

Evan, 11, Brooklyn, 4, and Audrey Krawczyk, 9, of Great Falls in front of the Snow Globe at the Great Falls Celebration of Lights on Sunday, Dec. 3, at the Great Falls Village Centre.

Great Falls CONNECTION

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Police To Add Body Cameras

In other business, board hires new county executive and updates environmental priorities.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County police officers from the Mount Vernon and Mason district stations will soon wear body cameras in a three-month pilot program designed to determine if all Fairfax County police officers will wear the cameras in the future.

"We see this as a really wonderful opportunity to better connect our officers on the ground and our folks on the street and make sure that everybody has an opportunity to work together and see how that work goes," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck.

The Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission recommended in 2015 that officers be equipped with the cameras, and the Board of Supervisors approved the pilot program at its board meeting on Nov. 21. It will take another few months to get the three-to-six month pilot program up and running.

Braddock District Supervisor John Cook, chairman of the board's public safety committee, expressed concerns about upcoming constraints on the public safety budget. "We are going to have some tough decisions in public safety and we need good data," said Cook.

Fairfax County Police Department will partner with American University to initiate an academic study, which could be extended from 90 days to six months.

"Community advocates will be at the table to help us monitor the deployment of the cameras and how the policy is working," said Col. Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Chief of Police.

"The pilot body worn program is designed to provide the department with the opportunity to review police-community member encounters as they occur, as well as provide an additional degree of safety for our officers as they patrol the streets," according to the Fairfax County Police Department.

The cost of the pilot program is \$684,000. Storck asked if all officers from the Mount Vernon station could use the cameras.

"When it comes to evaluating the impacts of body worn cameras, we are still, as a field, in the early days," said Brad Bartholomew, professor at American University.

For studies to be effective, "we must ensure that a group of officers receives the camera and another group does not," he said. "The more you can control, the more you can model, the more believable your results may be."

The study analysis is expected to cover statistics and community member feedback to assess the impacts prior to, during and following the pilot program.

"Officers will be expected to activate the



Bryan Hill, new county executive



Stella Koch



Col. Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Chief of Police



John Cook, Braddock Supervisor

camera during any law enforcement-public encounter related to a call for service, law enforcement action, subject stop, traffic stop, search or police service," according to the police department.

Police and a variety of civic groups worked together on a proposed pilot body-worn camera policy to address personal privacy rights, transparency and accountability in police-community member contacts. The policy can be modified as needed based on the pilot.

Read the draft policy at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/boardcommittees/meetings/2017/oct10-public-safety-body-worn-cameras-draft-policy.pdf

TWO BOARDS, ONE FAIRFAX

The Board of Supervisors and School Board adopted a joint social and racial equity policy called One Fairfax.

The Board of Supervisors joined the School Board by adopting the policy on Tuesday, Nov. 21, one day after the School Board.

"I dare say we've spent thousands of hours on this policy and I think it's reached a point when it is time to approve it," said Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, adding that he judges this his most important action in the 10 years he has served on the board.

"This goes across all that we do," said Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

The policy identifies 17 areas of focus including housing, education, community and economic development, environment and transportation.

"What we are doing here is not guaranteeing that everybody is going to be successful because that really goes to the individual, but what we can do is ensure that this board and Fairfax County ensure ... that everybody in Fairfax County has an opportunity to succeed," said Chairman Sharon Bulova.

"I believe philosophically at our core, we believe in equity and our community reflects that, and our community wants that," said McKay.

"Far too often, I have found that some people in my community aren't at the table,

but they rely on us to be there at the table for them. And they rely on us to make sure their county government represents them as individuals."

Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity had concerns how to measure the efforts or define success.

"From the very beginning of this policy discussion, I've asked several simple questions that I haven't been able to receive an answer for," Herrity said. "I support every one of our residents having equal opportunities to succeed and I believe our county and staff are committed to that as am I. But I can't support a new government bureaucracy for a problem that no one can quantify and for which there are too few definitions or measures of success or impact."

Read the resolution at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2016/one-fairfax-resolution.pdf.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

While addressing deer management and a lack of predators in Fairfax County, Stella Koch said, "They've changed the ecology in Yellowstone [National Park], but I don't think that it is an option here."

The Environment Quality Advisory Council advocates for a full-time wildlife specialist position in Fairfax County to support the deer management program as well as the Canada Geese Management Program.

"That position has been needed for a long time," said Koch. "We have one person doing a significant amount of yeoman's work."

On Nov. 21, Koch presented the environmental quality annual report, highlighting major priorities for 2018, including the need to conduct a countywide survey on the public's view of the "cultural carrying capacity, how people are thinking about deer in this county."

The advisory council also says the Board of Supervisors needs to update its 2003 Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and needs to implement a lighting work group. "Since 2003 there have been a lot of changes in technology and also an increase in density in this county," said Koch.

"The increasing density of development

in Fairfax County will invariably lead to more instances of 'light trespass,' where lights on one property affect another property," according to the environmental report.

Koch also advocated for increasing the Stormwater Service District rate by one-quarter penny, from a rate of 3 cents per \$100 assessed real estate value to 3.25 cents per \$100.

"As you know, there is an endless backlog of infrastructure that needs replacements," she said. "We're making great progress and it's slow and steady, but we definitely need more funding."

"I use this as a model for how we can track major issues," said Bulova, praising the structure and quality of the EQAC report.

"When you open the annual report, the first thing [you see] is the recommendations. We think that is important, it is what this annual report basically drives us toward," said Koch.

Other priorities include funding of \$263,000 required for the Fairfax County Park Authority's natural resource mapping efforts and additional technology.

The public will have an opportunity to give both EQAC and the Board of Supervisors feedback in a public hearing scheduled for Jan. 10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway.

To read the report, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/eqac/report2017/.

THE \$250,000 MAN

Bryan Hill will be Fairfax County's next county executive, effective Jan. 2, 2018.

"Selecting a county executive is the most important hire the Board of Supervisors undertakes," said Penny Gross, vice chairman and Mason District supervisor. "Mr. Hill brings impressive leadership, management, communications and budget experience to Fairfax County."

"I believe this is the fifth county executive for me and the fourth search," said Gross.

Hill, currently the James City County, Va. administrator and clerk to its Board of Supervisors, will replace Fairfax County Executive Edward L. Long, who retired in September.

"While [James City County] is a smaller jurisdiction, many of the issues are the same," said Bulova. "We are very, very excited to welcome Bryan Hill to Team Fairfax."

Hill will earn \$250,000 per year.

Hill has been the James City County administrator since 2014, and previously served seven years as the deputy county administrator with Beaufort County, S.C. Pre-

NEWS

County News

FROM PAGE 3

viously, he was the vice chancellor for Finance and Operations at the University of South Carolina's Beaufort/Bluffton Campus and was director of finance for the University of Maryland's Office of Information and Technology.

He earned his master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California and his bachelor's in public administration from Alfred University.

Bulova thanked Kirk Kincannon, who was the acting county executive since Long's retirement in September.

COUNTY'S FIRST TENANT RESIDENT CURATOR

The county extended its first lease through the Resident Curator program to a Coast Guard officer.

The county's Resident Curator Program is designed to preserve historic properties by offering long-term leases to qualified tenants who will rehabilitate and maintain the historic houses. A curator can be a private citizen, a nonprofit entity, or a for-profit entity, according to county documents.

"It is really a wonderful opportunity and a great pleasure to be the first of what I think will be a number of properties in Fairfax County ..." said Storck, "to bring back to life housing which is old and historic and meaningful to all of us."

The Board of Supervisors approved the lease of the historic Stempson House at 7520 Furnace Road

in Lorton to Steven J. McCullough for eight years and eight months to renovate the historic home.

"This is the first time we are doing this, you are our first tenant," said Bulova said to McCullough.

The Stempson House gets its historic significance from its association with the Occoquan Workhouse and Reformatory and the Women's Suffrage movement of the early 1900s, according to Resident Curator Program documents.

The United States purchased the land in 1910 to construct the prison. "In 1937, amongst the Lorton Reformatory orchard trees, prisoners constructed a residence for a prison officer. It is likely that prisoners constructed the house, under the direction of prison engineers, using bricks manufactured at the prison brick kiln. Ultimately, the residence was converted for use by the prison security office."

The 1,500 square-foot-house is described as a "vernacular style residence with Colonial Revival style elements."

Other applications are pending for the Turner Farm House, 10609 Georgetown Pike, in Great Falls and the Ellmore Farmhouse on West Ox Road in Herndon. The county intends to continue its programs at the Ash Grove in Tysons, Lahey Lost Valley in Vienna, and Hannah P. Clark (Enyedi) House in Lorton.

See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/press/html/ir141-16.htm

Learn more about the Resident Curator program and other properties at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rcp.



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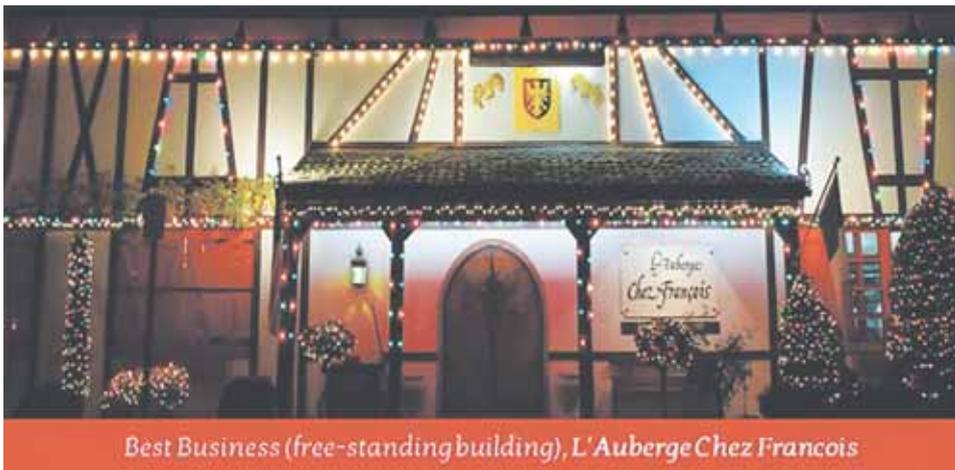
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Best Business (free-standing building), L'Auberge Chez Francois

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CELEBRATE GREAT FALLS FOUNDATION

L'Auberge Chez Francois restaurant on Springvale Road won last year's contest in business category.

Holiday Spirit Returns For Great Falls Contest

Sixth annual Holiday Decorating Contest closes on Dec. 22

BY ADRIENNE WEST
THE CONNECTION

Businesses and residences around Great Falls are untangling the string lights and digging out the tinsel for the sixth annual Holiday Decorating Contest. Beginning on Nov. 24th, with the deadline for submissions on Dec. 22, when the judges award \$200 to their choice for Best Business (stand alone building), Best Storefront and Best Neighbor(hood). Past judges and participants share some brief reflections on previous contests and how the community gets involved.

The contest was inspired by Katie Simmons Hickey's (of Caliber Home Loans) love of decorating: She puts up 11 trees in her home every year, even winning one of the contest awards last year. Born and raised in Great Falls, Hickey moved back after college and joined the board of Celebrate Great Falls Foundation, where she shared her idea for a friendly competition. Some of her favorites over the years are simple white lights outlining homes and trees, as well as L'Auberge Chez Francois' cheery and uplifting displays, and GF Auto Services'

snowman waterskiing behind a car. Hickey hopes that someday, all of Great Falls will join in, bringing the "spirit of the holidays to our small town."

Michelle Miller, resident and President of the Friends of the Great Falls Library, has been involved since 2013. Her holiday book tree won in 2013 and was nominated again in 2014; she may start planning now for next year as it "takes so many books." Miller loves the lights on Dante's Restaurant and the "Diamond Tree" at Adeler Jewelers, and that the town becomes "so festive, bright and magical for the holiday season."

Another community leader and a 20-year resident, Julie Casso of The Arts of Great Falls, was asked to judge the contest last year. The executive director likes "any type of lights and lots of them" like at L'Auberge Chez Francois, or those that "appropriately looked like diamonds" at Adeler Jewelers. Casso sees the contest as another way we're [brought together, enjoying the lights like we did as children].

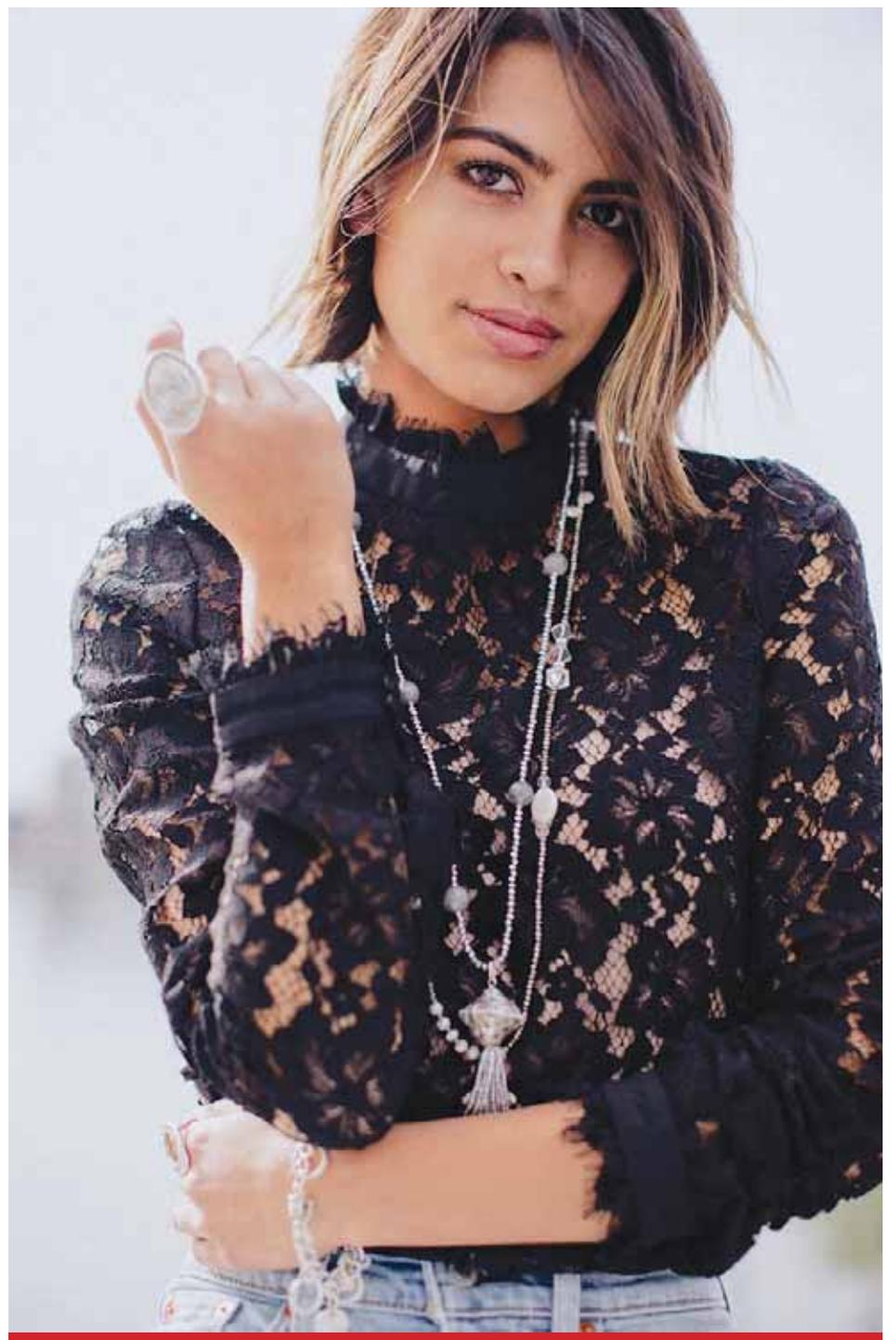
Erin Lobato, Director of the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation, adds: "Everything is so dark, cold and grey this time of year...adding a little sparkle...puts everyone in a good mood, no matter your religion." She names the decorations at Chez Francois, the firehouse, and GF Auto Service as some of her favorites. Lobato feels blessed to be part of such a "dynamic, friendly community."

SEE CONTEST, PAGE 11



Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department

Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department was among the 2015 contest winners.



JJ Singh Jewelry Trunk Show and Open Studio

featuring Wiley Grey

A collection of curated women's clothing.

Local designer JJ Singh hand crafts modern fine jewelry with ancient appeal in her Great Falls studio.

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OPINION

Give Locally in Fairfax County

Holidays are for giving; many choices to help.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks. The holidays are about children and family. The holidays are about sharing, about joy. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation. The holidays are about alleviating suffering for others.

EDITORIAL Northern Virginia is among the wealthiest areas in the country. Many if not most of us go through our daily and seasonal routines without encoun-

tering evidence of the needy families among us.

In Fairfax County, more than 52,000 (28 percent) of FCPS students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals.

The median family income in Fairfax County rose to \$129,800. But among families with children, 6 percent have income below the poverty level. That's \$20,420 for a family of three. That's about \$1,700 a month. Median rent in Fairfax County is \$1,747, meaning the cost for half the rentals is more than that.

These are children living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical bills, car repair, heat and food. Some of these are children who

may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school.

School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger — a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with the holidays.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

Many nonprofits in the county need your help to provide a holiday meal for Thanksgiving or Christmas, to provide children with gifts.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are a few ideas.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

GIVE LOCALLY

- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org. Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive. Gifts will be collected at Cornerstones main office, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, VA 20190 on Thursday, Dec. 7 and Friday, Dec. 8, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 9, 9 a.m. – noon. Contact Nate King, Donations and Drives Coordinator, at 571-323-9569.
- ❖ **Share of McLean** operates a food pantry; provides assistance to families to avoid eviction, keep utilities on and meet other needs in a crisis. Share of McLean will provide holiday assistance to more than 250 needy families (630-plus people) this year. Help neighbors in need by donating money, fulfilling a wish or donating Walmart, Target, Giant, or Safeway gift cards. Share's Furniture Program is in major need of drivers and helpers. Visit the Furniture Program page. The Food Pantry is in major need of supplies; visit the Food Pantry page and check Facebook to see how to help the Food Pantry. Visit www.shareofmclean.org for more info about Share.
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105, herndonrestonfish.org. Herndon-Reston FISH has assisted local residents in short-term crises by since 1969. FISH provides Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help by responding to emergency requests for rent, transportation, utilities, medical prescriptions and other needs. FISH operates The Bargain Loft, a thrift store, which needs donations of good quality saleable items, accepting and selling art, furniture, jewelry, household linens, dishes, pots and pans, books, women's designer clothing (clean and on hangers), puzzles, games, collectibles, small electronics and more. If you have store questions, call 703-437-0600. Herndon-Reston FISH also provides Holiday Food & Gift Baskets during the November and December season.
- ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more. Every year the goal is to provide each family with a week's worth of non-perishable food in November and again in December. When funds allow, grocery gift cards are also included. In November, clients also receive a voucher for coats and warm clothing. In December, children 16 and under receive gifts. holiday@linkagainsthunger.org. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org.
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others** (CHO), Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. Last year 450 children had a special Christmas through the annual Christmas Store. 703-281-7614, www.cho-va.com
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**. 571-748-2500, www.nvfs.org, Employment and job training, healthcare, housing, mental health, foster care and Healthy Families. 10455 White Granite, Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124.
- ❖ **Second Story** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182. 703-506-9191, second-story.org. Second Story

(formerly Alternative House) provides shelter and services for homeless, runaway or abused teenagers, unaccompanied youth, and young mothers and their children. Requests for food and clothing are up more than 50 percent.

- ❖ **Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna** providing services, personal enrichment, volunteer opportunities for adults 50 and over. Currently serving 3,000+ mature adults in the region. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org.
- ❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. www.touchingheart.com, 703-901-7355.
- ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly. For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153.
- ❖ **HomeAid** builds and renovates facilities that house the homeless, and partners with many local organizations to do so. 3684 Centerview Drive, Suite 110B, Chantilly, VA 20151.
- ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area, a partner in efforts to end homelessness in Fairfax County. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251, volunteer@facetscares.org or www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22030.
- ❖ **Britepaths** will have 3,000 individuals and families in need of holiday assistance list this fall. Sponsor a family or donate to provide a family with a Thanksgiving meal, December holiday meal and/or gifts for their children. britepaths.org.
- ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) helps local people who are in temporary need of life's basic necessities such as food, clothing, and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880, fairfaxfish.org.
- ❖ **Lamb Center**, day center for homeless, Fairfax. 703-691-3178, www.thelambcenter.org.
- ❖ **Food for Others** provides a safety net for people who suddenly face unforeseen emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173, info@foodforothers.org or www.foodforothers.org. Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others** (ECHO). 703-569-9160, www.foodforothers.org. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year.
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** (LCAC) will provide Thanksgiving and Holiday assistance to more than 450 families this year. Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets along with fulfilling gift wishes for more than 1,000 children and teens will help low-income families. More information at lortonaction.org/seasonal-assistance/. Volunteers

are needed for these events as well. Register online at lortonaction.org or call 703-339-5161, ext. 140 or email Linda@LortonAction.org. Mailing address: LCAC, P.O. Box 154, Lorton, VA 22199-0154.

- ❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. Assistance League's philanthropic programs touch the lives of thousands of children at 11 Title I schools in Northern Virginia, serving children most in need at selected schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria. To learn more about volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, email alnorthervna@gmail.com or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.
- ❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services** (CAUSE) ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. 1100 N Glebe Road, Suite 373, Arlington, VA 22201. 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org.
- ❖ **Shelter House** provides crisis intervention, safe housing and supportive services to promote self-sufficiency for homeless families and victims of domestic violence in Fairfax County. www.shelterhouse.org/
- ❖ **Mount Vernon At Home**, 703-303-4060, www.mountvernonathome.org. From practical help to social, wellness, educational and cultural activities, Mount Vernon At Home membership helps connect senior members of the community. Neighbors helping neighbors with volunteer support is the power of Mount Vernon At Home. Mount Vernon At Home is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working hard to meet the needs of older members. They fundraise all year to make this possible and count on the generosity of the community.
- ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, VA 22306, 703-768-7106, www.ucmagency.org, assists low-income families and individuals living along the Route 1 Corridor, UCM provides four different housing programs as well as a Workforce Development Center to help prepare people for moving forward with their jobs. For the holidays, donations of nearly 10,000 toys, books, games, clothing, and other gifts ensured a joy-filled holiday for more than 1,200 children in 600 families. Donations of cash/checks and gift cards are also welcome.
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia. 703-541-3063, www.capitalareafoodbank.org.
- ❖ **Homestretch** is the largest provider of transitional housing in Fairfax County and offers a services to help the homeless better their lives through education. Email jhenderson@homestretchva.org; 703-237-2035 x125; homestretchva.org/.
- ❖ **Pathway Homes** focuses on providing housing and support services to individuals with serious mental illnesses, with the mission to help these individuals reach their full potential and lead stable lives. They offer both in-home programs, semi-independent houses and assisted living facilities. 10201 Fairfax Boulevard, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. 703-876-0390, info@pathwayhomes.org, www.pathwayhomes.org, www.pathwayhomes.org/support-pathway/.

SEE GIVE LOCALLY. PAGE 15

Great Falls CONNECTION

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FAITH

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

During Advent, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, will present a series of three midweek Advent programs. The overarching theme of these evenings is "Peace for Our Time." Each evening's sub-theme will grow from a Reformation-era hymn. Each evening's program begins at 5:45 p.m. with supper followed by discussion, worship and the lighting of the Advent wreath. All are welcome. Visit www.gflutheran.org or call 703-759-6068.

- ❖ Thursday/Dec. 7 – Peace Between Nations, hymn: "Savior of the Nations Come" (ELW 263)
- ❖ Thursday/Dec. 14 – Peace in politics, hymn: "Now to the Holy Spirit Let us Pray" (ELW 743)
- ❖ Thursday/Dec. 21 – Peace in ourselves, hymn: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (ELW 268)

Living Nativity and Christmas Concert. Friday, Dec. 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1545 Chain Bridge Road. Featuring the sounds of the season and the excitement of

live animals in the creche. Call 703-909-3424 or email kbwenk@gmail.com for more.

Christmas Services at St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Call 703-356-4902 or visit www.stjohnsmclean.org.

- Sunday, Dec. 17
 - ❖ 9 and 11 a.m. – Festival of Lessons and Carols.
- Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24
 - ❖ 4 p.m. – Family Service of Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 3:30 pm
 - ❖ 7 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 6:30 pm
 - ❖ 10 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 9:30 pm
- Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25
 - ❖ 10 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

SEE FAITH, PAGE 8

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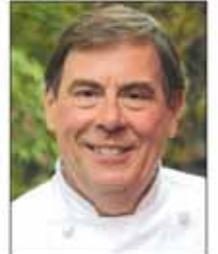
We didn't inherit the earth from our parents. We're borrowing it from our children.

—Chief Seattle
(1788-1866)
Suquamish/
Duwamish chief



Greetings from Chef Jacques

We're excited for the holidays here at L'Auberge Chez François and Jacques' Brasserie. In fact, the holiday season was our founder François Haeringer's most favorite time of the year, as you can tell by our extraordinary display of holiday decorations throughout the dining rooms and grounds.



Not to be missed, we have some of our most popular and decadent special events on the schedule for the coming month, which are listed below.

It's a great time to think about the perfect gift for your friends and family. Visit www.chefjacques.com/shop for ideas including engraved logo wine glasses, cookbooks, DVDs, and even a fashionable silk scarf. If you are still undecided, personalized gift certificates can be used to dine, come to a special event, or purchase merchandise.

Holidays also mean a rush for reservations, so we have posted our holiday schedule on our website (laubergechezfrancois.com). To accommodate all of those who wish to dine with us during the season, we will be open for lunch and dinner on Monday, December 11, 2017 and Monday, December 18, 2017. We hope to see you this holiday season!

Warm Wishes,
Chef Jacques and Paul Haeringer

Christmas Singalong with Difficult Run String Band

Please join us at L'Auberge Chez François on Sunday, December 3 at 5:00pm to kick off the season with our second annual Holiday Sing Along and Dinner with local favorite, Difficult Run String Band. This musical evening will feature holiday classics, as well as the Difficult Run String Band's bluegrass and old-time favorites. All of our spectacular holiday decorations will be in place and ready to complement this festive night of holiday music and good cheer.

Holiday in Paris Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon

You are invited to join us at L'Auberge Chez François on Friday, December 8, 2017 at 11:00am for our annual "Holiday in Paris" Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon. Chef Jacques will demonstrate how to cook French dishes that are sure to say romance while transporting you to the City of Love, Paris. This festive event will feature the cuisine and wines from France and will surely captivate you this holiday season. Viva La France, et Viva Paris!

Holiday Wine Festival and Luncheon

Our Holiday Wine Festival and Luncheon returns on Saturday, December 9, 2017. Please join us as we sample twelve wines from Austria, Italy, California, Washington State, and France. Arrive anytime between 11:30 and 1:00pm for a walk-around tasting of these fine wines. Our sommeliers will be on-hand to guide you through the tasting or provide suggestions for gifts and pairing wines with your holiday menus. Following the tasting, sit down and enjoy a luncheon of your choice from our four-course menu, paired with another glass of wine.

Sounds of the Season Brunch with Alexander Barnett

Please join us at L'Auberge Chez François on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 11:00am for a musical brunch featuring guitarist Alexander Barnett. Dine on house-made croissants, brunch cocktails, and a selection of festive favorites while listening to seasonal music. Alex is one of our customers' favorite entertainers, just as our Sunday brunch quickly became a popular event. You'll be sure to get into the holiday spirit in front of the fireplace surrounded by our sparkling lights and decorations. We hope to toast this holiday season with you and yours!

Gonet-Médeville Premier Cru Champagne and Bordeaux Wine Dinner

Please join us on Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 6:30pm. We'll be spreading holiday cheer with Premier Cru Champagne, fine Bordeaux wines, and an extravagant dinner featuring the wines of Vignobles Gonet-Médeville. Lending a new generation of winemakers, Julie and Xavier Gonet-Médeville bring their family knowledge, methods and passion to their wines. A festive night not to be missed with hosts Julie Gonet-Médeville, Chef Jacques and our team this holiday season!

Champagne Celebration Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon

Celebrate the holidays in style with a Champagne Celebration Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon on Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 11:00am. Chef Jacques will be entertaining our guests with a cooking demonstration highlighting Champagne and followed by a festive feast featuring seafood, chocolate, and more bubbly. Eat, drink and be merry this season at L'Auberge Chez François. Bonnes Fêtes, Seasons Greetings, and Happy Holidays!



L'Auberge Chez François
332 Springvale Road
Great Falls, VA 22066

Reservation or information

703-759-3800

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f y in

FAITH

FROM PAGE 7

Blue Christmas Service – a non-traditional service of remembrance and hope – will be held at Katie's Coffee House 760 Walker Road, Great Falls on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 3:30 p.m. brought to you by Great Falls Area Ministries. For more information call Carol Wright 703-582-1640.

Youth Activities at Wesley United Methodist Church. Activities are open to all 6th-12th graders. Youth Sunday School meets every Sunday at 10 a.m. in the upper room. Youth Bible Study will meet every Sunday at 4:30 p.m. off-site. Following bible study, ride together to the church for youth group. Email the Youth Ministry Staff for the address. The Anchor meets every Sunday from 6-8 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Join us for dinner, games, worship, and diving deeper into the Word. During the summer, Youth Sunday School meets most Sundays at 9 a.m. in the upper room.

To receive the newsletter or for more information contact youth@wesleyvienna.org.

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, at the intersection of Lewinsville and Brook roads in McLean, invites you for a casual Saturday Service at 5 p.m., followed by conversation and fellowship or for Sunday Services at 8 a.m. or 10 a.m. Sunday School for Youth and Children takes place during the 10 a.m. Service. Check www.stthomasmcleanva.org for special events and services through the year. St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, 8991 Brook Road, McLean, 703-442-0330.

Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna, offers a monthly Healing Eucharist with the Laying on of Hands and Anointing for Healing (first Sunday of the month, 5 p.m. at St. Mary's Chapel). The Healing Ministry is led by the Rev. Valerie Hayes and Alexandra MacCracken and includes a team of lay healers who have gone through intentional training and formation. Contact the Rev. Valerie Hayes at vhayes@holycorforter.com.

Yoga Class with a Christian Focus is held Saturdays, 3-4 p.m., McGill Hall or the Library at the Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. This group is suitable for those with beginner and/or intermediate yoga experience. Dress comfortably and bring a mat. Feel free to bring a towel, block(s) or strap. Contact the Church Office at 703-938-6521.

Mom's Group meets second and fourth Thursday of the Month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Join the group for coffee and fellowship. The group meets in the Lillian Croy Room, near the Church Office. Childcare will be available just across the hall in the Childcare Center. If you are interested in joining the group, contact the Church Office at 703-938-6521 so that we can plan appropriately for materials and childcare.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, has Sunday services at 8 – Holy Eucharist Rite I and 10 a.m. – Holy Eucharist Rite II with music. 703-759-2082.

SEE FAITH, PAGE 11



**VINSON HALL
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WELLBEING



Charitable activities, such as this toy drive by Interfaith Works, can improve one's overall well-being.

PHOTO COURTESY OF INTERFAITH WORKS

Season of Giving, Healing

Acts of kindness can boost wellbeing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

As Terrance Puller surveys boxes wrapped in holiday paper and filled with tubes of toothpaste, sticks of deodorant and other self-care toiletries, he says he can feel his heart well up with gratitude. The packages were part of a donation drive to benefit So Others Might Eat (SOME), a local nonprofit organization with a mission to provide services to the poor and homeless. Puller, who is now both a SOME employee and volunteer, reminisces about a period in his life when he was a recipient of such generosity.

Five years ago, Puller says he was alone, homeless and deep in an alcohol and crack cocaine-induced haze. He would later recall that he was so staggeringly intoxicated one holiday season that he would miss an opportunity to say goodbye to his dying mother. What he did receive that year however, was life changing.

"I was able to come into the shelter and get treatment, food and eventually a job," said Puller. "I volunteer my time because ... being here reminds me of my story and makes me grateful. It keeps me uplifted, less depressed and clean and sober."

Mounting research validates Puller's assertion. "Giving of our talents and time is an important way to improve our well-being," said Carolyn Lorente, professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. "What many of my colleagues are looking into is the connection between volunteerism and sense of self. It turns out that when we give to others, it not only helps those we are assisting but also boosts our sense of agency, gives us a sense of purpose and belonging and informs our sense of identity."

During the holidays, which are often emotionally charged, a focus on helping others can lead to feelings of gratitude and happiness, says psychologist Jerome Short, Ph.D. In fact, he points to a 2010 study published in the journal *Clinical Psychology Review*, which shows a link between benevolence and contentment.

For More Information

Interfaith Works – www.iworksmc.org
SOME – some.org
HOPE Pregnancy Care Center – 703-536-2020

"Kind acts increase personal happiness because we naturally empathize with others and take pride in our ability to make others smile and feel good," he said.

Even for those who haven't experienced levels of need such as Puller's, acts of altruism can have a positive effect on one's mood. An example is Jennifer Carter, a senior at Marymount University in Arlington, who spent last weekend in the center of a crowded auditorium on the university's campus frantically tying strips of fleece cloth. Along with nearly 300 other volunteers, she was making blankets for newborn babies for an organization called HOPE, a nondenominational crisis pregnancy center in Fairfax County.

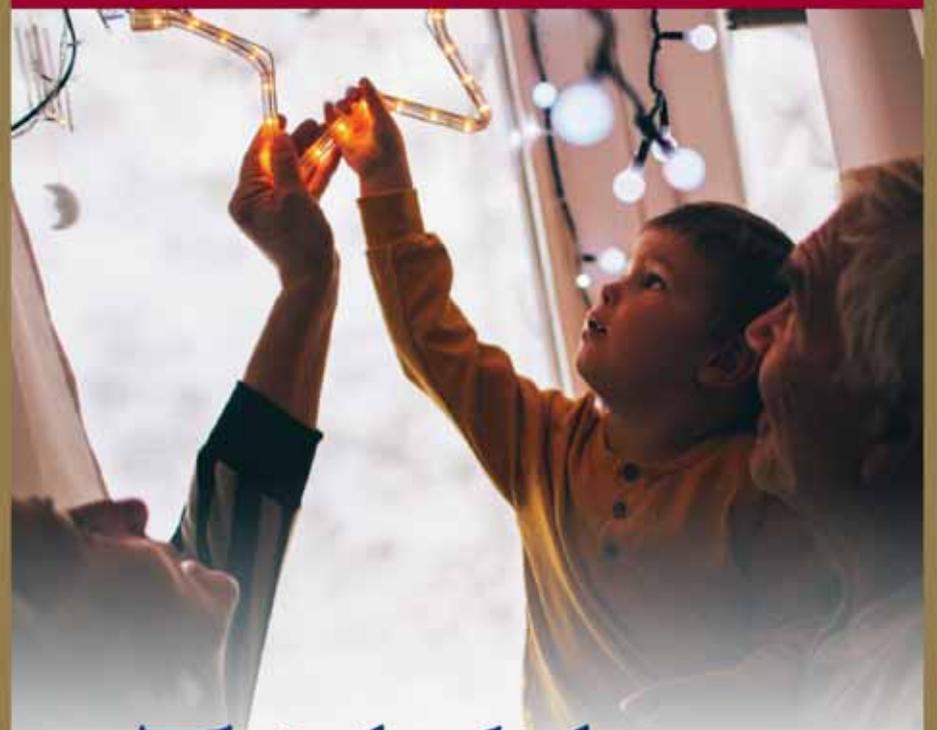
"When these new mothers leave the hospitals it's usually with a thin cotton blanket," she said. "A lot of times, the things that they're missing are warm blankets for the babies. It feels good to be able to give these mothers something that many people take for granted. It makes you realize how fortunate you are."

Short points to a 2016 study from the University of California at Riverside which shows that volunteerism can lead to gratitude and happiness. "Grateful people pay more attention to the cost, effort, and value of helping acts than the average person does," he said. "They are better at coping with life stress because they trust others to help them and then reach out and accept help."

Christabel Sampson experienced this metamorphosis first hand when she relocated to the Washington, D.C. area and was unable to find a job. She had mounting bills, but no income. Her financial outlook spiraled further downward and she became homeless. She moved into a shelter run by Interfaith Works, a nonprofit organization in Montgomery County Maryland that works to meet the needs of the poor. Through the organization's job training program, she was able to gain skills training, clothing and shelter. As a result of the services she received, Sampson says she found a job. Now she volunteers her time to helping others at Interfaith Works and has even become a member of the organization's board of directors.

"The experience of being homeless and now helping other women definitely made me stronger," said Sampson. "Sometimes even a spoken word can be said to help someone to a better place. I have empathy because I have been there."

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Great Falls Farmers Market.

Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. Music, vendors, fresh produce, fresh prepared food, delightful bakery, spices from around the world, wild-caught fish, grass-fed, free-range meats, organic-fed poultry and eggs. Email kathleen@greatfallsfarmersmarket.org.

McLean Farmers Market, Fridays,

through Nov. 17, 2017; 8 a.m. to noon, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, Master Gardener Plant Clinic on site to answer questions about plants in your landscape

Free Tai Chi. Every Saturday, from

7:55-9 a.m., Introduction and Beginners' Practice, meet on the outdoor basketball court located directly behind the Dolley Madison Public Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. in McLean Central Park, McLean. Call 703-759-9141 or visit www.FreeTaiChi.org.

Bingo Night. Sundays. 4 p.m. Flame

Room, Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S, Vienna. \$10. www.vvfd.org/bingo.html.

Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase flexibility, improve breathing and health, reduce stress. Ravi Kaur has 15 years experience teaching yoga. \$15 per session. www.edimprovement.org. 571-213-3192.

Colvin Run Mill open 11 - 4 p.m.

daily, closed Tuesday. 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Fairfax County's operational 19th century water powered gristmill, offers recreational and educational activities for all ages through daily tours, school programs and special events. Fees: \$7/adult, \$6 students 16+ with ID, \$5 children & seniors. Admission to park is free except for some special events.

Fundamentals of Watercolors.

Mondays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Artist Lorrie Herman will help students get comfortable working with watercolors and understanding this medium. Visit www.greatfallsart.org.

Evening Painting. Tuesdays 6:30 -

9:30 p.m. at The Arts of Great Falls, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. Jill Banks focuses on oil painting fundamentals with two sessions each of still life, landscapes, and portrait/clothed figure from a live model. Visit www.greatfallsart.org.

THROUGH DEC. 10

Toys for Tots Drive. Various times at

Sheehy Infiniti of Tysons, 8527 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Sheehy Auto Stores throughout Washington, D.C.; Richmond, Virginia; and Baltimore, Maryland areas will collect new and unwrapped toys as part of the company's annual Sheehy Cares Toy Collection to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program now through December 10. Visit www.sheehyinfinitiof_tysons.com/.

THURSDAY/DEC. 7

The MarketPlace Fair. 9:30 a.m.-

3:30 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Will feature over a dozen vendors, a silent auction of goods and services, gifts,



Live Music

On Friday, Feb. 3, its Lera Lynn in Concert 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E., Vienna. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.leralynn.com for more.

jewelry, baked delicacies, drinks and a lunch café. Parking and admission are free. Call 703-556-0197 or visit www.mcleanwomansclub.org.

51st annual Holiday Homes Tour

and Fair. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tour four large, decorated homes in the McLean neighborhoods of Franklin Park, central McLean, Spring Hill Farm and Woodlea Mill, all with ample street parking. Cost: \$25 before Dec. 7 at Mesmeralda's of McLean, Karin's Florist in Vienna and Great Dogs of Great Falls or \$30 on Dec. 7 at the tour houses and at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Call 703-556-0197 or visit www.mcleanwomansclub.org.

Ice Skating Social at Tysons. 7 p.m.

at Tysons Corner, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. McLean Racquet and Health Club is sponsoring, all ages and levels welcome. Visit www.mcleanrhclub.com or email mrhcinfo@gmail.com.

STARTING DEC. 8

Watercolor Workshops with Joe

Phillips. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Vienna Arts Society, 115 Pleasant St., NW, Vienna. Class each Friday until Jan. 1. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 8

Gift Collection. 9:30 a.m.-noon at

Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE, Vienna. Collecting new, unwrapped gifts and gift cards for children and teens. The North East Vienna Citizens Association is sponsoring the event with help from Girl Scout Troop 2684. Visit nevca.wordpress.com.

Cooking Demonstration and

Luncheon. 11 a.m. at L'Auberge Chez François, 332 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Chef Jacques will demonstrate how to cook French dishes. Call 703-759-3800.

Old Firehouse Family Movie Night.

7-9 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road. \$3. Gather the whole family and bring blankets, pillows and camp chairs for an indoor, picnic-style family movie night. Participants will enjoy unlimited free popcorn with the movie, which will be shown on a large projection screen. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 9

Gift Wrapping Service and

Christmas Bazaar. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Women, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna.

Shop for hand-crafted holiday gifts, gorgeous fine art jewelry, nature photography, watercolors, homemade sweet treats. Gift wrapping is free. Visit www.andrewchapelumc.org.

Holiday Open House. 11 a.m.-3:30

p.m. at the Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place. Friends of the Oakton Library are sponsoring a holiday open house with a holiday-themed book sale. Call 703-242-4020.

SUNDAY, DEC. 10

Live Music. 11 a.m. at L'Auberge Chez

François, 332 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Guitarist Alexander Barnett plays a variety of acoustic music. Call 703-759-3800.

Blue Christmas Service. 3:30 p.m. at

Katie's Coffee House 760 Walker Road, Great Falls. A non-traditional service of remembrance and hope, brought to you by Great Falls Area Ministries. Call Carol Wright 703-582-1640.

McLean Youth Orchestra. 4 p.m. in

the Grand Ballroom of the Community Building of Vinson Hall, 1735 Kirby Road, McLean. Visit www.tysonsmcleanorchestra.org or call 703-893-8646.

Christmas Concert. 4 p.m. at Vienna

Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St., NE, Vienna. A Cathedral Brass Christmas, music from Monteverdi to Gordon Goodwin. Call 703-438-0718.

Christmas Youth Concert. 4 p.m. at

St. John's Episcopal Church, 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The youth choir leads with Christmas hymns, followed by reception. Call 703-356-4902 or visit stjohnsmclean.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 11

Santa's Ride for Children. Donate

new and unwrapped toys, games, books and gifts to be distributed to children at Fairfax Hospital, Georgetown Lombardi Cancer Center. Email Ruth.Rohr@viennava.gov or call 703-255-6324.

TUESDAY/DEC. 12

Meteor Classes. 7:30 p.m. at Turner

Farm is located at 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. This class will cover what meteors are, their origins and the best time to view them. An optional outdoor visual observing session will be held after class, weather permitting. Bring a lawn chair and a warm cover or sleeping bag. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turnerfarm/.

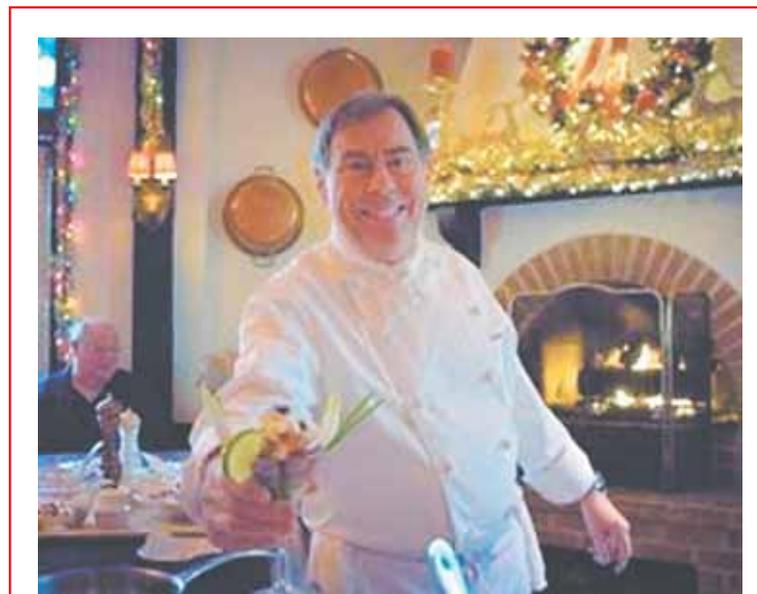


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Chef Jacques will demonstrate how to cook French dishes during the Holiday in Paris Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon on Friday, Dec. 8, at 11 a.m.

Special Holiday Events at L'Auberge Chez Francois

Holiday season is in full swing at L'Auberge Chez Francois in Great Falls: Traditionally one of the best decorated businesses in the area, the restaurant hosts a series of special holiday events. Last Sunday, Dec. 3, they kicked off the season with second annual Sing Along and Dinner with local favorite, Difficult Run String Band performing holiday classics.

The upcoming holiday events at L'Auberge Chez Francois include:

- ❖ Holiday in Paris Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon on Friday, Dec. 8, at 11 a.m. Chef Jacques will demonstrate how to cook French dishes. This festive event will feature the cuisine and wines from France.
- ❖ Holiday Wine Festival and

Luncheon, Saturday, Dec. 9: Come between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. for a walk-around tasting of international wines followed by a luncheon from a four-course menu paired with another glass of wine.

❖ Sounds of the Season Brunch with guitarist Alexander Barnett, Sunday, Dec. 10, 11 a.m.

❖ Gonet-Medeville Premier Cru Champagne and Bordeaux Wine Dinner, Thursday, Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m.

❖ Champagne Celebration Cooking Demonstration and Luncheon, Saturday, Dec. 16, 11 a.m.

To learn more about L'Auberge Chez Francois email chezlauberge@aol.com, call 703-759-3800, or visit www.laubergechezfrancois.com

SATURDAY/DEC. 16

Breakfast With Santa. 8 a.m.-noon at

the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S., Vienna. Pancakes, sausage, bacon, juice and coffee. Visit www.vvfd.org.

Night In Bethlehem Performance.

5-7 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Nativity scene with live animals. Visit www.andrewchapelumc.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

Breakfast Buffet. 8 a.m.-noon, at

Vienna American Legion Post 180, 330 Center St., N. Adults \$9, children 12 and under \$3. Get omelets, scrambled eggs, blueberry pancakes, bacon, sausage, hash browns and more. Call 703-938-6580.

Christmas Caroling Sing-Along. 3-5

p.m. at Historic Pleasant Grove, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Songs followed by cookies and hot cider, at this historic site. Visit www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org.

Christmas Concert. 4 p.m. at Vienna

Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. NE, Vienna. Glorious Sounds of Christmas, a Christmas celebration for the whole family led by the Vienna Presbyterian Sanctuary Choir, the Cathedral Brass, organ, piano, and noted soloists. Call 703-438-0718.

THURSDAY/DEC. 28

Tubing/Ice Skating Trip. 8 a.m.-6

p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Chill out racing down hills on the tubes or gliding on skates. During the day, there is a pizza party. Admission for tubing or ice skating and lunch are included in the fee. \$55/45 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 3

Lera Lynn in Concert. 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.leralynn.com.

NEWS

Contest

FROM PAGE 5

Stefan Suib, longtime resident and owner of Great Falls Auto Service, and his wife Sandy have decorated the lot for years, winning once and tying with the firehouse a second time. He enjoys the whole process

of decorating and that people love when he decorates his cars. Suib closes with: "Anything that helps to build community spirit, with neighbors meeting other neighbors, is a good thing."

There is still time to join the contest, visit www.celebrategreatfalls.org/holiday-decorating-contest/ for details.

FAITH NOTES

FROM PAGE 8

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.

McLean Bible Church. Fitness Class at Body and Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 10 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. Email bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

We didn't inherit the earth from our parents. We're borrowing it from our children.
—Chief Seattle (1788-1866) Suquamish/Duwamish chief

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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lostdogandcatrescue.org

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PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Linda Jones, president of Great Falls Studios, with her watercolors and mixed media paintings.



Brandon Royal with his India ink and graphite architectural work and portraits as well as custom artwork.



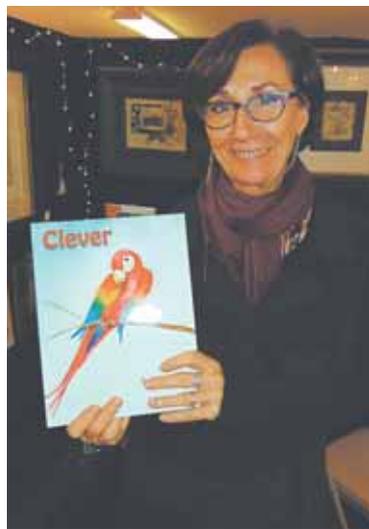
Mary Jane Cogan shows the book that she wrote and illustrated called "There Once Was a Cat" during the Great Falls Studios' Annual Holiday ArtFest last weekend, Dec. 2-3, in Great Falls.

Great Falls Studios Hosts Holiday ArtFest

About 25 artists from Great Falls Studios took part in the Annual Holiday ArtFest last weekend, Dec. 2-3, at The Great Falls Grange and Old Schoolhouse on Georgetown Pike, as well as the Artists Atelier and The Artists Loft in the Village Center on Walker Road. Guests could mingle with the artists, learn about their work and purchase artwork, cards and gifts. The artists include jewelers, painters, photographers, potters, sculptors and fiber artists. Established in 2003, Great Falls Studios is an organization of 110 independent artists living and working in Great Falls.

"This is one of three annual events Great Falls Studios has each year; we have one in the spring – the Spring Art Fest in May; we have the annual Studio Tour where we invite members of the public to visit our working studios; and this is perhaps the most festive before the holiday season – it's the Holiday ArtFest when we have 25 artists taking part," said Linda Jones, president of Great Falls Studios.

She said, "The founding idea of Great Falls Studios was to nurture the artists and develop an artistic community in Great Falls for the



Penny Ross Burk with the children's book that she wrote and illustrated called "Clever."

artists who actually live here. It's amazing that Great Falls has so many artists living here."

She added that one of the main aims is to nurture an artistic community and to develop a community spirit, which is why they like having their events in a central place, which has been at The Grange.

For more information, visit the website at www.greatfallsstudios.com.

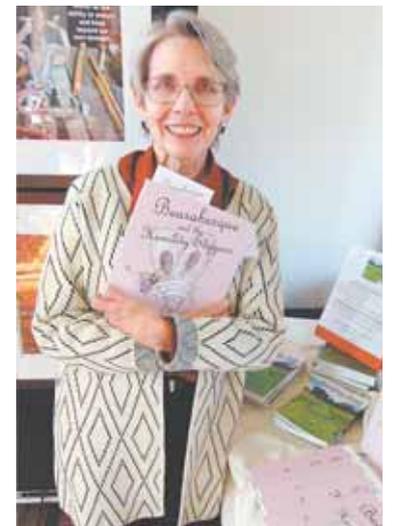
— STEVE HIBBARD



Kay Walsh with her abstract, mixed media, and acrylic paintings.



Pu-Chin Waide with her pottery and stoneware.



Lesley Hackman, who does photography and cards paired with positive messages, with her book, "Bearabesque and the Humility Slippers."



Ronni Jolles with her paintings with layered paper.



Dean Souleles with his photography of studio miniatures. He also photographs landscapes and nature.

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The long line for the pony rides.



Nicole Pappageorge, 6 1/2, and brother Andrew, 23 months, of Great Falls visit with Santa.

Celebration of Lights in Great Falls

Several hundred people came out for the Great Falls Celebration of Lights on Sunday, Dec. 3, at the Great Falls Village Centre. A tradition since the 1980s, the event includes musical entertainment from local schools, a petting zoo, pony rides, a live nativity, and the highlight when Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive by antique fire engine to light the Christmas tree. The tree was planted by Bob Moore at the request of his wife who always wanted to have a village Christmas tree. The three schools that performed were Forestville, Great Falls, and Colvin Run Elementary. Also performing were Village Green Day School, King's

Kids, Siena Academy, and Creche Preschool. "What I love most about the event is that it brings our community together — every age — it's building memories of being able to participate, whether you're a volunteer or the tiniest little singer or the Boy Scouts that come and help set up and clean up," said Erin Lobato, Director of the Celebrate Great Falls Foundation, which organized the event. "It really gets our entire community coming together and helping out to create a really fun evening for everyone."

— STEVE HIBBARD

The lighting of the Christmas Tree at the Great Falls Celebration of Lights on Sunday, Dec. 3, 2017, at the Great Falls Village Centre.



Scott Shilinsky, 5, of Great Falls rides on Lucky, a pony from Ponies Plus in Nokesville.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD THE CONNECTION



Dalayah, 7, hugs her sister Riyah McKimmy of Great Falls in front of the bonfire.



Finn Lukas, 8, of Great Falls and Charles Jackson, 8, of Herndon pet a rabbit.



Luca Visioni, 7, of Great Falls pets a baby llama from Squeals on Wheels Petting Zoo in Potomac, Md.

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COMMUNITY

Great Falls Church Youth Serve D.C. Homeless

Ten high-schoolers and three adult chaperones representing the youth group of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Great Falls, provided and distributed warm beverages, chili, water, blankets and more during a Salvation Army Grate Patrol ride-along in the District on Nov. 18. This marked the group's 10th year of participation in Grate Patrol.

Steve Wilson, a Christ the King senior high leader, said that the personal outreach Grate Patrol emphasizes is the essence of service.

"It's a great experience for suburban kids to step out of their comfort zone and see the homeless face-to-face — but to also see they're real people who are appreciative, responsive and grateful," said Wilson.

Kevin Magley, Christ the King's high school youth leader, remembers an interaction during a previous Grate Patrol, when a homeless man called the volunteers together and prayed over the group so they might help others that night.

"He didn't want any food or any blankets. He really just wanted somebody to talk to," said Magley. "That stuck out to me. He probably did need help, but he was focused on others."

Salvation Army van drivers follow the same route every night, with four to seven predetermined stops at locations like Union Station. One van driver, Nick Douglas, said he applied for his job simply because he needed employment. He has driven the van for 14 years.

"Now, it's no job," he said. Every night, he told us, he completes his route with an overwhelming sense of gratitude for all of his blessings.

"We come here when there's snow on the ground, and people are here, waiting for food," Douglas said. "If you're not grateful for what you've got, something's really wrong."

Serving the hungry and homeless is a lesson in

perspective for this group of high schoolers who may not otherwise witness the less fortunate side of D.C. As recipients walk away with chili and blankets, the young volunteers walk away with renewed thankfulness and an increased desire to serve.



Serving the hungry and homeless is a lesson in perspective for Christ the King Lutheran Church in Great Falls high schoolers.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



This marked the group's 10th year of participation in Grate Patrol.

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OPINION

FROM PAGE 6

- ❖ **Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services**, 8305-17B Richmond Highway, PO Box 15096, Alexandria, VA, 22309. 703-768-9419, www.goodhousing.org/. The mission of Good Shepherd Housing (GSH) is to reduce homelessness, increase community support, and promote self-sufficiency. GSH housing manages more than 70 housing units.
- ❖ **Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area** operates clubs in two of the neediest areas of the county, Culmore and Mount Vernon/ Route 1 corridor, focusing on character and academic success. www.bgcgw.org/fairfax.
- ❖ **Christian Relief Services**, 8301 Richmond Highway, Suite 900, Alexandria, VA 22309, 703-317-9086, 703-317-9690, christianrelief.org/
- ❖ **Friends of Guest House Northern Virginia** offers structure, supervision, support and assistance to female ex-offenders who want to improve their lives and break the cycle of incarceration. Friends of Guest House offers the only program for women of its kind in Northern Virginia. One East Luray Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301-2025, 703-549-8072, info@friendsofguesthouse.org, friendsofguesthouse.org/
- ❖ **Wright to Read** 703-299-9854, www.wrighttoread.org. Provides volunteer-based, one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to City of Alexandria public elementary school children in need. Funds are needed to provide field trips and enrichment activities, books and other resources. For more information about Wright to Read and becoming a "Tutor/Mentor" see website.
- ❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia** transforms the lives of lower-income families in need by providing affordable homeownership opportunities in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. Learn more at www.habitatnova.org.
- ❖ **Alice's Kids** (@alicewillhelp), aliceskids.org, P.O. Box 60, Mount Vernon, VA 22121. When a child is raised in poverty they suffer both publicly and privately. When there is no food in the refrigerator, no electricity nor heat, these are hardships that they can keep hidden from their peers. But, when that same child can't afford to pay for the band field trip, a pair of glasses, a chorus outfit or a new pair of shoes, these are indignities that are evident to their classmates. Alice's Kids pays for these relatively inexpensive items in the hopes of preserving the dignity of the child. Alice's Kids helps children from all over the Mount Vernon area through small acts of kindness.
- ❖ **The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia** has launched its Permanent Fund campaign, a community endowment which is a forever source to provide critical support for those in need in the Northern Virginia region; Consider leaving a legacy through a current or planned gift to the Permanent Fund at the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia. www.cfnova.org/permanentfund.
- ❖ **The Historic Pohick Church Foundation**, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton, VA 22079, 703-339-6572. The Historic Pohick Church, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has played a central role in the history of our country, founded by George Washington, George Mason, and others. The Historic Pohick Church Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable corporation that was established in 1983 for the maintenance, upkeep, and preservation of the historic colonial-era Pohick Church building and the surrounding churchyard.
- ❖ **Rising Hope**, 8220 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22309, risinghopeumc.org. Supports poor and homeless people along the Route 1 Corridor. To volunteer, donate in-kind contributions or partner with Rising Hope in other ways, contact Kat Roman at kroman@risinghopeumc.org or 703-360-1976.
- ❖ **The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia**, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042, 703-237-0866, lcnv.org, teaches adults to speak, read, write and understand English at the most basic level. The organization has been around for 55 years, and serves Fairfax and Arlington Counties and the cities of Falls Church and Alexandria. Most of the students are immigrants, and they are mostly women, and low income.
- ❖ **Neighborhood Health Clinics**, www.neighborhoodhealthva.org. Improving health and advance health equity in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax by providing access to high quality care regardless of ability to pay.

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Context of Having Written



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much about last week's column but, sometimes in my unexpressed desire to fulfill my writing obligation/not let me cancer/cancer treatment affect my schedule, I write my column under less-than-ideal circumstances.

Post chemotherapy/(last week) – the immediate week after, is about as challenging as it gets for me. I'm a bit irritable. I'm a bit out of sync/unable to focus. I'm somewhat impatient. My hands are shaky. My eyes are "squinty." I'm hungry yet I can't eat. My self-editing skills are below average – more than usual. And finally, my reading comprehension is mostly lost in the toxic haze. Still, I'm determined to make my deadline.

Not that any of the preceding paragraph is an excuse. It's more of an explanation as to why a column written with the best of intentions may have missed the mark in tone and substance. Though I've not received any feedback as yet confirming my sense of what I had written last week; nevertheless, my feeling upon submitting it to editorial was that I had wavered a bit. Unfortunately, I didn't have the balance emotionally or the ability physically to assess its content. I apologize in arrears for attempting to maintain its regularity.

And to that point, specifically to that word, that's what my attitude as a cancer patient has been about: regularity. Doing the things that I regularly/normally/typically do without deviating from my norm. Because for me, deviating from my norm, living/doing outside of my box – within reason, would be – to me anyway, reinforcing the negative that is most definitely a cancer diagnosis. A diagnosis with which I have long ago made my peace, made my choices and moreover, made my it goal to face the present/future with a positive attitude infused with as much self-effacing good humor as possible. It's nothing I really did intentionally, it is simply who I am: my father's son, with inherited sensibilities to live my life thinking the glass is half full, until it's not.

And so far, nearly nine years into a "13 month to two-year" prognosis, I'm living proof that either whatever I'm doing is working (and there's a bit more to the story) or I'm an incredibly lucky act of kindness for which there's no quantifiable explanation. Regardless, I'm not the least bit inclined to look a gift horse in the mouth and/or deny the possibility that my tumors are necrotic (dead). I'm very happy to accept the inexplicable fact that, statistically speaking, I'm an official anomaly: a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer survivor.

However, since I'm not one to presume facts not yet in evidence, I'm still infused every six weeks, scanned quarterly and seen by my oncologist every three months. I don't for a second believe that somehow, after being diagnosed with a "terminal disease" in late February 2009, that life goes merrily along without consequences. Not that I'm a fatalist – Rebecca, I'm merely evaluating/introspecting/compartamentalizing and allocating precious emotional resources so I can live my life as I'm accustomed to doing.

And what I'm most accustomed to doing, especially dating back to December 1997, is writing a weekly column for Connection Newspapers. Though the columns published previous to June '09 were not "cancer" columns, as we call them, they were nonetheless written with the same passion and nonsensical prose as my "cancer" columns are. So, generally speaking, I am able, as my brother Richard says, "to churn out the dribble."

Still, writing is not like reading. Though a similar commitment is needed, writing requires a bit more effort. And it's been an effort I've sustained before, after and during my lung cancer diagnosis. Some weeks are harder than others. Last week was difficult. This week not so much.

Perhaps you agree?

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



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