinquent rent, mortgage, utility bills, gasoline, and prescriptions. 703-222-0880 fairfaxfish.org/

❖ Food for Others Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. 2938 Prosperity Ave. info@foodforothers.org. Food for Others distributes food to more than 1,800 local families in need each week. Drop off food at our Merrifield Warehouse, 2938 Prosperity Ave, Fairfax, VA 22031. Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 5pm. www.foodforothers.org

❖ Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Each year, nearly 5,000 pets, including cats, dogs, small mammals, reptiles and livestock, come to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter funds important needs throughout the Shelter such as behavioral training and dental or medical care beyond what the shelter's budget can provide. generalinfo@ffcas.org 571-212-9858 www.ffcas.org/

❖ Friends of Guest House Northern Virginia offers structure, supervision, support and assistance to female ex-offenders who want to improve their lives and break the cycle of incarceration. Friends of Guest House offers the only program for women of its kind in Northern Virginia. One East Luray Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301-2025, 703-549-8072, info@friendsofguesthouse.org, friendsofguesthouse.org/

❖ Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia transforms the lives of lower-income families in need by providing affordable homeownership opportunities in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. Learn more at www.habitatnova.org.

❖ Herndon-Reston FISH (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 herndonrestonfish.org Herndon-Reston FISH has assisted local residents in short-term crises since 1969. 703-437-0600.

❖ Homestretch, to empower homeless parents with children to attain permanent housing and self-sufficiency by giving them the skills, knowledge and hope they need to become productive participants in the community. Since 1990 Homestretch has helped over 2,000 families achieve permanent housing and self-sufficiency. 303 South Maple Ave, Suite 400, Falls Church, VA 22046 Phone: 703-237-2035 homestretchva.org

❖ Lamb Center, www.thelambcenter.org, day center for homeless, Fairfax City. 703-691-3178.

❖ LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more. holiday@linkagainsthunger.org. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org.

❖ Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) provide low-income individuals, senior citizens, and families residing in Fort Belvoir, Lorton, Newington and other portions of southeast Fairfax County with access to basic needs and the opportunity to empower themselves. <https://lortonaction.org/>

❖ Mount Vernon At Home, 703-303-4060, www.mountvernonathome.org. Mount Vernon At Home membership helps connect senior members of our community. Neighbors helping neighbors with volunteer support is the power of Mount Vernon At Home. The group fundraises all year to make this possible and count on the generosity of the community.

❖ NAMI Northern Virginia (National Alliance on Mental Illness) works to raise awareness and provide education, advocacy, and support programs for people living with mental illness, families, students, educators, law enforcement, and the public throughout our neighborhoods. Many excellent programs. NAMI Northern Virginia serves Fairfax, Falls Church, Arlington, Alexandria, and Loudoun www.nami-northern-virginia.org/ HelpLine: (571)458.7310, Email: info@nami-nova.org

❖ National Capital Food Bank, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, (571) 482-4770 . www.capitalareafoodbank.org

❖ Neighborhood Health, 6677 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22306. Treats the whole person through medical, behavioral health and dental programs. It has 10 clinics throughout Arlington and Fairfax counties. Participating with all insurance including commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid, 703-535-5568, www.neighborhoodhealthva.org

❖ New Hope Housing, ends homelessness in Northern Virginia by providing housing, offering hope, and building community. We currently offer various Housing Programs, and Support Services. 8407E Richmond Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22309 www.newhopehousing.org/how-to-help/donate/

❖ Northern Virginia Family Service. The organization provides the essential building blocks for financial, emotional and physical well-being, serving as leaders and innovators for the Northern Virginia community. Every year, it empowers 35,000 individuals to achieve self-sufficiency. www.nvfs.org Northern Virginia Family Service, 10455 White Granite, Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124. 571-748-2500

❖ OAR rebuilds lives and breaks the cycle of crime with opportunities, alternatives, and

resources for offenders and their families to create a safer community. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 250, Fairfax, VA 22030, 703-246-3033. OAR needs volunteers and financial donations. oarnova.org/donate

❖ Our Neighbor's Child (ONC) volunteers are preparing for delivery of holiday gifts for children from financially struggling families in western Fairfax County – predominantly in Centreville and Chantilly. www.ourneighborschild.org/

❖ Pathway Homes providing non-time-limited housing and supportive services to adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring disabilities in Northern Virginia. Founded in 1980, Pathways currently serves more than 400 adults in community-based homes in Northern Virginia. www.pathwayhomes.org

❖ Potomac Riverkeeper Network works to protect the public's right to clean water in our rivers and streams; to stop pollution; to promote safe drinking water; to protect healthy river habitats; and to enhance public use and enjoyment.

3070 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007. (202) 888-2037

www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org

❖ Potomac Conservancy, 962 Wayne Ave, Suite 540
Silver Spring, MD 20910; 301.608.1188; potomac.org, seeks to improve the Potomac River's water quality by building an impassioned base of river advocates to impart change at the local level. www.potomac.org

❖ PRS is now HopeLink Behavioral Health, "where hope meets help," nonprofit providing mental health, crisis intervention and suicide prevention services .We seek to change and save lives in our community by empowering hope, safety, recovery, wellness, independence and community integration. Seeking to change and save lives in our community by empowering hope, safety, recovery, wellness, independence and community integration.. PRS also provides crisis counseling and connection to supports CRISISLINK When crisis calls, we answer 24/7 Call: 988 Text: 988 <https://prsinc.org/>

❖ Rebuilding Together Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church (Rebuilding Together-AFF) makes critical repairs at no charge for low-income homeowners and nonprofit organizations. Volunteers make homes safe and healthy, and they help seniors age in place. Since 1988 Rebuilding Together has repaired more than 2,273 homes and non-profit residential facilities in our area and mobilized more than 69,081 volunteers to do the work. 10723 Main Street, #135, Fairfax, VA 22030; Phone: 703-528-1999
<https://rebuildingtogether-aff.org/>

❖ Second Story — Second Story (formerly Alternative House) provides shelter and services for homeless, runaway or abused teenagers, unaccompanied youth, and young mothers and their children; Second Story for Teens in Crisis provides a short-term place to stay for youth in crisis, plus individual and family counseling. Second Story in the Community provides drop-in centers for families and after-school programs for youth who need more support outside their homes.
Second-story.org

❖ SHARE of McLean is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff that has been helping for more than 50 years, supported by donations from local religious congregations, community organizations and individuals. Our year round and seasonal programs include family emergency financial assistance, food pantry, used clothing room, recycled furniture,

SEE WHERE TO GIVE, PAGE 15

ENTERTAINMENT

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN LAUNCH HOLIDAY DONATIONS DRIVE

The Democratic Women of Clifton and Northern Virginia (DWCNV) is coordinating with Fairfax County Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue Organization <https://www.ffandfriends2therescue.org/> to collect unwrapped toys for local needy children throughout Northern Virginia. The toy drive is the highlight of the holiday season for both the first responders and the young gift recipients. The project is headed up by Retired Deputy Chief, Will Bailey. In addition to toys, the organization will accept monetary donations to purchase at a discount new winter coats for area children. Each year, the department distributes as many as 3,000 new coats to more than 50 schools, shelters, and non-profits throughout Fairfax and Alexandria. To donate to Operation Warm to buy new coats: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/operation-warm-inc/team-up-with-firefighters-and-friends-to-the-rescue>.

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

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

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

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

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

ONGOING

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

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

NOV. 9 TO DEC. 24

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

STARTING NOW

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

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

FUNDAY MONDAY

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

SCHEDULE

Dec. 4 -- Music Together Sing and Groove
Dec. 11 -- My Gym
Dec. 18 -- TBD

BONITA LESTINA FAIRFAX OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

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

SCHEDULE

December 8: Marcolivia – Classical String Duo
January 5: Baltimore Composers Forum – Modern



A Puppy Nativity will be held at Church of the Good Shepherd in Vienna on Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023.

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

NOV. 3 TO FEB. 4

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

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AT THE WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

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

Toy Drive – Now through Dec. 11

The Workhouse Arts Center is partnering with OAR NOVA, a local non-profit restorative justice organization, to give back to our community. Join us in helping

families impacted by the criminal justice system by donating a new, unused toy in its original packaging. Toys can be dropped off in the Workhouse Visitors Center.

Creating Beautiful Ornaments with Lightbulbs - Saturday, Dec 2, 10:30 am

In this workshop participants will transform used lightbulb into festive holiday ornaments. Participants will be shown how to paint, collage and add glitter for a beautiful transformation. Cost, \$70. Building W-3, room 305.

Theater Performance – A Christmas Carol - Saturday, Dec. 2, 7 pm and Sunday Dec 3, 1 pm

Get into the holiday spirit with this season favorite presented in a whole new light. Through the magic of theatre, John Hardy single-handedly performs over 40 roles to bring Charles Dickens' classic holiday perennial tale to life at the Workhouse Arts Center. Tickets, \$25. Building W-3 Theater.

WinterWorks - Season Celebration - Saturday, Dec. 9, 6-9 pm

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

Holidays...Hallowdays Movie Screening - Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 pm

While incarcerated at the Lorton Correctional Complex in the 1960s and 1970s, Rhozier "Roach" Brown led the prison theatrical troupe THE INNER VOICES. They performed original plays, skits, and social dramas at a variety of venues including the Apollo Theater and the Smithsonian Institution. Cost: In place of an admission fee, guests are asked to bring a new unused toy to donate to the Workhouse

Toy Drive. Building W-3 Theater.

New Year's Eve Musical Theater Performance – The Who's Tommy Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

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

New Year's Eve Comedy Show with Antoine Scott – Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

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

NOV. 30 TO DEC. 2

Winterfest. 5-9 p.m. At Brown's Chapel Park in Reston. Reston Association is proud to announce Winterfest, a new three-day family festival that's perfect for the holiday season. Winterfest will feature a 'Light up the Park' walk, a Santa meet and greet, an 'Enchanted Forest' filled with decorated trees from the community, local vendors for holiday shopping, bonfires and smores, a pop-up bar, food options and more. A unique aspect of the event is the Enchanted Forest, which will feature up to 50 holiday trees individually decorated by sponsoring businesses, families or groups. Guests will be able to share

ENTERTAINMENT



“It’s a Jazzy Christmas” will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.



The Mia Saunders School of Ballet presents “The Nutcracker” on Dec. 9-10, 2023 at Centreville High School in Clifton.

in the holiday celebration as they walk through the Enchanted Forest and can vote for their favorite tree theme, most creative tree or most originality. Following the event, all trees will be donated to less fortunate families in the Reston community. The event is free for all Reston Association members; admission is \$8 for non-members ages 3-17, and \$18 for non-members 18+. Registration is open at <https://www.reston.org/winterfest-2023>.

NOV. 30-DEC. 3

Tyson's Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale. At Tyson's Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Thursday, 30 November, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, 1 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday, 2 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 3 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.:

Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less

Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Visit <https://www.tysonslibraryfriends.org/>. Call 703-338-3307 for additional information. Proceeds benefit the Tyson's-Pimmit Regional Library and related activities.

DEC. 1-3

Holiday Book Sale. At Centreville Regional Library, Centreville.

Dec. 1, Friday, 1-5 p.m.

Dec. 2, Saturday, 10-5 p.m.

Dec. 3, Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Bag sale on Sunday. Fill a grocery bag with books for \$10.

Fiction, nonfiction, gift baskets and stocking stuffers

DEC. 1-10

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

ing tale of traveling through time and learning the importance of kindness. To purchase tickets, and for more information about the show, visit <https://www.traveling-players.org/performances/>

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

“Christine’s Crazy Christmas.” 1

p.m. At Cascades Library, 21030 Whitfield Place, Sterling. Presented by the Sterling Playmakers.

“Christine’s Crazy Christmas” tells the story of a young girl who’s a bit of a bully to everyone she knows. That changes when Dinky, Santa’s right-hand elf, comes and tells her that she’s been added to Santa’s naughty list. Since Santa doesn’t like to put kids on the naughty list, Dinky tells Christine there is hope if she can be good through the whole month up to Christmas Eve. Will Christine redeem herself, be switched from the naughty list, and learn the value of being nice?

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Puppy Nativity. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The popular Puppy Nativity is returning to Vienna for the first time in four years, and area residents are invited to bring their puppies, dogs and other pets to take part. Costumes and treats will be provided for pets, and photos will be taken. Hot chocolate will be served, and the church’s youth group will be on hand to accept donations to support Second Story (<https://second-story.org>), a nonprofit serving youth in need.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy – A Celtic Family Christmas. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy return to the Center for the Arts for a Celtic experience like no other. In A Celtic Family Christmas, the charming duo invites you and your family into their holiday traditions on Cape Breton

Island with charming stories of family, farming, food, and plenty of music. Even their talented children will join in the foot-stomping jigs, dizzying fiddling, soulful ballads, and spirited two-stepping. Fiddle masters in their own right, when MacMaster and Leahy combine their talents and magnetic chemistry, the stage crackles with electric energy.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Puzzle Swap. At Reston Museum in Reston. Visitors are encouraged to bring a puzzle and leave with a “new to you” puzzle! The event will take place during Reston Museum’s open hours until all puzzles are gone. Visitors can also purchase Reston-themed puzzles from the gift shop. The gift shop (excluding consignment) is 10% off the day of, with an extra 5% for museum members. Proceeds support Reston Museum a 501c3 nonprofit. Learn more at: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/event-details/puzzle-swap>

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Breakfast with Santa at Tysons

Corner Center. 8-9:30 a.m. Food Court, Level 3. ‘Breakfast with Santa’ is a popular family tradition, involving a special and up close interaction with Santa and a complimentary catered breakfast. Upon Santa’s arrival, all can enjoy family friendly entertainment, holiday music, face painting, coloring activities, and more. This annual event presented by Tysons Corner Center is free for families, with no additional costs for the breakfast or activities.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Model Train Show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Herndon Historical Society’s annual Model Train Show will take place. N-Scale Operating Layout by the Northern Virginia NTRAK. The Herndon caboose will also be open that same day from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Lake Anne Jingle on the Lake Christmas Festival. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At

Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Join the Lake Anne and Reston Community for a day long holiday celebration, starring Santa himself! Santa will arrive along with the Vienna Singing Princesses on a decorated boat parade, and accompanied by Santa’s elves on paddleboards! Calling on kids of all ages to greet Santa and enjoy hot chocolate, food and gifts at our Christmas Market, as well as children’s choirs and ballet, Ukrainian Christmas songs, and children’s activities and ornament making.

Schedule:

12 p.m.: Boat Parade and Santa arrival

12:45 p.m.: Vienna Singing Princesses

1:30 p.m.: Sunrise Valley Elementary School Choir

2:15 p.m.: Reston Conservatory Ballet

3:00 p.m.: Lake Anne Elementary School Choir

3:30 p.m.: Ukrainian Christmas songs

DEC. 7-24

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 7

“Tři Oříšky pro Popelku” (“Three Wishes for Cinderella”) Foreign Language Film. 1 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A retelling of the “Cinderella” story in a wintry landscape and with hazelnuts rather than a fairy godmother. This 1973 movie has become a holiday classic all over

Europe and is annually shown on TV from Spain to Russia.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

“The Snowman in Concert.” 10:30

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

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season.

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

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

The Wonder of the Season. 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Experience The Wonder of the Season with a concert of sacred and secular holiday music, from Donny Hathaway’s This Christmas and a Nutcracker Ballet-inspired twist on Jingle Bells to Francesco Durante’s Magnificat. Adding to the delightful mix of music in this family-friendly concert, they’ll be joined by members of South Lakes High School Vocal Arts at the 4 p.m. show, and the Treble and Youth Choirs of Saint John the

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Beloved and Saint John the Apostle at the 7 p.m. show. Tickets: \$30 Adults 18-61 | \$25 Seniors 62+ | Free Youth 17/under & Active Duty Military.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

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

DEC. 9-10

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

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Beau Soir Ensemble. 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This McLean-based harp, flute and viola trio returns by popular demand.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Magic at the Fairfax Station Railroad

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

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 14

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

WHERE TO GIVE LOCALLY

FROM PAGE 11

back-to-school supplies and refurbished laptop computers. During the holidays, we also provide our neighbors in need with grocery cards and gifts.

Main Message Center: (703) 229-1414
info@shareofmclean.org
www.shareofmclean.org

- ❖ Shelter House provides crisis intervention, safe housing and supportive services to promote self-sufficiency for homeless families and victims of domestic violence in Fairfax County. It is our mission to get families into stable housing in order to provide them the opportunity to continue their journey to self-sufficiency. www.shelterhouse.org

- ❖ Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna providing services, personal enrichment, volunteer opportunities for adults 50 and over. Currently serving 3,000-plus mature adults in the region. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org

- ❖ Tahirih Justice Center, 703-575-0070, www.tahirih.org, Legal services, public policy advocacy, and education for immigrant women and girls.

- ❖ TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, 3033 Wilson Blvd., Third Floor, Arlington, VA 22201, Call 24/7 800-959-TAPS (8277) The Tragedy Assistance Pro-

gram for Survivors offers compassionate care and resources to all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Make a donation to support surviving military families and loved ones. You can also make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one. www.taps.org/donate

- ❖ Touching Heart in Herndon is a non-profit organization focused on how to enlighten, excite, and educate children about how they can experience the true joy that comes from helping those in need. www.touchingheart.com,

- ❖ United Community, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, VA 22306 assists low-income families and individuals living along the Route 1 Corridor. The mission is to build thriving communities and create equitable opportunities by providing supportive services and advancing community driven solutions.

UC's vision is to end multigenerational poverty. Make a Financial Contribution 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria VA 22306. www.ucmagency.org

Donations of cash/checks and gift cards are also welcome.

- ❖ Western Fairfax Christian Ministries — 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, Chantilly, VA 20151 in Chantilly. email Assistant Food Pantry Manager/Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Culbertson at volunteer@wfcmvva.org

guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 16

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We Need Your Help Again
We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784

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CENTRE VIEW

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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Uncertainty



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that you regular readers know when I write these columns, relative to when they publish; but suffice to say, given the publishing/ go-to-press schedules of newspapers, these columns must be written/submitted in adherence to those schedules/publication dates. As such, some columns, depending on subject matter of course, are written before the outcome of whatever cancer-related circumstance is top of mind at the time – for me; and then published after I know said outcome. This column is one of those and is always difficult because the dominant feeling I have – which contribute most to the subject matter of these columns, is basically I don't know. Moreover, the associated difficulty I have is knowing that by the time you read this column, I'll know what I didn't know before it subsequently publishes/ you read it. And since I like to share everything with you in as real a time as possible; the timing of this column means I'm not able to do that.

In a round-about way this column is about the diagnostic scan, a PET scan, I'll be having on Mon., Nov. 27th, the results of which I'll likely know by Wed., Nov. 29th-ish, the day this column publishes and days to late to modify is pre-publication content. By the time you read this, all the anxiety, conjecture, et cetera, will have passed, and the interpretation of the scan will be known, and then the fun begins, hopefully. Presuming I can gather my thoughts together about that interpretation – which will determine the next three-to-four months of cancer treatment, vis-à-vis my life, I will submit a column for Dec. 6, publication date which will address these concerns and update all you interested readers, which I assume after nearly 26 years my column has been published in The Connection, I assume I have a few. It's these kinds of moments when my brother's death rears its ugly head. Not having that backstop emotionally takes away much of what us patients truly need: support, understanding, encouragement and a positive outlook no matter the results. One doesn't survive a disease of this magnitude without help, and as my biggest booster, Richard was a multi-year backstop-of-the-year award-winner. And when you consider that I originally was given a "13 month to two years" prognosis, perhaps you imagine the frequency and type of conversations Richard and I regularly have had over the many years of my ongoing cancer treatment. Every step of the way. And scans, such as these are a very big step, always.

In my view then, this column is nothing about very much ado. The various scans I have throughout the year, as they are for many patients, are when the rubber hits the road and the doctor (an oncologist in my life) can really tell how you're doing health-wise. As my doctor has said: he doesn't need to see me in person, as much as he needs to my scan results. That will tell him what he needs to know about my thyroid cancer/overall health to decide if what happens next is more of the same or God help me, a change for the worse.

Apart from my monthly lab work and quarterly zoom call, this scan will indicate whether my warranty, so to speak, is to be extended and my life will go on relatively unchanged. (I imagine you can all appreciate then the depth and range of emotions we patients feel; before, during and after these high-tech diagnostic scans have been completed and interpreted. It's only a matter of life and death.) Unfortunately, it's difficult to affect the scan. If the results say something unpleasant then the conversation that follows with your doctor and of course your family, will be equally unpleasant. I remember when Team Lourie (Dina, Richard, and myself) attended our "ground zero" meeting with my oncologist when the doctor first told me my diagnosis. Richard was there then. Now he won't be, ever again. Without him around to help absorb some of inevitable fear and anxiety, the experience going forward scares me. Certainly, I've been there and done that. However, from now on, I will be doing it differently. Not alone exactly. But definitely missing my wingman.

Therefore, writing a column of some substance before these potentially life-changing facts are known is challenging. Which means this column says very little about something so big. In effect, I feel as if I'm wasting your time, sort of by telling you nothing about something. I'll try to write the ship and update you accordingly in next week's column. Until then, wish me luck. I need as much of it as you can spare. Enduring this cycle as much as I have over nearly 15 years (upwards of 100 exposures; all types of scans to consider: CT, PET, and bone scan, and yearly MRIs since I was diagnosed), doesn't make this process any easier. Experienced: yes, comfortable: no.

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

❖ NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 6, 2023 ❖ 15

HOLIDAY



PHOTO COURTESY OF DARAH CURRAN

The home of Dave and Jacquie Baciocco.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DARAH CURRAN

The home of Adam and Janie Trost.

Clifton Holiday Homes Tour and Horse Parade

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Let the holiday season officially begin – it's time for a full day of fun and merriment in the historic Town of Clifton. The festivities begin Saturday, Dec. 2, at 2 p.m. with a colorful horse parade, followed by the Holiday Homes Tour from 4-7 p.m.

Parade participants are members of the Clifton Horse Society, and they and their horses will be all decked out in their holiday finery as they jingle down Main Street and loop through the town. Afterward, they and the attendees will gather together to enjoy cookies and other refreshments.

People are then invited to visit the charming shops and eat at Clifton's restaurants before immersing themselves in the town's storybook setting of twinkling lights, the sound of caroling and beautifully decorated homes awaiting them during the homes tour.

On display will be four houses in town, an RV, plus a bonus fifth house, just outside Clifton. "You will not want to miss this home's floor-to-ceiling decorations spanning three levels, which have been featured in a national magazine," said event Chairman Darah Curran. "This bonus house will open at 3 p.m. to accommodate the drive."



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Horses make their way through town during a past Clifton Horse Parade.

The rest of the homes will open their doors to the public at 4 p.m. Three of them are historic and one is a modern, arts-and-crafts style. "While the homes' walls might not be able to talk, as you walk through them,

docents will share stories about the houses, their previous homeowners and some town history/gossip," said Curran.

One house stands on the rumored moonshine stills of the 1920s, another home

showcases stained-glass doors that were once part of a suite at the Clifton Hotel – and prior to that, served as the interior cabin-doors on a Trans-Atlantic steamship. The historic homes served many purposes; visitors will be able to learn about their former uses as a barbershop, grocery store, saloon, church, livery, etc.

In addition, the Clifton Caboose will be open for curious train enthusiasts of all ages to view. And all three town churches will have holiday performances over the course of the evening, and the public is welcome to attend, free of charge.

Except for the bonus house, the entire event is walkable throughout the town. Tickets for the homes tour will be available at these Clifton shops and restaurants: Main Street Pub, Little Villagio, Belle Jar and Virginia Mercantile, as well as at Pickett Fence in Burke.

The cost through Dec. 1 is \$25, adults; \$5, children. On the day of the event, tickets will be \$30 and \$5. Proceeds benefit the Town of Clifton and a designated, town charitable cause. Ticket booklets will contain each home's address, plus detailed information and histories about all of them.

— DARAH CURRAN CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

BULLETIN BOARD

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especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities. RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible sched-

ules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org. Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues

to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmafc.org. The Center's website is www.scmafc.org. Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics,

home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more. Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org.

org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org. The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/litombudsman/.