

Burke CONNECTION

Sharon C. Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, is joined by (from left) former Chairman Kate Hanley, Cathy Hudgins (Hunter Mill), John Cook (Braddock), Gerry Hyland, and Dalia Palchik (Providence-elect).



Robinson
Middle Schoolers
Celebrate the Season

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Merry Christmas

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Leaving on a
High Note
— A Joy Ride
Of 31 Years

NEWS, PAGE 3

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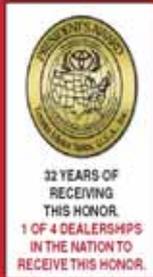
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Retiring members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: John Cook, Cathy Hudgins, Sharon Bulova and Linda Smyth at the Dec. 3, 2019 Board of Supervisors Meeting.



Leaving on a High Note: 31 Year Joy Ride

Sharon Bulova retires.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

At the end of December 2019, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Sharon S. Bulova ends 31 years of service to the County, 21 years as the Braddock District Supervisor and 10 years as Chairman of the Board. During her last month in service, Chairman Bulova continued to lead the locality of 1.1 million people and also shared her heartfelt thanks to constituents, staff and others.

"It has been a great ride," Bulova said on Dec. 3, when she chaired her last Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting. "I have loved the relationships that we have had among my colleagues on the Board and our county staff. ... We are all in the trenches together, making things happen together. We don't always agree on things, and yet we are able to come together and work things out. ... Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you and previous boards."

Bulova presided over the meeting that began at 9:34 a.m. that day and adjourned, eleven hours later at 8:41 p.m. "I love local government, even on days like this. You have to love people, love human nature. We manage change, which is not easy. Things can be emotional, but it is people coming together and participating in the process of governing (that) is so critical. I think we do that well in Fairfax County," she said.

Highlights of Board actions taken at the Dec. 3 meeting under the gavel of Chairman Bulova:

- Adopted the 2020 Legislative Program for the Virginia General Assembly, Approval of the County's 116th Congress Federal Legislative Strategy and Principals;

- Received reports from various councils including the Racial Equity Stakeholder Council and a presentation by the Environmental Quality Advisory Council;

- Approved projects submitted for the FY 2026 Regional Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Federal Funding Through the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority;

- Approved a Construction Administration Agreement between Fairfax County and the Town of Herndon for the Herndon Metrorail Station Access

Management Study Project (Dranesville District).

Nearing the end of the meeting, Bulova thanked her staff over the years, her current staff and staff that served her since she was first elected as the Annandale District Supervisor, which later was named the Braddock district. Bulova recognized the services of the outgoing Board of Supervisor members, Braddock Supervisor John Cook (R), Providence District Supervisor Linda Smyth (D) and Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D).

During Chairman Bulova's last days in service, the tables turned. Supervisors, as well as members of the Virginia General Assembly and leaders of neighboring jurisdictions in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Region set about to recognize and thank Bulova for her distinguished and extraordinary service, at the Dec. 3 Board of Supervisors meeting and Bulova's Dec. 9 retirement reception held at the Fairfax County Government Center.

On behalf of the Board, Mason Supervisor Penelope A. Gross (D) presented a Resolution for the Chairman at the Dec. 3 meeting. The resolution recognized Bulova's service representing Fairfax County on multiple fronts including the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; as founding member, "I would say, godmother," Gross said, of the Virginia Railway Express; founder of several community groups such as Faith Communities in Action and Communities of Trust; and sponsor for groups on key County initiatives such as the Diversion First, Stakeholders Group, the Fairfax County Private Sector Energy Task Force, the Governing Board for the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness and more.

"She will be remembered for distinguished public service and achievement, love for history and the arts, and excellent doodling skills," said Gross. "Be it resolved the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on behalf of all residents does hereby thank Sharon for her extraordinary service on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors," said Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

As the meeting was about to adjourn, Bulova forecast what is on the horizon for Fairfax County. "I think we're (heading) toward a beautiful future," she said referencing the new 2020 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to be led by current Lee District Supervisor and Chair-elect, Jeff McKay.

VIEWPOINTS

'She's Always Been a Gold Standard'

Community leaders on Sharon Bulova.

Phyllis J. Randall

Phyllis J. Randall, Chair of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors: "I want to thank Chairman Bulova for her many years of service, but also more personally being a guide and mentor to me during my first term as Chair of Loudoun County. She passed the baton to me, and it's my intention to make her proud."



Bryan Hill

Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive: "I wish her all the best in retirement, and she should be happy never to receive another phone call from me with bad news as it will always be good news going forward. And thank you for the opportunity to run Fairfax County."



Gregory Scott

Gregory Scott, director of Information Technologies Fairfax County: "I'd like to thank her for all the support she's given Information Technologies over the years and helping us to continue to be innovative in the way we deliver services to constituents in Fairfax County."



Jay Dorsey

Jay Dorsey: "Simply put, she's one of a kind. I've seen my share of elected officials who exert leadership and display of power that comes with their position. I have not seen an individual with her responsibilities that treats every single resident of Fairfax County like she does."



Cathy Hudgins

Retiring Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins: "I think she had the ability to have a calming approach to dealing with some of the most difficult issues as if there is none. She has a very even personality."



SEE VIEWPOINT, PAGE 6

OPINION

Merry Christmas

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

The pages of the Connection (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. Help for the needy, holiday parades, Santa and more Santa; tree lightings, stories of giving, the Nutcracker.

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.

Matthew 7:12:

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

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 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 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 2019

This is our last regular edition of 2019. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish our annual Children's Issue, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. You'll be able to find this online while you wait for the print edition at www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/ Scroll down to Children's.

Our next regular edition will publish Jan. 8, 2020, with deadline for content and advertising of Jan. 3 (late ads accepted).

In the meantime you can email the editors at editors@connectionnewspapers.com. You can reach sales/marketing/advertising at sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

Digital replica editions of the most recent week's papers are available at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs/

Past issues of the Connection back to 2008 are available at connectionarchives.com/PDF/ Sign up for a free digital subscription at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/subscribe

EDITORIAL

Give Locally

Many local nonprofits are reporting a significant drop in contributions this year. To some, the decrease constitutes an existential threat. Not only will they be unable to meet their goals for helping others, but some might not be able to keep their doors open.

This comes as the need is increasing, as the White House cuts food stamps, as more people go hungry.

This is a perfect time to give, give a little more than you have in the past.

The holidays are about giving, and giving thanks.

There are people going hungry here, people who need help, organizations that will help, but can only help with the resources they have.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season, for humans in need, for animals in need, for an environment in need. Here are a few ideas.

— MARY KIMM.

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Families face uncertainty and need; nonprofits face drop in contributions.

Where to Give Locally

- ❖ **Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. Assistance League's philanthropic programs touch the lives of thousands of children at 11 Title I schools in Northern Virginia, serving children most in need at selected schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria. To learn more about volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, contact nfo@alnv.org or visit www.alnv.org
- ❖ **Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area** operates clubs in two of the neediest areas of the county, Culmore, Mount Vernon/ Route 1 corridor, and Chantilly, focusing on character and academic success. <https://www.bgcgw.org/club-page/fairfax-county-region-our-impact/>
- ❖ **Britepaths** Britepaths is working to assist 500 Fairfax County area families who might otherwise go without holiday meals and gifts for their children. Sponsor a family or donate to provide a family with a holiday meal and/or gifts for their children. Britepaths.org <https://britepaths.org/our-programs/holiday-program>

- ❖ **Centreville Immigration Forum**, a safe, organized center where residents and contractors can negotiate work arrangements with day laborers. Centreville Square Shopping Center, 5944 Centreville Crest Ln, Centreville, VA 20121. Phone: (703) 543-6272 website: www.centrevilleimmigrationforum.org and email contact@theCIFva.org
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. Coming up, holiday bike drive. 703-281-7614, www.cho-va.com
- ❖ **Community Foundation of Northern Virginia** www.cfnova.org The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia works to respond to critical need and seed innovation in our region. Your gift helps us make grants in our focus areas of interest while also bringing a spotlight on the benefits of community philanthropists www.cfnova.org/for-donors/donate-now
- ❖ **Cornerstones**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org.

SEE GIVE FOR LOCAL IMPACT. PAGE 10

Burke
CONNECTION

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

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'I Enjoy Serving the Community'

Q&A with Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova two weeks before she retires.

Q: What action taken during the Dec. 3 Board Meeting was most meaningful to you, and why?

A: Recognizing my outgoing colleagues. I have worked closely with Supervisor Cook, Supervisor Hudgins, and Supervisor Smyth, and I can speak to their dedication and commitment to both their districts and Fairfax County at-large. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with them over these many years and am happy to see them recognized for their service.

Q: What motivated you to serve as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; over time, did your reasons to serve change as you sought reelection?

A: My reason for serving as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Braddock District Supervisor before that has always been the same: I enjoy serving our community. Through ups and downs, I get great satisfaction working on constituents' concerns and issues.



Sharon Bulova

that touched your heart most deeply and why it did.

A: I regularly attend the Sheriff's Department Back-to-School "Shop with the Sheriff" event at the Target Store in Burke. Through the generosity of local business and the Sheriff's Department, elementary school-aged children residing in homeless shelters are treated to a shopping spree at Target. I always give welcoming remarks outside of Target to the children, who have been paired up

with Sheriff Deputies. After this event in 2010, I received a handwritten letter from the mother of one of the children. She described how excited she was when "a big yellow school bus" pulled up to the shelter where she was residing. A smiling Sheriff's deputy escorted her daughter, Angelica, to the bus to have lunch and to go shopping. The daughter returned ecstatic with new clothes, shoes, and school supplies. The mother thanked Fairfax County and me for caring so much and for "making her day." It is a wonderful letter. I have kept it and take it out to read every once in a while. I am looking at it now.

Fairfax County— Looking Back

Q: Describe a challenging time and how you guided others toward a solution. How did you re-access the situation and modify plans, acts, or approaches going forward?

A: The most challenging time of my Chairmanship was the police shooting of John B. Geer in 2015. It was an awful event that severely impacted trust in our local government. To develop changes in our response to critical incidents, I created the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission and Diversion First, two of the most meaningful initiatives of my career. The Police adopted new policies, with a focus on "the sanctity of life," de-escalation, and transparency when responding to critical incidents. I hope these initiatives continue to promote community trust, transparency and safety well into the future.

Q: Your most memorable experience as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

A: There really are too many to describe. Establishing the VRE Commuter Rail system and helping it develop into a popular, successful service; the creation of Faith Communities in Action, where houses of worship work in partnership with our local government to address community challenges; the extension of the Silver Line Metrorail into Tysons and Reston; navigating the Great Recession in a way that brought the community to the table to help identify strategies for adjusting to vastly reduced revenues.

I consider One Fairfax to be the most impactful initiative our Board has adopted during my time as Chairman. It is a joint social and racial equity policy that commits the County to intentionally consider equity when making policies. When the County is making policy decisions, we must make sure that all our residents have access to opportunities that will help them to succeed. I am extremely proud of this initiative and look forward to seeing its positive effects throughout the years to come.

Q: Name the one item you received over the years,

Fairfax County— Looking Forward

Q: What skills and leadership style did you bring to the role of Chairman, and do you see such present in the incoming Supervisors and Chairman-elect Jeff McKay?

A: As Chairman, I believe it is essential to listen and to be open to collaboration. Jeff McKay has demonstrated those skills as Lee District Supervisor and as Chair of the County's Budget Committee.

Q: About traffic: How would you like to see the new Board mitigate the concern or replace the current solution?

A: The ultimate answer to traffic congestion lies in better land use planning and development. Transit-oriented, compact and walkable new development takes the pressure off congested roads and highways. Unfortunately, I won't be in office to see the completion of Phase II of the Silver Line to Dulles Airport and into Loudoun County, but I look forward to seeing the new Board bring this transformational project to fruition.

Q: If the County received a \$1 million grant to use any way it wanted, what would you like to see done with the money?

A: Early childhood education.

Retirement

Q: The first day you are no longer Chairman (after you sleep in), what are you going to do that morning? What about the weeks and months that follow?

A: The first day I am no longer Chairman, I will go for a jog as I always do before spending a relaxing day with my husband. In the following months, I plan to visit with my grandchildren on the west coast and to spend some time in France with my sisters and daughter.

After that, I have always wanted to write the history of the VRE. It is a great story, full of funny stories and interesting characters. I will finally have time to do that.

Community Leaders on Bulova

Gerry W. Hyland

Former Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry W. Hyland (D): "Our Chairman has been a loving leader of all, our consistent, loving leader of the Board of Supervisors. Her presence has been an inspiration. Sharon has left her fingerprints, footprints and heart print all over the landscape of Fairfax County. We are so much better because of her efforts."



State Sen. Chap Peterson (D-34)

State Senator Chap Peterson (D-34), presenting the Virginia State Senate Proclamation: "She's always been a gold standard in terms of service. What I admire most is her self-effacing personality."



Del. Mark Keam (D-35)

Del. Mark Keam (D-35), presenting the Virginia House of Delegates Proclamation: "She's always put the community ahead of herself."



Lisa Sales

Chairman Fairfax County Commission for Women & VAratifyERA Leadership Team Lisa Sales: "Chairman Bulova has led with a steady hand, kind heart, and always with a focus on strengthening community, which everyone knows. What she might not know is how she has impacted girls and women in the County and how we look to her for examples of leadership for what is good and what is right; we watch her and look to emulate her class."



Shyamali Roy Hauth

Shyamali Roy Hauth, EVP, Outreach Virginia Equal Rights Coalition: "I admire Sharon Bulova's compassion in leadership. Her contributions to Fairfax County will live on."



NEWS

Robinson Middle Schoolers Celebrate the Season

Middle school students at Robinson Secondary stayed after school for hot chocolate, treats, and to compete in the annual winter locker decorating contest. The locker bays were filled with glitter, wrapping paper, glue sticks, stickers, holiday lights, and students sharing good cheer.

PHOTOS COURTESY FCPS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Girl Scouts Sing Christmas Carols at Greenspring

Girl Scouts from Service unit 52-10 enjoyed singing Christmas carols with residents of Greenspring Independent Living in Springfield as part of an ongoing Connections program between the two groups.

COMMUNITIES OF WORSHIP



• Christmas Eve Service at 7:30 PM
 • New Year's Eve Gathering at 6 PM
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Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Give the Gift of Original Art. Now thru Jan. 5. At Torpedo Factory Artists at Mosaic, 2905 District Ave., #105, Fairfax. Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 – 7 p.m. You can find extraordinary fine art that makes great gifts this holiday season — the work of highly-acclaimed Torpedo Factory Artists — at their satellite space in Merrifield. Beautiful paintings, fine-art photographs, one-of-a-kind jewelry, scarves, ceramics and much more will be offered. Plus you can get an early start on your holiday shopping. Artists Sonne Hernandez and Greg Knott are in residence during this show.

PJ Party + Santa's Arrival. At Springfield Town Center, Springfield. Welcome Santa with a Pajama Party. Get in the holiday spirit with caroling, hot coco and watch as Santa arrives in style with Fairfax police and fire. Santa's visiting hours will be as follows: Now through Dec. 23: Monday – Saturday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Christmas Eve: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Oculus: A Place of Unseen. Now thru Feb. 2. At The Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center presents the interactive exhibit Oculus: Of A Place Unseen featuring works of artists Elaine Buss, Edgar Endress, Michelle Repiso and Steve Wanna. The use of the word 'oculus,' most known as an eye-like form in architecture, gestures towards the enlightening narratives discovered throughout the show. Each referencing feelings of solitude and contemplation, the storylines range from institutional boundaries to societal oversights and mantra meditations. Some works are as light as silk, some as heavy as stone, but the overall space is quiet — both literally and figuratively.

NOW THRU DEC. 20

Fairfax City Elf Hunt. 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Takes place Fairfax City-wide, start point: Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Locate 10 elves in Fairfax City businesses, get a stamp from each business confirming that you found the elf; share the Fairfax City Elf Hunt card with us at economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov. Once you have submitted your Fairfax City Elf Hunt card, you will receive a Fairfax City car magnet and have your name entered into a drawing for a \$250 cash prize. Free to participate; patrons are encouraged to purchase items when they visit businesses. Visit the website: <https://fairfaxcityconnected.com/2019/10/08/elfhunt/#prettyPhoto>

SATURDAY/DEC. 21

Tea Tasting. 3-4 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Sample a variety of whole leaf hot teas — white, green, oolong and black. Learn how to make authentic masala chai. Free. For teens and adults. Email Sonal Gosai at sonal.gosai@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/5090800>

DEC. 21-22

"The Nutcracker." 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Experience this timeless holiday classic with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet — a holiday tradition your family will always cherish. Enjoy a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, sugar plum fairies and epic battles between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice. Tickets: \$54-\$94. Visit the website: <http://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/fairfax-symphony-orchestra-the-nutcracker>

NOW THRU DEC. 22

ETAP's "Finding Santa." 12 show times over 2 weekends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 7:30 p.m., 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. At Richard J. Ernst Theatre, Annandale NOVA Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Encore Theatrical Arts Project presents a new holiday musical, "Finding Santa." Cost is \$19-\$26. This song and



PHOTO BY DJ COREY PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY FAIRFAX SYMPHONY AND FAIRFAX BALLET

The "Snow" scene creates a winter wonderland in the Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Ballet 2018 production of "The Nutcracker."

'The Nutcracker' at Center for the Arts

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet present Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" at Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, George Mason University Campus, 4374 Mason Pond, Drive, Fairfax. Performances: Saturday, Dec 21 and Sunday, Dec 22 at 4 p.m. Tickets: \$49, \$69 and \$89. Call 703-993-2787 or visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

dance musical features over 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, over 165 costumes, and over 16 musical numbers. Come see all the glamour of a Broadway-style show right here in Northern Virginia. Appropriate for audiences of all ages www.ensemble-tap.org

SUNDAY/DEC. 22

Lessons and Carols. 10 a.m. At Historic Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Historic Pohick Church, the Colonial parish of George Washington and George Mason, will have a Service of Lessons and Carols. This service originated in Victorian England in the 1880s as "Lesson and Carols: A Festal Service for Christmastide," as a series of scripture readings interspersed with Advent and Christmas carols, hymns and choral anthems, tracing God's love from the creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden, through the annunciation and birth of the Christ Child. Call 703-339-6572 or visit <http://www.pohick.org>.

Chanukah Family Event. 2-5 p.m. At Pozez JCC, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Most enjoyed by families with kids in kindergarten-middle school, the event includes: Chanukah Games Workshop, 2:30-4 p.m.; The Chanukah Game Show, 4-5 p.m.; and Menorah Lighting, 5 p.m. Cost is \$15-\$20 per family. Contact CampAchva@theJ.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Service. 8-9 p.m. At Harvester Presbyterian Church, 7800 Rolling Road, Springfield. Join Harvester Presbyterian Church for a traditional, candlelight Christmas Eve Service. Parking is behind the building. Free. Visit the website: www.harvesterpca.org

DEC. 26-27

Cold Weather Camps. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Hidden Pond Nature Center is offering a Pohick Rangers Mini-Camp where campers will learn about forest ecology in winter, animal homes and animal calling. They will make wildlife observations on hikes and gain hands-on experience in the field uncovering the natural wonders of winter in the Pohick Stream Valley. For children ages 6 to 12. The cost is \$125 per child. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

DEC. 27-29

"The Nutcracker." 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus, Ernst Community Cultural Center. The Virginia

Ballet Company and School will present its 70th season of the classic "Nutcracker." Ticket prices for reserved seating are \$30 for adults and \$20 for children, students and seniors, plus a \$3 fee per each ticket. Tickets may be purchased online at www.vaballet.org. Group pricing for these 6 performances is available for groups of 10 or more for the same performance. Call 703-249-8227.

DEC. 30-JAN. 3

Winter Survival Camp. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Kids will face winter head-on at the "Winter Survival Camp" at Hidden Pond. Campers ages 6 to 12 will learn to survive and have fun with nature's most challenging season as they make fire, build shelter, track animals and more during this adventure into winter wilderness. The camp runs from Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The cost is \$205 per child. Call 703-451-9588 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond.

TUESDAY/DEC. 31

Country-Western Dance. 8 p.m. to midnight. At Accotink Universalist Unitarian Church, 10125 Lakehaven Court, Burke. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a New Year's Eve dance. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission \$30; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$20. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. Bring appetizers, side dishes or desserts to share. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 5

Winter Make 'n Take Craft. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Make a snowman or a snowflake snowman wreath at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum's first event of 2020. Reservations are not needed and craft supplies are included with the admission fee. Craft available while supplies last. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5; Seniors 65 and older and active or retired Military, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR

SATURDAY, JAN. 11 AND TUESDAY JAN. 14

Winter Art Lessons for Youth Classes (8 yrs & up). Saturday 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Tuesday 5:15-6:15 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin drawing and watercolor. Visit

www.czartlessons.com for more. Call 703-250-6930.

SATURDAY, JAN. 11 AND TUESDAY, JAN. 14

Winter Art Workshop for Teens/Adults. Saturday 10:30-12:30 p.m.; Tuesday 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing, watercolor, Chinese Brush & portfolio development. Visit www.czartlessons.com for more. Call 703-250-6930.

SUNDAY/JAN. 12

Personal Tour Day. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Come have a day at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Let the knowledgeable docents provide personal tours or download the Uniguide Audio Tour and explore the rich local history of the Fairfax Station. Tours of the Museum will be held every 30 minutes. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older \$5; Seniors 65 and older and active or retired Military, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY, JAN. 14

Winter Drawing Plus Color Class (5-8 yrs.). 6:15 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. at Woods Community Centre, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Instructor Carol Zeitlin, drawing and watercolor. Visit www.czartlessons.com for more.

JAN. 16-19

Shen Yun. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Show times are Thursday, Jan. 16 at 2 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 at 2 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 19 at 2 p.m. Prices starting at \$80. Shen Yun's artistic vision expands theatrical experience into a multi-dimensional, inspiring journey through one of humanity's greatest treasures—the five millennia of traditional Chinese culture. This epic production immerses you in stories reaching back to the most distant past. You'll explore realms even beyond our visible world. Featuring one of the world's oldest art forms— classical Chinese dance—along with patented scenographic effects and all-original orchestral works, Shen Yun opens a portal to a civilization of enchanting beauty and enlightening wisdom.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23

ESL Registration. 7-8 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church's two locations: 5114 Twinbrook Rd, Fairfax, and 13421 Twinlakes Dr., Clifton. Register for ESL classes in Fairfax or Clifton/Centreville on Jan. 23. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 p.m., January 28-April 2. Cost is \$40 for student text book. Visit the website: www.lordoflifeva.org

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Alonzo King LINES Ballet. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Since 1982, visionary choreographer Alonzo King has been redefining contemporary ballet by creating daring new works that marry the science of artistic movement with the beauty of other art forms. In his latest collaboration, Figures of Speech, King addresses the fact that languages of the world are vanishing at an alarming rate, and draws on the research of poet and activist Bob Holman, pioneer in the slam poetry movement and co-founder of the Endangered Language Alliance. His expressive choreography takes inspiration from a soundtrack of poetry recited by native speakers of languages nearing extinction and music played on traditional instruments. Cost is \$48, \$41, \$29. Visit the website: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>

SUNDAY/JAN. 26

Game Day Activities. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. There will be train-related games for all ages and you can win a prize if you play. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5; seniors 65 and older and active or

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



VISIT ALEXANDRIA

Waterskiing Santa!

Don't Miss the Waterskiing Santa Show

On Christmas Eve, next Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 1 p.m., the Waterskiing Santa Show will occur in the Potomac River on the Alexandria Waterfront. This will be the 34th year of this wonderful show which includes numerous acts including flipping waterskiers, characters like Frosty The Snowman, the Grinch and others and, finally, Santa Claus skiing by with his full complement of reindeer. The best viewing will be on the waterfront between Oronoco Street and Duke Street. The current weather prediction includes no precipitation.

Typically, thousands of people view the show and it is always exciting and enjoyable. There is no charge to watch the show and an amusing pre-show featuring the Grinch begins at 12:45 p.m.

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

After the show, there is plenty to do in Alexandria from shopping and eating to observing the beauty of this historic city. Merry Christmas to all my Christian friends.

Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

retired Military, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Virtuoso pianist and storyteller extraordinaire Jeffrey Siegel is popular with classical music lovers and newcomers alike with his unique "concerts with commentary" format. Hear some of the most famous works by these two popular composers who have recently had anniversary celebrations in the musical world: the 100th anniversary of the death of Debussy and the 75th of Rachmaninoff. In this program, Siegel plays Debussy's Clair de Lune and Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C-sharp minor as well as colorful Preludes by both composers. Cost is \$44, \$37, \$26. Family Friendly. Visit the website: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 29

Troop Open House. 7-8:30 p.m. At Wood Community Center, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke. Scouts BSA Troop 1345G will host an Open House for young women (ages 11-17) interested in learning more about Scouting and its focus on outdoor adventure, leadership development, and citizenship skills. Free. Visit the website: <http://www.troop1345.org>

Beau Soir Ensemble Performs. 7 p.m. At Fairfax City Regional Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. The Beau Soir Ensemble is a flute, viola, and harp trio. Free. Call 703-293-6227.

SUNDAY/MARCH 1, 2020

Hot Peas 'n Butter. 1 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Praised by the Los Angeles Times for their "hot and

mellow multicultural groove," Hot Peas 'n Butter will have you and your whole family on their feet dancing with their infectious fun global music celebration. This Parent Choice Award-winning, family music ensemble blends together traditional Latin music, Afro-Caribbean rhythms, jazz, bluegrass, country, and rock to create a "rainbow of color and sound." (NY 1 TV). Singing in English, Spanish, French, Korean and Hebrew, Hot Peas 'n Butter aims to show multi-cultural interconnectedness. Their repertoire of songs like Number 1" and their signature Latin beat tracks "Somos Familia," "Amistad," "Que Lluvia," and "Round the World" enjoy radio play nationwide. Cost is \$15 for adults; \$10 for children. Visit the website: www.cfa.gmu.edu

ONGOING

Second Saturdays. 6-9 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. The Second Saturday Art Walk is the perfect time to meet nearly 85 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in our galleries. Experience performances of dance, cabaret, comedy, big band, jazz, and theater. Indulge in classes in the art of mixology or cuisines from around the globe. Visit www.workhousearts.org/.

Senior Line Dancing. Mondays, 1 p.m.; Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. at Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8-week session. Email barbriba@hotmail.com or call 703-524-3739.



Kat Radley



Rahmein Mostafavi is a comedy producer who attended McLean High School.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Comedians Featured at the Workhouse on New Year's Eve

Includes Bishop Ireton alumna Kat Radley, who is now a writer on the Daily Show in New York City.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

They do it all at the Workhouse Art Center in Lorton, and coming soon on New Year's Eve is stand-up comedy, featuring local talents Kat Radley and Rahmein Mostafavi.

Radley is an alum from Bishop Ireton in Alexandria, and Mostafavi from McLean High School. Radley is coming in from her home in New York, and loves the Workhouse space for her brand of stand-up, which focuses on life in general.

"A lot of my material comes from personal stories, either about my family, dating, partying too much in my twenties ... and last week," she said. "Also observations about society."

Both are billed under the Comedy and Productions of Rahmein Mostafavi, a company with local roots that's been performing at the Workhouse for the past seven years, as well as other venues in the area. "I bring it wherever you need it, your basement," he says on his website.

Mostafavi grew up in McLean and majored in theater at George Mason University before opening his production company. He puts on shows at the Ragtime in Arlington, and the DC Improv as well. He first met Radley through college friends, and has worked with her several times since.

"Comedy is a greate," Rahmein said. "We try to be as topical as possible, the best comics leave you thinking about it," he said. Topics include his parents, news, or par-



Kat Radley's stand-up comedy includes observations on everyday life.

Rahmein Presents

NEW YEARS EVE with Daily Show Writer, Kat Radley
Tuesday, Dec. 31, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Rd, Lorton

tying in their twenties. "I'll try to work it into my set if it's topical," he said.

When Radley is not doing stand-up, she is a staff writer for the Daily Show in New York City. Jon Stewart was the main figure on Daily Show, but the host is now Trevor Noah, who worked his way up from a writing position, like Radley, to host. She's been featured at the Emmy Awards and in the Hollywood Reporter too.

Radley is a big fan of Conan O'Brien, as well as Amy Schumer, Tig Notaro, and Mike Birbiglia. "I think they are really solid joke writers," she said. And for Conan

O'Brien, "I could watch him talk to office furniture and find it hilarious," she said.

The notion that the Workhouse was formerly a prison works with Radley too. "I think it is great they were able to repurpose it as a place for the community to enjoy. It can be hard to find good art and performance venues, so they are much needed, especially outside of large cities," Radley said. There is a line in comedy though, and some of it revolves around the "F Bomb," which doesn't show its face too much at the Workhouse. Rahmein admitted that their comedy is for adults, but didn't want to put an "R" rating on it. "People that drop the F bomb for no reason, that's what people fear," he said.

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Where to Give for Local impact

FROM PAGE 4

Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embury Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, Gifts for Kids and annual Coat Drive. www.cornerstonesva.org. Contact Nate King, Donations and Drives Coordinator, at 571-323-9569.

❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area, a partner in efforts to end homelessness in Fairfax County. FACETS is always in need of donations and volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities.

Donations will be accepted at FACETS' main office (10700 Page Avenue, Building B, Fairfax VA 22030) between 9am - 5pm.

Contact Haylee Davis at hdavis@facetscares.org. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org.

www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030

❖ **Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.** Each year, nearly 5,000 pets, including cats, dogs, small mammals, reptiles and livestock, come to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter funds important needs throughout the Shelter such as behavioral training and dental or medical care beyond what the shelter's budget can provide. generalinfo@ffcas.org 571-212-9858 www.ffcas.org/

❖ **Friends of Guest House Northern Virginia** offers structure, supervision, support and assistance to female ex-offenders who want to improve their lives and break the cycle of incarceration. Friends of Guest House offers the only program for women of its kind in Northern Virginia. One East Luray Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301-2025, 703-549-8072, info@friendsofguesthouse.org, friendsofguesthouse.org/

❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia** transforms the lives of lower-income families in need by providing affordable homeownership opportunities in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. Learn more at www.habitatnova.org.

❖ **Homestretch**, to empower homeless parents with children to attain permanent housing and self-sufficiency by giving them the skills, knowledge and hope they need to become productive participants in the community. Since 1990 Homestretch has helped over 2,000 families achieve permanent housing and self-sufficiency. 303 South Maple Ave, Suite 400, Falls Church, VA 22046 Phone: 703-237-2035 homestretchva.org

❖ **NAMI Northern Virginia** (National Alliance on Mental Illness) works to raise awareness and provide education, advocacy, and support programs for people living with mental illness, families, students, educators, law enforcement, and the public throughout our neighborhoods. Many excellent programs. NAMI Northern Virginia serves Fairfax, Falls Church, Arlington, Alexandria, and Loudoun www.nami-northernvirginia.org/ **Helpline: (571)458.7310, Email: info@nami-nova.org**

❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, (571) 482-4770 . www.capitalareafoodbank.org

❖ **Neighborhood Health**, 6677 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22306. The organization partners

with its patients to treat the whole person through medical, behavioral health and dental programs. It has 10 clinics throughout Arlington and Fairfax counties. Participating with all insurance including commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid, 703-535-5568, www.neighborhoodhealthva.org

❖ **New Hope Housing**, ends homelessness in Northern Virginia by providing housing, offering hope, and building community. We currently offer various Housing Programs, and Support Services. 8407E Richmond Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22309 www.newhopehousing.org/how-to-help/donate/

❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service.** The organization provides the essential building blocks for financial, emotional and physical well-being, serving as leaders and innovators for the Northern Virginia community. Every year, it empowers 35,000 individuals to achieve self-sufficiency. www.nvfs.org Northern Virginia Family Service, 10455 White Granite, Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124. 571-748-2500

❖ **OAR** rebuilds lives and breaks the cycle of crime with opportunities, alternatives, and resources for offenders and their families to create a safer community. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 250, Fairfax, VA 22030, 703-246-3033. OAR needs volunteers and financial donations. oarnova.org/donate

❖ **Our Neighbor's Child (ONC)** volunteers are preparing for delivery of holiday gifts for children from financially struggling families in western Fairfax County - predominantly in Centreville and Chantilly. www.ourneighborschild.org/

❖ **Pathway Homes** providing non-time-limited housing and supportive services to adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring disabilities in Northern Virginia. Founded in 1980, Pathways currently serves more than 400 adults in community-based homes in Northern Virginia. www.pathwayhomes.org

❖ **Potomac Riverkeeper Network** works to protect the public's right to clean water in our rivers and streams; to stop pollution to promote safe drinking water; to protect healthy river habitats; and to enhance public use and enjoyment. 3070 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007. (202) 888-2037 www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org

❖ **Potomac River Conservancy**, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 805, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301.608.1188 potomac.org, seeks to improve the Potomac River's water quality by building an impassioned base of river advocates to impart change at the local level.

❖ **PRS, Inc.** is a non profit providing mental health, crisis intervention and suicide prevention services in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Seeking to change and save lives in our community by empowering hope, safety, recovery, wellness, independence and community integration.. PRS also provides crisis counseling and connection to supports CRISISLINK When crisis calls, we answer 24/7 Call: 800-273-TALK [8255] Text: "CONNECT" to 85511

❖ **Rebuilding Together** Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church (Rebuilding Together-AFF) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that makes critical repairs at no charge for low-income homeowners and nonprofit organizations. Our volunteers make homes safe and healthy, and they help seniors age in place. Since 1988 we have repaired 2,273 homes and non-profit residential facilities in our area and mobilized 69,081 volunteers to do the work. We believe in safe homes and communities for everyone. 10723 Main Street, #135, Fairfax, VA

22030; Phone: 703-528-1999 https://rebuildingtogether-aff.org/

❖ **Second Story** — Second Story (formerly Alternative House) provides shelter and services for homeless, runaway or abused teenagers, unaccompanied youth, and young mothers and their children. second-story.org.

❖ **SHARE** of McLean, celebrating its 50th anniversary, is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. We are supported by donations from local religious congregations, community organizations and individuals. Our food and clothing room is housed in space donated by the McLean Baptist Church. Our year round and seasonal programs include family emergency financial assistance, food pantry, used clothing room, recycled furniture, back-to-school supplies and refurbished laptop computers. During the holidays, we also provide our neighbors in need with grocery cards and gifts.

Main Message Center: (703) 229-1414 info@shareofmclean.org
Mail: Share, Inc. P.O. Box 210 McLean, VA 22101
Food and Clothing Room: McLean Baptist Church 1367 Chain Bridge Road McLean, VA 22101 www.shareofmclean.org

❖ **Shelter House** provides crisis intervention, safe housing and supportive services to promote self-sufficiency for homeless families and victims of domestic violence in Fairfax County. It is our mission to get families back into stable housing in order to provide them the opportunity to continue their journey to self-sufficiency. www.shelterhouse.org

❖ **Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna** providing services, personal enrichment, volunteer opportunities for adults 50 and over. Currently serving 3,000-plus mature adults in the region. 703-281-0538, www.scov.org

❖ **Tahirih Justice Center**, 703-575-0070, www.tahirih.org, Legal services, public policy advocacy, and education for immigrant women and girls.

❖ **TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program** for Survivors, 3033 Wilson Blvd., Third Floor, Arlington, VA 22201, Call 24/7 800-959-TAPS (8277) The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers compassionate care and resources to all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Make a donation to support surviving military families and loved ones. You can also make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one. www.taps.org/donate

❖ **Touching Heart** in Herndon is a nonprofit organization focused on how to enlighten, excite, and educate children about how they can experience the true joy that comes from helping those in need. www.touchingheart.com, 703-901-7355.

❖ **United Community**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, VA 22306 assists low-income families and individuals living along the Route 1 Corridor, UC provides housing programs as well as a Workforce Development Center. Make a Financial Contribution to support the Holiday Gift Room 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria VA 22306. www.ucmagency.org
Donations of cash/checks and gift cards are also welcome.

❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, Chantilly, VA 20151 in Chantilly, email Assistant Food Pantry Manager/Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Culbertson at dculbertson@wfcma.org and put Holiday Food in the subject line. wfcma.org/

BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 18

Community Input Meeting. 7-9 p.m. At Garfield Elementary School, 7101 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has rescheduled the second community input meeting on Fairfax Connector bus service review in the Franconia-Springfield area. Staff will present three service alternatives that were developed based on public input received during the first round of community and stakeholder engagement and technical analysis. After this round of input, FCDOT staff will develop a preferred service plan to provide better access to destinations, improve travel times, increase schedule reliability and provide more dependable service. The community will have an opportunity to review and comment on the preferred service plan in Spring 2020.

SATURDAY/DEC. 28

Messy Church. 5-6:30 p.m. at St. Peter's in the Woods, 5911 Fairview Woods Drive, Fairfax Station. Join St. Peter's in the Woods for their monthly Messy Church. It's a worshipping community especially geared towards families and young children, but welcoming to all. Bible-themed crafts and activities, casual worship and a free, family-style dinner. Call 703-503-9210 for more. Registration is appreciated, visit www.stpetersinthewoods.org/events.

MONDAY/JAN. 13

Effective Strategies for Dementia Caregivers. 7-8:30 p.m. At Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Explore how communication changes when someone is living with Alzheimer's, and identify strategies to help you communicate at each stage of the disease. Presented by the Alzheimer's Association. Light refreshments provided. Free. Visit the website: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

BRITEPATHS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is seeking volunteers to sponsor families in need who live throughout the Fairfax County area. Sponsors are matched with families who have demonstrated need, and may opt to provide a December holiday meal and/or gifts for children under 18. Britepaths also has a great need for cash donations and gift cards to grocery stores or Target/Walmart to assist those who are not sponsored. A wonderful family, company or group holiday service project. Register and learn more at: britepaths.org. Contact 703-273-8829 or sryan@britepaths.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nam-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

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

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.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg			

Catharsis



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having re-read what I wrote in last week's column: "Still Processing," I can't say it made me feel a whole lot better than when I wrote it. Granted, it was a column that had to be written given my self-indulgent tendencies (that I fight against constantly) and the possible crossroads that I may be entering. Nevertheless, if part of the underlying reason why I take up this space every week is to vent and share, as a means, hopefully not to a premature end, I suppose there was stress released there. But the subject matter was so third-rail-ish that even though I've tried to avoid it, I feel adversely affected by the experience.

The subject to which I so ambiguously refer is my own death. Aside from not wanting it to happen, if I don't plan in advance for it having happened, the chaos that will ensue and envelop my wife, Dina, is both unfair and inconsiderate. You see, in our relationship, she's been the social director and I've been the business manager. To quote my late father: "and neither the twain shall meet except on the twack." If I were indeed to predecease my wife, a fairly distinct possibility, not only would there be no twain, there would be no "twack" as well. There would only be trouble, and that's 'trouble' with a capital "T."

It's not so much that there are complications lurking, so far as I understand them: there are no children, no blended family, no special needs situations, no multi-layered business entanglements, no offshore anything (heck, there's very little onshore), our home and bank accounts are jointly owned, no financial thresholds exceeded, no delinquencies and few liabilities; really not much of the ordinary. However, I get that ordinary is in the eye of the surviving beholder, which is likely not to be me. Therefore, if I want to contribute to my wife's quality of life after I've departed dearly (and to her peace of mind now, quite frankly), apparently a road map of sorts is in the offing. (And believe me, none of this is about control; it's more about initiative.)

I guess there's something in me that feels I need to get it out on paper so that I might act on it in person. Maybe writing about such a grim task minimizes its grimness, sort of like dipping your toe in the water before you jump? Maybe thinking and writing about the anxiety I'm feeling concerning what my wife will have to do after I've died is kind of a mental ice breaker. Not that I'm getting into any details here, it's more of a broad brush," to once again quote my brother, Richard, about the need for consideration and fairness. The underlying problem is that getting into all this after I'm-dead stuff seems and feels incredibly negative. And I try to ignore negativity. In fact, it may very well have been my positivity which has kept me alive all these live-long days.

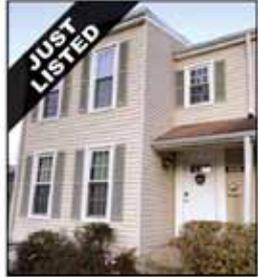
I'm sure I'm rationalizing (maybe more like "irrationalizing"), as an excuse for not doing what needs to be done, but I've always been good at that. In addition, I keep coming back to it's my life; I'm the one with "the cancer," to quote "Forrest, Forrest Gump," describing his mother's cause of death, as a means of justifying my stubbornness/unwillingness to make certain arrangements. I mean, when you think of it, having cancer is a heck of an excuse. And though I've rarely used it as one, I've always felt it. And with respect to planning for a future I don't have, I have to blame the cancer. It makes you do and think things you might not otherwise do and think. It's not as if anyone is ever prepared for a cancer/serious health diagnosis. Quite the opposite in fact. As such, you either learn to roll with the punches or get knocked down by them.

This recent/current experience hasn't knocked me down or out exactly, but it has made me a little wobbly emotionally, and reminded me just how insidious cancer can be. Once again, and for the first time in years, I seem to be at greater risk than ever. I suppose with risk comes opportunities. Having my tumors "typed" and in turn treated with specific/targeted medicine seems to be present just such an opportunity; exactly what the doctor ordered, literally.

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



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