

# Reston CONNECTION

Queen Titania and Bottom with Fairies (actors from top left to right)  
- Chloe Vanderhoof, Izzy Wyland, Emme Kasprzyk, Elspeth Berry,  
Maya Berry, Ennis Shabab in South Lakes High School recent pro-  
duction of William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."



## 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' At South Lakes

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# Reston Hospital Center Welcomes New Chief Medical Officer

## Dr. Thomas Taghon comes to Reston from Dayton, Ohio.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**D**r. Thomas Taghon is the new Chief Medical Officer at Reston Hospital Center, HCA Healthcare, as of Dec. 2. Dr. Taghon comes to Reston from his previous role as Associate Chief Medical Officer at Dayton Children's Hospital in Ohio and as a Board Certified Pediatric Anesthesiologist. Ending his second week at Reston Hospital Center, Dr. Taghon shares his views on a variety of topics, including things that might surprise people about him.

## Q&A with Dr. Taghon

**Q:** What leadership skills do you bring to Reston Hospital Center, not only to doctors, but department managers, top executives, and patients?

**A:** I have been involved in health care nearly my entire working life. I started as an Emergency Room Technician in college and earned my undergraduate degree in Pharmacy. I worked as a hospital pharmacist for a couple of years before medical school and then became an anesthesiologist. I have been working in hospital administration for several years now, so I have a pretty good understanding of how hospitals and doctors function. That said, one of the most enjoyable parts of my job is learning new aspects of medicine, and helping our doctors and nurses deliver this care.

**Q:** Discuss your primary role as Chief Medical Officer at Reston Hospital Center, HCA Healthcare, and position as a liaison between doctors and hospital executives.

**A:** As Chief Medical Officer, my most important job is to help our outstanding medical staff deliver safe, high-quality care for each patient, every time. I do this by partnering with the medical staff and hospital executives to help ensure that we have the right processes in place, and the best doctors delivering care.

**Q:** In what areas or instances might the Chief Medical Officer need to exercise medical judgment?

**A:** Every day brings a new challenge! For any given patient, the Chief Medical Officer may be called upon to help the medical and executive staff understand the best path forward so that we can deliver the best care possible. This requires medical knowledge and a willingness to do the necessary research to gain new knowledge.

**Q:** How is training and experience in management duties and so-called "business sense" relevant to the position?

**A:** Unfortunately, most doctors do not have a lot of training in business and management during medical school. Realizing that this is important for Chief Medical Officer work, I returned to school a few years



**Dr. Thomas Taghon is the new Chief Medical Officer at Reston Hospital Center, HCA Healthcare. He says simply: 'Call me Tom.'**

ago to earn a master's degree in healthcare administration. Having this knowledge helps me bridge the gap between hospital administrators and doctors and help them work together to solve problems and deliver safe, high-quality care.

**Q:** Stress is a constant influence in lives. How do you maximize the positive stress and minimize negative stress in the role of Chief Medical Officer at Reston Hospital Center?

**A:** The practice of medicine can be extremely stressful, and I worry about the health of physicians today. Physician wellness is a huge issue, and I think that one way to combat stress and burnout is to remain connected to our core mission, which is caring for patients and improving their lives. Doctors today have many distractions, so it takes conscious effort to take a moment to remember why we are doing this each and every day.

**Q:** According to the Reston Hospital Center website, the hospital provides signature services from 24/7 Emergency Care, Women's care and Neonatology, Surgical Care with nationally recognized Spine, Orthopedic, and Bariatric, along with Virginia Institute of Robotic Surgery and Inpatient Rehabilitation Center. Discuss involvement in training new doctors, if any, and would your responsibilities include providing any patient care, direct or indirect?

**A:** The biggest challenge is making sure that we have the right processes, equipment, and support staff in place to allow our doctors to safely and effectively use this cutting edge technology. It is one of the most exciting aspects of my job, and I look forward to working with our team as we utilize technology to enhance the care that we deliver.

**Q:** What types of foods and pastimes are your favorites?

**A:** Hands-down, Italian. My family and I had the privilege to be stationed in Sicily, Italy, when I was in the Navy. Through this experience, we all gained an appreciation and passion for travel and Italian food!

**Q:** What might people be surprised to learn about you?

**A:** My wife and I have adult, boy-girl

twins, and they were literally born the day before I started medical school.

**Q:** Is there something else you want to share about your leadership role at Reston Hospital?

**A:** I am thrilled to be working at Reston Hospital Center. The physicians, nurses, and staff are all extremely talented, motivated, and rightly proud of all that they have ac-

complished. We are all dedicated to providing the best care possible to our community and beyond. In addition, my wife and I love the Reston community, and we are thrilled that this is now our home.

**ACCORDING TO A HOSPITAL SPOKESPERSON**, the arrival of Dr. Taghon wasn't the only thing that was new and exciting at Reston Hospital Center: "In 2019, Reston opened a new 18-bed, private room inpatient rehabilitation center, a state-of-the-art, 24-bed intensive care unit (ICU), a 4-bed antepartum unit for high-risk OB patients, a second cardiac catheterization lab, and a 400-space parking garage for patients and visitors. Further, Reston has welcomed Children's National Hospital neonatologists (ranked number one in the nation by U.S. News & World Report) to cover the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) 24/7. Reston has also obtained recent accolades from national organizations, including an "A" grade in patient safety from the LeapFrog Group and two recognitions from the American College of Surgeons – Verified Level II Trauma Center and a Center of Excellence in Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery."

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

## Bus Service Survey Extended

Fairfax County Department of Transportation has extended the Fairfax Connector Reston-Herndon bus service online survey until Dec. 27, 2019. Residents may provide input on the service alternatives by completing the survey at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/herndon-reston-service-review](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/herndon-reston-service-review). Comments can also be mailed to Fairfax County Department of Transportation, 4050 Legato Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22033. Providing opportunities for engagement and input about improvements to bus service in Herndon and Reston and to future Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 stations, is integral to FCDOT's effort to hear from residents and Fairfax Connector riders about how they would like to see bus service improved and restructured to accommodate service to the new Metrorail stations. Visit [www.fairfaxconnector.com](http://www.fairfaxconnector.com) to stay informed with the latest news and information.

## Commemorative Brick Program.

The Reston Historic Trust & Museum will be celebrating its commemorative brick program. Members of the community are encouraged to support not only the Reston Historic Trust & Museum on Giving Tuesday – but to do so by ordering a commemorative brick which is a great way to leave your mark on Reston or give as a gift to friends, family, teachers, neighbors, organizations, or even a pet. Commemorative bricks can be ordered at <https://www.restonmuseum.org/bricks>. The bricks are ordered only once a year. Bricks to be installed in 2020 must be ordered by Jan. 8, 2020. Bricks are then reviewed by the

Lake Anne Condominium Association and Reston Historic Trust & Museum. They are displayed and dedicated on Founder's Day, which will be April 18, 2020 and installed shortly thereafter dependent on weather.

## 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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

## ONGOING

**STEM Professionals Needed.** Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2019-20 school year. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or [donaalrea@aol.com](mailto:donaalrea@aol.com).

**Assistance League of Northern Virginia**, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at [gronbiz@aol.com](mailto:gronbiz@aol.com) or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at [lynnieb517@verizon.net](mailto:lynnieb517@verizon.net).

**Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed.** Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

# 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 at <http://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](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com). You can reach [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com).

Digital replica editions of the most recent week's papers are available at [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/PDFs)

Past issues of the Connection back to 2008 are available at [connectionarchives.com/PDF/](http://connectionarchives.com/PDF/) Sign up for a free digital subscription at [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/subscribe](http://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](mailto:nfo@alnv.org) or visit [www.alnv.org](http://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](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](http://www.centrevilleimmigrationforum.org) and email [contact@theCIFva.org](mailto:contact@theCIFva.org)

❖ **Closet Of The Greater Herndon Area** is a nonprofit thrift shop in downtown Herndon. The Closet recently awarded over \$20,000 in grants to seven local non-profit organizations: Cornerstones, Fellowship Square, Herndon-Reston FISH, Meridians Recovery, Mobile Hope of Loudoun, South Lakes High School PTSA Food Pantry, and Herndon Woman's Club in support of Wreaths Across America. The Closet is a source of low-cost clothing and household necessities and also gives away clothing at no cost to truly needy individuals. 845 Station Street Herndon, VA 20170 (703) 437-7652. Email [TheClosetInc@verizon.net](mailto:TheClosetInc@verizon.net) Web: [theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/](http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/)

❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE)** ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of

SEE GIVE FOR LOCAL IMPACT, PAGE 7

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# COMMENTARY

## Focus on the Environment

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM  
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



In the oddities of the Virginia government calendar, the one-term limited governor spends the first two years of the term implementing a biennial budget proposed by the previous governor and passed by the General Assembly in the first two months of his term. It is only after serving nearly two years that the governor has the opportunity to propose a budget reflecting the priorities on which he was elected. The governor then has two years to implement his budget before proposing a budget that will be implemented by his successor. The complexities of changing the calendar are more than is likely to be undertaken at this time. Some like the system for it slows down the process of change for certainly the "Virginia Way" has never been to bring about any change too swiftly! A fix that would take care of part of the snail pace of doing business in the Commonwealth would be to allow the governor to run for a successive term. I support such a change for it would allow the voters to decide if an individual should be granted a second term.

One area in which there is a need for haste in taking action is related to the environment and the role the state will take in reducing carbon emissions and responding to climate change and all of its ramifications. Governor Ralph Northam ran on a platform promising more protection for the environment. He and his staff worked busily on his new budget that was announced before this column was written. In

the weeks leading up to his announcement, the Governor held press conferences around the state on various parts of the budget including one on his environmental proposals.

The budget and legislative proposals he announced on environmental protection are the strongest ever proposed by a Virginia governor. He said of his proposals that "these significant investments in environmental protection, environmental justice, clean energy, and clean water will combat climate change and ensure we maintain our high quality of life here in Virginia."

To reduce carbon pollution the governor recommends removing budget language added by the Republican legislature two years ago prohibiting Virginia from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). He instead proposes legislation making Virginia a part of the regional effort to reduce carbon emissions by requiring the purchase of credits that through the marketplace will make fossil fuels more expensive than solar and wind sources of energy. The proposal is already being attacked as a "carbon tax."

The Governor's proposals include \$400 million for Chesapeake Bay clean up that will keep that effort on track.

An investment of up to \$40 million to upgrade the Portsmouth Marine Terminal will support the offshore wind supply chain and the development of offshore wind energy generating capacity to achieve 2,500 megawatts by 2026. Additional funding will also be provided for land conservation.

This additional focus on the environment is sorely needed in Virginia.



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## NEWS



Actors (from left): Freya Nardelli, Hannah Donis, Ennis Shabab, Zoe Koperna, Madison Cosgrove, Elliot Blocksom.

## 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at South Lakes

Reston's South Lakes High School Theatre Department students, under the direction of its Theatre Arts Director, Eva Forman, delighted audiences last month with a Cajun twist on William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

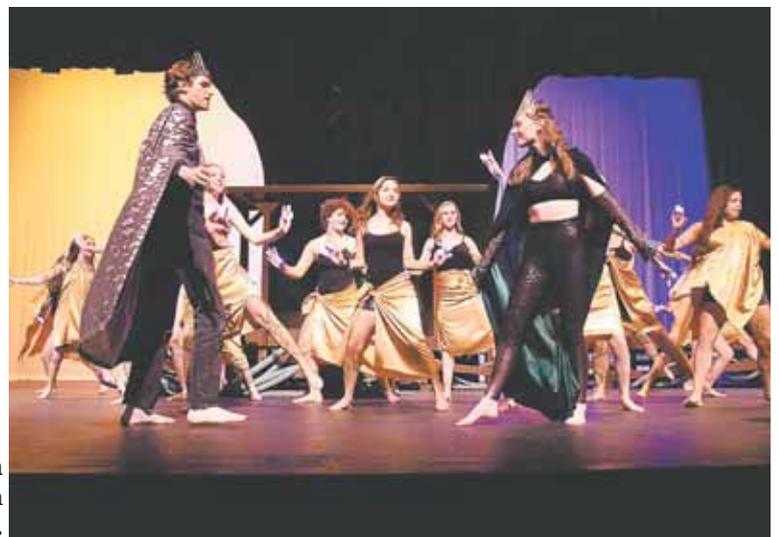
"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a comic tale of how the residents of Athens mix with fairies from a local forest. In the city, Duke of Athens Theseus (Jonah Kossoy) is to marry Queen of the Amazons Hippolyta (Ryleigh Line). Bottom (Ennis Shabab) the weaver and his friends rehearse a play in the woods that they hope to stage for the wedding celebrations. Meanwhile, four young Athenians are in a romantic tangle. Lysander (Noah Rice) and Demetrius (Kiran Drew) love Hermia (Serena Mandala-Kol). Hermia loves Lysander and her friend Helena (Farrah Greeves) loves Demetrius. Hermia's father, Egeus (Colin Walsh), commands Hermia to marry

Demetrius, and Theseus supports the father's right. All four young Athenians end up in the woods where Robin Goodfellow (Emilia Cayelli) and Puck (Keaton Lazar) serve the fairy king Oberon (Aaron McDonald), and put flower juice on the eyes of Lysander, and then Demetrius, unintentionally causing both to love Helena. Oberon, who is quarreling with his wife, Titania (Maya Berry), also uses the flower juice on her eyes. As a result, Titania falls in love with Bottom, who now, thanks to Robin Goodfellow, wears an ass's head. As the lovers sleep, Robin Goodfellow restores Lysander's love for Hermia, so that now each young woman is matched with the man she loves. Oberon disenchant's Titania and removes Bottom's ass's head. The two young couples then join the royal couple in getting married, and Bottom rejoins his friends to perform the play.

## Cappies Nominations

Director: Eva Forman; Technical Director/Set Designer Alessandro Gaiarin; Lighting Designer Erin Baynard; Assistant to the Director Kenzy Forman; Stage Managers Elizabeth Beausoleil, Anna Gillespie, and Audrey Moore, along with the rest of the SLHS cast and crew are proud to be nominated for several Cappie awards for this magical production.

Source: <https://www.folger.edu/midsummer-nights-dream>



King Oberon played by Aaron McDonald and Queen Titania played by Maya Berry.

PHOTOS BY  
KIMBERLY BERRY

Play in a play for the Royals (left to right) - Charlie Barbaro, Anand Bhandari, Ryleigh Line, Colin Walsh, Jonah Kossoy, Ennis Shabab.



## Where to Give for Local impact

FROM PAGE 4

- appreciation for all that they have done. Mailing address: 4201 Wilson Blvd., #110-284, Arlington, VA 22203, CFC #33011, Phone 703-591-4965, cause-usa.org
- ❖ **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. Nonprofit providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program, 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. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
  - ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 herndonrestonfish.org Herndon-Reston FISH has assisted local residents in short-term crises by since 1969. 703-437-0600.
  - ❖ **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
  - ❖ **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
  - ❖ **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. 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
  - ❖ **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.
  - ❖ **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
  - ❖ **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.

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## 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.

# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**Santa's Secret Shop.** Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 3 p.m. thru Dec. 22. At Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, at Route 28 and Route 7 at Claude Moore Park in Sterling. Children can shop in the barn theatre for their parents, grandparents, siblings, and teachers with the help of volunteer elves and museum staff. It will offer a selection of gifts priced under \$10. Santa's helpers will be available to help children wrap purchases with special bags and ribbons. When they are finished shopping, children can send a postcard to Santa at the North Pole. While waiting, parents can browse the museum gift shop where most items will be marked down 50%. Visit the website: [www.heritagefarmmuseum.org](http://www.heritagefarmmuseum.org)

**Centroid Towns: Like a Passing Shadow.** Through Jan. 4, at GRACE, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston. GRACE presents the next chapter of Baltimore-based artist Nate Larson's Centroid Towns project. Since the first US census in 1790, the United States Census Bureau has been recording the mean center of population as it moves steadily west and south. The first Centroid Town recorded was Chestertown, Maryland, and the projected Centroid of the 2020 census is Hartville, Missouri. Larson will dive deeper into the community of Waterford, Virginia, Centroid Town of 1810. Visit [restonarts.org/exhibition/nate-larson/](http://restonarts.org/exhibition/nate-larson/) for more.

**"Matilda The Musical."** Now thru Dec. 22. At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Show times are Thursdays through Sundays. A Broadway musical about a courageous girl with an unbounded imagination who proves that despite the odds, you can do anything you put your mind to — and change your destiny. Based on the book by Roald Dahl. Tickets start at \$40; Family 4-pack available — Buy 3 get one free with code "NextStopFam." Call 866-811-4111 or visit the website: [nextstoptheatre.org](http://nextstoptheatre.org).

## FRIDAY/DEC. 20

**Family Board Game Pop-Up.** 6-8 p.m. At Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. The Starting Player Pop-Up Company brings a wide variety of board games you've never tried: quick silly games, strategic, games for small or large groups, plus the knowledge and expertise to teach them quickly. Games can take between five minutes and up to an hour. On top of the games, the knowledge, and the family time, you can create your own nut-free trail mix. Cost is \$4 person/\$14 per family, per date. To register, visit [herndon-va.gov/recreation](http://herndon-va.gov/recreation), or call 703-787-7300.

**Friday Sound Series.** 7:30 p.m. At ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Holiday music and stories from Appalachia with local musicians, and storytellers. Recommended donation of \$10. Call 703-956-6590 or visit the website: [artsherndon.org](http://artsherndon.org)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 21

**Children's Winter Wonderland.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. At Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Free admission. Includes crafts, face painting, holiday letter writing, games, sweet treats, storytime and more. Please bring a canned/non-perishable food item to donate to a local food bank. Sponsored by the Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

**Holiday Performances at The Promenade.** At 12 noon. At Reston Town Center, Market Street, Reston. (Between Market Street and Democracy Drive, Reston). Schedule:

12-12:45 p.m. — Northern Virginia Ukulele Ensemble;

1-1:45 p.m. — Rick Landers, Guitar and Vocals; One-hour music performances presented by Reston Community Center. Call 703-476-4500 or visit [restoncommunitycenter.com](http://restoncommunitycenter.com).

**Angel Workshop & Sale.** 2-4 p.m. At Hambrook Holistic Healing Center, 297 Herndon Parkway, Suite 105, Herndon. They will use meditation to get you in contact with your angel. After the meditation, they will share angel stories and get to know each other. Free. Visit the website: <https://www.hambrookholistichealing.co/>



**A Christmas Eve Service will be held Tuesday, Dec. 24 at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston.**

## Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday/Dec. 24, 5-6 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston. This special candlelight Christmas Eve worship service will be full of music and joy. All are welcome. Free. Nursery care will be offered for children ages 4 and under; sign up on the website if you need nursery care for your little one. All children are welcome in the worship service. Visit the website: <http://www.uureston.org/christmas-eve>



**"The Mountaintop" will be presented Jan. 9 to Feb. 2 at NextStop Theatre in Herndon.**

## "The Mountaintop"

Jan. 9 to Feb. 2, At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. "The Mountaintop" is a historical drama taking place in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s hotel room the night before his assassination. He meets a young maid who forces him to consider exactly who and what he is fighting for. Full of vivid theatricality, poetic language, and surprising twists, this drama takes us to the summit of a man's historic life and offers a stunning view of his dream for our nation. Visit the website: [www.nextstoptheatre.org/shows/mountaintop](http://www.nextstoptheatre.org/shows/mountaintop)

## DEC. 21-22

**Wagon Rides with Santa.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. You're in for a jolly time when Santa takes the wheel on the "Wagon Rides with Santa" at Frying Pan Farm Park. Celebrate the holiday season with Santa in the driver's seat.

Enjoy hot cocoa and roast marshmallows by the fire before or after your wagon ride. This program is designed for participants age 2 to adult. Register for rides on the half-hour. The cost is \$5 per person. A registered adult is required to attend with all registered children. Call 703-437-9101 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park>.

**"Santa's Funky Hawaiian Christmas Cabaret."** 6:30 p.m. At StageCoach Theatre Company, 20937 Ashburn Road, Suites 115 and 120, Ashburn. StageCoach Theatre Company presents a musical revue, "Santa's Funky Hawaiian Christmas Cabaret". Ticket prices range from \$25 for non-dinner performances to \$60 when dinner is included. This show will feature the vocal talents of Lisa Alford, Kat Brais, Doug Marcks, Joey Olson, Katie Pond, and Jolene Vettese. This musical revue is produced by Jerri Wiseman, a co-owner of StageCoach Theatre Company. Reservations for dinner theatre performances are required for catering purposes. Reservations can be made online at <https://stagecoachtc.com/santas-funky-hawaiian-christmas-cabaret/>

## DEC. 21-23

**"A Seussified Christmas Carol."** At StageCoach Theatre, 20937 Ashburn Road, Suites 115 and 120, Ashburn. StageCoach Theatre for Young Audiences presents a family-friendly tale, "A Seussified Christmas Carol". The show is a whimsical reinvention of Dickens' most beloved Christmas story in wacky rhymed couplets. With zoot fruited juices and binka bird geese, from Bed-Headed Fred to Timmy Loo Hoo, this tale of glorious holiday cheer is similar to something Dr. Seuss might have come up with — if he ever had his way with the story. This classic story has been "Seussified" by playwright Peter Bloedel and brought to life by director Linda Cirba. The show will be held Dec. 21 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.; Dec. 22 at 2 p.m.; and Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. Ticket prices are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children ages 3-12. Reservations are encouraged at <https://stagecoachtc.com>. Tickets will be sold at the door pending availability. Seating will be on a first come, first served basis. Doors open 30 minutes prior to the show start time.

## TUESDAY/DEC. 24

**Christmas Eve Service.** 5-6 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston. This special candlelight Christmas Eve worship service will be full of music and joy. All are welcome. Free. Nursery care will be offered for children ages 4 and under; sign up on the website if you need nursery care for your little one. All children are welcome in the worship service. Visit the website: <http://www.uureston.org/christmas-eve>

## SUNDAY/DEC. 29

**Resolutions Workshop.** 1-3 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Explore your interests and plan goals for your best life in 2020. Workshop includes interactive activities and planning workbook. Register <https://bit.ly.367qUMH>.

**West Coast Swing Lesson plus Social Dance.** 5-8 p.m. at Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St. #1, Herndon. Instructor Tim Bowker and partner Laura Martin will teach West Coast Swing, 5-6 p.m. Classes videotaped for individual review. Basic skills recommended. Social dancing, 6-8 p.m. WCS crossovers and ballroom, Latin, Hustle contemporary mix. \$10; \$8, USA Dance members. Email [herndonsocialdancers@gmail.com](mailto:herndonsocialdancers@gmail.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/herndonsocialdancers](http://www.facebook.com/herndonsocialdancers).

## MONDAY/DEC. 30

**Bob Brown Puppets.** 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. At Frying Pan Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Keep the holiday season merry with a ticket to the "Nutcracker Fantasy Puppet Show" at Frying Pan Farm Park. Join Master Puppeteer Bob Brown at Frying Pan's visitor center for an exciting marionette performance, and get ready to enter the Kingdoms of Snow, Flowers, Sweets, and Far-a-Way Places. It's fun for all ages! Cost is \$5 per person. Call 703-437-9101 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/frying-pan-park>.

## TUESDAY/DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve Golf Tournament.** 10 a.m. Shotgun Start. At Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. Cost is \$70 per player; entry deadline: Dec. 26. Call 703-471-5769 or visit the website [herndongolf.com](http://herndongolf.com)