

Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ♦ Kingstowne ♦ Newington



From Frontier Drive
looking south, the road
will continue past the station.



Frontier Drive Extension Plans Unveiled

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VDOT Presents Frontier Drive Extension Plans

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

If there was a musician strumming out tunes at the Springfield-Franconia Metro Station, Bob Dylan’s “Times They are A Changin’,” would be the song of choice, indicative of the changes this area in southeast Fairfax County has experienced lately, capped off with the proposed extension of Frontier Drive all the way through to Loisdale Road. The combination of transportation assets and commercial opportunities built in the last few years enhance the attraction to this change.

“The Metro station and interstate access makes it look good,” said Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee), who has been in the supervisor’s office for the mixing bowl project, the mall redevelopment, express lanes, and now the planned Transportation Security Administration (TSA) relocation to land next to the Metro Station.

Mark Heinitz, a resident of nearby Monticello Woods, agreed. “It’s a direct impact to our community, we think central Springfield has great infrastructure,” he said.

Heinitz was among a few homeowners in attendance at the first Frontier Drive Extension public information meeting on Dec. 14, looking over the initial plans and hearing the description from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) engineers. “It’s really about improving access and increasing capacity,” said VDOT engineer Andrew Beecher. “It will enhance the circulation in the Springfield area,” he said.

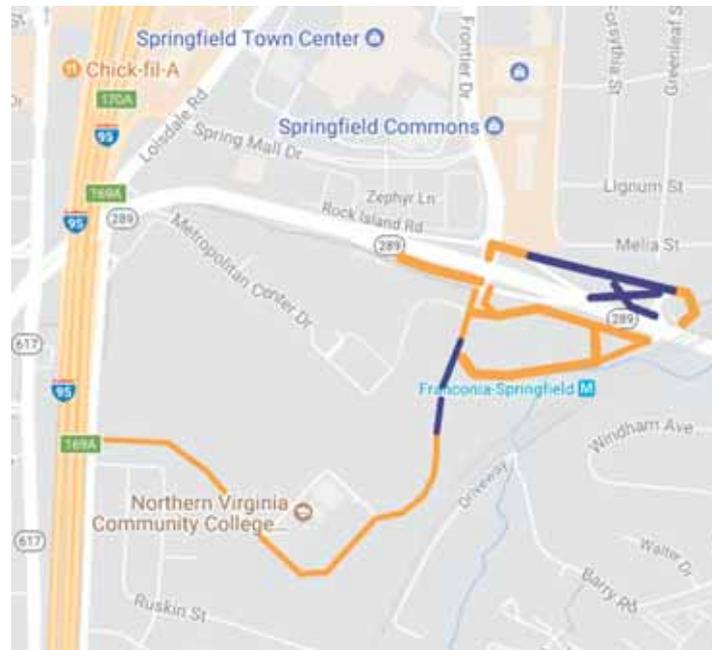
UNDER THE PLAN, Frontier Drive will continue in a southern direction, past the Metro Station, joining with Springfield Center Drive in a semi-remote area south of the Government Services Administration (GSA) site, and continue west to link with Loisdale Road, just north of Loisdale Estates community. Construction on the \$116 million project will begin in 2022 and end in 2024 or 2025. It’s early in the project process, so the timeframe for completion is not finalized yet, but the environmental assessment will be completed in May 2018, officials said.

A voice from the audience mentioned the impact when the TSA construction starts and McKay spoke up. “It’s already under construction,” he said of the site preparation currently underway. “We start the foundation next week,” said Kenneth Simmons, vice president of development at Boston Properties.

Robert Morris, an engineering consultant, worked on the Fairfax County Parkway extension from Rolling Road to Newington as a Federal Highways engineer, so he is familiar with the transportation needs in this area.

“There are many multimodal improvements, including on-road bike paths and a separate multi-modal trail,” Morris said.

Tom Sachs has lived in the area since 1963 and is now on the Lee District land use committee. He was looking at the plans and the



Frontier will link to Loisdale Road at a spot north of the Loisdale Estates community.



At this stage in the project, there are no predictions of construction impacts at the station.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

braided ramps planned that will ease the flow of pedestrians and vehicles, particularly on the Franconia-Springfield Parkway overpass near the railroad tracks. Although Sachs lives in Manchester Lakes a few miles away, his attendance was semi-official in nature.

“I wanted to make sure it’s not something outrageous,” he said. The arrival of the TSA and a 625,000 square foot office complex is “going to help develop the rest of the area,” he said. The plan for access from the parkway to the station over by the tracks will be changed too, eliminating the long walk across the ramp lane, down to the light, and back under the parkway to the station.

VDOT will hold several public information meetings before any ground is broken on the project. Meeting comments can be sent to meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov and for more information, go to www.virginiadot.org/projects.



Del. Vivian Watts (D-39) looks on at the public information meeting.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

2017: a Strong Year for Lee District, County

BY SUPERVISOR
JEFFREY MCKAY
(D-LEE DISTRICT)



Many big changes came to Lee District and Fairfax County this year, and many of those changes benefit our ongoing revitalization efforts and improve the way we deliver services to residents. Thanks in no small part to our community's hard work, it was overall a strong year for Lee District and Fairfax County as a whole.

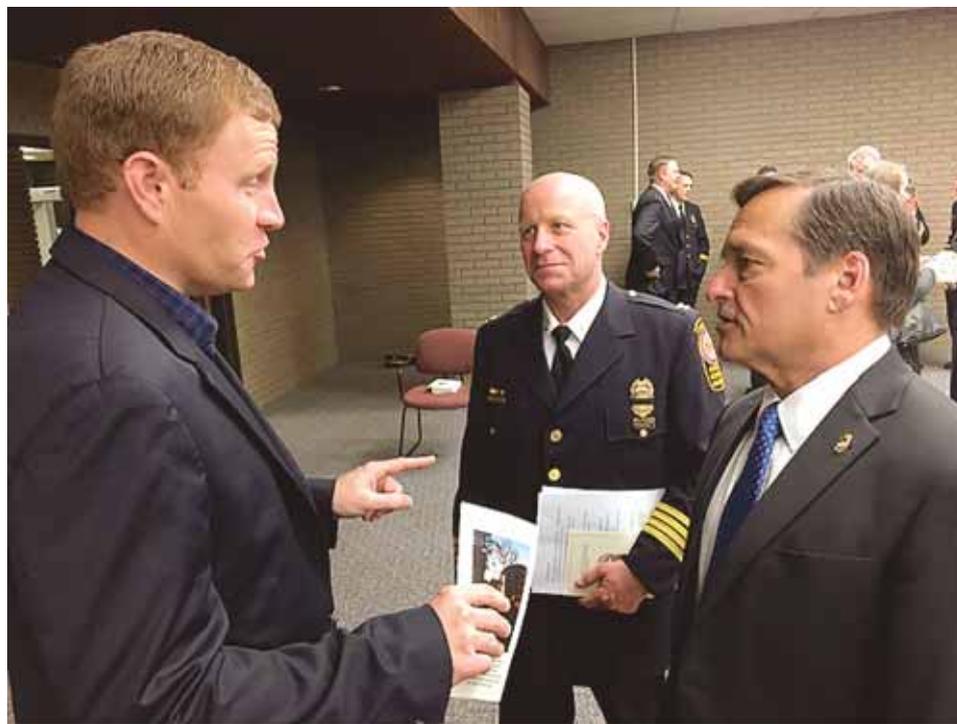
COMMENTARY My proudest legislative accomplishment was the passage of the One Fairfax Resolution; an affirmation by the Board of Supervisors to improve equity of access to opportunity for all residents regardless of their background. In my mind, this was one of the most important resolutions that has come across my desk in my term as Supervisor, and there has never been a more important time to commit to reducing inequalities in our community.

THE RESOLUTION first began to develop during one of my meetings with the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team, and grew from there to be an unwavering commitment to a better future for all residents. After all, much of Fairfax's economic success has been because we are inclusive and we need to enhance that further.

Even in the wake of the FBI cancelling its headquarters relocation, I was confident that we would be able to attract other federal agencies to Springfield. That paid off when I learned that the Transportation Security Administration had chosen to build their new headquarters near the GSA warehouse, a testament to our hard work. In just the past few years, Springfield has become a major economic powerhouse in the region with the Springfield Town Center becoming the third most valuable property in



Supervisor McKay chairing the Budget Committee during deliberations.



Supervisor McKay speaking with Police Chief Edwin Roessler and Deputy County Executive David Rohrer at the Rose Garden Ceremony.

Fairfax.

I also was able to work together with Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck to get transportation projects in Lee District and along the Route One Corridor put at the top of the priority funding request the Board of Supervisors recently approved. In all, projects in Lee District made up 43.8 percent of the total projects listed on the countywide funding request. This request is a major step forward in that direction. We were also able to get many Lee District roads on the VDOT paving plan, ensuring that residents would be able to travel on well-maintained and safe roads.

We also had big developments in our parks this year. Franconia Park, a stone's throw from my office, is currently having its master plan reevaluated, a major step in adding new facilities and features to one of our favorite neighborhood parks. We also brought back the carousel to Lee District Park, a childhood favorite of mine and a staple of summers in Lee District.

IN PUBLIC SAFETY NEWS, police in the Mount Vernon Station will begin wearing body-worn cameras for a pilot program in the next few months, after the Police Ad Hoc Commission made a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. A research team will evaluate the impact of the cameras and report back after the three month pilot program, after which we will make a decision on whether to keep the cameras as a permanent program.

Many agencies and organizations were involved in this exciting project, including our own police department and sheriff's office, the Fairfax NAACP, the Independent Auditor's Office, and many community organizations.

Even more is on the horizon for Lee District and its residents. As we move into 2018, I am already hard at work looking for opportunities to continue to improve our quality of life and offer even more great services. It was a pleasure serving as your District Supervisor this year.

ECHO Executive Director Receives Herb Hunter Award

An executive director who oversees approximately 400 workers — for free — is this year's recipient of the prestigious Herb Hunter Citizen of the Year.

Meg Brantley, this year's recipient, is executive director of the nonprofit Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO).

Brantley was one of six award recipients at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Thursday, Dec. 14, which also featured the swearing in of 2018 Chamber Chairman Kathleen McDermott of Alliance Law Group, and entertainment from two

West Springfield High School guitar ensembles.

Others recognized by the Greater Springfield Chamber for their community dedication were Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Master Technician Michael Guck, Public Service Award; April Pinch-Keeler, Business Person of the Year; Andrews Federal Credit Union, Corporate Citizen of the Year; David Druitt, Veteran Community Service Award; and Rachel Kopfstein, Military Spouse Community Service Award.

After having served as a co-chair of ECHO's clothing services for 10 years, Brantley accepted the challenging job of executive director in 2009. Since then, she

has guided ECHO's mission of providing food, clothing and emergency financial help to people in need.

Because ECHO is staffed entirely by volunteers, Brantley's full-time job has been without remuneration.

Along with a penchant for hard work, Brantley has brought a commitment to the ideal that clients, donors and volunteers be treated with dignity and fairness. She works with and supervises approximately 400 volunteers whose tasks include everything from packing bags of food, to sorting thousands of donated clothing items and household goods, to making sure the physical plant works properly. Directing the work of

volunteers requires a measure of grace and tact, qualities Brantley possesses in abundance.

In addition, Brantley works closely with the ECHO board and community and government officials. Her outstanding organizational abilities are matched with a great sense of humor and touching personal warmth — qualities that have helped ECHO increase its volunteer staff and its number of donors during her tenure and qualities that earned Brantley this year's Herb Hunter Citizen of the Year award.

For more information about the Chamber visit springfieldchamber.org.

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



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON

At Springfield Town Center, Hayden Basse monitors valet spaces and uses a cell phone feature to retrieve cars when needed.

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 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 specialty 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.



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SPRINGFIELD CONNECTION ❖ DECEMBER 21-27, 2017 ❖ 5

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.

EDITORIAL

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.

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Islam Recognizes Jesus As a Prophet

To the Editor:

I want to wish all my Christian friends Merry Christmas. I would also use this opportunity to highlight that Islam recognizes Jesus (peace be upon him) as a Prophet. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet who was given a special message — the Gospel — to convey to all people. This message both confirmed what was taught in the Torah and foretold the coming of Prophet Muhammad. Thus,

Jesus has a vital and unique role to play in the Muslim faith.

The Qur'an mentions Jesus, or *Isa*, 25 times, but differently each time. The Qur'an explains that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary (19:20-21) and is “highly honored in this and the next world” (3:45-47). Thus, he is called *Isa ibn Maryam*, or Jesus son of Mary. The Qur'an also refers to him as *ruh min Allah* (“Spirit from God”), *mushia bi'l baraka* (“the Messiah—someone blessed by God”), *kalimah min Allah* (“Word from/God”), and *rasul* (Prophet-Messenger) of God.

It is part of my faith to accept Jesus as a pious and righteous

man. He, like all Prophets of Islam, brought a message of peace, love and brotherhood for the world. While Christians and mainstream Muslims are still waiting for the second coming of Jesus (peace be upon him), tens of millions of Ahmadi Muslims have accepted Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Messiah, who claimed in 1889 to have come in the spirit of Jesus to reform the world.

Nevertheless, the holiday season is a source of joy and celebration for all Christians. Please accept my humble wishes for the season. I would end my note by reaffirming that Jesus (peace be upon him)

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NEWS

Unbuilt Ball Fields Find New Location

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

From eight previous rezoning cases, \$1,346,459.52 in proffered contributions to build baseball diamonds in Springfield remained unused.

But the Fairfax County Park Authority and Board of Supervisors called up a new Virginia Code that allows for reallocation of funds where construction could go forward.

"I think this is the first time that we've used this new section of the Virginia Code," said Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herry.

Virginia Code 15.2-2303.2 "allows a locality to use any cash payments proffered for capital improvements for alternative improvements of the same category within the locality in the vicinity of the improvements for which the cash payments were originally made."

The money originally intended to build baseball diamonds at Patriot Park at 12111 Braddock Road will now be reallocated to build baseball diamonds at Patriot Park North, west of Patriot Park, at the intersection of Braddock Road and Willow Springs Road.

"This clearly makes a lot of sense and it has community approval," said Herry. "The proffers were for baseball fields and they are going to be used for baseball fields in the vicinity of where they were originally expected to be."

The Park Authority predicts construction will start in 2019.

"The community's got a severe

Suzianne Battista, Planning and Development Division, Park Authority, presented the staff report.



Pat Herry, Springfield District Supervisor



shortage of 90-foot diamonds," said Herry. "It also clusters with a pair of 60-foot diamonds which makes for a great baseball facility."

If the Board didn't approve the Park Authority's request, "the funds proffered to Patriot Park will remain unavailable to be used for other improvements at nearby Patriot Park North and will remain unutilized until VDOT and FCDOT transportation improvements, including road

alignments that will impact Patriot Park, are finalized," according to planning and zoning documents.

Development on the original park plan was delayed indefinitely, said Suzianne Battista, of the Department of Planning and Zoning, because of uncertainty of VDOT and FCPT road improvements, including lack of an entrance to the planned baseball diamonds.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday.

Melissa Pratt, of Springfield,

was initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Pratt was initiated at Clemson University (S.C.).

BULLETIN BOARD

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

HOLIDAY SOBER-RIDE

Free Sober Rides. The annual Holiday SoberRider 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.

BLOOD DONATIONS NEEDED

The American Red Cross urges eligible donors to give more life by giving blood this December. In December, donations decline but the needs of patients remain steady. During the holiday season, set aside an hour to give the most important gift - give blood and give more life. All those who come to give blood or platelets Dec. 21, 2017, through Jan. 7, 2018, will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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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."

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



Sylvain Richard, 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.

"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

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



"The Nutcracker"

On Thursday and Friday, Dec. 28 and 29, The Virginia Ballet Company is presenting its 68th annual production of "The Nutcracker." Shows at 2 and 7 p.m. at the Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. 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 for more.

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

ONGOING

Santa's Flight Academy. Through Dec. 24, at various times at Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Santa surrounded by a space motif. Visit www.santaexpresslane.com.
"Peekaboo! A Nativity Play." Through Dec. 24, 8 p.m. at The John Swayze Theatre, New School of Northern Virginia, 9431 Silver King Court, Fairfax. The Hub Theatre presents "Peekaboo! A Nativity Play." Call 703-674-3177 or visit www.thehubtheatre.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

Friday Morning Music Club. noon-1 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Call 703-385-7858 or visit www.fmmc.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 24

Celtic Carols by Candlelight. 9:30-10 p.m. at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Hear Celtic instruments and sing Christmas carols featuring the hammered dulcimer, Irish flute, pennywhistle; harp-guitar, cittern, mandolin, fiddle and Celtic harp. Donations go to FACETS and ECHO. Christmas Vigil Service will follow. Visit www.standrews.net.

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/DEC. 28-29

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

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-219-2200.

SATURDAY/DEC. 30

Early New Years Party. 11 a.m.-noon at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Ctr. All ages. Come out a few days early to celebrate the New

Year with arts and crafts and a count down to noon. Call 703-339-4610.
Art and Lunch. noon-3 p.m. at Village Gallery, 3950 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Free and open to the public. Visit www.fairfaxartleague.net or call 703-587-9481.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

Fairfax 4 Miler. 6 p.m. at Pacers Running Fairfax, 10427 North St., Fairfax. Celebrating their ninth year, the Fairfax Four is a favorite for its post-race pizza party and sweatshirt premium. Call 703-537-0630.

TUESDAYS/JAN. 2-FEB. 13

Art Lessons for Youth. 5:15-6:15 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor. 8 years and older. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

TUESDAYS/JAN. 2-FEB. 13

Drawing Plus Color Class. 6:15-7 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing and watercolor. Visit www.czartlessons.com. For 5-8 yrs. Call 703-250-6930.

FRIDAY/JAN. 5

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

SATURDAYS/JAN. 6-FEB. 17

Art Lessons for Youth. 9:15-10:30 a.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor. 8 years and older. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

SATURDAYS/JAN. 6-FEB. 17

Art Workshop for Teens/Adults. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing, watercolor, Chinese Brush & portfolio development. Visit www.czartlessons.com. Call 703-250-6930.

MONDAY/JAN. 8

Funday Monday. 10:30 a.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive,

Fairfax. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts. Funday Monday will offer a variety of children's activities and entertainment in Old Town Hall. Free. Call 703-385-7858.

MONDAYS/JAN. 8-MARCH 26

Exercise Classes. 9:30-10:30 a.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. \$30. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 10

Earth Fare Opens. 7 a.m. at Fairfax Plaza, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Specialty organic and natural foods grocery store. Visit www.earthfare.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

Art and Lunch. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. The Fairfax Art League will be hosting, bring lunch and enjoy the company of other artists. Free. Visit www.fairfaxartleague.net or call 703-587-9481.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at the Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St. John Cox, who was a guide at the U.S. Capital Building will speak on the history of the building. \$10. Call 703-323-4788 or visit www.scfbva.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Call 703-273-3638 or visit www.fairfaxvfd.com.

Sherwood Family Movie. 7 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway. Featuring "Smurfs Lost Village." Participants may bring their own snacks. Britepaths will accept donations of non perishable food. Call 703-385-7858.

Dance Fest 2018. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Harris Theatre at George Mason University, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Virginia Dance Coalition presents DanceFest 2018 Gala Performance highlighting 12 member companies. Visit www.virginiadancecoalition.org.

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NEWS

Planning Commissioners Appointed

**Four new members
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 basis.

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, according 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.

MOUNT VERNON Supervisor Dan Storck appointed Walter C. Clarke to replace Earl Flanagan on April 18, 2018.

Clarke is a current co-chairman of the EMBARK Richmond Highway Advisory Group and played a substantive role in the revisions to the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan, according to Storck.

"The selection of Mr. Clarke as the next commissioner is a natural next step in his service to the Mount Vernon District," said Storck.

Clarke is also vice president at Burke & Herbert Bank and has lived in the Mount Vernon Community for more than 15 years.

Current Planning Commissioner Earl Flanagan "has agreed to work closely with Mr. Clarke over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition of upcoming matters and continued support, as needed," said Storck. "[Flanagan] provided invaluable direction in land use cases for the District. As a steadfast leader in our community, he is highly respected for his in-depth knowledge of zoning, as well as his ability to work with community leaders, individual residents, working groups and builders."

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).

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Jazz Band and Ensemble include **Charlie Gorham** from South County High School.

Vocal musicians from 14 Fairfax County public schools have been named to the Virginia Honors Choir for 2017. Thirty-four Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students were selected for the choir, and five students

were named as alternates. This select choir is open to the top 125 singers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career. FCPS students named to the 2017 Virginia Honors Choir include: **Olivia Chaves** and **Michael Reinhardt** from South County High School.

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

Make an appointment to give blood by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

♦ Springfield

Dec. 26: 1-5 p.m., South Run RECenter, 7550 Reservation Drive

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Dec. 21: 12:45-5:45 p.m.

Dec. 22: 7:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 23: 7:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 24: 7:45 a.m.-2:45 p.m.

Dec. 26: 10:45 a.m.-5:45 p.m.

Dec. 27: 12:45-8 p.m.

Dec. 28: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Pennino Building 10th Floor Conf Rm, 12011 Government Center Parkway

Dec. 28: 12:45-5:45 p.m.

Dec. 29: 7:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 30: 7:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 31: 7:45 a.m.-2:45 p.m.

TUESDAY/JAN. 9

American Legion Post 177 Luncheon. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Presentation on "Advanced preparation and arrangement for funeral/memorial" by Peter Hause, Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home. \$11. Call 703-280-2356 for more.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50 and older who no longer drive. Volunteer drivers are needed for trips (Monday-Friday) to medical appointments and companion shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. Office workers are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday-Friday) to match drivers and those who need rides. Call 703-323-4788.

Positive Parenting Strategies Course. At PHILLIPS, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS' counselors. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Stryjewski at 703-658-9054.

Thermal Camera Loan Program. Learn where the energy is leaking out of the home with a special attachment for the iPhone or Android. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energy or call 703-324-5955 for more.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. fairfaxrotary.org.

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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.



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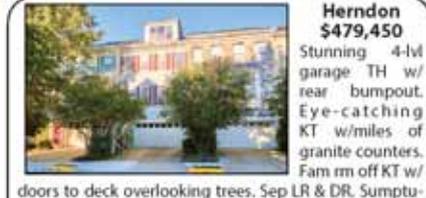
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