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# THE CONNECTION

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Encore dancers pose in reindeer costumes for their upcoming show, "Time for Christmas."

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# Thankful

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SCREENSHOT GOOGLE MAPS

View of the tree-lined W&OD Trail as it crosses Grace Street and heads west toward Ferndale Avenue in the Town of Herndon. According to police, a woman was abducted and raped on Monday evening, Nov. 18, between Grace Street and Ferndale Avenue.



SCREENSHOT GOOGLE MAPS

The W&OD Trail crosses Station Street in its 700 block where Herndon Police located the suspect in Monday's abduction and rape of a woman. Denis Humberto Navarette Romero, 31, of no fixed address, arrested by Herndon Police.

# Woman Abducted, Raped on W&OD Trail

**Suspect had been released from detention center days earlier; may be linked to more cases.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Herndon Police Department has arrested 31-year-old Denis Humberto Navarette Romero, of no fixed address, for abduction with intent to defile and rape.

Herndon Police Chief Maggie DeBoard announced during a videoed Facebook news briefing on Tuesday, Nov. 19. "Our thoughts are most certainly with the victim as she copes with the events that happened last night," DeBoard said. "Herndon police

detectives and Fairfax County Victim Services are doing all they can to support her and provide her with the services that she needs."

DeBoard said she was "saddened and outraged" that a crime like this could happen in the town. "This is the only stranger rape that we have had in the town in my more than 12 years as chief of police," DeBoard said. The incident occurred on a public trail, the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD), causing widespread concern.

Police report that after the woman left a business in downtown Herndon, she walked

down the W&OD trail between Ferndale Avenue and Grace Street on Monday night, Nov. 18. The suspect grabbed the woman and forced her to the ground, "where he proceeded to rape her," DeBoard said.

According to the chief, at 8:51 pm, officers responded to the W&OD trail between Ferndale Avenue and Grace Street for a call about a woman who approached the passerby and asked for help after being raped. The woman reportedly fought off the suspect, and he ran away, according to DeBoard. That is when she encountered the passerby who called 911.

After interviewing the victim and witnesses, police located the suspect "minutes later"

in a parking lot in the 700 block of Station Street in the Town of Herndon. Herndon police officers brought Romero to the Herndon Police Station, where detectives questioned him and reported they found him to be in possession of property that belonged to the victim.

Police discovered that Romero has a documented history of sex exposures and offenses in the region dating back to 2022, which includes charges filed in the Town of Herndon prior to the Nov. 18 incident.

DeBoard said that on Oct. 19, Romero was sentenced to 50 days in jail after pleading guilty to indecent exposure on the trail. He was only required to serve half of the sen-

SEE RAPED ON W&OD, PAGE 7

# Community Entrance Sign Destroyed in Police Chase

**Rose Hill residents faced with the repair price.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The residents of Rose Hill are not happy with the destruction of their community sign that was destroyed by a car being pursued by the police.

A neighbor saw the incident from her house nearby and described what she saw on social media.

"I didn't realize right away what was happening until we heard the helicopter and saw their lights sweeping the backyards. We saw that several police cars had lined up on the opposite side of the street and you could tell they were searching backyards on foot on that side. They were also telling people on that side of the road to stay in their houses," Lindsay Holzrichter wrote on the Rose Hill Facebook page.

"I went to watch out my bedroom window and we watched the helo hovering over a backyard and saw the police come out from behind the houses with someone in custody," her post read.

This all happened on March 8 when "the sign was severely damaged when a car fleeing from police crashed into the sign on March 8, 2024," it said in a letter published in a recent Rose Hill newsletter article.

A letter to Steve T. Descano, Fairfax Commonwealth Attorney, dated Oct. 30, 2024 was written by Carl Sell, president, and Robert J. Riccio, treasurer of the Rose Hill Civic Association. "Frankly, we are angered by the lack of support from the police and your office regarding this situation," it said.

Apparently the charges were dropped against the driver because they couldn't determine who was driving the vehicle, the letter said. Sell and Riccio suggested fingerprinting the steering wheel or looking on the rental agreement. It was not clear what the

SEE ROSE HILL SIGN CRASH, PAGE 5



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

It appears that there was a significant amount of force used on the sign on Rose Hill Drive.



SCREENSHOT INSTAGRAM SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENT

A circuit court judge has ruled that the decision to pull Virginia out of a successful climate program known as RGGI, or the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, was unlawful

## Judge: Youngkin's No to RGGI is Unlawful

**At the crossroads, the anti-climate agenda ratcheted down a notch, preserving benefits of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**ircuit Court Judge Randall Lowe of the 27th Judicial Court of Virginia issued a decision on Monday, Nov. 18, overturning Gov. Glenn Youngkin's repeal of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, ruling that it "is unlawful and thereby null and void."

RGGI is a market-based program — an agreement between 11 states to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the power sector by 30 percent by 2030.

"We just got a huge climate win for Virginia," posted the petitioner in the suit, the Southern Environmental Law Center, after learning of the decision. The Southern Environmental Law Center represented the Association of Energy Conservation Professionals in the case.

According to the Law Center, in three years the program functioned in Virginia, it dropped Virginia's power plant emissions by 22 percent and generated new funds. The state received \$827 million to help Virginia communities plan for and become more resilient to floods, and also helped low-income households reduce their energy bills.

The primary sources of electricity sector emissions,

the burning of fossil fuels used to generate electricity in power plants, are coal and natural gas. Coal historically has been the largest contributor to emissions. Its usage has been declining in recent years while natural gas usage has increased slightly. Petroleum and non-biomass waste are also sources of electricity sector emissions

(power plants).

Judge Lowe wrote that the "only body with the authority to repeal the RGGI Regulation would be the General Assembly. ... If Respondents had merely amended the RGGI Regulation in ways that were not inconsistent with the RGGI Act, it is doubtful that their authority to do so could be challenged. But that is not what happened here."

**The "only body with the authority to repeal the RGGI Regulation would be the General Assembly."**

— Judge Randall Lowe

brought millions of dollars into Virginia to increase energy efficacy and storm resiliency efforts to address climate change.

The issue surrounding RGGI is multifaceted. RGGI requires power producers in Virginia to purchase carbon offsets from auctions managed by the interstate compact. Youngkin wrote in a release dated June 7,

SEE RGGI, PAGE 14

## Electric Utilities Required to be Carbon-free by 2050

**Dominion Power Proposing Electric Plant Fueled by 'Natural Gas.'**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**A**ccording to the Virginia Clean Economy Act, electric utilities in the state are required to be 100 percent carbon-free by 2050, meaning electricity generated must come from carbon-free sources, and this applies to major utilities like Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power Company. In Virginia, Dominion Energy is proposing a new electricity plant, about a two-hour drive from Fairfax County in Chesterfield, fueled by natural gas. That means methane and oil.

It is part of a more extensive proposed buildout of methane gas-fired power plant facilities across six Southern states. "Energy-related greenhouse gas emissions account for the majority of all anthropogenic emissions — about 80 percent of which are in the USA and the European Union, for example. Just 20 percent of final energy consumption is in the form of electricity, but the generation of electricity is responsible for over 40 percent of all energy-related emissions," according to world-nuclear.org.

Utilities across the United States, including Dominion Energy facilities "are much cleaner than they were decades ago," with reduced reliance on coal use for electricity generation. Methane gas has lower emissions than coal when it is burned. To produce the same amount of electricity, natural gas plants typically emit nearly 100 percent less particulate matter, an air pollutant harmful for health, and nearly 50 percent less CO<sub>2</sub>, a potent heat-trapping gas, according to the U.S. Energy and Information Administration.

However, natural gas plants still produce air pollution emissions, are noisy, transport gas through pipelines, are located more often than not in underserved communities, and leaks "are common," at gas wells and pipelines, according to Dr. Lucas RF Henneman, an Assistant Professor in the Sid and Reva Dewberry Department of Civil, Environmental, and Infrastructure Engineering at George Mason University College for Science at George Mason, Virginia Climate Center.

## Natural Gas, Still a Fossil Fuel

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**L**ooking back to June 7, 2023, when Gov. Glenn Youngkin praised the State Air Pollution Control Board's repeal of RGGI, he stated that the Office of the Attorney General had "confirmed the State Air Pollution Control Board has the legal authority to take action on the regulatory proposal using the full regulatory process."

Youngkin also said, "We need to ensure Virginia has a reliable, affordable, clean, and growing supply of power by embracing an all-of-the-above energy plan that includes natural gas, nuclear, renewables and the exploration of emerging sources to satisfy the growing needs of Commonwealth residents and businesses."

Renewable energy sources emit little to no greenhouse gasses, making them the cleanest energy resources available.

The growth of AI is pressing the growth of data centers, and that fuels the demand for electric plants turning toward natural gas.

Growth in AI and data centers "is a tailwind for natural gas," according to Alan Armstrong, CEO of The Williams Companies, Inc., which handles approximately one-third of the natural gas in the U.S.

Natural gas is cheaper than other polluting fossil fuels like coal

SEE NATURAL GAS, PAGE 14

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



The sign was there a long time before McDonald's.



Another look at the damage.



From the back, a wine bottle adds to the impact of the whole thing.

# Rose Hill Sign Crash

FROM PAGE 3

county response was and the attempts by the Rose Hill residents were not successful.

Laura Birnbaum, the Deputy Chief of Staff/PIO at the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney office is familiar with the case but said that it falls under "nolle prossed," with the attorney's office because there was legally not enough evidence to move forward, she said. There were three suspects in the car but the police could not be sure which was the driver. Birnbaum sympathizes with the community group but stressed that "if there is not enough evidence to move forward with a case legally, we cannot proceed," she said. Since it was a rental car, fingerprints are not a reliable method, she said.

In the end, the stone wall sign that has been in front of the community on Franconia Road remains unreadable, and looks like a pile of stone and concrete with shards of metal throughout. Not a welcoming site. "Stonework is expensive!" they said.

The signs here at Rose Hill are known as monument signs, defined as a ground-level, often free-standing, sign with information designed for drivers and onlookers to spot and read quickly, said a definition by America's Instant Signs company.

The Rose Hill Civic Association's social media page has an older picture of the Rose Hill community sign as their moniker from before this crash.

## SPRINGTIME SHOCK

The sign was a subject on the Rose Hill Civic Association blog, dated April 19, 2024. That was before the Commonwealth's Attorney got involved. The following was posted on their social media site:

"First, the investigation concerning the repair of the Rose Hill entrance sign is ongoing. Since the sign is located in VDOT right of way, we need approval to move forward. At the same time, we hope to hold the person liable for the damage to pay for the repair.

"The crash occurred after a police chase that started on the Beltway and reached a speed of 90 miles per hour. No wonder the driver couldn't make the turn onto Rose Hill Drive from Franconia Road! The driver's court appearance is scheduled for June 18 and RHCA will be there. We invite you to join us. "Meanwhile, we are soliciting ideas on what kind of sign you would like to see to replace the one that was damaged."

On Sept. 24, Franconia Police Commander Marisa Kuhar spoke with residents at a meeting of the Rose Hill Civic Association on Tuesday Sept. 24. Topics of discussion included the sign, traffic safety enforcement and retail theft concerns.

The sign rubble is still located next to the Rose Hill Shopping Center which is still in the crosshairs of developers. In recent years, it has been the subject of proposed redevelopment and this became a topic of debate for many.

## Fairfax Water

### NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2024, 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, 2025, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,800 to \$4,930\*.
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$22,910 to \$24,290.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,830 to \$1,840\*.
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$47 to \$48.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$15.60 to \$16.55\*.
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.84 to \$4.03 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$4.10 to \$4.15.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$57 to \$58.
- 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 Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge Inspection Fee from \$46 to \$47.

\*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 \$240 million budget for calendar year 2025.<sup>1</sup> Water sales are expected to provide \$209 million and the remaining \$31 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2024	2025
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 66,956	\$ 74,371
Power and Utilities	14,667	14,630
Chemicals	15,970	16,910
Purchased Water	7,713	9,013
Supplies and Materials	6,871	7,401
Insurance	1,507	1,558
Fuel	776	890
Postage	620	642
Contractual Services	12,667	14,194
Professional Services	1,191	1,940
Other	2,605	3,168
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>131,543</b>	<b>144,717</b>
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(11,014)	(12,005)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 120,529</b>	<b>\$ 132,712</b>

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$49,871,656
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$43,885,000

<sup>1</sup> Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our website at [fairfaxwater.org/rates](http://fairfaxwater.org/rates).

Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Jessica Love at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments to [PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org](mailto: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 11, 2024** to be included in the record of the public hearing.

# CFTC Presents 'Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins'

**A new, holiday play geared for both children and adults.**

By BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

In a holiday season when some of the focus is on Christmas, City of Fairfax Theatre Co. (CFTC) is presenting a play about a different celebration. It's an adaptation and expansion of the award-winning children's book, "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins."

"A family is preparing to celebrate the last night of Hanukkah when their menorah breaks," said Director Adam Ressa. "The kids don't see why it matters so much, so their grandfather tells them the story of 'Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins.'"

Suitable for all ages, including children 6 and up, it has a cast and crew of 25 and even an onstage clarinet player who only responds to the characters by playing his instrument. In addition, there are hand puppets, shadow puppets, puppets worn by the actors, and one puppet operated by five people.

"Even the set, to a certain extent, is a puppet," said Ressa. "We're seeing the grandfather's imagination manifest through many different types of puppetry as he tells the story."

This one-hour play will be presented at the Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike in Fairfax. Show times are Thursday-Friday, Dec. 5-6, at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 7-8, at 1 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20, adults; \$15, children 12 and under, via [www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org](http://www.fairfaxcitytheatre.org).

In the story, a man named Hershel walks into an Eastern European village on the first night of Hanukkah and no one's celebrating. He learns that goblins have taken it over and won't let the village celebrate Hanukkah. So he vows to save the village from them, and the play shows how he does it.

"The message is the idea that everyone's entitled to celebrate their own culture without fear," explained Ressa. "It's a universal concept that speaks to everybody, and it's especially relevant that we're performing this show in a Jewish community center. There's something for all audience members to enjoy and think about, and some adults will even take away a deeper message. When you have layered stories like this, it makes it so much richer for everyone."

Scenes take place in the village, a synagogue and in the grandparents' apartment, with lighting, puppets and multiple technical elements illustrating the various locations. Regarding the actors, Ressa said, "It brings a tear to my eye watching them become a true ensemble. When they're all working together to create this work of art, it's truly inspiring. It's a play well-worth seeing and is something that'll both wow and surprise the audience."

GMU junior Thomas Malinovsky portrays Hershel, who's in his mid-30s. "He's a trick-



Thomas Malinovsky portrays the lead character, Hershel.

ster who goes from village to village fixing any supernatural issues they may have," said Malinovsky. "He's not strong physically but has a strong mind. He uses his humor and sharp wits to put one over on people.

"I really love playing him; it's a huge honor to be cast in the lead. And as a Jewish person, it's important to me to bring this story to life because, for many people, it was a childhood favorite. And for those who don't know it, I hope they'll learn something. December is usually full of Christmas shows, so this is refreshing. And it's nice to have a play where everybody's character is Jewish."

Malinovsky said it's lots of fun playing off the puppet characters, and he enjoys children's theater because "you get to really play up your comedy. And whenever the kids in the cast laugh, I know I'm doing something right. The audience will like the puppets and the message that, even when things are hard, you can still enjoy the holidays with the people you love."

Playing the grandfather, Zayde (the Yiddish word for grandfather) and telling the story is Bob Rosenberg. "He's a family guy, loves his three grandchildren and loves to tell them stories," said Rosenberg. "But he's having a little trouble with this story because it takes a while before the children buy into the existence of the goblins."

He likes his role because "not only is it fun to be a narrator, but I also get the excellent combo of being onstage the entire play and sitting – which is something actors don't usually get to do. So I'm both in the play and watching it."

Rosenberg said the story will especially



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEATHER REGAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Villagers cowering in the face of the goblins: (from left) are Whitney Perez, Sharon Petersen, Maxwell Hayes and Taylor Alexander.



Bob Rosenberg as Zayde, with his three mischievous granddaughters (from left) Emma Chase, Vianne Vazquez and Adele Wiseman).

strike a chord with the adult audience members "when they realize what it's really about. So it's both entertaining and educational."

Elizabeth Suzanne is the show's puppet captain. She's in the ensemble, working some of the puppets, and is also the lead puppeteer for the Goblin King character. "I taught all the actors the basics of operating the puppets," she said. "And I figured out how to make each particular puppet be best manipulated to perform as an actor onstage."

"The puppets actually engage with and respond to the human actors, so they need to look like they're alive and focusing on some-

thing and have actual substance. I've been doing this a long time, and I really love it. Altogether, we have four really big puppets, plus multiple smaller ones – all of which serve individual purposes."

Suzanne said the story is rooted in truth and lived experience, so "the presence of the goblins adds a fantastical element." Therefore, having them represented as puppets "keeps that idea of fantasy and imagination still grounded in the actors who bring them to life. And having the puppets portrayed as real characters adds another unique layer to the storytelling."

Producer Rebecca Kalant (director Ressa's wife) wrote the script based on the children's book by Eric Kimmel. She and Ressa both loved the book, as children, and often talked about what a great play it would make. Upon learning there wasn't an official stage version, she obtained Kimmel's permission to adapt it since CFTC is a nonprofit.

"The original is just about Hershel defeating the goblins in his village," explained Kalant. "I added

the framing device of the grandfather telling the story to his grandchildren to flesh out the story and provide some context." Now, watching her adaptation performed onstage, she said, is "amazing. It's so rewarding to see the actors engage with the material; it feels like a real accomplishment."

"For me, it was important to have a holiday offering accessible to everyone and, particularly, to Jewish children," she continued. "And having my own baby six months ago underscored that desire. But it's also a fun story for everyone and introduces non-Jewish children to a Hanukkah story."



SCREENSHOT HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Herndon Police Chief Maggie DeBoard: “You should feel safe here in town, knowing that this individual has been removed from our streets.”**

# Woman Raped on W&OD Trail

FROM PAGE 3

tence and was released just days before the recent attack on the W&OD Trail. DeBoard expressed concern about the number of arrests and releases Romero has experienced.

The suspect continued to re-offend, and his behavior has escalated to rape in a public area in our town, DeBoard said. Romero did not know the victim, according to DeBoard. Romero is at the Fairfax County Adult held without bond, charged with abduction with attempt to defile and rape. DeBoard said they will do everything in their power “to ensure that he does remain in custody.”

Police are urging potential victims or witnesses to come forward and are increasing their presence to ensure public safety. They emphasize vigilance, especially at night, and the importance of calling 911 for any suspicious activities. There will be additional uniformed officers on the W&OD in the upcoming days and weeks “to allay any fears.”

The investigation into this case is ongoing. Police ask that anyone with information about this incident or anyone who believes they may have been a victim to contact the Herndon Police Department at 703-435-6846.

“I want our community to know that you should feel safe here in town, knowing that this individual has been removed from our streets in a rapid manner and remains in custody,” DeBoard said.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Other Attempted Abductions or Indecent Exposures on the W&OD Trail

❖ On May 12, 2024, Brandon Lee Anthony, 30, of Herndon, was arrested for indecent exposure on the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail in Sterling by the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office.

❖ In August of 2022, a series of attempted abductions on or near the W&OD trail occurred. Fairfax County Police provided a photo of a man as a suspect in an incident that occurred on Friday, Aug. 26, in Herndon, believed to be related to the other cases. On Aug. 28, 2022, Fairfax County police said a man grabbed a woman walking east on the W&OD Trail between Town Center Parkway and the Fairfax County Parkway a little after 8 a.m. On Aug. 30, Fairfax police posted that officers were on the scene of an attempted abduction in the 1800 block of Old Reston Ave. in Reston. A man had tried to grab a teenager walking on the sidewalk, but she broke free and ran. On Thursday, Sept. 9, 2022, Herndon resident Juan Alfaro Rodriguez, 42, was arrested in the incidents.

❖ Aug. 23, 2019, Town of Vienna, Virginia Police Department Media Information said the “department has arrested a 33-year-old Vienna man after several incidents of Indecent Exposure were reported on the W&OD trail. Enoc Isaac Vasquez has been charged with four counts of obscene sexual display, which is a charge similar to the Indecent Exposure statute, 18.2-387.”



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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Girl Scouts of Service Unit 55/6 sings Christmas tunes at last year's Festival of Lights and Carols.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Tevin Renaa Parker sells her knit and crocheted winter wear at the 2023 holiday market.

# Holiday Markets, Entertainment, in Fairfax City

Family fun, as well, at the Festival of Lights and Carols.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Area residents coming to Fairfax City's Holiday Market, the first two weekends in December, will be able to support local artisans and do some holiday shopping at the same time. The place to be is Old Town Square, 10415 North St.

Craft vendors will vary between the two weekends, providing shoppers with a variety of vendors to check out. And while they're shopping, they'll also get to enjoy the sounds of live music, dance and other entertainment on the Old Town Square stage.

The dates are Friday-Sunday, Dec. 6, 7 and 8; and Friday-Sunday, Dec. 13, 14 and 15. The times are Fridays, 5-8 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-6 p.m.; and Sundays, noon-5 p.m. To see each weekend's list of vendors, go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/holiday-market>.

The live performers include singers, musicians and dancers. To see who they are and what day and time each one will be onstage, visit the above Website and click on "performance schedule."

And both humans and pets may have their photos taken with Santa. On Sunday, Dec. 8, from 2-5 p.m., children may bring

their Christmas-wish letters to place into Santa's mailbox and also grab a photo with him. And on the following Sunday, Dec. 15, also from 2-5 p.m., people may participate in Paws and Claus. They're encouraged to bring their pets dressed in their holiday best for their own photos with Santa.

## FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND CAROLS

Besides the Holiday Market, Fairfax City's annual Festival of Lights and Carols is set for Saturday, Dec. 7, from noon-6 p.m., in Old Town Square. The fun includes activities for the whole family. Attendees may enjoy live

holiday music, toast marshmallows for s'mores, have some hot apple cider, make holiday crafts and more. And capping off the festivities will be the lighting of the City's Christmas tree at 5:30 p.m. while everyone there sings Christmas carols to ring in the holiday season.

❖ The entertainment schedule is as follows:

Noon – The Daniels Run Elementary Singers and the Fairfax Choral Society Youth Choirs

- 1 p.m. - UUCF Choir and Handbell Choir
- 2 p.m. - GMU Tuba Euphonium Ensemble
- 3 p.m. - Girl Scouts of Fairfax City
- 4 p.m. - Metropolitan School of the Arts
- 5 p.m. - Vienna-Falls Chorus

## Fairfax City's Small Business Saturday Is Nov. 30

Area residents have a chance to support local, mom-and-pop businesses – and do some holiday shopping at the same time – during Fairfax City's Small Business Saturday. It's observed annually on the first Saturday after Thanksgiving, and this year's event will be on Saturday, Nov. 30.

It's a collaborative effort of Fairfax City Economic Development, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce and the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. (OTFBA). The goal is to emphasize the importance of local small businesses, foster community engagement and encourage residents to actively support and patronize these establishments during the holiday season.

The fun begins at 9 a.m. at the Fairfax Funky Flea Market at 4031 University Drive. Stop by the OTFBA tent there until 1 p.m. to get details of exclusive deals being offered by various Old Town Fairfax retailers.

And from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., children can meet Santa Claus at the Funky Flea.

In addition, people may give the gift of Fairfax this season by purchasing a Flex Card. The Fairfax City Flex Card can be used at many small businesses in the City, especially on Small Business Saturday. Select a value of \$10, \$25, \$50 or a custom amount to place onto the card. Then choose a recipient (family, friends, team members, etc.) and send that person the details via email or text message.

The recipient may use that value to make purchases at participating Fairfax City Flex Card businesses. To obtain a Flex Card and see a list of the businesses accepting them, go to <https://app.yiftee.com/gift-card/fairfax-city-flex-card-fairfax>.

— BONNIE HOBBS

## Car Seat Inspections on Dec. 5

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, Dec. 5, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants should install the child safety seat first so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly. Everyone is eligible. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for Dec. 19, at the same place and time.

## Donate Gifts for Santa's Ride

The Fairfax County Police Department Motor Squad is gearing up for Santa's Ride 2024. Donate new unwrapped toys, games, books and other gifts to be distributed to children at Fairfax Inova Children's Hospital, Inova Life with Cancer, and to other children in the community who might not otherwise have a cheerful holiday season.

Bring these items to any county police station, to the lobbies of the Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Pkwy., or the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Pkwy., or to the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy., all in Fairfax, no later than Monday, Dec. 9, at 9 a.m.



# COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

— MERCIA HOBSON



PHOTO BY FCPS

## Patrick Bayne Receives Proclamation and Award

Patrick Bayne, manager of the ADA Infrastructure Projects for Fairfax County, received a proclamation at the Nov. 14 school board meeting read by Melanie Meren, representative of the Hunter Mill District. The proclamation honored his work in conjunction with the Reston Accessibility Committee. The committee completed its accessibility assessment of the parking lots at Reston elementary schools, and middle and high schools in Reston/Herndon (2022-23). Bayne oversaw the timely implementation of all recommendations. At the school board meeting, RAC presented him with an award, noting that his advocacy had enhanced access for staff, faculty, students and parents with mobility disabilities.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

The Bowie family dresses up their holiday spirit for an outing to Springfield Town Center; Briana, Sekani (2), Aaron Sr, Aaron Jr. (5), Seaunite (1), & Carla

## Specialty Unit of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department announced on Nov. 22 that it hosted its first in-house Tower Rescue Technician Course. Tower Rescue Operations Team (TROT) personnel are now qualified to serve as adjuncts for future courses, boosting regional capabilities. According to the department, TROT personnel “respond to complex and challenging rescue incidents including high-angle incidents on cranes, cliffs, high-rise buildings; confined space incidents in tunnels, tanks, sewers, buildings and trenches; and swift water incidents occurring on flooded streams, roadways and within Great Falls Park.



Fairfax County hosts its 1st in-house Tower Rescue Technician Course.



PHOTOS FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE/RESCUE @FFXFIRE/RESCUE  
Geared up for TROT training, Technical Rescue Operations Team

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# Dancing Reindeer, Elves, Toy Soldiers and Santa

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAYNOR VAN DER MERWE

## Encore presents its holiday show, 'Time for Christmas.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Since Santa delivers all the Christmas presents in one night, Oswald – a hare-brained scientist/part-time elf – wants to control time like he does. But when he accidentally throws the world into a time loop, two high-tech elves try to prove their value by fixing it. With the same day repeating over and over, will Christmas ever come?

That's the premise of "Time for Christmas," the Broadway-style holiday musical by Chantilly-based Encore Theatrical Arts Project. A dazzling holiday adventure for all ages, it features creative choreography, elaborate sets, stunning costumes and more than 20 musical numbers. It'll be performed at the Richard Ernst Theater at NOVA's Annandale campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike.

The curtain rises Saturday, Dec. 7, at noon, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 8, at noon and 4 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 14, at noon, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 15, at noon and 4 p.m. For tickets and Girl Scout program details, go to [www.encore-tap.org](http://www.encore-tap.org).

Rehearsing since July, the cast of 35 includes professional actors Logan Dolence and Matty Rafanelli, plus a slew of outstanding dancers. And Encore founder Raynor van der Merwe is proud of them all, as well as of Encore alum Paige Williams, who wrote the show's original script.

"They're all so hardworking and talented," said van der Merwe. "This show is the year's highlight for all of us, and the audience will be transported to the holidays by the storyline, sets and costumes."

"The scenes take place at Santa's workshop and at Santa Land at a New York City mall where Oswald works. Our professionals have gorgeous singing voices, and the story and dialogue are quick, tight and funny. And I'm so excited to have Paige writing and directing it."

After graduating from Centreville High in 2005, Williams was a New York City Rockette, performed at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, danced with the national tours of "Cinderella" and "Mary Poppins" and danced on Broadway



Striking a pose (from left) are Haley Bonaventura, Mimi Platenberg, Jillian Felder, Jenna Abi Joumah and Leila Zarnegar.

in "Holiday Inn" and Aladdin." She returned home after the pandemic and, since 2022, has been an Encore dance teacher.

"I love it," she said. "It's fun watching kids discover how to dance, realize they can do things that were hard for them, and master those skills. I helped with last year's script and enjoyed it, so I offered to write this year's. The message is the importance of friends and the people who love you for exactly who you are – and to be confident in that."

And as the director, said Williams, "I've been so impressed by how playful the cast can be. Actors find what works by exploring their characters, and they're all unafraid to take chances while creating their characters' personalities."

Dancing since age 5, Chantilly High senior Jillian Felder plays Juniper, a tech-maintenance elf who fixes the gadgets and electronics in Santa's workshop. "She also creates inventions to make toy production go faster," said Felder. "She's happy and upbeat, cares about her friend Ivy and is excited to try new things."

Since she and Juniper have similar personalities and lots of energy, Felder enjoys her role and feeling connected to her character. "And I love her friendship with Ivy – they compliment each other really well," she said. "And since I'm friends in real life with the person playing Ivy, it's nice getting to be

best friends in the show, too."

Felder's favorite song is "Mailroom" since "all the props we use in the dance make it really fun and exciting. There's so much going on in this number, passing boxes and organizing letters, and the choreography is enjoyable to watch." As for the audience, she said, "Everyone's going to love this original story, our guest actors, all the dances and the wonderful choreography."

Portraying Ivy is Fairfax High senior Mimi Platenberg (whose Uncle Jeff is Fairfax City Schools Superintendent). "She's also a high-tech elf and is smart and caring," said Platenberg. "She loves all the elves, especially her friends, and enjoys spreading cheer and spending time creating new gadgets with Juniper."

"Ivy is like my own personality in elf form," she continued. "And it's so cool getting to act out the fun and quirkiness of elves and do it with my best friends." She's danced with Encore since age 5, and her favorite number is "Soldiers" because "it's a cute routine with dancers dressed as toy soldiers and fits humorously into the storyline."

"The actors we have this year are really funny and will appeal to everyone in the audience," added Platenberg. "The script writing is fantastic and even makes me laugh."

Chantilly High seniors Sam Wolff and Aniqah Ahmed play electrical elves, A.C. and D.C., respec-



Snowflakes and smiles: Encore's dancers are ready to perform their annual Christmas show.



In Santa's workshop are (from left) Dewi Vollmer, Haley Buenaventura, Leila Zarnegar, Sam Wolff, Claire Youk and Jenna Abi Joumah.

tively. "They're co-heads of the electrical team; so when the power goes out at the North Pole, we have to fix it," said Ahmed. "D.C. is optimistic, but also logical because he says all experiments must stop until they find out what's wrong.

It's great playing him, and we get to do a funny dance called 'Power Up Tap.'"

Ahmed said the audience will like this show because "the plot is really creative. And it's cool to see

SEE DANCING REINDEER, PAGE 11

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



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RANNOR VAN DER MERWE

Encore dancers pose in reindeer costumes for their upcoming show, "Time for Christmas."

# Dancing Reindeer, Elves, Toy Soldiers and Santa

FROM PAGE 5

two elves who are science-based and interested in technology – which is different from our usual Christmas shows."

As A.C., Wolff describes his character as jolly, but also concerned. "He's got to fix the catastrophe created by Ivy and Juniper," explained Wolff. "After they caused the power outage, the elves couldn't work. I have a good time playing A.C., and Anika and I do a crazy dance with some other electrical elves. It's performed to a somber, searching-type song with no words, but has some really advanced tap steps."

He, too, said audiences will love "Time for Christmas" because "there's a bunch of silly jokes and great costumes, and we turn into Santas, soldiers, reindeer, rag dolls and other characters – which is highly entertaining. And the dances are performed at a professional level."

Jenna Abi Joumah, also a Chantilly senior, is a singer and dancer in the ensemble. "I sing a solo in our opening song, 'Christmas Town,' and in another number called 'A Christmas Song,'" she said. "And I'm in lots of the dances. My favorite is 'Elf Search.' We wear fedoras and do a jazz dance down low while snapping our fingers."

"I love being part of this show. We bond with each other, make so many memories backstage and look forward to dancing together. I also like how happy and inspired it makes the younger kids in the audience."

Another Chantilly senior, Leila Zarnegar, performs in the ensemble, too. Dancing with Encore since age 7, she likes "expressing myself through exercise and showing my emotions through dance."

"I especially like the 'Reindeer' number because we get to wear cute reindeer costumes and heels. It's challenging because of all the technical elements like leaps and turns, but it's lots of fun." Regarding the audience, she said, "It's magical to see how many people show up and how it makes them feel ready for the holidays."

Haley Buenaventura plays Quill, an elf who finds a special electronic device that Juniper and Ivy need. "She's eager and always up for a search, and I get to do the 'Elf Search' dance," said Buenaventura. "Dancing feels good, especially jazz and contemporary numbers."

"Our storyline will hook the audience, and they'll love the fun dances," she continued. "This show is unique – I don't think there's anything else like it in Northern Virginia."

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Liz Kamp (2nd from right), Founder of New Trail Cycling & Strength, inspires others in service at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Herndon.



Members of Social4Good, an organization that promotes volunteerism, understand that many hands make light work. They helped to receive and sort food and toiletries bound for Herndon and Reston area schools.

# Ending Teen Food Insecurity

## Amazon sponsors Food For Neighbors Event.

The power of local businesses and community volunteers working together to make an impact was on full display earlier this month when Amazon sponsored the Food For Neighbors event to help fill the food pantries in local schools. Through the Food For Neighbors Red Bag Program and generous food drives from eleven area businesses and other groups, the community collected and sorted over 28,800 pounds of donations bound for 47 local schools. Thirty-one of these schools are in Fairfax County, where more than 1,560 households donated food and toiletries and over 600 volunteers rolled up their sleeves in the Centreville, Falls Church, Fort Hunt, Herndon, South County, and Springfield areas to collect, sort and deliver.

“Amazon’s continued partnership and generous donations have played a pivotal role in expanding our services into new communities,” said Karen Joseph, Founder and Executive Director of Food For Neighbors. “Their support has made a real difference for thousands of students facing food insecurity and has allowed us to provide much-needed, ongoing assistance.”

Amazon volunteers helped to receive and sort food and toiletries at

multiple locations. Working at Irving Middle School in Springfield was Melissa Robinson of Amazon Community Impact. She shared, “At Amazon, we want to be good neighbors. Food security is an issue that employees are passionate about supporting. We are proud to support the Food For Neighbors fall food event for the second year in a row.”

Gonzalo de Dios was among other Amazon volunteers working in Springfield with Robinson. He noted, “We don’t realize there are a lot of people who are hungry. A little effort goes a long way for people without means.”

Despite Northern Virginia being among the most affluent areas in the state, over 1-in-3 students in Fairfax County were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the 2023-2024 school year. Food For Neighbors works to ensure that supplemental food is readily accessible to students during the school day and to take home over weekends and holidays.

To address this need, several other community businesses and organizations joined Amazon and local volunteers in service. Working at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Herndon were Sprouts, Social4Good, Young Men’s Service League’s (YMSL) Hunter Mill Chapter, and New Trail Cycling & Strength, which also began their efforts prior to the event by sponsoring a food drive with their members. For the Herndon and Reston area schools, Food For Neighbors also received generous food drives from FS-ISAC and Anytime Fitness Herndon and Chantilly gyms.

Liz Kamp, Founder of New Trail,

expressed enthusiasm for supporting Food For Neighbors. “We have loved working with Food For Neighbors this fall. New Trail is more than a gym; we’re a community of people who want to support each other and our neighbors,” said Kamp. “One of our quotes on the wall inside New Trail is ‘We rise by lifting others,’ and we try to embody that through action. Collecting food for Food For Neighbors has been a great way for us to come together for a common purpose.”

Volunteers from Sprouts stores in Leesburg and Westminister chose to volunteer with Food For Neighbors as part of Sprouts Day of Service, an annual nationwide effort. “We brought our kids to help with the food sorting, as it is a great way for them to learn how to serve and how to give back,” said Sprouts team member Nancy Potumuthu.

Social4Good also had a number of members participating in Herndon. Pam Soncini remarked, “Partnering to fight food insecurity has been an incredibly rewarding experience for Social4Good and our members. ... I’m grateful to be part of an effort that brings hope and nourishment to others.”

Additional businesses and organizations also supported the massive food collection by providing food drives to and/or volunteering as groups at Centreville High School, Luther Jackson Middle School, and Walt Whitman Middle School. These included Cooley LLP, Kiwanis, IBM, ICF, National Charity League, Rocky Run Middle School, Salesforce, St. Aidan’s Episcopal Day School, TCG, and YMSL.

“At TCG, we’re committed to



Sprouts team members enjoy volunteering in Herndon as part of their Sprouts Day of Service, an annual, nationwide effort.

making a meaningful impact by actively addressing food insecurity in our communities,” shared Debbie Buchanan, FSO/Executive Assistant to the President of TCG, Inc., whose team helped at Whitman Middle School in Mount Vernon.

Christopher Kozusko, President of the Kiwanis Club of Tysons, which also had a team at Whitman, echoed Buchanan’s sentiments. “Dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time, the Kiwanis Club of Tysons appreciates this opportunity to help tackle teen food insecurity in Alexandria.” On Feb. 1, the Kiwanis will continue to make an impact through its Polar Dip fundraiser in support of Food For Neighbors and other nonprofits.

“I want our amazing volunteers and business partners to know that

their contributions are making a profound impact. Thanks to their dedication and generosity, we’ve been able to reach far more students than we ever imagined when we started in 2016,” said Food For Neighbors Founder Karen Joseph. “Our partnerships with local businesses and organizations have been key in expanding our reach. School staff continue to share how the consistent food support is helping students attend school more regularly, stay focused in class, and improve their academic performance. Together, we are changing lives and giving these students opportunities to thrive.”

To learn more about Food For Neighbors and join more than 3,100 Red Bag donors and over 3,600 volunteers, visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/get-involved/>

# Elections and Lake Anne Moving On

JOHN LOVAAS

**W**e couldn't have asked for a nicer election day weatherwise! This year I was working the polls for Harris and Walz at Lake Anne Elementary School rather than doing a 16-hour day as an election official. We had a solid turnout and would-be voters, especially women, were in a good mood doing their civic duty. I saw many friends and neighbors who knew me as former Reston Farmers Market Manager.

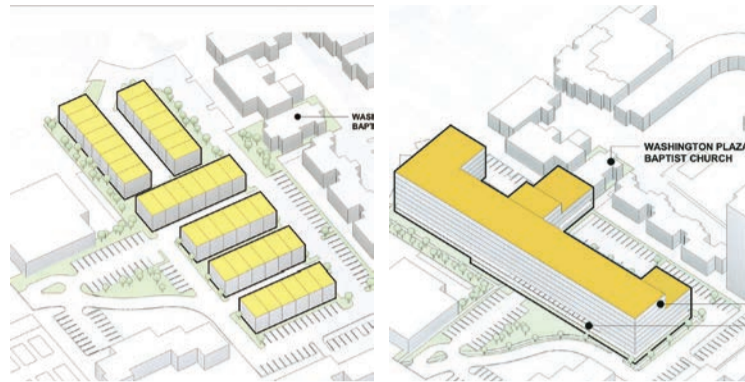
I had one surprise when a long-time activist acquaintance, and now a political consultant, appeared and told me he'd not come to vote, but was there to promote a casino in Reston. He wanted to be seen around Democrats while promoting the casino. I told him we'd prefer that he move away from us so that it would not seem that a casino was part of a Democratic agenda. He complied but was not a happy camper. Note: Elected Democratic officials from this district all oppose a casino in Reston.

I only wish we'd had as much success electing our ticket instead of the convicted felon who did win. In any case, the Dems won all Reston precincts as well as Virginia, with the exception of the nearby 10th Congressional District seat.

**ON THURSDAY**, Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn and the County consulting team Street Sense presented the final phase findings of the two-year Lake Anne Economic Visioning Study to the community. About 35 people attended the meeting, mostly residents of the Lake Anne Condominium Association (LARCA), Washington Plaza Cluster Association and other clusters near the Village Center. The evening's discussion focused on conceptual proposals for "revitalization" consisting of substantial new residential construction on the south



INDEPENDENT  
PROGRESSIVE



Possible townhouses or condo building for Lake Anne?

side of LARCA's property and adjoining property owned by the Washington Plaza Baptist Church. The presenters mentioned the possible future development on property of the Buddhist Temple of the Village Center. There are no preliminary proposals yet for that site which is not within LARCA's property area.

Alcorn reminded the community that the findings from the joint efforts of the consultants and LARCA residents (not formally the Association itself) are now in the hands of LARCA owners to decide what, if anything, will be implemented as a result of the study.

Alcorn noted that he would now focus his attention on the urgent matter of redevelopment of the Fairfax County-owned Crescent Apartments property. The planning will include market-priced units and a review of the wooded area between the gas station and Baron Cameron Avenue as a possible site for a new Lake Anne branch of the Reston Community Center now located on the Plaza.

Most of the following active discussion focused on the economics and merits of the 18 to 36-unit townhomes or the 125 to 200 multi-family apartments/condos concepts (see drawings) to be nestled up to the Quayside/

Heron House, the Church and Washington Plaza towns. The townhouses would offer more financial return to LARCA up front; while the large (4-7 stories) apartment/condo building would yield less upfront return but more significant longer-term income for LARCA. There was a lot of back and forth, but my take was that the LARCA owners were not generally enthusiastic about either concept.

One gentleman, in closing, took a very contrarian view — he said the concepts were wholly inconsistent with the reasons he moved here ... offering nothing he could support. Then, I got the surprise of the evening when a senior county official rose and said he agreed with the man. He reported that, in fact, developers often come to his office proposing "exactly this kind of crap" as he pointed directly at the conceptual drawings of the townhome and apartments/condos proposed by the study team.

With that, the consultant's findings were turned over to a very divided group of LARCA owners to study and decide together what to do next.

I left the meeting convinced that Lake Anne revitalization will be for the next generation to decide.

## Thankful for Team MVD

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

**W**hat a wonderful year it's been in our community! I am truly grateful for family, friends, health, the privilege of serving each of you and especially Team MVD, who answer your questions, host great community events, work to connect you with County services and so much more. This year, I thought it would be meaningful for you to hear directly from the team about what they're thankful for in working for you.

Christine Morin — "Over the past 15 years, I've had the privilege of working alongside passionate community members to help shape our community. I am truly grateful for the relationships we have built and the collaborative spirit of our residents. Contributing to projects like the Lorton Community Center and Library—where it's heartwarming to see children at the playground and engaging in classes—has been

especially rewarding. Additionally, the revitalization of Richmond Highway, the development of Liberty and the Workhouse master plan, and the visioning and redevelopment of the Original Mount Vernon High School reflect our commitment to creating a vibrant community that serves everyone. I'm thankful every day for the trust our residents place in us and that together we are able to make a meaningful and lasting impact on our community. Thank you!"

Camela Speer — "I have served you as Supervisor Storck's Communications Director and Environmental Lead for 7 years, with this past year also serving as his Deputy Chief of Staff. I also have lived in Lorton for more than 25 years. I often say my favorite thing about what I do is getting to communicate about my community to my community. I am also grateful in my new role to pursue other



SEE STORCK, PAGE 18

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# Judge: Youngkin's No To RGGI is Unlawful

FROM PAGE 4

2023, on the State Air Pollution Control Board's vote to repeal the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) regulation, as directed by his Executive Order 9, that "the cost of those offsets are fully passed on to power customers who have zero choice because of the Commonwealth's regulated utility model."

In 2020, Virginia established the Community Flood Preparedness Fund. The Virginia Resources Authority partners with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation in administering the Fund. It provides financial assistance to localities to reduce the impacts of flooding in the Commonwealth, with an emphasis on projects that align with local, state and federal floodplain management standards, local resilience plans, and the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. RGGI raised 45 percent of the Fund's revenue from 2021-2023.

The impact of Hurricane Helene's catastrophic winds and rainfall across Virginia is a reminder that climate change is here. Two Virginians died in the hurricane. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership estimated that the storm had direct and indirect economic impacts of more than \$2.0 billion in the Southwest Virginia region.

"Unfortunately, [Youngkin's] decision has now cost Virginians over \$200 million dollars of funds that could have been appropriated in the last two years to protect the Commonwealth against flood damage like what just happened in Southwest Virginia because of Hurricane Helene," said Surovell.

According to the Virginia Conservation Network, "This pollution reduction program (RGGI) drives down greenhouse gas emissions, which improves air quality and public health while also bringing in desperately needed revenue to help Virginia's families with flood protection. RGGI raised over \$372.5 million over the first three years of Virginia's participation to fund the only

**City of Fairfax** (PDF)  
Dwight Avenue and Virginia Street drainage improvements study  
\$61,556.16  
[Score Sheet](#) (PDF)

**Fairfax County** (PDF)  
Richmond Highway voluntary land acquisition  
\$2,800,000  
[Score Sheet](#) (PDF)

**Alexandria, City of** (PDF)  
Developing a flood resilience plan focused on flood mitigation  
\$525,000  
[Score Sheet](#) (PDF)

SCREENSHOT DCR VIRGINIA

**Proceeds from the sale of carbon allowances went into the Community Flood Preparedness Fund, benefiting Virginia communities including Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Alexandria.**

statewide source for community flood resilience funding."

Local jurisdictions in Northern Virginia are among the Round 4 Grant Funds (Announced March 2024). City of Alexandria developed a flood resilience plan focused on flood mitigation \$525,000. Fairfax County Richmond Highway voluntary land acquisition \$2,800,000 Score Sheet. They are currently accepting applications through the WebGrants portal until Jan. 24, 2025.

The Virginia Conservation Network and its over 160+ network partners, such as Wetlands Watch, safeguarding wetlands and shoreline buffers that provide natural resilience against rising seas and storms, and the Environmental Defense Fund, have scored one for flood protection, air quality, and public health, at least for the time being, given Judge Lowe's decision that the "only body with the authority to repeal the RGGI Regulation would be the General Assembly."

A look through the nation's lens of



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
**Jason S. Miyares, Attorney General of Virginia**



**Sen. Scott A. Surovell**



**Del. Rip Sullivan**



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**Gov. Youngkin assesses storm damage caused by Hurricane Helene in Damascus, Virginia.**

2024 reveals a resemblance to 2016. President-elect Donald Trump is planning to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement for a second time; he says climate change is a hoax and he will increase fossil fuel production. The United States would be one of the only countries not to be a party to the 2015 pact. Nearly 200 governments made non-binding pledges to reduce their planet-warming pollution.

As for Virginia and RGGI, a spokesperson

for Gov. Glenn Youngkin, Christian Martinez, posted, "We respectfully disagree with the judge's decision and will pursue an appeal. [Gov. Youngkin] remains committed to lowering the cost of living for Virginians by continuing to oppose the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which fails to effectively incentivize emission reductions in the Commonwealth. Instead, it functions as a regressive tax, hidden in utility bills, passed on to all Virginians."

**"The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a cooperative cap-and-trade program designed to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector. Virginia's participation in RGGI is mandated by the Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act of 2020, which also directs the proceeds from the sale of carbon allowances into the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF)."**

— Wetlands Watch

## Natural Gas, Still a Fossil Fuel

FROM PAGE 4

or oil and "cleaner" in comparison. However, natural gas is still methane, still a fossil fuel, and still not "clean energy," nor renewable energy.

Natural gas is composed of 70-90 percent methane. It is a potent greenhouse gas and a significant contributor to global warming, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, although cleaner than coal.

"Renewable energy sources like wind and solar typically emit 50 grams or less of carbon dioxide (CO2) per kilowatt hour (kWh) over their lifetime. In comparison, coal emits about 1,000 grams of CO2 per kWh, and natural gas emits about 475 grams per kWh," according to a study reported by the World Resource Institute.

According to the "Virginia Clean Economy Act," HB 1526, effective 7/1/2020, introduced by Del. Rip Sullivan Jr. (D), electric utility regulation, environmental goals, electric utilities in the state are required to be completely carbon-free by the year 2045.

Sullivan posted on Nov. 20, regarding RGGI, "This decision is a major victory for Virginians—and the rule of law. It ensures that our Commonwealth is doing everything it can to reduce carbon emissions, fund flood resiliency efforts, and provide energy efficiency programs to low-income communities."

## OBITUARY

# Homer Wendall Johns, Great Falls and McLean Volunteer Firefighter, Dies

A life of service to two communities.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**H**omer Wendall Johns, 93, a 52-year active service volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician (EMT) for the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue McLean Volunteer Fire Department and Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department, and former chief of both departments, died on Oct. 1. A memorial service for Johns was held Sat., Nov. 16 at the Old Firehouse Center in McLean.

For Johns, volunteerism stood as the cornerstone of his life. Johns received his engineering degree from Virginia Tech, served in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1955 during which he was awarded three Bronze Stars along with several service medals, and embarked on a career in the CIA, his passion in life was being a volunteer firefighter with Fairfax County.

Johns became a member of the McLean Volunteer Fire Department in 1967 and held the position of chief in 1977. A family move to Great Falls in 1971 led him to join the Great Falls VFD, and he became a life member of both stations. Johns served the two communities until he retired in 2019.

Johns served in administrative and operational roles for over 50 years, holding positions such as president, chief, assistant chief, treasurer and secretary. He served 31 consecutive years on the boards of directors between McLean and the Great Falls stations, and for two years, he served simultaneously as chief of both stations. He also served as a member of the Old Dominion Historical Fire Society and the antique fire truck parade at the annual Apple Blossom Festival for several years.

A retirement party at River Bend Country Club on Feb. 13, 2019 signaled the end of a half-century-plus volunteer service with the county. At the time, Johns' desire to be near his children and grandchildren led to his retirement and relocation to the Shenandoah Valley. Accolades upon his retirement poured in from county dignitaries and elected officials, including Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Chief John Butler, Capt. Mike Allen, Great Falls VFD; Capt. Doug Wessell, Great Falls VFD; and President Frank Smith. Supervisor John Foust (Dranesville) announced Johns as the Dranesville Community Volunteer of the Year and presented a Certificate of Proclamation from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, officially declaring Feb. 13, 2019, as "Homer Johns Day."

Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner sent Johns letters in 2019 upon his retirement, thanking him for his service, and presenting him with an American flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol Building in his honor. Sen. Jennifer Wexton sent a representation



On Saturday, Nov. 16, a memorial service was held for Homer Wendall Johns, Great Falls and McLean volunteer firefighter. He is pictured here at his retirement celebration in 2019 with (left) Supervisor John Foust (Dranesville) and Fairfax County Fire Chief John S. Butler.

FILE PHOTOS GREAT FALLS CONNECTION FEBRUARY 20-26, 2019



Some of the career personnel who worked with Homer Johns' gathered to wish him well in 2019.

tative to the event, and State Sen. Barbara Fava and Del. Kathleen Murphy sent letters of congratulations and thanks. A flag was flown for Johns over the Virginia Legislature. Allen, who commanded Station 12, praised Johns at his retirement as a "linchpin" between the volunteers and the career personnel, "willing to do whatever it takes for both to operate efficiently and in collaboration."

What may have mattered most to Johns at his retirement gathering, though, might have been the words that left him speechless, as reported by The Connection in the Feb. 20-26, 2019 Great Falls edition. "I just don't know what we will do without him," Leslie Smith, a volunteer at Station 12, said.

Five years later, after attending the Celebration of Johns' Life on Nov. 16, Leslie Smith commented again about her good friend, saying that when she joined the Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department in

2016 as an EMT, Johns quickly "became a dear friend and mentor." He handed her that role, and Smith picked up where John had left off. "When planning and coordinating these activities, I often think of Homer and what he would have done. I always tried to make him proud," Smith said.

"I had the honor and pleasure to work closely with Chief Johns... I can attest to his focus and drive to go out and help those in need. His commitment and passion are a lesson to all who follow his amazing legacy. He is distinctly missed in the Great Falls, McLean, and Fairfax County communities in which he so faithfully served," said Frank Smith III, NRP, FP-C president of the Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department.

Joan Bliss, an EMT-P and board member of the Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department, said that she first met Johns in 1997 when she joined the Great Falls Volunteer



Volunteer fire and rescue worker Homer Johns works the scene of a tanker and car collision from a bridge overlooking I-495 near Tysons Corner in 1976.

Fire Department. "He was first a mentor and always a treasured friend. While serving as president for five years, he was invaluable in guiding us through seeking and seeing our new fire station come to fruition. Homer was a beloved fixture in the communities he served as well as his fire families - career and volunteer," Bliss said.

Johns is preceded in death by his sister, Betty Ann Norman, and brother, George Garratt Johns Jr. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, daughter Carole, son David, daughter-in-law Christa; his grandchildren, Aaron, Addison and Aiden; and his nieces and nephews.

Contributions will be welcomed at the Great Falls Fire Department (<https://www.greatfallsvfd.org/donate.html>) and the McLean Volunteer Fire Department (<https://mcleanvfd.org/support-us>).

# ENTERTAINMENT



The LEGO Holiday Bricktacular takes place Nov. 30 to Dec. 30, 2024 at the LEGO Site at Springfield Mall.



The Vienna Church Street Stroll takes place on Monday, Dec. 2, 2024 in the Town of Vienna.

## NOV. 2 TO JAN. 12, 2025 10th Annual Glass International.

At Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Gallery, 9518 workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center is proud to present the 10th Annual Glass International, an exhibition highlighting the depth and breadth of contemporary functional and sculptural glass art. In celebration of Workhouse Arts' 10th year exhibiting glass from artists throughout the United States, in 2024, they opened eligibility to include artists working internationally.

## FRESH EVERGREEN WREATHS AND DECORATIONS

Assistance League of Northern Virginia (ALNV) is partnering with Lynch Creek Farm to offer a variety of fresh evergreen wreaths and decorations for your home or as holiday gifts. Lynch Creek offers a beautiful assortment of fresh wreaths, centerpiece, swags, and tabletop items, all hand-crafted from natural materials such as noble fir, pine cones, berries, and white pine. These long-lasting arrangements are perfect for autumn and Thanksgiving or the winter holidays. ALNV, a non-profit providing assistance to needy students across the region, will receive 15% of the proceeds from your order. Use the following link to place your order: <https://tinyurl.com/LynchCreekBeauty> To order by phone, call 1-800-426-0781 and mention our campaign ID #9630516. Orders will be sent directly to your selected recipients. You can specify the dates that your orders will ship, and you can include multiple recipients in the same order. Standard Ground Shipping is offered to the contiguous 48 states for all orders at a flat rate of \$4.95 per item. The deadline for submitting orders is December 15, 2024.

**VIENNA HOLIDAY GUIDE**  
The Vienna Business Association (VBA) is hosting a Vienna Holiday Guide for local business and nonprofit promotions through Jan 1, 2025. You will find events, promotions and fundraisers for many local organizations. Organizations are encouraged to add their

promotions for holidays, Small Business Saturday and the Church Street Stroll. You can view it online or download it here: <https://viennabusiness.org/vienna-holiday-guide>

## POTOMAC HARMONY CHORUS IS SEEKING SINGERS

If you enjoy holiday music, this is for you. Potomac Harmony Chorus will be rehearsing holiday classics during November and December and you can sing along! No experience necessary! No cost! Just a love of music required! They sing a cappella, are an open and safe environment for women and non-binary singers, and love what they do. Singing brings joy, so come get some! Contact Jackie Bottash at [JackieBottash@gmail.com](mailto:JackieBottash@gmail.com).

**THRU JAN. 12, 2025**  
**Winter Lantern Festival.** At Tysons Corner Center, 8025 Galleria Drive, McLean. Thursdays to Sundays, 5-9:30 p.m. The Winter Lantern Festival is a must-see display of electrifying lights made from more than 1,000 handmade Chinese lanterns. Guests will enter and wander through a wonderland of light and color inspired by Chinese myths, legends, and zodiacs. Attractions will include a bounce house, sugar paintings, dino ride, interactive light swings, see-saws, tunnels, and many majestic creatures. Guests can also enjoy live entertainment by the Zigong Acrobatic Troupe, a new treat for this year, along with food, drinks and gifts.

**WEDNESDAY/NOV. 27**  
**2024 Turkey Trot 5K and 10 K.** 2 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, Centreville. Come celebrate the holiday early with this fun pre-Thanksgiving Turkey Trot! Enjoy this scenic 5k/10k that will run through Manassas National Battlefield. This is a new race location for the 2024 Sippin Series season. Runners Receive 1 Glass of Wine from the Winery at Bull Run, Finisher Medal, Technical (Drift) Event Shirt, & A Chip Timed Event. Benefits Manassas Battlefield Trust.

**FRIDAY/NOV. 29**  
**Reston Town Center Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting.** 11:00 a.m. -

7:00 p.m. At Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Tree lighting at end of Reston Holiday Parade. A day of celebration, beginning with the nationally ranked holiday parade (perennially a USA Today top 10) and ending with the tree lighting and other festivities. Train and carriage rides, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, ice skating, great shopping, and more throughout the day. Visit the website: <https://www.restontown-center.com/event/3797/>

**NOV. 30 TO DEC. 30**  
**LEGO Holiday Bricktacular.** At LEGO Site, 6563 Springfield Mall, Suite 12004, Springfield. Families can enjoy a winter wonderland of activities, festive decorations, large Santa Mini Figure and more. A dedicated area in the attraction will inspire guests with various heart designs and inspire families to build a LEGO heart. Additional holiday experiences include the Mini World Washington, D.C. Winter Wonderland takeover featuring holiday scenes, Letters to Master Model Builder and meet and greet with a new Gingerbread Costume Character.

**SATURDAY/NOV. 30**  
**Canadian Brass: Making Spirits Bright.** 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Canadian Brass kicks off the holiday season with a program of original arrangements and signature takes on beloved classics such as "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Christmas Time is Here," "Silver Bells," "Jingle Bell Rock," and songs of Hanukkah. Visit [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu).

**SATURDAY/NOV. 30**  
**Second Annual Beaver Boogie 5K.** 10 a.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. The Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP) will host its second-annual Beaver Boogie 5K at Lake Accotink Park. More than just another fun run, the Beaver Boogie is a great opportunity to join with family, friends and neighbors in supporting one of Fairfax County's largest and most visited parks. The event runs through the park, creating a scenic and picture-perfect atmosphere for all runners and

walkers to enjoy themselves while being active. Registration is \$25 for each participant for the 5K Fun Run/Walk. Additionally, racers may also purchase a \$10 pasta dinner meal deal to be hosted at Kilroy's on Friday, Nov. 29 from 5 to 7 p.m.

**SATURDAY/NOV. 30**  
**Turkey Trot 5K.** 9 a.m. Meets at Langley High School, McLean. Join McLean Crew Club and Langley Crew Club for a Turkey Trot 5K. The friendly rivals are joining together as one team to support and strengthen rowing in the McLean and Great Falls community. Proceeds from the event will be shared equally between the two teams. In addition to a scenic 5K run, there will be a deejay with music and a coffee truck for specialty coffee and hot chocolate, starting at 8 a.m. on the day of the trot. For those who cannot join in person, consider registering for the virtual trot. Registration Fee: 5K is \$50 through Race Day. All pre-registered runners will receive a commemorative shirt. Register here: <https://potomac.enmotive.com/events/register/2024-langley-crew-turkey-trot-5k>

**SATURDAY/NOV. 30**  
**Small Business Saturday.** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Building 16 and Building 11, Lorton. Shop Small and Support Workhouse Artists on Small Business Saturday! Save 20% on one-of-a kind handcrafted artwork and retail merchandise. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org>.

**SUNDAY/DEC. 1**  
**Take 6.** At 2 p.m. At GMU's Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The most awarded a cappella group in history, Take 6, brings its superlative vocal genius to the Center for a gospel-infused holiday concert.

**MONDAY/DEC. 2**  
**Vienna's Church Street Stroll.** 6-8 p.m. The merriment begins in front of the Freeman Store and Museum at the corner of Church and Mill streets, Town of Vienna. Experience the magic of the holidays as Santa Claus and his elves make their grand entrance down Church Street aboard the Vienna Volun-

teer Fire Department's antique fire truck. Revelers can marvel at the tree lighting ceremony on the Freeman Store lawn led by Mayor Linda Colbert, and listen to live, festive holiday music. After the ceremony, everyone is invited to enjoy free marshmallow roasting at fire pits located up and down Church Street, visits with Santa, and a chance to participate in gingerbread ornament decorating by picking up a kit from a participating business anytime from Saturday, Nov. 30 through Monday, Dec. 2. Participants are asked to bring their decorated ornaments to the Town of Vienna Parks and Recreation tent by 6:50 p.m. to enter in the gingerbread decorating contest. Winners will be announced at 7 p.m. and will receive gift cards from Vienna businesses. Visit [www.viennava.gov/stroll](http://www.viennava.gov/stroll).

**DEC. 2 AND 9**  
**Pet Nights with Santa.** 6 - 8 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center in Santa's Chalet - Lower Level near Wasabi, in McLean. Tysons Corner Center invites your furry friend to dress in their holiday best for photos with Santa - Sponsored by the Veterinary Emergency Group. This beloved event has become a signature theme night during the Tysons Holiday season. Shoppers can bring their furry friends for memorable photos with Santa, along with treats and fun giveaways. Visit the website: [www.TysonsCornerCenter.com](http://www.TysonsCornerCenter.com).

**WEDNESDAY/DEC. 4**  
**Holiday & Hearts Event.** 7-8:30 p.m. At Fonts Books & Gifts, 626B Old Dominion Road, McLean. Five local authors will discuss their recent releases and the writing process in an evening panel discussion and signing event.  
Meet authors:  
Barbara Boehm Miller, When You See Her  
Carolyn McBride, The Cicada Spring, Santa Overboard  
Christine Gunderson, Friends with Secrets  
Jennifer Milder, The Epilogue of August  
Sharon J. Wishnow, The Pelican Tide  
Each book shares a common thread of women navigating complex relationships, personal growth,



# ENTERTAINMENT



The Reston Town Center Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting takes place on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024 at Reston Town Center.

and societal expectations, delving into themes of identity, resilience, and the enduring power of human connections.

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 4 Legislative Town Hall. 6:30 to 8 p.m.

At Lake Anne Community Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. State Senator Jennifer B. Boysko, Delegate Irene Shin, and Delegate Karen Keys-Gamarra will host a Town Hall on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, to provide constituents with updates on legislative accomplishments, initiatives from the past year and a preview of the upcoming legislative session. The event is open to the public. Constituents are encouraged to attend and participate.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 5 2024 Holiday Homes Tour.

Sponsored by The Woman's Club of McLean. The tour offers a delightful day of holiday cheer, as the Club welcomes our diverse McLean community to experience the celebration and customs represented in our four beautifully decorated homes. Tickets can be purchased for \$45.00 online (<https://shop.womansclubofmclean.org/>), or take advantage of the special price of \$40 at the local ticket outlets: Mesmeralda's Gifts of McLean, McLean Hardware, Karin's Florist in Vienna, and Great Dogs of Great Falls. To ensure a smooth experience, online ticket buyers can pick up their ticket entry at House No. 1 on the day of the event. Proceeds will benefit a number of community organizations, including the McLean Volunteer Fire Department.

## DEC. 5-7 Winterfest. 5 to 9 p.m.

At Brown's Chapel Park, Reston. Reston Association is proud to announce the return of Winterfest, a three-day event that's perfect to kick off the holiday season. New additions include live musical performances each night, an expanded Enchanted Forest, bigger light displays on the 'Light Up the Park' walk, a 'Grinch's Village', and a Santa Experience - all included in one spectacular event. Returning favorites are the Vendor Village for holiday shopping from local sellers,

bonfires and smores, the pop-up bar, food vendors and more. Winterfest is free for all Reston Association members; admission is \$8 for non-members ages 3-17, and \$18 for non-members 18+.

## DEC. 5-7 Used Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

At Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street, Springfield. Preview sale, Wed., Dec. 4, 2 - 5 p.m. Entry fee \$10. General sale, Thu. - Sat., Dec. 5 - 7, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Free. Bag sale, Sun., Dec. 8, 12 - 2 p.m. \$5/bag. Choose from a wide variety of high-quality used books, CDs, and DVDs. Jump start your winter holiday gifts and by-the-fire reading at bargain prices. Thousands of like new books to choose from. The Friends of the Richard Byrd Library is a nonprofit all-volunteer organization. Revenue supports library programming. For more information contact the Friends at [rbfriends@gmail.com](mailto:rbfriends@gmail.com).

## DEC. 5-8 Tysons Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale.

At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Dates: Thursday, 5 Dec., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Friday, 6 Dec., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 7 Dec., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday, 8 Dec., 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.tysonslibrary-friends.org/>

## EXPERIENCE THE HOLIDAYS AT COLVIN RUN MILL

Embrace the spirit of yesteryear with festive activities at this historic site. Join us for lantern tours, a children's holiday shopping experience and meet Santa himself! Holiday Lantern Tour: Dec. 6-7, 5:30 or 6:30 p.m., \$12  
Children's Holiday Shopping at Historic Colvin Run: Dec. 7-8, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m., \$7  
Santa at the Mill: Dec. 14 (3-5:30 p.m.) & Dec. 15 (2-4:30 p.m.), \$10  
Sensory-Friendly Santa at the Mill: Dec. 14 (12:30-2:15 p.m.) & Dec.



The 2024 Holiday Homes Tour sponsored by The Woman's Club of McLean takes place on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2024 in McLean.

15 (11:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m.), \$40 per group (up to five in a group).

## DEC. 6-7 Voce Chamber Singers Concert:

**Radiant Dawn.** Friday at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at 4 p.m. At Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna. Rediscover the cheer of the season with Voce Chamber Singers. The most popular program returns featuring Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria for soloists, choir, and chamber orchestra. Sing along with beloved choral works by Esmail, Rutter, and Willcocks that shine with the light of morning.

## DEC. 6-8 Great Falls Holiday Art Fest.

Friday from 6-8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Explore three festive locations filled with incredible art, perfect for gifting or treating yourself this holiday season. Just look for the Nutcrackers to guide you. At the following three locations:  
❖ The Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike;  
❖ The Artists Atelier, 756 Walker Road;  
❖ The Artists on the Green, 776 Walker Road.



Winterfest takes place Dec. 5-7, 2024 at Brown's Chapel Park in Reston.

## DEC. 6-15 "Commedia Christmas Carol." 8 p.m.

Presented by Traveling Players in Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Adapted from Charles Dickens' haunting and heartwarming holiday classic, Commedia Christmas Carol tells the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, an excellent man of business. To purchase tickets, and for more information about the show, visit <https://www.travelingplayers.org/performances/>

## HOLIDAY ON THE FARM AT FRYING PAN FARM PARK

Celebrate the holidays with an evening of wagon rides, animal interactions and visits with Santa. Enjoy food, indoor activities, and cozy campfires. Dec. 6-7, Dec. 13-14, Dec. 20-21, 4:30-7:30 p.m., \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

## WINTER WONDERLAND AT BURKE LAKE PARK

Climb aboard the Holiday Express for a train ride, spin on the Carolers Carousel, play Gingerbread Man Golf and savor s'mores by the fire. Meet Santa, sip hot chocolate and enjoy the season's warmth. Weekends: Dec. 7-8, Dec. 14-15, Dec. 21-22, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7 Living Nativity. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

At St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 6320 Hanover Ave., Springfield. Come meet Baby Jesus and pet Delila the Camel and other animals. Bring family and friends to enjoy the greatest story of all times and live music and refreshments. This event is free. If possible, bring a toy to donate. Donations of new or lightly used toys will be distributed to local organizations that help families in Springfield. All are welcome. Visit the website: <https://www.saintchristophers.net/>

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7 Herndon's Holiday Tree Lighting and Singalong.

5-6 p.m. At Herndon Town Hall Square. Get into the holiday spirit as Santa rides in on his fire truck. Get ready to sing along with the Herndon High School Band and watch Mayor Sheila Olem light the holiday tree.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7 Alternative Gift Market. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston. Featuring 30-plus local and global charities. Get ready to embrace the spirit of giving at the 2024 Alternative Gift Market (AGM) and Craft Fair. This unique hybrid event combines the convenience of online shopping with the warmth of in-person connection, making it the perfect opportunity to share joy through socially conscious gift-giving this holiday season. Choose from a variety of donation packages that support local and global charities, like providing rent and utility bill assistance for just \$50, or emergency groceries for \$25. Visit [uureston.org/agm](http://uureston.org/agm).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7 Jingle on the Lake Christmas Festival.

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Sponsored by the Lake Anne Washington Plaza Merchant Association (LAWPA). Join the Lake Anne and Reston Community for a day long holiday celebration, starring Santa himself, arriving with a decorated boat parade (made possible thanks to Reston Lakeside Cluster) and accompanied by Santa's elves on paddleboards! Rumor has it that the Grinch (played by talented theater student Josh Lewis) might attempt to steal Christmas again... but Santa (played by genial neighbor George Broderick) and the kids know how to deal with him...

Schedule:  
8 a.m. Christmas Market  
11:40 a.m. Lake Anne Elementary Choir  
12 p.m. Boat Parade and Santa.  
12:45 p.m. Vienna Singing Princesses  
1:20 p.m. Sunrise Valley Elementary Choir  
2:15 p.m. Reston Stars  
3 p.m. Reston Conservatory Ballet  
3:30 p.m. Ukrainian Christmas Songs

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7 Breakfast with Santa. 8 - 9:30 a.m.

At Tysons Corner Center in the Food Court on Level 3, McLean. Families are invited to join us for some up-close and personal time with Santa, by continuing its long-standing 'Breakfast with Santa' tradition. A complimentary catered breakfast, child-focused

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19

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**Legals**

Dr. Eric Choe will be closing his Urology practice on December 20, 2024, located at 2826 Old Lee Hwy, Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22031.

**Legals**

**ABC LICENSE**  
Mrs. Jo's Petite Eats LLC trading as MRS. JO'S, 7940 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia 22102. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Erinn S. Roth, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

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**Storck**  
FROM PAGE 13

passions, like bringing new public art displays. Recently, I had an opportunity to tour the District with ArtsFairfax looking at all the amazing opportunities we have along the Richmond Highway corridor to improve access and strengthen our sense of community through various forms of art and community engagement."

Peyton Smith – "I've had the privilege of serving you for almost 3 1/2 years, while also living in the District. I truly enjoy making a positive impact on our community and engaging with residents on a variety of issues. Outside of work, I'm passionate about biking and coffee roasting, and in our community I'm especially thankful for the Mount Vernon Trail, which I consider the Cultural Spine of our District. The Trail not only offers beautiful scenery but also connects us to the many incredible tourism opportunities in the area, including the Mount Vernon Estate, Grist Mill, Woodlawn – all without the need of a car!"

Maddie Alvarado – "I am thankful for the opportunity to be able to live and work in Fairfax County. After being the Office Manager and Health & Human Services Liaison for almost 3 years, I have come to understand that Fairfax County consists of a diverse community of people that can help us all grow to be better versions of ourselves. I have enjoyed not only the food that comes from having a diverse community, but also the culture and arts that they bring. I am thankful that I work with a team that embraces people for who they are and the great things that they bring to Fairfax County. In the Mount Vernon District, I am thankful to everyone who creates such a wonderful place to live, eat and gather to create a place we can call home. Our residents are the reason we can say that the Mount Vernon District is truly 'The One'."

Cassidy Donaghy – "Working with Team MVD for almost 2 1/2 years as Supervisor Storck's Communications, Events and Community Outreach Coordinator, I have had the privilege to help bring you newsletters such as this one and work on major events like our Tour de Mount Vernon and the Ides of Bark, to name a few. As someone who grew up in the Mount Vernon District, I've loved watching this community grow and evolve over the years. Being part of projects at the Lorton Community Center and Library and watching the renovations come together at Original Mount Vernon High School is especially meaningful to me. I can remember visiting the Lorton Library for summer camps before the renovation, learning to swim at the Mount Vernon Rec Center

# ENTERTAINMENT

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entertainment, and activities make this a family favorite and must-attend event during the Tysons Corner Holiday season. Sponsored by First Steps Academy and Apple Tree School. Visit the website: [www.TysonsCornerCenter.com](http://www.TysonsCornerCenter.com).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7

**Squirrel Nut Zippers Christmas Caravan.** 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Swing into the holiday season with platinum-selling jazz-rock band Squirrel Nut Zippers. Serving up a boisterous blend of Delta blues, big band, klezmer jazz, and calypso sound in its holiday program Christmas Caravan, Squirrel Nut Zippers is sure to get audiences dancing along.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 7

**Holiday Homes Tour of Herndon.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Holiday Homes Tour of Herndon started in 1979 as one of many events held in celebration of the town's centennial and has continued as an annual event since 1985. The volunteer organized tour is a much-anticipated holiday event cultivating community to showcase all that is good, beautiful and the evolving history of Herndon. The Rotary Club of Herndon-Reston is pleased to volunteer at this year's event, showcasing "The Blue House." Volunteers are needed for shifts throughout the day. Visit [www.HerndonRestonRotary.org](http://www.HerndonRestonRotary.org).

## DEC. 7-8

**Children's Holiday Gift Shopping.** 11 a.m. Ages 5-12 years. Children are accompanied by a secret shopper to assist them with purchasing holiday gifts at the Colvin Run Mill General Store. Assistants help wrap and tag gifts. Cost of gifts not included. Adults may tour the site and visit the Miller's House exhibit while waiting. Register at Fairfax County Park Authority ParkTakes web site.

## DEC. 7-8

**Holiday Train Show.** Saturday 10

a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday noon to 4 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will host its 33rd annual holiday train show with a multitude of model trains to include N (NTRAK), HO (PMC), LEGO, and G (WVMGRS) scales. The European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) group will display on Sunday. Santa is planning a stop on both days! Adults as well as children 13 and over - \$6; children 5 to 12 - \$3; 4 and under - free; museum members - free. Information on the museum and show can be found on the web: [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) or call 703-425-9225.

## DEC. 7 TO JAN. 12, 2025

**Disney's The Hunchback of Notre Dame.** Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The Hunchback of Notre Dame is based on the Victor Hugo novel with songs from the Disney animated feature. Set in 15th-century Paris, the musical tells the story of Quasimodo, the deformed bell-ringer who longs to be in the outside world. Held captive by his devious caretaker, the archdeacon Dom Claude Frolo, he escapes for the day, only to be treated cruelly by all but the beautiful Romani woman, Esmeralda. Quasimodo isn't the only one captivated by her free spirit, though - the handsome Captain Phoebus and Frolo are equally enthralled. As the three vie for her attention, Frolo embarks on a mission to destroy the Roma - and it's up to Quasimodo to save them all.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 8

**45th Annual Herndon Holiday Arts & Crafts Show.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Featuring over 80 artisans, free reusable tote for the first 300 shoppers, perfect gifts for your loved ones.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 8

**Holiday Sip & Paint.** 11:30 a.m.



The Vienna Police Santa's Ride 2024 takes place on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024 in Vienna.

to 1:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, Centreville. Join in a delightful day of creativity and relaxation as you learn to paint the charming "Winter Barn" scene on your own blank canvas while sipping on delicious Bull Run Wines.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 8

**Traditional Celtic Music.** 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Jody Marshall's Holiday Celebration. One of the top hammered dulcimer players in America, Jody Marshall has been performing for more than a quarter century. She is accompanied by Jim Queen on fiddle, banjo and vocals, Susan Queen on bass guitar and vocals, and Paul Nahay on piano, bringing us holiday favorites old and new. Visit [jodymarshall.net](http://jodymarshall.net)

## SUNDAY/DEC. 8

**Santa Cares: A Sensory Friendly Experience.** 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Tysons Corner Center is pleased to offer a Sensory Santa experience this Holiday season, providing a calm and welcoming environment for children with sensory sensitivities to enjoy a memorable visit with Santa. Visit the website: [www.TysonsCornerCenter.com](http://www.TysonsCornerCenter.com).

## TUESDAY/DEC. 10

### Vienna Police Santa's Ride 2024.

Santa and his reindeer are trading in their sleigh for motorcycles and joining Vienna police officers and other Northern Virginia agencies on a special detail - to bring holiday cheer to sick children in local hospitals. Residents who wish to support Santa's Ride can drop off new, unwrapped toys, games, books, and gifts at the Vienna Police Department, 215 Center St. S; the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE; or Vienna Town Hall, 127 Center St. S, during normal business hours (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.). All items must be dropped off by 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024. On Tuesday, Dec. 10, police officers on motorcycles will escort Santa to local schools and government buildings to pick up the donated items and deliver them to hospitals and to community children in need.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 14

**Historic House Tours.** 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. At Sunrise at Silas Burke House, 9619 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The Burke Historical Society will lead free tours of the historic house located on the grounds of Sunrise at Silas Burke House. Tours are free and reservations are not required.

## Storck

FROM PAGE 18

and volunteering at the Lorton Community Action Center in its previous location. Seeing these places transformed and thriving today is incredibly exciting, and I'm thankful to be part of it all."

Diego Rodriguez Cabrera - "Hey there, I'm Supervisor Storck's Transportation, Parks, and Housing Liaison. This is my second round having the privilege to work for Supervisor Storck, as I served as his Latinx Outreach Coordinator in 2020-2021. I've lived along Richmond Highway all my life, and this community holds a special place in my heart. I am incredibly thankful for the work I do and the impact it makes on people's lives, especially with our most vulnerable populations. Whether it's connecting people to County resources, educating community members

on the various ongoing of the District, or advocating for our residents, our work is essential to ensure no one gets left behind. One of my favorite places in the District is Grist Mill Park. I have been going there since I was a kid, and it is home to our Mount Vernon Nights Summer Entertainment Series. It's a wonderful place to gather with family and friends on a hot summer day to share a picnic, play frisbee, or attend a summer concert!"

Shirley Short - "Through my work as a retired firefighter and volunteering with this office and the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce, I've had the pleasure of meeting many dedicated County personnel and business owners who have welcomed me with open arms and become valued friends. As a constituent, I am incredibly thankful for the many agencies and resources that are available to me. And as always, I am thankful for

my family."

I'm thankful for Team MVD and their unwavering dedication to serving our community. Every day, they strive to make a difference in the Mount Vernon District, by working on projects like the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, "The One," or by addressing community concerns such as reducing truck parking on local roads. Some of our other key ongoing efforts include the renovation of the Mount Vernon Rec Center, scheduled to open in Spring 2025, Lorton Visioning 2040 and Original Mount Vernon High School, set to open in Summer 2026. Additionally, we are working to support small businesses through the Fairfax Founders Fund and Green Business Partners. I wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving, and as always, I'm very thankful to be able to represent you and serve our community!

## Tick, Tick, Tick



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After picking three ticks off myself yesterday afternoon, including one so embedded in my upper right arm, my wife, Dina practically had to dig it out with an "entrenching tool," to invoke a phrase from 1970's comedy troupe, "The Firesign Theater." I am once again reminded of the risk/disease associated with ticks: Lyme disease. Having known a few friends "diseased" with Lyme and likewise having heard and read multiple first-person accounts of life with Lyme, I'd just as soon skip the experience. Moreover, I can't imagine that being an active thyroid cancer patient with kidney issues would likely simplify my treatment. A treatment which has continued for nearly 16 years with ups, downs and all-arounds and has seen me outlive my original "13 months to two years" prognosis by leaps and bounds. 'Leaps and bounds' which likely would have been almost impossible if I had been afflicted with Lyme, on top of my underlying morbidity - as is the medical jargon for complications - now papillary thyroid cancer, with a stage or two above the threshold for dialysis. A possible development which scares the s\*\*\* out of me.

In addition, there's another variable, though hardly unique to me, which increases the likelihood of yours truly being subjected to this very unpleasant experience: Burton the dog. He must go out. We don't have a fenced-in yard. And even though he's almost always on a leash, our neighborhood is very woody and I'm guessing the trees, and all make for a very inviting and hospitable environment for ticks. I don't see much tick-mitigation going on under the power lines behind our house or above the fuel pipeline bordering our property. In short, it's tick central over here and every time I walk Burton (four to five times a day), I feel like there's a ticking time bomb ready to explode - with my name on it, and infect me with this most insidious and hard-to-defeat disease - despite the deet that I'm spraying on myself as I prepare to venture into our "backwoods."

What I really need to do is inject myself with anti-tick venom. Or maybe take the deet internally? Now that Trump is back in The White House - or soon will be, perhaps he'll sign an executive order co-signed with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. authorizing the treatment, so long as Dr. Deborah Birx has not been rehired to lead the newly-authorized tick-elimination group. She might veto this bleach injection-type treatment on the grounds that it's ill-advised, shall we say. Besides, we've all been there and done that during the pandemic, so I don't foresee a repeat of this similar-sounding solution. But Trump has returned/prevalled to be president for another four years and with his hands on the tiller, surrounded by legions of sycophants, there may be very little that anybody governing for the other team, can do. But I semi digress. The issue is Lyme disease and the consequence of animals being vaccinated against it while their human owners are left to fend for themselves and as a result, must constantly look over their body for ticks and be sure to have a ready supply of "Off" on hand.

All kidding aside, I don't know why there isn't a Lyme disease vaccine for humans. My dog is vaccinated against Lyme. Why not me? In fact, he's due Jan. 16, 2025, for a renewal. As is said about the goose and the gander, isn't it true that what's good enough/appropriate for the dog is good enough/appropriate for the dog owner? Granted, one wouldn't want to be injected with animal vaccine but is bleach somehow better? Do we take better care of our dogs than we do ourselves? After all, dogs are so dependent on their owners for food, water, and overall health and welfare - not to mention bathroom breaks, that shouldn't us dog owners receive similar preventive treatment to assure our availability? I love my dog and I'm sure he loves me (despite his getting neutered last week), but if I'm unable to provide the same T.L.C. as he's come to expect, we all lose.

Maybe what's needed to guarantee me, and my pet's simultaneous good health/Lyme disease-free existence is for President-to-be Trump to create a new cabinet level department: Dept. of Veterinary Affairs? Perhaps he could fund it with some of the savings that will accrue in the budget with the dismantling of the Dept. of Education? I imagine it would make us pet owners, regardless of party affiliation safe and secure. And isn't that what the government is supposed to do?

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



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Direct: (703) 606-7901 | (703) 712-1757  
 JDCallander@gmail.com  
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*Wishing you and your loved ones  
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 Discover this stunning classic 4BR/3.5 colonial home located in the highly coveted Chesterbrook Woods neighborhood. Nestled on a corner lot, this residence offers 3250 sq ft of beautifully finished living space on 3 levels. The main level features gleaming hardwood floors; formal dining room; living room w/ fireplace and walkout to deck; gourmet kitchen w/ breakfast bar and ss appliances; large family room w/ brick woodburning fireplace. Upstairs is the primary en suite with 3 additional BR's and hall bath. LL offers a spacious rec room; office; full-size bath; laundry w/ walk-up to spacious backyard. **Chesterbrook, Longfellow, McLean!**

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