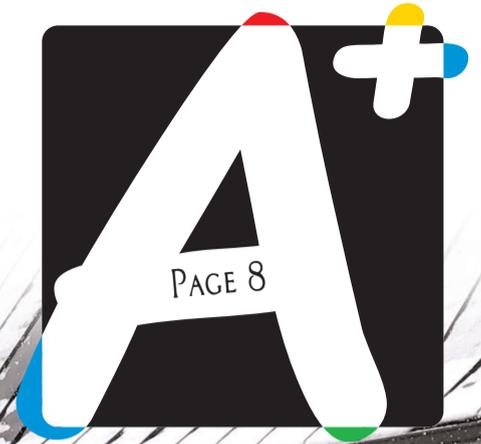


Great Falls CONNECTION



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PHOTO BY RACHEL SMITH/LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL



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New Appointments to
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Elves line up for a photo at the Wish List Project drop-off in Great Falls Dec. 9.

New Appointments to Planning Commission

Four named to Fairfax County Planning Commission; one vacancy remains in Sully.

Members of the Board of Supervisors appointed four new planning commissioners this month to begin serving on the 12-member commission.

The Planning Commission advises the Board of Supervisors on all matters related to land use in Fairfax County, a particularly busy time right now reviewing redevelopment along the Silver Line.

The commission holds public hearings, often multiple times a week, and often brings together residents, developers and county planners to work through concerns and conflicts.

This includes the location and character of public facilities; amendments to the Comprehensive Plan; amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, the Public Facilities Ordinance, and the Subdivision Ordinance; rezonings and special exceptions; approvals of final development plans; and also sometimes advises the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Each of the nine supervisory districts has a representative, and three members are appointed at-large. Planning commissioners are appointed by the Board of Supervisors for four-year terms on a staggered ba-

sis.

Hunter Mill Supervisor Catherine Hudgins appointed John Carter to replace Frank de la Fe as the Hunter Mill District Planning Commission.

De la Fe, the vice chairman of the commission, served as the Hunter Mill planning commissioner since 2001. The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations named him 2001 and 2012 Citizen of the Year.

“Commissioner de la Fe has been involved with every major task force and committee dealing with planning and land use,” said Hudgins. “His strength has been an ability to hear all sides of an issue and come to a decision that best serves the community and Fairfax County.

“Most significantly, he worked with the Planning Commission on the approvals to bring rail to the Dulles Corridor that has changed the culture from a rural/suburban area to a vibrant urban district,” she said.

Carter was a former chief of community-based planning in Montgomery County, Md., overseeing the county’s master plan and development review processes, and has more than 35 years experience as a planner, urban designer and architect, accord-

ing to Hudgins. Carter has a Master of Planning degree from the University of Virginia; a Master of Architecture in Urban Design from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Architecture with Distinction from Arizona State University.

“Mr. Carter has lived in the Hunter Mill District for over 44 years and has extensive community involvement. I believe Mr. Carter is an excellent choice for this position,” said Hudgins.

SHARON BULOVA appointed Mary Cortina in November to replace Janyce Hedetniemi as an at-large member.

Cortina currently serves as vice chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board. She grew up in West Springfield in the 1970s, said Bulova.

Cortina is a graduate of George Mason University with a B.S. in Business, majoring in Decision Sciences/Management Information Systems and Marketing. She also attended the Leadership Development Program at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, N.C.

SULLY DISTRICT planning commissioner remains vacant after Karen Keys-Gamarra

announced her resignation effective Oct. 25, 2017.

Keys-Gamarra won a special election in August to fill the at-large School Board seat vacated by Jeanette Hough.

THE OTHER planning commissioners are:

- ❖ Peter Murphy, chairman, Springfield District, appointed December 1982 (appointed by Marie Travesky), current term expires December 2018

- ❖ Jim Hart, at-large, appointed Jan. 2004 (Gerry Connolly), term expires December 2019

- ❖ Tim Sargeant, at-large, appointed January 2007 (Connolly), term expires December 2018

- ❖ John Ulfelder Dranesville, appointed December 2013 (John W. Foust), December 2020

- ❖ Ellen Hurley, Braddock, appointed December 2011 (John Cook), December 2019

- ❖ Julie Strandlie, Mason, appointed December 2014 (Penny Gross), December 2018

- ❖ James Migliaccio, Lee, sworn in July 2010 (Jeff McKay), December 2019

- ❖ Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence, 2017 (Linda Smyth).



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Outside (left) and inside (right) the renovated Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

A Year in Review: 2017 in Dranesville

Supervisor reflects on major developments this year.

BY SUPERVISOR JOHN FOUST
(D-DRANESVILLE)

The Board of Supervisors faced challenges to adopt a budget for FY 2018 that provided adequate funding for essential services including education, public safety and human services while controlling the tax burden on homeowners. After a number of public meetings and hearings, the Board adopted a budget that kept the tax rate the same as in FY 2017 but increased the amount of money transferred to the public school system. Nearly 53 percent of the County's General Fund or \$2.17 billion is going to our excellent schools.



conomic climate and changing demographics of this century, Fairfax County cannot rest on its previous achievements. The Board's vision is a community where businesses, residents and employees of a variety of ages, abilities and experiences want to live, work, play, learn and thrive. To foster that vision, the Board adopted The Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County in 2015.

The plan, prepared by the 50-member, board-appointed Economic Advisory Commission, of which I serve as chairman, contained an economic roadmap of over 90 recommendations to help the County expand and diversify the economy. While the Plan includes some policies and action steps already in place, it also offered many new ideas and actions. Since the adoption of the plan, County staff has used it as a framework and guide for implementing the Board's adopted initiatives and policy directives.

An update on the plan delivered to the Board in the fall of 2017 lists several accomplishments that relate directly to the Plan's goals such as: the creation of the Economic Development Success Fund that allows the County to make strategic investments in opportunities that stimulate economic growth; the approval of an application by Capital One to add a performing arts center, parks and a Wegmans grocery store in Tysons; the opening of the seventh craft brewery in the County; and the development by County staff of an interactive tool that provides transportation options and resources specific to an address for older

adults and individuals with disabilities.

One Fairfax

In November, the Board of Supervisors and the School Board adopted a social and racial equity policy that commits the County and schools to consider equity when making decisions or developing/delivering programs or services. One Fairfax offers a "lens" for the County and schools to look intentionally, comprehensively and systematically at barriers that may be creating gaps in opportunity.

The One Fairfax policy identifies 17 areas of focus to promote equity including community and economic development, housing, education, environment, and transportation. The commitment to the One Fairfax policy not only is the right thing to do — but it also recognizes that equity is an economic imperative to help every resident thrive.

Police Civilian Review Panel

Early in 2017, the Board of Supervisors established the Police Civilian Review Panel. This was a major step to further promote transparency and openness in community policing. The Civilian Review Panel has the authority to request and review completed Police Department internal administrative investigations regarding a civilian complaint against an officer.

The panel holds public meetings to review police administrative investigations and walk through with members of the community how the investigation was conducted, including findings of fact, evidence collected and witness statements. The Civilian Review Panel was one key recommendation of the Ad Hoc Police Commission, which delivered 202 recommendations to the Board of Supervisors in November 2015.

New Herndon Fire

and Rescue Station Opened

The grand opening of Fire and Rescue Station 4 in Herndon occurred in April. The new two-story fire station is approximately 14,500 square feet, and contains one level of underground parking. The station is able to accommodate a shift of 14 and four pieces of apparatus equipment, including an engine, two transport units, and a rescue unit.

Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library Renovated

As of October, residents were treated to a beautifully renovated Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library. The extensive renovation was funded by the 2012 bond referendum. It included new exterior and interior design features, upgrades to building systems, energy efficiency improvements (the project is registered with the certification goal of LEED silver) and upgrades to power and technology options, including more public access computers and wireless networking. The library had been operating in temporary space since 2016.

Stormwater Improvements in Franklin Park, Chesterbrook

Infill developments can put additional strain on existing drainage and stormwater infrastructure. For a number of years, my office has been working with County staff to address these issues and 2017 marked the completion of the Franklin Park and

Diversion First

The Board budgeted just under \$2 million and 18 new positions to support the second year of the County's successful Diversion First initiative. The Diversion First program offers alternatives to incarceration for people with mental illness or developmental disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system for low-level offenses. The goal is to intercede whenever possible to provide assessment, treatment or needed supports. People needing diversion may also have a substance use disorder, which often co-occurs with mental illness. Diversion First is designed to prevent repeat encounters with the criminal justice system, improve public safety, promote a healthier community, and is a more cost-effective and efficient use of public funding.

Economic Success in the County

In the challenging and changing eco-



Volunteers dressed as elves sort gifts in a garage in Great Falls for the Wish List Project Dec. 9.



Snow falls as volunteers bring gifts to the Wish List Project drop-off Dec. 9.

Wishes Come True Year Around

Wish List Project in Great Falls continues to grow.

BY COLIN STOECKER
THE CONNECTION

Kristina Okeson, 14, of Great Falls, volunteered to sponsor Austin, an 8-month-old baby for this year's Wish List Project.

"It was great! It gave me a whole different perspective on those who aren't as capable of providing gifts for themselves this holiday season. I like doing charities and helping others," said Okeson.

This was her first time participating and when she and her mother received the match from the Wish List Project, they were provided with a few sentences about what baby Austin and his family needed this holiday season.

"They wanted some bedding and little toys, and a jumper walker for him to play in," she said.

But Okeson wanted to add a personal touch. "I added on some stuff that I enjoyed when I was a child, like stuffed animals, some books, and toys."

Dec. 9 was the drop-off for gifts for the Wish List Project in Great Falls. Volunteers dressed as elves unpacked gifts from cars dropped off by about 200 volunteers this year. The Wish List Project is in its 18th year connecting children to donors in the community.



Elves line up for a photo at the Wish List Project drop-off Dec. 9.

"People's wish list are their wants and needs," said Program Co-chair, Christine Shumadine. And the wants are filled out electronically to keep some mystery about who will fill them around the Holidays.

This year, the Wish List Project created a digital wish list, where underprivileged children and teens could be matched with a

volunteer. With a few sentences posted about each child to help connect the donor to the recipient, volunteers found perfect holiday gifts for about 400 children and teens this Christmas.

"It's difficult to get everyone's needs, it's freezing and it's snowing, but we have elves and we are pseudo Santa," said Shumadine.

Volunteers then brought the presents, wrapped, to the drop off where volunteer elves pack the gifts into a garage for delivery.

The Wish List Project no longer only focuses on Christmas. This past Thanksgiving, they collected 75 food baskets for meals.

This Christmas the Wish List Project partnered with six local non-profits and schools: Fairfax Foster Care, Second Story, Shelter House, Buzz Aldrin Elementary, Herndon Elementary, and Hutchinson Elementary.

"The guidance counselor helps to identify kids at the schools who are on reduced lunches that might be a good match for the program," said Shumadine.

Recently, Shumadine was shopping for the Wish List program at Burlington Coat Factory, and the cashier used to be a recipient. Last year the woman sponsored an area youth to be able to pay it forward. She told Shumadine that if it wasn't for the program she would never have had a Christmas as a child.

In the past three years, The Wish List Project has quadrupled in size and Shumadine hopes to keep expanding the impact out into the community. "We are not just for Christmas anymore. Spring break trips are on our list and so is Easter!" she said.

PHOTOS BY RACHEL SMITH/LANGLY HIGH SCHOOL



From left: Rohit Kishore, driver and generous donor pictured with Wish List Project elves Caitlyn Shumadine, Alexa Gianoplus and Maya Kanaan Dec. 9.



Foster Care van loaded with gifts to be donated from the Wish List Project to children in need this holiday season.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Year in Review

FROM PAGE 3

Chesterbrook Neighborhood Stormwater Improvement Project, which provided for the restoration of approximately 3,000 linear feet of green infrastructure type stormwater improvements. The primary goals of this project were to retrofit the site to provide improved water quality, to reduce localized flooding, and to improve stormwater flow.

Transportation and Pedestrian Improvements

❖ Route 7 Widening – Full Funding and Board of Supervisors Endorsement

One of my major priorities for many years has been the expansion of Route 7 west from Tysons. In June, the Board of Supervisors endorsed VDOT’s design plans for widening 6.9 miles of Route 7 from four to six lanes between Jarrett Valley Drive and Reston Avenue. The project will include intersection improvements and shared use paths on both sides of the road. When completed, this project will significantly reduce the congestion on one of our most traveled highways. Contract award is expected in early 2018.

❖ Pedestrian Improvement Projects — Two pedestrian improvement projects were completed in Dranesville this year, and many more are in design or construction. In June, a project to install a signalized pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Leesburg Pike and Colvin Run Road was completed. In McLean, a project to improve and upgrade the pedestrian facilities to current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards at the intersection of Old Dominion Drive, Linway Terrace, and Birch Road was completed in August. Pedestrian accessibility is a major priority for me; these projects are great steps toward that goal.

❖ Jones Branch Connector — Construction on the Jones Branch Connector, which will provide an important new link to Route 123 over the Beltway for commuters and visitors to Tysons, began earlier this year. The half-mile project includes new roadway from the interchange of the I-495 Express Lanes and Jones Branch Drive to Scotts Crossing Road in addition to other improvements. Fairfax County led design and development for the project, while VDOT is administering the construction. By providing an alternate route across the Beltway and linking the Tysons East and Central areas, the Jones Branch Connector is expected to relieve traffic along Route 123, at the I-495 interchange, and at other congested intersections.

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OPINION

Merry Christmas

Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

The pages of the Connection Newspapers (including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Potomac Almanac and the Centre View) have been full of holiday spirit beginning before Thanksgiving. Group and individual efforts to help the needy, holiday parades, Santa arriving by boat, Santa arriving by horse-drawn carriage, Santa arriving at the Malls, tree lightings, Menorah lightings, stories of giving, secular celebrations, religious celebrations. Shopping locally. Giving locally.

Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

It is also about embracing the teachings of Jesus: to love thy neighbor as thyself; to help the needy; to feed the hungry and clothe the poor; to care for those who are sick; to invite and welcome strangers; to treat others as you would have them treat you.

EDITORIAL

Matthew 7:12:
“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 25:35-40:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one

of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

SO LET US SHARE the verse relating the birth of Jesus from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife,

being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is

come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Editor’s Note About the Rest of 2017

This is our last regular edition of 2017. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish our annual Children’s Issue, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. We have more submissions from local students than ever, and so some children’s and teens’ artwork and writing will spill over into the first week of the new year.

Our next regular edition will publish Jan. 3-4, 2018, with deadline for content and advertising of Dec. 30 (late ads accepted).

In the meantime you can reach the editors

at editors@connectionnewspapers.com and sales/marketing/advertising at sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taking Exception on Tax Reform

To the Editor:

(Regarding ‘Federal Tax Reform. Bad for Fairfax,’ Connection, Dec. 13, 2017)

Interesting article! However, I must take exception with the conclusion as presented by our local representatives. Capping the state and local write-offs will help to ensure that the local property taxes will slow their continued in-

creases above a reasonable deduction against your federal income tax.

Maybe, just maybe once the local deductions are capped at 10K our local elected officials will stop or slow their tax and spend policies. Once the tax paying property owners find that their outrageous property taxes are not deductible they just might start questioning the out of control spending by our local Fairfax county representatives and maybe think of electing different representatives.

One can only hope that this tax bill passes and a capped of 10K is

placed on local deductions. It is really time to bite the bullet and focus on spending.

Dudley Losselyong
Great Falls

The Other Side of Gun Ownership

To the Editor:

Reporting part of the story (Letters, “Armed as for a war zone,” Connection, Dec. 13) can be more

misleading than reporting none. Here’s what some don’t want you to know: If you’re not involved with drugs or gangs, the probability that you’ll be the victim of violent crime in the U.S. drops to the same levels as those in Western European nations with the most restrictive gun regulations in the world. Attributing differences in homicide rates to gun ownership rates, without a hint of empirical support, is deceptive and irresponsible.

Also, overall homicide rates in

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

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. 21 – Peace in ourselves, hymn: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (ELW 268)

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

- 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

Community Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at Charles Wesley United Methodist Church, 6817 Dean Drive, McLean on Sunday, Dec.

24, 5 p.m. All are invited to join this service of Carols & Lessons with special music and a message for every age. Visit www.thehungerchurch.org.

Christmas Eve Service at Antioch Christian Church, 1860 Beulah Road, Vienna on Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017 at 7 p.m. All are welcome at the Scripture & Carols service. Visit antiochccvienna.org.

Christmas Eve Services. The Church of the Good Shepherd, 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna, will celebrate with four worship services on Sunday, Dec. 24. The community is invited to all services. The church will hold its regular worship service at 10:15 a.m. At 5 p.m. will be the Children's Christmas Eve Service. Communion and candlelight Christmas Eve services will be held at 7 and 10 p.m. (child care provided for the 7 p.m. service). Visit the church website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com or at www.Facebook.com/GoodShepherdVienna.

Christmas Praise Benefit Concert. The Morehead family will present a concert of Christmas music at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road

Vienna, on Dec. 28 at 7 p.m. The concert includes classical works as well as more contemporary songs in addition to Christmas carols that all will sing. The concert is free. An offering will be taken to benefit Hypothermia Prevention Week and the ministry of the Christian retreat center Caroline Furnace. Call 703-938-2119.

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Ornament Helps Support Great Falls

Add some local charm to this year's holiday tree. The Village Centre Gazebo tree ornament is available at Katie's Coffee House, 760 Walker Road, Great

Falls. The cost for these limited edition Pewter keepsakes is \$20; \$8 of proceeds goes to support Celebrate Great Falls Foundation.

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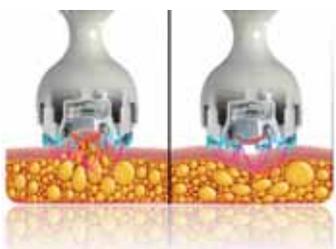


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Finding Peace and Joy

Relieving stress and finding meaning in the holiday season.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

When artist Kathryn Coneway is feeling overwhelmed by the stress of the holiday season, she heads outside to find peace and calm in nature.

"I get easily overwhelmed by the crowded parking lots and busy stores," she said. "When I'm feeling overwhelmed, I'll go to Huntley Meadows Park and walk around. The beauty of nature restores me. You're with other people when you're there, but there's still solitude."

From those who are dashing to finish holiday shopping and those who are financially strapped to those grieving a loss or dreading dealing with strained familial relationships, the stretch of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is often hectic and emotionally charged. Recharging and infusing the holidays with joy and peace might mean redefining the holiday season.

"Research shows increased happiness after thinking of three good things that happened to you today and what caused them," said Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University. "Also, people report improved mood from doing five kind acts in a day, expressing gratitude, pursuing important goals, and playing sports."

An evening of music and quiet creativity is one method that Elizabeth Rees, associate rector at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria uses to recharge during the holiday season. The event called "Healing Arts" is held at the Center for Spiritual Deepening at St. Aidan's. "Sometimes for me, meditative art helps me to get into a different space," she said. "And with instrumental cello and guitar music in the background, it [is] beautiful."

"Moments of quiet and rest and being able to be present in the moment help me to get through the frenzy."

— Elizabeth Rees, Associate Rector, Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church

Visual imagery is another technique Rees employs. "I went to a... prayer-yoga-dance gathering this week, and [the instructor] had us physically pretend to pick up things that we want to let go of or that are weighing us down to place on an imaginary fire," she said. "I loved the imagery: my burdens and distractions going up in smoke along with my prayers rising to God to make space in me for something new."

Coneway uses the season's natural surrounding to inspire her art, which is another way in which she finds joy and relaxation. "The gift of this time of day is the display of light and colors of early morning and evening," she said. "I encourage families to gather around the table and [create] art together. Whether its parents addressing Christmas cards while children are drawing or making a collage out of wrapping paper or tissue paper, I encourage families to work on something together."

Serving others and expressing gratitude are research-driven techniques for finding happiness says Dr. Lois T. Stover, Ed.D., dean, School of Education and Human Services at Marymount University.

"Make holiday cards and send them out. It's fun to drop a word of kindness anonymously to someone in the neighborhood and then tell that person to pass along the idea, leaving words of kindness or gratitude themselves for someone else," she said. "Create an 'I am

thankful for ...' wall and cover it with sticky notes that complete the sentence as new thoughts come to mind each time you pass by."

There's plenty of holiday joy that comes without a price tag, suggests Stover. "Drive through various neighborhoods just after dark and exclaim 'Oooh - aah' over homes or other buildings that have particularly fun



Artist Kathryn Coneway and her family spend time in Huntley Meadows Park when they're feeling overwhelmed by the holiday rush.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHRYN CONEWAY



Richard Sylvain, Pat Keithly and Eileen Myers attended a "Healing Arts" event at the Center for Spiritual Deepening at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. Such activities can bring peace and joy during a hectic holiday season.

or beautiful displays of lights," said Stover. "Listen to holiday music in a variety of genres and make play lists of favorites. Sing along loudly. It's hard to feel down while belting out anything from 'Frosty the Snowman' to 'Joy to the World.'"

For those looking to maintain the religious meaning of the season, Rees suggests daily devotions sent electronically. "I've found

some wonderful daily prayers that arrive each day by email. Just a minute or two of focus on what is deep and joyful and holy help center me for the day," she said. "For me, Ignatian prayer has been speaking to me lately, imagining myself into the stories of scripture. Moments of quiet and rest and being able to be present in the moment help me to get through the frenzy."

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Vienna-Wide Food Drive. Through Dec. 31, bring food contributions to Vienna Town Hall - 127 Center St. S; Vienna Arts Society-115 Pleasant St. NW; Bikes@Vienna-128-A Church St. NW; Caffe Amouri-107 Church St., NE; Evolution Fitness- 216 Dominion Road, NE; Rexall Drug Store-150 Maple Ave. W; Drs. Covell, Stack and Henon- 120 Beulah Road, NE; Patrick Henry Library (co-sponsored by Supervisor Cathy Hudgins) and the Vienna Community Center. Girl Scout Troop 2684 will be helping NEVCA by picking up the food. Sponsored by Committee for Helping Others. Call 703-281-7614.

Winter Walk of Lights. At Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. During the Winter Walk of Lights, the garden is transformed into a half-mile, walk of lights. Revisit perennial favorites such as the animated Lakeside Lights, the Fountain of Lights, and the Holiday Nature Walk – and look for new displays each year. Round out a visit roasting marshmallows and sipping on hot beverages, available for purchase. Visit www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights.

Textures Exhibit. Through Jan. 7, various times at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.org.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20

Timeline Arcade and Ice Cream. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Play old-school video games and then eat ice cream. \$55/45 for McLean Community Center district residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Bowling and Movie. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. \$65/55 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 26

Beatrix Potter Tea. noon-1:30 p.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Learn about the famous author. Nibble on cupcakes and sip fruit punch or tea while hearing stories about the bunny family of her creation. Meet a live white tale rabbit and learn what wild bunnies do in the winter. Make a bunny of your own to take home. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 27

Dave and Buster's arcade. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Lunch and a \$25 game card with unlimited arcade game play are included. \$70/60 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

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

Art Exhibit

Thompson Farm Barns on Canvas. Various times through Dec. 31 at the **Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. Local artist Parinaz Ziai Bahadori exhibits a selection of acrylic and watercolor paintings and collages, some of which are dedicated to the Thompson Farm barns which were torn down last year in Great Falls. Call 703-757-8560 for more.**



Live Music

Local musician "Rorie," is in concert, Sunday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E., Vienna. She plays her new EP called "Dawn." Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.roriemusic.com.

or visit www.mcleancenter.org. **The Nutcracker.** 2 and 7 p.m. at the Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The Virginia Ballet Company is presenting its 68th annual production of "The Nutcracker." This is a full-length, professionally-staged ballet. \$30 for adults and \$20 for children, seniors and students at VABallet.org. Email vbcoffice@vaballet.org or call 703-249-8227.

FRIDAY/DEC. 29

Movie Double Feature. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-noon at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Road trip to AMC for two movies. Movie tickets and lunch are included in the fee. \$55/45 for McLean residents. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org.

The Nutcracker. 2 and 7 p.m. at the Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The Virginia Ballet Company is presenting its 68th annual production of "The Nutcracker." This is a full-length, professionally-staged ballet. \$30 for adults and \$20 for children, seniors and students at VABallet.org. Email vbcoffice@vaballet.org or call 703-249-8227.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Women at the Helm. 10 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E. Vienna Mayor Laurie DiRocco and Town Council Members Carey Sienicki and Linda Colbert will share

their experiences of leading the Town of Vienna. Visit vienna-va.aauw.net/.

SUNDAY/JAN. 14

MLK Speaker. 2 p.m. at The Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road. Award-winning sports columnist William Rhoden, who will speak on the timely subject of "Activist Athletes." \$20, \$10 for McLean Community Center tax district residents. Visit www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123.

Rorie in Concert. 7 p.m. at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Local musician plays her new EP called "Dawn." Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.roriemusic.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 17

Art Workshop. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Vienna Arts Center, 115 Pleasant St. Artist Jacqueline Saunders is hosting a one day workshop. Call 703-319-3971 or visit ViennaArtsSociety.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

Artists Reception. 4-6 p.m. at Vienna Art Center, 115 Pleasant St., NW. Jazz It Up! Exhibit open until March 3. Free and open to the public. Call 703-319-3971 or visit www.ViennaArtsSociety.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.

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NEWS

**Parking Comes in Various
Forms for Holiday Shoppers**

Focusing on convenience and security.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Parking at the shopping mall can be challenging at any time of the year, but during the holiday season, it takes time and a certain amount of work to find a good spot. There are lots of cars, new rules and entrances, so forgetting where the car is happens more than once.

At Tysons, there are 11,500 parking spaces, divided between a few multi-level parking garages and open air lots. The valet parking specialist at the valet lot right outside Nordstroms can't keep tabs on everyone, so he focuses on the clients that pay the \$10 Holiday Parking special to use his lot. "They keep asking me, they don't know where they parked," he said.

Diane Peratt came in from Leesburg and didn't balk at the \$10 special. "I'm very short on time," she said, as she looked around at the big roped off area that was empty on a Wednesday afternoon. "I'm glad they have this option, this number of spots is a bit much," she added.

Over at Springfield Town Center, the number of shoppers waxes and wanes during the week, but the weekends are big, said Hayden Basse, a college student that operates the valet stand at Springfield. On one evening shift in early December, he parked 75 cars in either the 15 spots up front or the auxiliary lot that is off along Loisdale Road. "You get a lot of families, especially in colder weather," Basse said.

Joshua and Jessica Ball are new to the area, but have been to Springfield Town Center a few times. "It's a nightmare on Fridays and Saturdays," Joshua Ball said. Parking on the weekends craziness is no secret, but Basse is happy to help out, saying: "Our job is to provide convenient parking to the mall and restaurants," he said. Basse gets the shopper's cell phone number upon arrival, enters it in his iPad and when the customers are ready, a signal is sent and Basse retrieves their car. "Makes it super quick," he said.

Valet spots are \$6 at the Springfield Town Center and \$7 at Tysons Corner, but in the Nordstroms lot, the \$10 Holiday Parking Special includes money-saving coupons.

Nordstrom employee Christina Curtis never has a problem even in the holiday season. "There's plenty of spaces, eventually you do find a parking space," she said, but has seen the shoppers that can't find their car at the end of the day. "A lot of people get confused with the exits, they don't know where they parked," she said.

The Tysons security office is always helping find cars. "We do that a lot," said Security Officer Rivas. To accompany all the specialty shops that open and



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

The Holiday Valet special at Tysons is tempting to some.

close around the holidays, there are a number of specialty spots for restaurant patrons, electric vehicles, pregnant women, military veterans and big spenders. What's an average Joe to do in situations like this? Go to the back of the lot, hope for a spot, and take the hike back to the shopping center, keeping an eye out for drivers who aren't being attentive.

Becca Willcox, the Tysons events and communications manager, noted that there are a certain number of spaces dedicated to electric and hybrid vehicles, valet parking and 20 VIP spots for their top 50 money spenders. On the weekends in December, there are "parking directors," maintaining order around the lots and for the speciality spots, the Tysons security "patrols them to make sure they're [specialty spots] being used correctly," Willcox said.

Parking lot safety is another concern around the holidays. The Fairfax County Police Department has a Christmas Anti-Theft Team, known as the CATT, "watching for people breaking in cars and taking merchandise," said officer Bob Otten.

According to the police, "over the 2016 holiday season, our teams collectively recovered over \$315,000 in stolen property and seized assets." In addition, there are police officers in the lots keeping the peace and making sure cars are not blocking the fire lanes or illegally parking in the disabled parking spaces, noted with the blue signs. "We ask them to move along," he said. It's a \$50 ticket if they don't, said Otten.

BULLETIN

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

HOLIDAY SOBER-RIDE

Free Sober Rides. The annual Holiday SoberRide program will operate 8 p.m.-4 a.m. each night from Friday, Dec. 15, 2017-Monday, Jan. 1, 2018. Area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter the code in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's weekly Holiday SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 2 p.m. on Dec. 15, Dec. 23 and Dec. 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna Caregivers Support Group is held the first and third Thursdays of every month, year round. Call 703-821-6838 or email jtarr5@verizon.net for more.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

English as a Second Language Classes. 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Come help 150+ adult learners master the English language, prepare for American citizenship, learn to converse fluently in English, improve their writing skills, and integrate into the local community. Call 703-980-9380, email stmarksesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarksesl.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

English as a Second Language Classes. 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna. Come help 150+ adult learners master the English language, prepare for American citizenship, learn to converse fluently in English, improve their writing skills, and integrate into the local community. Call 703-980-9380, email stmarksesl@gmail.com, or visit www.stmarksesl.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Are You A Caregiver? Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first & third Thursday of each month. February 2nd and 16th, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd, Oakton, VA. For more info contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, 703-821-6838 jtarr5@verizon.net.

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

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

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

the U.S. are 12 times closer than the specific gun homicide rate given in Mr. Nelson's letter. In other words, British criminals substitute knives or clubs for guns to kill their victims — cold comfort there.

Housebreaking is far more common in Britain than in the U.S. Could this be due to the deterrent effect of widespread gun ownership? Surveys of violent felons reveal that they are far more fearful of facing an armed resident than the highly unlikely chance that a cop will appear during the crime.

Michael Crawford
Great Falls

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"Suit Yourself, Biscuit"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Talk about a superfluous statement. I was asleep in bed and awoke to find one of our five cats, Biscuit, the oldest at 11+, lying sphinx-like on the front right of our bed. Though it was dark, I could see in his yellow eyes that he was awake.

Wanting to feel a cat against my body, I said, "Biscuit, come here. Come lie against my chest." No response so I repeated the request. This time with a bit more conviction: "Biscuit, come here. I want to feel you next to me." Again, no response. In fact, no reaction whatsoever. So I muttered, without thinking even: "OKAY, Biscuit, suit yourself."

And then I laughed. Of course he's going to suit himself. That's what cats do. I should be grateful he didn't jump off the bed. After all, he was minding his own business.

And that business is the entire philosophy of the feline species captured in two words. If any of you has ever owned a cat and been sensitive to and appreciative of their differences with the canine population, cats don't really come when you call them. Nor do they respond to a million other things you ask of them. If you understand and embrace that behavior, you'll likely begin to see this non-responsiveness as part of their charm.

However, when they do come when you call them, or when they climb uninvited onto your chest while lying in bed or snuggle with you on the couch; oh, how special you feel. And if you don't feel put upon or tolerated and can instead savor the uniqueness of their knead (and do everything you can to encourage its repetition), then you can indeed find pleasure and purpose in that moment, rare though it may be — or maybe not.

Accepting the parameters of the relationship with your cat, and managing your expectations, will go a long way toward understanding what your cat is able to give you. And what cats can give you is companionship and love — on their terms of course. The mere fact that Biscuit is lying on the bed should be enough to make me happy. Expecting that he would rise due to my beck and call, at night, especially while he's cat-napping is unreasonable on my part. Biscuit is not being difficult in the least. He is simply adhering to a non-responsive-type behavior that generations of cats — and generations of cat owners, should be accustomed to, not questioned or even curious about.

As an extraordinarily experienced cat owner (almost 40 years), I should have known better. Yet I couldn't resist the temptation/control the urge to give Biscuit (a cat) the chance to change the course of presumptive cat history and come to me when I asked. The problem is, once in a blue moon — or was that a red moon (it certainly appeared to be above the fold on the front page of The Washington Post the other day), cats will break with historical convention and respond/react/reply in kind with both word and deed. They'll come, they'll snuggle, they'll talk, they'll nuzzle, they might even lick. In fact, they'll do everything they can to endear themselves to you.

But it doesn't happen often or rather it doesn't happen consistently. Yet it remains the goal of every committed (or rather should be) cat owner to make every attempt to induce their cats to succumb to their cat-seducing charms. Like right now, Twinkle, our white, five-and-half-years-old domestic medium hair, is doing everything she can to get my attention. She's walking back and forth across my note pad (as I'm trying to write; I'm busy), she's rubbing her head against my face and using the top of my pen as some sort of head scratcher, she's lying on her left side with as many as four paws outstretched across my left arm as I use it to block her advance and she's talking non-stop.

She's being such a pain, but you have to love them. If you can't appreciate their untimely intrusions and instead expect some kind of predictable dog-like obedience, you need more than "The Cat Whisperer," you need "The Cat Screamer," because it's NOT HAPPENING.

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

GREAT FALLS



Happy Holidays!

From:

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JAN & DAN**

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