

Forestville Elementary School Principal Matt Harris checks out the feel of Santa Claus's motorcycle during his visit to the school on Dec. 14. Students at the school participated in a toy drive for sick and needy children and Santa Claus and his entourage came to visit the school to thank them for their participation during the 25th Annual Santa's Ride for Children.

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PHOTO BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

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The Art of Appreciation

Teaching children to have an attitude of gratitude during the holidays.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

From Christmas lists to piles of presents under the tree, the last thing on a child's mind during the holiday season might be expressing appreciation. In fact, mental health experts say, it is one of the hardest concepts to teach children.

Dr. Todd Kashdan, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University, has studied the link between gratitude and happiness and says that people who are grateful tend to be less depressed and anxious.

"When people are mindfully recognizing and appreciating the benefits they receive from other people, positive events linger longer, [and] it is enhancing and strengthening those relationships. There is a strong link between being a grateful person and having the experience of gratitude and having more happiness in your life," said Kashdan, who is also the author of "Designing Positive Psychology" (Oxford University Press) and "Curious? Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life."

During the season of giving, Kashdan and other mental health professionals offer tips for parents for teaching gratitude to children.

Children often hand their parents lengthy Christmas lists. Experts say it is difficult for children to feel grateful when their every wish is granted.

"Allow them to [identify] certain things on the list that might be most important to them," said Annette Kielkopf, a marriage and family therapist based in McLean. "[Say to them] 'If Santa isn't able to bring you everything on the list, what would that be like for you?' And talk with them about how to cope and allow them to appreciate the smaller things. What you're trying to do is teach coping skills. You're teaching them how to accept a disappointment and find a diamond in the rough."

RAISING GRATEFUL CHILDREN requires that parents model the behavior.

"As parents, talk about things that you're grateful for and not strictly material things. That sets a good example so children don't only hear you complaining or nagging them. Kids really do notice what their parents and the significant people in their lives talk about," said Karen Prince, MSW, LCSW-C, a Kensington-based clinical social worker who specializes in treating children with anxiety and depression.

Kashdan says parents should encourage children to elaborate on why they like a particular gift.

"Spelling out what makes [a gift] a good thing for them gets them to bookmark and underline it in their brain," he said. "You want them to elaborate on it and what they are going to do with it. Having them say thank you without an elaboration is just one more thing that [their] parents are telling them to do."

This strategy works even when children receive gifts that they don't like.



Dr. Todd Kashdan, Ph.D. professor of psychology at George Mason University has studied the link between gratitude and happiness and says that people who are grateful tend to be less depressed and anxious.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Giving a child everything on their Christmas list could make it difficult for them to feel grateful. McLean-based therapist Annette Kielkopf says rather than granting a child's every gift wish, parents could ask children to identify the items on the list that are most important.

"Sometimes it is difficult [for children] to receive a present that they don't like," said Kielkopf. "Take the gift and notice and recognize the good things about it. Maybe it is your child's favorite color. It is good to have discussions about gift-giving so that it doesn't become about the gift; it becomes about the gesture."

"I'm forever hearing kids in my office saying to their parents, 'But everybody in my class has an iPad.' And these are kids who are like 8, 9 and 10. The grass always looks greener on the other side. So the idea is to focus on what you

have and what you need. It is a good lesson for kids to learn early on," said Prince.

KASHDAN BELIEVES that one of the things that makes children grateful is taking inventory of their day.

"One of the things that we do at my house is, at the end of the day, we ask our 4-year-old twins, 'What was the high point of your day? What was the best thing that happened to you today?' You can make sure that the positive things that happened to them as a result of other people stick out more," said Kashdan.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

THURSDAY/DEC. 22

Outdoor Chanukah Festival. 6 p.m. Lake Anne, Reston. Giant ice Menorah lighting by Robert E. Simon, family entertainment, live performance by the Chabad Hebrew School, prize drawings, hot chocolate, Chanukah donuts, latkes, chocolate gelt, free dreidels and more. Free admission. www.chabadrh.org or 703-476-1829.

Jammin Java Presents Todd Wright's 9th Annual Christmas Spectacular. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 23

Jammin Java Presents Todd Wright's 9th Annual Christmas Spectacular. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 24

Good For The Jews: Putting The Ha! In Hanaukka Tour featuring Rob Tannenbaum and David Fagin. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

Dinobabies. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

5th Annual Rocknoceros New Year's Eve Party at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.; **Deep River and Friends' Super Classy New Year's Eve Blowout and Post-Show Dance Party** at 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Fairfax 4-Miler. 6:30 p.m. Starts and finishes at Pacers Fairfax, Old Town Plaza Village, 10427 North St., Fairfax. Family-friendly running event to support the Fairfax Police Youth Club. The post race party at 8 p.m. includes food and entertainment. \$35-\$40. www.fairfaxfour.com.

Bull Run 5k. 3 p.m. Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. Timed with IPICO timing. Refreshments and gifts after the race. 75% of the proceeds benefit the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. \$27 online. www.bullrunrunners.com.

New Year's Eve Golf Tournament. 10 a.m. Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls, prizes and lunch. \$70. 703-471-5769 or www.herndongolf.com.

1980's Themed New Year's Eve Celebration. 7:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. Arlington Draft House, 2903 Columbia Pike, Arlington. Watch the Times Square ball drop on the theater screen. Entertainment, food and party favors. \$14 per person. 703-486-2345.



PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova addressed attendees at the Inauguration Ceremony held at the Fairfax County Government Center on Dec. 13.

County Officials Inaugurated

All local elected officials will take office on Jan. 1, 2012.

The inauguration ceremony on Tuesday, Dec. 13 at the Fairfax County Government Center for the 15 recently-elected officials was filled with all the pomp and circumstance of any official celebration.

“Almost three years ago when I addressed you for the first time as your chairman, it was to a backdrop of troubled and uncertain times,” Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-a-large) told the crowd of several hundred spectators in her inaugural address. “The world and our nation were reeling from a breakdown in our lending and financial institutions that was unprecedented in most of our lifetimes. Fairfax County, along with all state and local governments in the U.S., was seriously affected by this downturn,” she said.

In addition the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County constitutional officers, and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District directors all took their oath of office.

FAIRFAX CIRCUIT Court Judge Jan L. Brodie administered the oath of office to Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova and 14 other elected officials, who each swore to support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The ceremony also included musical performances by harpist Christine Van Dyke from Fairfax County’s Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, the Frost Middle School Advanced Symphonic Orchestra, Langley High School Madrigals, South County Secondary School Chamber Orchestra and Captain Matthew Lopez of the Northern Virginia Firefighter’s Emerald Society Pipe Band.

The colors were presented by the Fairfax County Public Safety Honor Guard and PFC Laura Redman of the Fairfax County Police Department sang the national anthem. The evening concluded with a reception.



John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor.

Sworn In

In addition to Bulova, the district supervisors installed were:

- ❖ John C. Cook, Braddock District
- ❖ John W. Foust, Dranesville District
- ❖ Michael R. Frey, Sully District
- ❖ Penelope A. Gross, Mason District
- ❖ Pat Herryty, Springfield District
- ❖ Catherine M. Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
- ❖ Gerald W. Hyland, Mount Vernon District
- ❖ Jeff C. McKay, Lee District
- ❖ Linda Q. Smyth, Providence District

The constitutional officer installed was:

- ❖ Raymond F. Morrogh, Commonwealth’s Attorney

The three directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District installed were:

- ❖ Johna Good Gagnon
- ❖ George W. Lamb
- ❖ John W. Peterson

Stan G. Barry, sheriff, was not available and will be sworn in at a later date.

The ceremony will be rebroadcast on Fairfax County Government Channel 16 at 8 p.m. on Dec. 21 and 24.

“The ceremony was beautiful and I especially enjoyed the high school musical performances. What a great way to begin this four-year term,” Bulova said after the ceremony.

All elected officials will take office on Jan. 1, 2012.

— VICTORIA ROSS

Favola Discusses Session Priorities

Senator-elect addresses Great Falls Citizens Association.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

State Sen.-elect Barbara Favola (D-31) met with members of the Great Falls Citizens Association Wednesday, Dec. 14 to discuss her goals for the upcoming General Assembly session, as well as listen to concerns from the community.

“We felt it was important to try and have a meeting before the inauguration, when Barbara will be swamped,” said GFCA President Jackie Taylor. “This is a good opportunity for her to hear about Great Falls and what our needs are.”

The General Assembly session will start Jan. 11, and it will be a 60-day session because the assembly will work on a bi-annual budget.

FAVOLA SAID SHE is “looking forward” to going to Richmond, and had already pre-filed a few bills. Some of those include: extending the subsidy for adopted children from age 18 to 21, a state health exchange program aimed toward small businesses and grants for students coming out of community colleges.

“One of my priorities when I ran was to support higher education. I have a bill in that would increase the grant for community college folks who have finished their two years and are heading into a four-year school and studying areas where we have job shortages,” she said. “We’re still working on what exactly those areas might be. Nursing and probably computer technician tracks are the two that come to mind, but there will be others where we have a shortage of educated workforce.”

Favola also said she would encourage Virginia to pay its dues on the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, an interstate compact between Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

“The governor hasn’t paid the Virginia dues [to the commission] in the past two years, and it doesn’t look like it will make it into this year’s budget,” she said. “We have to figure a way to get the dues back in, it’s only



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH/THE CONNECTION

State Sen.-elect Barbara Favola (D-31) addresses members of the Great Falls Citizens Association Wednesday, Dec. 14 about her priorities for the upcoming January General Assembly session.

about \$150,000. It’s not the right thing to do, the commission has survived without Virginia’s dues, but we really want to be at the table. A lot of our jurisdictions get our water from there.”

She also pledged to fight for more state funding for Dulles Metrorail Phase Two, saying “it will not only spur economic growth, but it will reduce congestion, which is a major quality of life issue.”

Wes Callender of the GFCA’s Transportation committee said, “If you look at Great Falls, Georgetown Pike is the backbone. It’s key to our continued ability to be semi-rural,” he said. “For decades we’ve had encounter after encounter with VDOT... there have been many attempts to widen it, it seems any time anybody wants to put more houses in, VDOT wants to put in turn lanes and widen it more.”

Favola said she would look at the widening of Route 7 from Tysons Corner to Reston “very closely,” and that Georgetown Pike would be one aspect of that.

Doug Cobb, co-chair of the Long Range Planning and Development committee, said he hoped Favola stayed true to her word when it comes to education.

“I was pleased that she opened her remarks by talking about education,” he said. “I think education is the answer to every single problem we have.”

NEWS

Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Merry Claus, Frosty, and Rudolph with their escorts on Dec. 13 for the 25th Annual Santa's Ride for Children during which Claus visits seven Fairfax County elementary schools that have collected toys for the Fairfax County Police Motorcycle Squad's annual toy drive.



PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION



Santa Claus checks his radio before he heads out with the Fairfax County Police Motorcycle Squad on their 25th annual Santa's Ride for Children on Dec. 13. By the end of the day Claus will have visited seven elementary schools in Fairfax County to thank the students for their participation in the unit's annual toy drive.

Santa Comes Roaring

25th Santa's Ride for Children visits schools, hospitals.

On Dec. 12, 13 and 14, Santa Claus traded in his sleigh for a Harley Davidson motorcycle in an effort to bring holiday cheer to area children. The Fairfax County Police Motorcycle Squad, in cooperation with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, Fairfax City Police, Town of Vienna Police, Falls Church Sheriff's Office and Virginia State Police, escorted Santa on the 25th Santa's Ride for Children, the capstone event of a three-week long toy drive organized by the Motorcycle Squad. Police stations, government offices, nine Fairfax County public el-

ementary schools (Mount Eagle, Bush Hill, West Springfield, Woodburn, Navy, Churchill Road, Crossfield, Union Mill and Forestville) and several local businesses and individuals collected toys for the drive.

On Monday, Dec. 12, the toys were collected from all sites, on Tuesday, Dec. 13, students from the Robinson High School Criminal Justice program sorted the toys by age group while Santa Claus and his entourage, including Mrs. Claus, "Merry" Claus,



Santa Claus gives a Forestville Elementary School student a fist bump on Tuesday, Dec. 13. Santa is visiting the school as part of the 25th Annual Santa's Ride for Children.

SEE SANTA, PAGE 5

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NEWS

Santa Comes to Forestville

FROM PAGE 4

Frosty and Rudolph visited seven of the schools that donated toys to the drive, escorted by the police.

On Wednesday, Dec. 14 and Thursday, Dec. 15, Santa Claus hops back on the Harley and delivers the toys to patients at INOVA Fairfax Hospital for Children and the Georgetown Hospital Lombardi Cancer Center. Officer David Pierce, who coordinated the event, said, "For us to be able to put a smile on these kids' faces is something great..."

Toys are also given to several local charities, including the Ronald McDonald House and the Herndon-Reston F.I.S.H. (For Immediate Sympathetic Help).



PHOTO BY DEB COBB/THE CONNECTION

Forestville Elementary School Principal Matt Harris checks out the feel of Santa Claus's motorcycle during his visit to the school on Dec. 14. Students at the school participated in a toy drive for sick and needy children and Santa Claus and his entourage came to visit the school to thank them for their participation during the 25th Annual Santa's Ride for Children.

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Share Your New Year's Resolutions

What were top events, accomplishments of 2011 in your opinion?

This is the last regular edition of the Connection for 2011. Between Christmas and New Year's, we'll deliver the Children's Connection, an annual tradition, with pages filled with the artwork and writing of local students.

Meanwhile, we are preparing for the first issue of 2012, sharing views of what were the most important happenings of 2011 and what to look for in 2012. We'll also share a variety of New Year's resolutions. We invite our readers to help in this endeavor.

For some, local elections were likely the top event of 2011. For advocates of families of the fallen, like the Tragedy Assistance Program (TAPS), the end of 2011 brings the end of the Iraq war and the complex emotional and practical issues that come with that. For non-profits and charitable organizations, 2011 brought greatly increasing numbers of people in need. For your family, the top events of 2011 might have included the birth of a child or a graduation or the completion of a marathon.

Share your joys and milestones with us, not only from the year that's past, but also your expectations of 2012.

Answer one or all of these questions:

1) What were the (one, two or three) most significant happenings of 2011 for you in your community? Why?

2) What do you think our readers should know to watch for in the coming year (up to three issues)? Or what do you think the top (one, two or three) happenings of 2012 will be locally? Why?

3) What is your New Year's Resolution? (Feel free to share more than one)

Please include your home address with your responses, we'll only print your town name. And we'd also love to have a photo of you, your family and/or events or places in your community that you reflect upon in your answer.

Please send photos and answers via email. For McLean, Vienna/Oakton, Great Falls, Reston, Oak Hill/Herndon, Springfield, Burke, Fairfax, Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton, send to Kemal Kurspahic, kemal@connectionnewspapers.com.

For Arlington, Alexandria, Mount Vernon, the Centre View area or Potomac, email to Steven M a u r e n , smauren@connectionnewspapers.com.

Free, Safe Ride Home from Holiday Celebrations

Once again, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program will provide a safety net for those who might celebrate the holiday season with alcohol and unexpectedly need a safe ride home.

WRAP's 2011 Holiday SoberRide program will operate each night from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The program began Friday, Dec. 16, and will continue until Jan. 1, 2012.

To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294 (TAXI). You must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service. All requests for SoberRide service must be called to and dispatched from 1-800-200-8294. Callers will be responsible for any amount over \$30.

WRAP's SoberRide has helped to ensure local residents have a safe way home on high-risk holidays, keeping likely impaired drivers off the roads. Since 1993, WRAP has provided nearly 53,000 safe rides home. SoberRide operates during the December/January holiday season, St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day and Halloween.

For details, see <http://wrap.org/soberride>

EDITORIALS

COMMENTARY

'Tis the Season To Be Green

BY NAT WILLIAMS
MARYLAND/D.C. DIRECTOR FOR
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Which is better for the environment — a live or artificial Christmas tree? That's just one of the perennial holiday questions we hear at The Nature Conservancy.

For the record, our experts say your best choice is a fresh-cut tree from a local farm. Not only will you support rural traditions and open space, but also avoid the carbon emissions and recycling quandary that result from the manufacture and eventual disposal of vinyl trees.

Real trees also provide gifts all year — not just a place to put them around the holidays. They clean the air and water and help store carbon. And don't worry; a tree farmer typically re-plants up to three seedlings for each tree cut, keeping the cycle going and supporting the local economy.

Dozens of local farms in Maryland and Northern Virginia offer opportunities to choose your own tree. It's a great family outing, and you'll enjoy the memory of your experience, along with the enticing smell of a fresh-cut tree, throughout the holiday season.

Beyond the tree, your family faces a host of other holiday-season challenges to green living. Can holiday meals be healthy and sustainable, as well as festive? What about gifts that won't fade with the latest fad, or require reams of wrapping paper? And can we usher in 2012 with changes for the better?

I'd like to offer a few suggestions that can make your holiday season greener and merrier.

GREEN YOUR TRADITIONS

Visit your local farmers market and make in-season foods the star of your holiday dinner table. You'll connect with nature while you reunite with family and friends.

Power off the electronics and get outdoors with family and friends. Go for a hike along the Potomac at Great Falls Park, or scramble up Bear Island's Billy Goat Trail, which we manage in partnership with the National Park Service.

GREEN YOUR GIVING

The average American spends \$700 on holiday gifts, and between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the U.S. generates more than 5 million extra tons of trash destined for landfills.

You can set an example of re-

sponsible giving by choosing local, hand-made presents, or creating your own. A card, photo album, or music mix that you make especially for that special someone will remain meaningful long after many gadgets are broken and discarded.

You can also give an experience. Treat your favorite foodie to a cooking class, for example. Or provide a getaway to one of Maryland or Virginia's beautiful state parks: Take your outdoors person camping at Sky Meadows, say, or reserve a cozy cottage on the Chesapeake Bay at Point Lookout.

You can also skip the wrappings and trappings altogether and give the gift of nature. The Conservancy and other like-minded organizations offer gift memberships and ways to support specific conservation projects in honor of your nature-loving friend or family member.

GREEN YOUR RESOLUTIONS

To improve ourselves and our planet, what New Year's resolutions can we actually keep this year? Here in Maryland/D.C., the Conservancy encourages a healthy planet and a healthy you by inviting runners to join Team Nature.

Team Nature offers a support system for local runners who, in turn, are supporting restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. We share tips on how to be a green runner, and you'll look great sporting our distinctive green shirts at D.C.-area races.

Exploring our region's natural areas on your own is another wonderful way to exercise mind and body. For inspiration, check out our online series Passport to Nature at www.nature.org/marylanddc. We hope to see you outside in 2012.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.
Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Connection
1606 King St.
Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.
By e-mail:
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

FAITH

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to greatfalls@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike in McLean, has announced their Christmas Worship Services. 703-356-4902 or www.stjohnsmclean.org.

❖ Saturday, Dec. 24. 4 p.m. Christmas Eve family service of Holy Eucharist, with Christmas music beginning at 3:30 p.m.

❖ Saturday, Dec. 24. 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. A traditional service of Holy Eucharist including familiar carols. Music begins at half an hour before each service.

❖ Sunday, Dec. 25. 10 a.m. Celebrate Christmas with the Holy Eucharist and carol singing.

Epiphany United Methodist Church, 1014 Country Club Drive N.E. in Vienna, will hold a Christmas Eve Family Service on Saturday, Dec. 24 at 5 p.m., featuring the Praise Band and a Christmas Children's Program. On Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day worship and communion service will be at 11 a.m. office@epiphany.com or 703-938-3494.

Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road in Oakton, will host a Burning Bowl Service on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, at 7 p.m. Reflect on the events of the year, lessons learned and wisdom gained, then write down that which you wish to release to the Burning Bowl in a letter to yourself. It is mailed to you in the fall. 703-281-1767.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers three Sunday services and a host of musical, educational, outreach, and fellowship ministries to enrich spiritual growth. 7:45 a.m. Worship Service without music; 9 a.m. Worship Service, Children's Chapel and Children's Choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Forum; and 11 a.m. Worship Service with Adult Choir. 703-759-2082.

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean, Sunday worship services are at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for adults is at 9:30 a.m. and for children during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Youth Group for grades 7-12 meets Sundays at 6 p.m. A 20-minute service of Holy Communion is held each Wednesday at 12 p.m. 703-356-3312 or umtrinity.org.

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class at Body & Soul Fitness. Balance is key, energy is renewed and strength is gained. 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center offers ongoing classes on meditation and Buddhist philosophy, Mondays at 7 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. \$10 per class. 202-331-2122 or www.meditation-dc.org.

Epiphany United Methodist Church, 1014 Country Club Drive, N.E. in Vienna, will hold its Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, Nov. 20 at 11 a.m. The sermon topic is "Why Me, Lord." office@epiphanyumc.com or 703-938-3494.



Church of the Holy Comforter
The Rev. Richard A. Lord, Rector

CHRISTMAS EVE
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4:00 p.m. Eucharist with Children's Living Crèche
7:00 p.m. Festival Choral Eucharist
10:00 p.m. Festival Choral Eucharist

CHRISTMAS MORNING (Episcopal)
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25:
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PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION



Food for Others executive director, Roxanne Rice, works with volunteer Michael Powers of Springfield to sort intake forms from clients.



Volunteers Payton Robertson, 13; Bridgette McRoberts, 14, and Mackenzie Bliss, 14, of Fairfax help sort canned goods and stock shelves during a Friday afternoon at Food for Others.



Daniel Gerke, of Vienna, with the P3 bags he and friends assembled at his 13th birthday party. From left — Justin Lee, Jack Goewey, Peter Freck, Joey Welsh, Lee Morrison, Daniel Gerke, Clark Bowden, Johnny Corish, Jack Jones, and Johnny Rogers.



Leo Delgado hands out food staples, such as bags of potatoes, to Juan, Rocky and Nancy, who depend on organizations such as Food for Others. Located in Fairfax, Food for Others is the largest distributor of free food directly to people in need in Northern Virginia, provides the assistance needed by unemployed and low-income neighbors.

PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION



Laura Gerke, of Vienna, with Katharine Sickl, an au pair from Germany, deliver food packs to Food for Others on Friday, Dec. 8. The food packs, which will be distributed to area children who need food on the weekends, were assembled by Gerke's son, Daniel, and his friends, at his 13th birthday party.

Helping Neighbors, Respectfully

Area residents donate 23,746 hours to help Food for Others fight hunger.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

When Laura Gerke of Vienna was planning her son's 13th birthday party in November, she thought about doing something a little different.

"I started thinking 'how many iTunes and Game stop cards you have?' Daniel gets so much stuff for his birthday and Christmas, and I thought this year might be an opportunity to combine fun activities with a service project," Gerke said.

When she learned about Food for Others Power Pack Program (P3), which provides food packs for local elementary children who don't have balanced meals to eat on the weekends, her idea crystallized into action.

"I talked with my son about it, and he thought it was a great idea," said Gerke. "I emailed party invitations and asked his friends to donate food instead of bringing gifts. Everyone was on board, and the parents thought it was a great idea."

The 10 boys at his birthday party brought enough food for 33 packets to donate to the Power Pack Program. "They had fun assembling the food packets, in between playing foos ball and air hockey," Gerke said.

"We wanted to plant the seed that it's not all about yourself. Daniel is well aware that his needs are met, and there are people in greater need," Gerke said. "It's hard to believe there are children right here in Fairfax County, who, when

they go home for the weekend, don't have enough food to eat."

NIKKI CLIFFORD, Food for Others' volunteer coordinator, launched the P3 program in October, and said she has been pleasantly surprised at the success of the program.

"It's incredible how the program has taken off," Clifford said. "I have elementary schools helping other elementary schools. We connect churches and youth groups with schools. The response has been fantastic."

Clifford said she receives food packs nearly every day, and has increased the organization's commitment from 50 to 75 packs a week to several Fairfax County elementary schools. She said school counselors identify the children in need, about 85 percent of whom receive free and reduced lunches.

"It's sad, but many children in our area have very little to eat between their school lunch on Friday and the breakfast they get at school on Monday morning," Clifford said. "Mothers tell me their children hoard food under their beds, and sometimes have to lock up the refrigerator to make the food last. That's just incredible to me."

Clifford said volunteers and generous donors, like Gerke, help sustain Food for Others, the largest distributor of free food directly to people in need in Northern Virginia. Last year, volunteers logged 23,746 hours, the equivalent of 11 full-time positions.

"I have the easiest job in the world, and I love coming to work.

The volunteers here are amazing," Clifford said.

Even though Northern Virginia is considered one of the wealthiest areas in the country, the poverty rate is still about 5 percent, which means more than 90,000 people are living in poverty and 30 percent are children, according to 2010 U.S. Census figures.

"We have nine wonderful full-time employees," said Lynne Galanis, Food for Others finance manager, "but it's the hard work of over 1,000 volunteers that allow us to keep our costs low and maximize our service to those in need."

FOOD FOR OTHERS began feeding the poor in Northern Virginia in December 1995, continuing an earlier program of emergency food

"Volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization, and we view volunteers as our partners in the fight against hunger."

— Roxanne Rice, executive director of Food for Others

services designed as a safety net to assure no individual in Northern Virginia should go to bed hungry.

The overall program concept continues with three primary activities: direct food assistance at the Merrifield warehouse, food distributions at 14 sites every night in low-income neighborhoods and food bank operations for organizations serving families and individuals unable to meet their basic need for food.

The organization provides food for approximately 2,000 families each month at its warehouse distribution site and twice that many families each month at its street-

corner sites.

The major difference occurring during the past 10 years is the number of volunteers and the volume of food distributions, according to Roxanne Rice, the organization's executive director, with more than 258,000 pounds distributed to local residents in the past four years.

"The organization was started by a dedicated team of volunteers, and the importance of volunteers continues to this day," said Rice, the organization's executive director. "We couldn't do what we do without extra hands provided by this dedicated group. Our volunteers bring such positive energy."

"This is wonderful organization. Everyone is here for the right reasons," said Wendell Moore, a re-

tiree from Fairfax who has volunteered at Food for Others for two years. "The front-desk job is very satisfying because you can see how you're helping people right in front of you."

Peter Spain, a retiree from Vienna, has volunteered at Food for Others for seven years. He said the rewards he gets helping others outweighs the hours he puts in.

"I don't think there's anything more basic than hunger. The cost of living here is so high, and it's very easy to find yourself in a situation where you need help," said Spain, who helps clients navigate the intake process.

"The key thing is to respect the clients. A lot of people who come through these doors never thought they would need help," Spain said.

"As a volunteer, I have an opportunity to build relationships with clients," said Michael Powers of Springfield. "You get to know them and their stories, what brought them here, and they deserve compassion. They don't need to feel like they are being judged because they need our assistance."

Rice said she recently received a note from a single mother with four children who had just lost her job. "She said her children always participated in the Boy Scout Food Drives, and she couldn't believe she needed help. We often get volunteers who were once clients, and those who were once in a position to volunteer or donate now need our help," Rice said.

Rice said the organization's volunteers represent a cross-section of the community, including workplace team-building groups; adult service organizations; university students, retired individuals; religious organizations and families and school groups ranging from grade school to high school.

"Volunteers are the heart and soul of our operations, and we view volunteers as our partners in the fight against hunger," Rice said.

TO VOLUNTEER OR LEARN more about the Power Pack Program and other programs, go to www.foodforothers.org or call 703-207-9173 to speak with volunteer coordinator Nikki Clifford. "Volunteers who are bilingual in English and Spanish are especially needed. Our goal is to provide a meaningful volunteer experience in a positive environment," Clifford said.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Children from St. Francis Creche Preschool round out the nativity scene during the school's annual Christmas Pageant.

Preschool Presents Christmas Pageant

Almost 70 students re-enact the birth of Jesus in annual event.

BY ALEX MCVEIGH
THE CONNECTION

Almost 70 preschoolers participated in St. Francis Creche's annual Christmas Pageant Friday, Dec. 16. The play, which tells the story of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, is an annual tradition at the church.

"This is one of our annual events we put on to bring the community together during the holiday season," said Jane Ruppe, director of St. Francis Creche. "This year, our major change was using a piano to accompany the children instead of a guitar."

Children sang and performed every role, which included the holy family, as well as the Three Wise Men, Little Drummer Boys, the angel Gabriel and the vari-

ety of animals that were present at the time of Christ's birth.

Holiday classics such as "Joy to the World," "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "We Three Kings" were part of the storytelling, and the children concluded the performance with a medley of "Feliz Navidad," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and "Jingle Bells."

"I thought it was a wonderful play, and it was really nice to see the kids actually performing rather than being drowned out by a CD playing," said Laura Fischer, who came to watch her niece perform as one of the stars. "And the costumes were just beautiful."

After the play, the students and their families joined together for a potluck lunch in the church's utility room.



From left, Maeve Christie as Mary and Garrett Hicks as Joseph in St. Francis Creche's annual Christmas Pageant Friday, Dec. 16.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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THURSDAY/DEC. 22

Jammin Java Presents Todd Wright's 9th Annual Christmas Spectacular. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 23

"Parfumerie." 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Two Budapest shop clerks bicker by day, oblivious to the fact that they've fallen for each other exchanging anonymous love letters. Tickets \$25. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststageTysons.org.

Jammin Java Presents Todd Wright's 9th Annual Christmas Spectacular. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 24

Good For The Jews: Putting The Ha! In Hanaukah Tour featuring Rob Tannenbaum and David Fagin. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

MONDAY/DEC. 26

FunkMnkyz and Do It With Malice. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

"Nutcracker." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Northern Virginia Community College Annandale, Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Performed by the Virginia Ballet Company and School. \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. www.virginiaballetcompany.org or 703-249-8227.

Dinobabies. 8 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Tuesday Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Stories, songs and activities. Age 1-2 with adult. 703-790-8088.

Practice Your English. 6:30 p.m. Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Conversation group for adults learning English. 703-790-8088.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 28

"Nutcracker." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Northern Virginia Community College Annandale, Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Performed by the Virginia Ballet Company and School. \$30 adults, \$20 children, students and seniors. www.virginiaballetcompany.org or 703-249-8227.

DJ Aetgy, Atom Christie, DJ M.A.F. and Konstellation. 9 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

Roundup Time! 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

A Sweet Shop to Visit

1st stage presents
"Parfumerie".

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Once acclimated, an audience will find a leisurely, genteel evening with a recently re-discovered, romantic comedy that follows tangled lives in the 1st Stage production of "Parfumerie." This kind-hearted production is an unhurried, ultimately engaging, holiday treat.

As directed by Leslie A. Kobylinski, "Parfumerie" is a journey into a world dimly remembered. A time and place, 1930s Budapest, with lux touches, carefully wrought characters and a less acerbic kind of bombast and bad behavior than is currently the norm on television and in movies.

"Parfumerie's" storyline follows the complicated lives of employees in a family-owned cosmetics shop. A few days before Christmas, employee George Horvath (Joshua Dick) is fired by the shop owner (Manolo Santella). The reasons become clear as time goes by; he is wrongly suspected of being the paramour of the shop owner's wife. Additionally, George's life goes askew when he discovers that the stranger he has fallen in love with through anonymous mail correspondence is a co-worker (Amal Saade) with whom he has been endlessly bickering.

As the production unfolds, little-by-little the



From left, Amal Saade and Joshua Dick in the 1st Stage production of "Parfumerie."

truth comes out leading to a happy ending with the assistance of an observant shop employee (Mario Baldessari). There are also numerous characters who add pop to the shop and the production including a sleazy, good-for-nothing Matt Boliek and the flashy hip-swinging Leigh Taylor Patton.

When the comedy begins to take center stage, the flash and fine timing of the actors kick-in, as they begin to enjoy themselves. The stiffness that initially set-up the production disappears.

The show is quite distinctive in that it delves, with corresponding emphasis, into both the story of younger lovers as well as the troubled marriage of a middle-aged couple.

Miklos Laszlo (1903-1973) is the playwright likely unfamiliar to even regular theater goers. His "Parfumerie" was written decades ago and not

SEE "PARFUMERIE", PAGE 11

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10

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THURSDAY/DEC. 29

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West Goes East CD Release, Taylor Carson and Breaking Borders. 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

"Parfumerie." 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Two Budapest shop clerks bicker by day, oblivious to the fact that they've fallen for each other exchanging anonymous love letters. Tickets \$25. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststageTysons.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 30

"Parfumerie." 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Two Budapest shop clerks bicker by day, oblivious to the fact that they've fallen for each other exchanging anonymous love letters. Tickets \$25. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststageTysons.org.

Friday Afternoon Chess. 1 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Players of all levels welcome. All ages. No registration necessary. 703-757-8560.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

Fairfax 4-Miler. 6:30 p.m. Starts and finishes at Pacers Fairfax, Old Town Plaza Village, 10427 North St., Fairfax. Family-friendly running event to support the Fairfax Police Youth Club. The post race party at 8 p.m. includes food and entertainment. \$35-\$40. www.fairfaxfour.com.

An 80's New Year's Dance Party. 8 p.m.-2 a.m. The State Theatre, 220 N. Washington, Falls Church. With The Legwarmers. Age 21 and up. \$50. 703-237-0300.

New Year's Dance with Orpheus Jazz Band. 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. dance with jazz music. Family-friendly. \$30 per person.

New Year's Eve Party. 8:30 p.m. TheSpace, Old Town Plaza, 3955 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. Music, refreshments, games and family-friendly fun. Sponsored by Jubilee Christian Church. Free. www.jccag.org.

"Parfumerie." 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Two Budapest shop clerks bicker by day, oblivious to the fact that they've fallen for each other exchanging anonymous love letters. Tickets \$25. 703-854-1856 or www.1ststageTysons.org.

5th Annual Rocknocoers New Years Eve Party at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.; **Deep River and Friends' Super Classy New Years Eve Blowout and Post-Show Dance Party** at 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. www.jamminjava.com.

VVFD Bingo. 4-8:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.-2 a.m. Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. South, Vienna. Doors open and sales begin at 2 p.m. Free breakfast will be served. http://www.vvfd.org.

"Parfumerie"

FROM PAGE 10

seen again until recently re-adapted by Edward P. Dowdall. But "Parfumerie" does have a successful history, used as the storyline for movies such as "You've Got Mail" (1998) where the premise was updated to the internet age. There was also a multi-Tony Award nominated 1963 Broadway musical "She Loves Me."

The production technical design is scene-stealing. Steven Royal's set has a cultivated look with burnished wood, arched glass windows, and display cases lit with a glimmering, lovely rose by Andrew Jorgensen's lighting. The period costumes by Cheryl Patton Wu are absolutely delightful. Even white lab coats stand out.

Where and When

"Parfumerie" is performed at 1st Stage Theatre, 1524 Spring Hill Road, McLean. Performances through Jan. 8, 2012. Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Note: No performances Dec. 24 or Dec. 25. Performance added Thursday, Dec. 30, 2011. Tickets: \$15-\$25. Call 703-854-1856 or logon: www.1stStageTysons.org.



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McLean Boys Off to Strong Start in Basketball

Coach Roller has veteran line-up in place for Highlanders.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The McLean High boys' basketball team is coming off a successful season last winter in which it finished 13-9 overall and qualified for the 16-team Northern Region playoffs. The Highlanders, during the postseason, defeated Stone Bridge in first round play of the Liberty District tournament before losing to South Lakes in the semifinals. Then, a few days later, McLean's season ended with a first round region playoff loss to Yorktown.

This season's prospects of maintaining, or even improving on, last year's good results are promising as McLean has eight of its top 10 players from last year back on the squad.

McLean, going into this week, has won five of its first six games. The team's top scorers thus far have been senior guards Gordon Rogo and Sango Amolo, and senior forward Thomas Van Wazer, all averaging double figures.

The Highlanders opened the season competing in a tournament at South County Secondary in Lorton. In their first game on Dec. 1 they defeated Osbourn Park High (Manassas), 73-61. The following day, McLean defeated South County, the host of the early season tournament, 70-55.

McLean's first loss of the current season came on Dec. 6 in a 64-63 setback at Trinity Episcopal High, a private school team from Richmond and a member of the Virginia Prep League. The home team Trinity squad scored a late three-pointer to cap a comeback win.

But McLean has won three straight games since — a 50-48 non-district win at Westfield High on Dec. 9, followed by Liberty District victories over visiting South Lakes, 69-51, on Dec. 13, and at Madison, 57-46, on Dec. 16. The wins over the Seahawks and Warhawks give McLean a 2-0 start to the district schedule.

"We have started the season well," said veteran McLean High coach Kevin Roller. "Offensively, we are doing an exceptional job of being patient and making the one extra pass to lead a teammate to a better scoring opportunity which is a major factor in our averaging almost 65 points per game so far. Defensively, we are also much farther along than last year's team. In fact, it was our defense and not our offense that led to our success at Westfield last week.

"Our one loss was to a strong Trinity Episcopal team in Richmond who hit a three-pointer at the buzzer



McLean High boys' basketball head coach Kevin Roller talks with his team during last year's district tournament semifinals game versus South Lakes. The Highlanders had a winning record during that winter season and qualified for the region playoffs.

to cap off a five-point comeback with a little over two minutes remaining to win," said Roller.

McLean's leading scorers in the loss to Trinity were Rogo (16 points), Amollo (15), senior forward Kevin Lastova (12), and Van Wazer (9). Daniel Lewis, a senior front court player, added seven points.

In the district win over South Lakes, McLean's leading scorers were Lewis (18 points), Amollo (15), and Rogo and Van Wazer, both with 13. In the district victory over Madison, top scorers were Van Wazer (18 points), Rogo (13), junior guard/forward Samer Abdelmoty (9), and Amollo (7).

McLean was scheduled to play its final pre-Christmas game on Tuesday, Dec. 20 of this week against visiting Chantilly. The Chargers, members of the Concorde District, are under the guidance of longtime head coach Jim Smith, who was once at the helm of the McLean program.

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, McLean will be competing at the annual Raytheon Bulldog Bash Holiday Tournament, hosted by Westfield High School. The holiday showcase is now in its 10th year.

The Bulldog Bash will take place Tuesday, Dec. 27 through Thursday, Dec. 29. McLean is scheduled to open play at the Bash on Dec. 27 at 2:15 p.m. versus Potomac High (Prince William County).

Other participating teams at the tournament will include Battlefield High (Manassas), Fairfax High, Flint Hill School, Annapolis Area Christian School, Potomac High (Prince William County), Sewickley Academy (Pittsburgh), Freedom High (South Riding), Bishop Ireton (Alexandria), and Paul VI (Fairfax).

Championship games on both the girls' and boys' side at the Bulldog Bash are scheduled to take place Dec. 29 at 7:30 p.m. (girls' finals) and 9:15 p.m. (boys' finals). Admission will be \$6 per day. A three-day tournament pass is also available for \$15. Free admission will be granted to children under age six, adults over age 62, and any travel or house youth basketball players wearing their uniform top and accompanied by a paying adult.

Langley Girls Net First Win

Saxons, behind strong play of Goettman, defeat Liberty opponent Jefferson for first win of season.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The Langley High Saxons earned their first victory of the new high school girls' basketball season on Dec. 13 when they won a Liberty District road game at Thomas Jefferson High, 49-42. Langley, under new head coach Amanda Bates, had lost its first four games so the victory over the Colonials was a relief as well as a confidence booster for the squad. The Saxons, in the win, received an excellent outing from Grace Goettman, who scored a game high 22 points. Jessica Stewart contributed eight points in the win and Paige Stuhlmuller had six.

Three days later, on Dec. 16, Langley played a talented South Lakes squad tough in a 49-42 district home loss. The Saxons, who saw their record slip to 1-5 overall and 1-1 in the district, played a strong first half and led 25-23 at the intermission. But the visiting Seahawks put together a strong third quarter, outscoring Langley 17-5 to take the lead. The Saxons did outscore their opponents 12-9 in the final quarter but it was not quite enough to overcome the 10-point deficit it had faced going into that fourth quarter.

Coach Bates, who served as an assistant coach at South County Secondary last year under former Stallions head coach Chrissy Kelly, is taking over a Langley team which struggled with a 4-18 record last year. But Bates likes her new team and is confident about the team's chances of improving this season.

"For the most part I've been really pleased with how the girls are playing," said Bates, who was named the new Langley head coach last April. "The girls are working really hard and they are improving each week. I think the most difficult hurdle right now is developing a winning mentality. I want them to go out there and feel confident that they can com-

pete with and beat anyone we play. They are a talented group of girls, and once we get over that mental hump we will be in great shape to make some noise in the district."

Goettman, a talented 5-foot-11-inch junior backcourt/forward player for Langley, is leading the Saxons with just over 13 points per game so far.

"Grace Goettman has been playing extremely well for us," said Bates. "She is really starting to blossom on both ends of the court."

Stewart, a junior forward, is averaging close to nine points per game for Langley.

LANGLEY OPENED THE SEASON with a close 36-32 loss at Chantilly High on Dec. 1, and lost a low scoring 29-21 home contest to visiting Potomac Falls (Dulles District) the following night.

The next day, the Saxons' third game in as many days, saw Langley, against perennial Northern Region power West Springfield, fall to the Spartans 64-40. And on Dec. 9, Langley played W.T. Woodson tough in a 43-34 road loss to the Cavaliers of the Patriot District.

That was followed by the much-needed win over Jefferson four days later.

Langley was slated to play one more game before Christmas — that being a non-district outing at Westfield earlier this week on Tuesday, Dec. 20.

Over the holidays, the Saxons will be competing at the annual Pohanka Classic at Chantilly High School Dec. 27 through Dec. 29. The Saxons will open the showcase tournament on Dec. 27 with a 9 a.m. game versus Georgetown Visitation, a private school member of the girls' Independent School League (ISL).

This will be the 19th year of the Pohanka Holiday Classic, which features both girls' and boys' tournaments. This year's showcase will feature 16 schools from Northern Virginia, Virginia Beach, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

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CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/REDEVELOPMENT

On December 6, 2011, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) held a public hearing regarding an ordinance to establish exclusive water service areas and maximum allowable rates, fees, and charges within Fairfax County for water service. At the same meeting, the BOS enacted the ordinance as Section 65-6-13 of the Code of Fairfax County. Section (a) of the ordinance provides that effective 12:01 a.m. December 7, 2011, Fairfax Water will be the provider of retail public water service within Fairfax County, Virginia, for any new construction or redevelopment of any dwelling unit and any residential or non-residential structure, unless Fairfax Water determines it cannot make water service available due to a utility-related reason.

The ordinance requires that any determination by Fairfax Water that it cannot make service available be made in accordance with policies, rules, or regulations established by Fairfax Water for the purpose of establishing when a utility-related reason exists that prevents it from supplying water. The ordinance further requires that the policies, rules, or regulations be adopted by Fairfax Water after notice and a public hearing.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2012, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/ REDEVELOPMENT. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

A copy of the proposed rule can be viewed on our Web site at <http://www.fairfaxwater.org>. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed rule should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

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

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 to be included in the record of the public hearing.

21 Announcements

NOTICE

Edward E. Gahres, MD is closing his medical practice at 5021 Seminary Rd, Ste 109, Alexandria, VA, on December 31, 2011. Patients interested in requesting copies of their medical records should call (703) 931-7515 between 10 am and 4 pm, Mon., Tues. and Thurs.

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Living Proof



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Or just plain dumb luck (which I don't take personally), or inherited genes (for which I am fortunate) that have so far fended off the cancer due to their DNA profile – or whatever, or the cumulative effect of the diet and lifestyle choices I've made, or the ingenuity of the design of the chemotherapy initially and then the anti-angiogenesis maintenance treatment I've been infused with – going on nearly three years, or everything together or some other things I've done separately, or a higher power simply blessing me for reasons I couldn't begin to understand. Why ever, how ever, I am grateful life goes on; thank God!

Woe is not me so I have never wondered why it has been me so seriously and unexpectedly afflicted. Certainly I've been curious and at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, questions were asked but answers were not really provided. My oncologist was more interested in treating the disease going forward rather than determining a cause for this effect reviewing backwards. It was of no interest to him, so by association – or influence, it likewise became less so to me. And so was born – and has evolved, my attitude toward being diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer at age 54 and one half. It's my problem, but I can't really worry about it – sort of, somehow.

On the one hand, whatever will be will be and attempting to control the uncontrollable (cells in my body) will likely mentally-anguish even a patient patient like me. On the other, giving up and/or giving in to this terminal disease doesn't make much sense either. I didn't (don't) want to be a victim of my own circumstance. Nor do I want to be an answer to anybody's prayers, except my own. Everybody has their own problems. Cancer has become mine and it's a problem I have assimilated into my life. I wouldn't say I've embraced it but I have accepted it and moved on, you might say.

Writing these columns and sharing with all of you has likely contributed as well to that acceptance as much as anything has. Not taking my diagnosis/prognosis lying down (in fact, I was sitting at the time), might have started the proactive peace with which I presently exist – and formerly as well, ever since that first this-is-what-you-have/this-is-what-we-should-do-about-it meeting occurred with my oncologist. He set the forward-thinking tone at that meeting and I have, to the best of my ability – despite some valleys along the way, remained vigilant, trying to appreciate the present while constantly thinking about the future. A future once filled with hope, but now one filled with anxiety and uncertainty.

Managing that anxiety has been, and continues to be, my greatest challenge, a challenge I never anticipated given that my parents' ages when they died were 87 and 86 and their health history had not included any cancer. And though it doesn't appear as if I've inherited their long-living genes, I have most definitely inherited their senses of humor and positive attitude. Maybe that's why I've outlived my prognosis. I think I thought: why not me? And then joked about it. (I remember asking my oncologist if it were OK for me to buy in bulk, among other similar kinds of queries.)

At the end of the day, the whole thing has probably been out of my hands. But accepting that wouldn't have been any fun.

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

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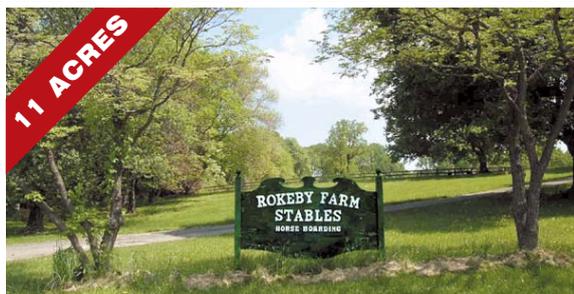
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