

CONNECTION

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Helping Refugees After Harrowing Escape

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Cynthia Fox (center), of Alexandria, visits with members of Afghan refugee Javi's family at Quantico, bringing donations of clothing, and other essentials.

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PHOTO BY RON GREEN

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NEWS



PHOTO BY RON GREEN

Cynthia Fox (center), of Alexandria, visits with members of Afghan refugee Javi and family at Quantico, bringing donations of clothing and other essentials.



PHOTO BY LINSEY WISE

A second sort of donations at Ramstein Air Base separated clothing by sex, age and size.

Northern Virginians Aid Afghan Evacuee Family

Support Crosses Three Continents.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

This is the story of one family's successful evacuation from Afghanistan to escape the brutal policies and actions of the Taliban. It's also the story of how groups of northern Virginia residents made the evacuation possible in the face of shrinking hope and rising danger, and how they helped one family start their journey to freedom and safety.

There are many Afghan families whose stories are similar to this family's and many neighbors who felt the call to help. Situated so close to the global seat of power that is Washington D.C., many residents in our area are among those involved in high profile events. What makes this story different is that local people took on the role that the government could not, making the ultimate difference in the lives of many who aided the U.S. in time of war.

MEET THE FOX-GREENS, both career Army veterans now residing in Alexandria. Ron Green served in Afghanistan in the 528th Special Operation Support Battalion from 2000-2003; his wife served in Kandahar in 2005-06. The Northern Virginia couple, together with others, organized a core group of veterans after a plea from friend and fellow veteran Thomas Koppen. Koppen's Afghan translator, Javid, who served in support of U.S. troops through 2017, had called seek-
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PHOTO BY JON-PAUL DELANGE

Northern Virginian group organizer, veteran Ron Green (left), of Alexandria, stands with Afghan evacuee Javi on Quantico Marine Base after Javi's escape from Kabul with his family.

ing assistance. Javid's long period of application for a Special Immigrant Visa, begun in 2016, had not been finalized. Dangers and pressures were building in the final days of U.S. troop withdrawal. Javid was desperately worried for his safety and his family's.

The Special Immigrant Visa program is available to people who worked with the U.S. Armed Forces or under Chief of Mission authority as a translator or interpreter in Iraq or Afghanistan.

When Green's friends recognized there was no existing system within the State Department or Department of Defense that could coordinate with these allied families



PHOTO BY COLBY WISE

Northern Virginians residing in Germany buy out the IKEA store inventory of blankets to contribute to evacuees arriving at Ramstein Air Base

like Javid's, the veterans organized. They took on the task of getting the interpreter and his family out of danger. In what Fox described as a "spider web" of contacts, including those from her service in Kandahar Province and Kuwait, several groups connected to help each other in their mission, including some still on active duty in Afghanistan.

Communications in Afghanistan required encryption to avoid leading the Taliban to the hidden families.

Over several harrowing days and nights, the family, six girls under the age of ten, six women, and six men, reached the airport and were safely airlifted to Germany. Their escape included narrowly missing the suicide bombing at Kabul International Airport.

Give to Help Refugees

At a time of the year when many more area citizens will open their hearts to help others in need, these local charities are offering assistance to Afghan evacuees who must start again from nothing:

LUTHERAN SERVICES

National Capital Area,
www.lssnca.org

AFGHAN YOUTH RELIEF FOUNDATION

Chantilly,
www.aryl.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Arlington,
www.cceda.net

HOMES NOT BORDERS

Washington D.C.,
www.homesnotborders.org

LOCAL VETERAN SPONSORED FUND

<https://gofund.me/b5cf1eb0>

Javid's was not the only family aided by the group.

"Our efforts to date have successfully rescued 12 translators and their families. This is great news, but the work continues," according to the group's Go Fund Me. "There are many others our group is working on getting out of Afghanistan including interpreters who directly supported Special Operations, Medical Professionals, and workers who supported an Afghan Orphanage all of whom are in fear for their lives for working with US Forces. Many more still in harm's way, trying to get out of Afghanistan."

Read more at <https://gofund.me/b5cf1eb0>

SEE AFGHAN EVACUEE, PAGE 4

Northern Virginians Aid Afghan Evacuee Family

FROM PAGE 3

MEANWHILE IN GERMANY, at U.S. Air Force, Ramstein Air Base, another northern Virginia couple, Colby and Linsey Wise were also heeding the call to help. The Wise family, formerly of Falls Church, had been in Germany for four years with Colby's company, providing Defense Department support. Ramstein Air Base was designated to receive evacuees airlifted from Kabul as a point of departure to the U.S. and other countries.

The Ramstein Air Base newsletter told of a growing effort, "What started as a clothing and shoe drive turned into a large donation process to sustain the evacuee population from Afghanistan temporarily housed on Ramstein Air Base, Germany, during Operation Allies Welcome. ... The team received donations valued at \$1.3 million from local and international communities during the evacuation operations. The donation process began on the evening of Aug. 19, 2021, shortly after [the first] evacuees arrived at Ramstein. It dawned on us really quickly that we needed more space. Many of the donated items were not only from the Kaiserslautern Military Community, but they were from the United States, Belgium, France and other countries around the world. Volunteers collected more than 110 tons of donations."

Linsey Wise described the donation center effort. "The first sort was general sorting (e.g., men's clothes, kids shoes, baby food), the second sort was more specific (e.g., boys clothes size 2T, baby formula, women's small pants). Once sorted, the donations went to a hardened shelter area on



PHOTO BY LINSEY WISE

Three year old Jackson Wise helps pack and load jackets and other warm clothing donated by friends and neighbors of his family for evacuees traveling through Germany.

Ramstein AB where other volunteers pulled together clothing kits. These kits contained underwear, socks, pants, shirts, scarves, hats, coats, etc. and were handed out to evacuees once they got some essentials from the Red Cross. We tried to ensure that folks had a clean set of warm clothes right away since many people came with only the clothes on their backs. "

Linsey added, "Never have I felt the need to give back more than during 'Operation Allies Welcome.' Colby and I literally put our lives on pause [and hired babysitters] so we could volunteer, purchase essential items, and make purchases on behalf of friends, family, and coworkers back stateside. It was a very humbling and emotional experience, and I feel so lucky to have been a part of this effort and meet some amazing people along the way."

Leaving Ramstein Air Base, Javid and



PHOTO BY JON-PAUL DELANGE

Cynthia Fox brings toys, books and stickers, which the girls particularly enjoyed, to Javid's daughters, Sahar, 5 years old, Kawsar, 3 years old, and Hila 7 years old.

his family were flown to Dulles International Airport, then transported to temporary housing at Quantico Marine Base. After many weeks, they are still at Quantico as they await completion of final processing for the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), part of the United Nations System, the leading inter-governmental organization providing support for immigrants across the globe. IOM will assist the family in getting to Seattle, where they plan to settle near family members who have been in the U.S. for some time.

Meanwhile in Virginia, the Fox-Green group has continued to organize donations. Multiple visits to the evacuee family at Quantico included delivery of four truck-

loads of essentials from donors across Northern Virginia. Fox said that beyond clothing and shoes, they brought books to help entertain the girls and assist them in learning English. She commented that the family will once again be able to take only a limited amount of belongings with them on the final part of their journey as they fly to Seattle. Fox was complimentary of the work that charities such as Lutheran Social Services are doing to support refugees with transportation, housing, job assistance, mentoring, and other essential needs beyond what the small local group can manage. The Lutheran's national capital group, with the help of 5,300 volunteers, has assisted 926 Afghan allies to date.

Strauss and Moon Honored

The contributions of two former Fairfax County School Board members were recognized at the School Board meeting on Nov. 11 when two school facilities were renamed in their honor.

The theater dressing rooms at McLean High School were renamed after Janie Strauss, a School Board member for the Dranesville District from 1993 to 2019, an avid former educator, and director of the nationally acclaimed Critics Awards Program for High School Theater, known as the Cappies. Her three children graduated from McLean where they were active in the arts and athletics. The McLean High School theater dressing rooms will be known as the "Janie Strauss Dressing Rooms."

"Janie Strauss has made education her life's work, as a teacher, through two de-

acades of volunteer service, and as the longest serving woman on the FCPS School Board," said Tamar Derenak Kaufax, School Board member for the Lee District. "She is a model of stability and patience, is respectful and inclusive, energetic and strong, and a trusted counselor and friend."

Strauss served as the president of the Fairfax County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations and chair of its education and budget committees. She also served on many key education and youth-related committees, including the Fairfax County Public Schools Career and Technical Preparation Task Force, the Division Planning Committee, the Citizens Bond Committee, and the Fairfax Framework for Student Success.

"It has been my honor to serve the children and families of Fairfax County, and to have had the opportunity to be a proud

member of the School Board," said Strauss.

Ilryong Moon, an At-Large School Board member from 1995 to 2019, was honored with a resolution dedicating the main gym at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) in his name. The gym will now be known as "Ilryong Moon Gymnasium."

Moon's two sons attended TJHSST. He was appointed an At-Large member of the School Board in 1995 and in November of that year became the first Asian-American to be elected to a public office in Virginia.

"I truly appreciated that my time serving with Mr. Moon, after eight years of service together, he became such a wise counsel for me," said Meghan McLaughlin, School Board representative for the Braddock District. "One of the things that was so characteristic of Mr. Moon is, not only that he was known for his professionalism, but was

the way he treated everyone with respect and dignity. One of the things he tried to teach me over and over again, was to show your praise in public and share your constructive feedback in private," added McLaughlin.

Moon served as chairman of the School Board in 2006, 2012, and 2013, and three terms as vice chairman in 2005, 2011, and 2018. He led the push by the School Board to require full-time certified athletic trainers at each high school, and also volunteered his time for the TJHSST athletic department, handling concessions, working the ticket booth, and serving as an announcer.

"Sports is a universal language. Sports can help our students and members of the community overcome whatever disability they may have. Sports can bring mankind together," said Moon

Britepaths Needs Help to Provide Holiday Meals

Fairfax nonprofit is assisting 500 local families.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When people think of Thanksgiving and Christmas, they often think about the special foods associated with them, including turkey, stuffing, a wide array of side dishes and delicious desserts. But for families in Fairfax County struggling to put food on their tables, at all – let alone, during the holidays – special meals are completely out of their reach.

That's where Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths comes in – with help from the community. And if area residents, churches and other organizations are as generous as they have been in the past, then Britepaths will be able to make sure that 500 county families in need can purchase food for their Thanksgiving and December holiday meals and buy presents for their children.

"Due to the pandemic, Britepaths is assisting families this year by distributing gift cards that will allow parents in families referred to us to purchase food and gifts for their children," said Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. "Donations of funds or gift cards are greatly needed to ensure that all families will receive help."

For more information and to make a contribution, visit Britepaths' Holiday Program page at <https://britepaths.org/our-programs/holiday-program>. Britepaths' new online donation form makes it easy for users to donate and also create their own donation campaigns to share with friends and colleagues.

In addition, gift cards or checks payable to Britepaths may be mailed to: Britepaths, 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please write "Holiday" on the check memo line. Anyone with questions may contact Britepaths at 703-273-8829 or info@britepaths.org.

Staff at a number of Fairfax County Public Schools with which Britepaths partners referred families with demonstrated need to receive assistance. Participating schools include those in the Fairfax High pyramid, and among the families served are those living in the City of Fairfax and central Fairfax County.

"We are nearing the end of another year that has been difficult for so many of us, and especially challenging for families who are struggling from lost income, illness and other effects of the pandemic," said Whetzel. "It is a heartwarming feeling to know your



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER WEBB

Mila Cobos, Britepaths' programs manager, receives a \$2,050 donation for Britepaths' Holiday Program from Mike Kimlick, representing American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax City. The money will provide holiday meals and children's gifts for 13 local families in need.

act of kindness can make a big difference for our neighbors during such a trying time. We hope community members will be inspired to make the season brighter for hardworking families who may otherwise go without holiday meals and presents for their children."

She also noted that Britepaths is grateful to its Holiday Program sponsors, American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax, the Peterson Family Foundation and the Fair Lakes Walmart. Britepaths is currently in its 37th year of providing assistance and a way forward for struggling individuals and families throughout Fairfax County.

During the pandemic, it's been providing greatly enhanced food and financial-assistance services to area residents in crisis, as well as virtual financial literacy, job-readiness services and more. Throughout the year, the organization relies on funding and volunteer support from businesses, individuals, community organizations and faith communities to provide services that stabilize families and help them build resilience against crises.

Mini-Grants for Youth-Led Projects to Reduce Stigma of Mental Illness

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) is once again offering mini-grants for youth-led projects to reduce stigma among their peers, with support from the Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia which is funded by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. In addition to the goal of reducing the stigma around mental illness,

the mini-grants also aim to promote help-seeking behaviors. While mental health concerns and disorders are common, frank discussions about them are not a common occurrence. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in youth ages 10-24.

These mini-grants will fund youth-planned, youth-led projects within Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and Falls Church City, to be completed by August 15, 2022. A total of \$6,000 is

available, for requests not to exceed \$1,000 each.

Proposals are due Monday, Nov. 29, 2021 and awards will be announced Friday, Dec. 3, 2021. For more information on the program, some ideas from previous awardees, and how to apply visit the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) website <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/sites/community-services-board/files/assets/documents/2021-2022%20youth-led-mini-grant-rfp.pdf>

Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting

Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 7 p.m.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting>

You are invited to participate in a virtual joint public meeting held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). According to Virginia Code, these organizations shall conduct a joint public meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving public comments on, the transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

The virtual meeting will begin with a brief presentation followed by a public comment period. During the presentation you can learn about various transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia's Multimodal Project Pipeline Program
- NVTA's updates to TransAction and the FY2022-2027 Six Year Program; the NVTA Transportation Technology Strategic Plan; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC's Commuter Choice program
- DRPT's funding opportunities, Six-Year Improvement Program and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA)
- VRE project updates

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted at <https://www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting>. The team of VDOT, DRPT, OIPI, NVTA, NVTC and VRE representatives will make a presentation beginning at 7 p.m. highlighting their transportation programs, regional collaboration and receive public comments about Virginia's transportation network.

Give your comments during the joint meeting after the presentation concludes or submit your written comments by **January 7, 2022** by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775



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Where to Give for Local Impact

❖ Alice's Kids (@alicewillhelp) aliceskids.org P.O. Box 60, Mount Vernon, VA 22121 When a child is raised in poverty they suffer both publicly and privately. When there is no food in the refrigerator, no electricity or heat, these are hardships that they can keep hidden from their peers. But, when that same child can't afford to pay for the band field trip, a pair of glasses, a chorus outfit or a new pair of shoes, these are indignities that are evident to their classmates. Alice's Kids pays for these relatively inexpensive items in the hopes of preserving the dignity of the child. <https://aliceskids.org/>

❖ 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 info@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

❖ 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 Web: theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/

❖ Comfort for America's Uninformed Services (CAUSE) ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. Mailing address: 4201 Wilson Blvd., #110-284, Arlington, VA 22203, CFC #33011, Phone 703-591-4965, cause-usa.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.

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.

❖ Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO), 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families. www.echo-inc.org.

❖ 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

❖ Fairfax City Area FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) FISH provides funds and volunteers to serve the needy and elderly in the greater Fairfax City area of Fairfax County. FISH responds to requests for life's necessities: food, clothing, financial assistance for delinquent rent, mortgage, utility bills, gasoline, and prescriptions. 703-222-0880 fairfaxfish.org/

❖ Food for Others Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. 2938 Prosperity Ave. info@foodforothers.org. Food for Others distributes food to more than 1,800 local families in need each week. Drop off food at our Merrifield Warehouse, 2938 Prosperity Ave, Fairfax, VA 22031. Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 5pm. www.foodforothers.org

❖ 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.

❖ 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 since 1969. 703-437-0600.

❖ 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

SEE WHERE TO GIVE, PAGE 12

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Community member Brian McCawley creates perfectly square, holes to welcome his tree seedlings

Paul Worsham and his daughter Alyssa join in the community hole digging to prep for tree planting

Community Plants Trees, Saves Money

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

joined by native wildflowers grown by individual families from donated seed; and by wildflower seeds scattered into the soil for a re-wilding garden effect.

Community efforts such as this one, are encouraged by “Celebration of Trees,” a campaign organized by the nonprofit group Plant NoVA Natives (plantnovanatives.org).

“Whatever your priority (people, wildlife, planet, shade, beauty, clean air and water, erosion prevention, animal food and shelter) there is a reason why you should plant a native tree.”

Fairfax Releaf (fairfaxreleaf.com) is a volunteer non-profit group seeking “to conserve, restore and promote sustainable urban forests in Northern Virginia.”

Susan Laume is a Virginia Master Naturalist. See virginiamasternaturalist.org

With the cost of lawn mowing services passing \$1500 annually for a small lot, the Ridge Road Estates Home Owners Association (RREHOA) in Springfield voted to turn their grassy common area into a better nature habitat, and save money at the same time. Using their own sweat equity, a group of 14 neighbors in the 37 household community dug holes and planted trees on Nov. 11 and 13. Tree seedlings and planting supplies were donated by Fairfax Releaf.

Tree placement on the lot mirrors the community’s house layout, so that each household has a designated native tree to monitor and maintain. The trees will be



Neighbors, (left to right) Kevin Dean, Antonio Baines, Stewart Forbes , Ming-Jen Pan, Susan Laume, Diane Elbe, and Paul Worsham, team up to plant, stake, and sleeve tree seedlings of eight species as they add 38 trees to an empty common area lot, for future improvement of environment, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, and property values in their neighborhood.

NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 16, 2021, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water’s offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2022, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,400 to \$4,510[†].
- A decrease in the Local Facilities Charge from \$19,610 to \$19,400.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,430 to \$1,480[†].
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$40 to \$41.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$14.85 to \$14.95[†].
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.33 to \$3.46 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- A decrease in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.90 to \$3.85.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the changes in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
- An increase in the Overhead Charges for (Labor) from 102% to 103% and a decrease for (Materials) from 13% to 12%.

[†]Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8” residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$208 million budget for calendar year 2022*. Water sales are expected to provide \$180.1 million and the remaining \$27.9 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

| Category | -- \$1,000s -- | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | 2021 | 2022 |
| Personal Services & Employee Benefits | \$58,379 | \$63,585 |
| Power and Utilities | 10,597 | 10,795 |
| Chemicals | 7,637 | 8,688 |
| Purchased Water | 6,863 | 8,013 |
| Supplies and Materials | 4,984 | 5,272 |
| Insurance | 1,157 | 1,214 |
| Fuel | 680 | 753 |
| Postage | 585 | 618 |
| Contractual Services | 11,737 | 12,526 |
| Professional Services | 1,254 | 1,249 |
| Other | 2,243 | 2,740 |
| Sub-Total | 106,116 | 115,453 |
| Transfer to Improvement Fund | (10,763) | (10,949) |
| Total | \$95,353 | \$104,504 |

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Debt Payment | \$42,484,307 |
| Improvement Fund | \$11,000,000 |
| General Fund | \$47,922,000 |

*Fairfax Water’s Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

Visit fairfaxwater.org/rates to view a copy of the proposed changes.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Karen Barnette at 703-289-6029.

Written comments to can be sent to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

'The Core of our Neighborhoods and Communities'

Small Business Saturday is Nov. 27.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

To encourage customers to shop local, Fairfax City will celebrate the holidays this weekend with Small Business Saturday on Nov. 27. The fun will also include the City's annual, Elf Scavenger Hunt, plus special offers and giveaways.

Fairfax City's Economic Development Office is putting on this event in partnership with the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce and the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. And all three entities are delighted to participate.

"Fairfax City kicks off the holiday season on this special day," said Shannon Duffy, executive director of the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. "The OTFBA celebrates Small Business Saturday with our community in support of our fierce, hardworking, small businesses. We are excited to bring family programs and activities that reward shoppers and support local, small businesses, this holiday season and all year long."

Established in 2010 and held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Small Business Saturday is a nationwide initiative to help local communities thrive by encouraging shoppers to support independently owned businesses during the holidays. And, said Danette Nguyen, the City's assistant economic



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANETTE NGUYEN

One of the elves that'll be hiding in a storefront window display.

development director, "As a Small Business Saturday Neighborhood Champion, Fairfax City serves as an ambassador for the Shop Small cause by supporting, rallying and bringing other businesses together throughout the holiday season."

An important part of the City's Shop Small movement is Fairfax's Elf Scavenger Hunt, which will begin at 9 a.m. with a welcome station at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. There, attendees can pick up treats and giveaways – including tote bags, coffee and cocoa, participate in children's activities, have a photo taken with Santa and pick



Small Business Saturday supports local merchants.

up an Elf Scavenger Hunt card. Children may also mail their letters to Santa, create elf picture frames and have up to three gifts wrapped for free, while supplies last, until 2 p.m.

The card lists 29 businesses that have hidden an elf inside their business or somewhere in their storefront windows. Shoppers are encouraged to find five or more elves and to make a purchase at one business by Monday, Dec. 6, to have their name entered into a drawing to win one of 10 gift cards, valued at \$50, from a participating business of their choice.

New, unwrapped toys for donation to Toys for Tots will also be collected at the welcome station. They may also be dropped off that day in the designated toy boxes inside Old Town Hall.

While searching for elves, residents and

visitors may use this opportunity to start their holiday shopping, while supporting local businesses, as many are featuring special promotions and sales for the day. But there's an even more important reason for shoppers to participate.

"As we continue our economic recovery, it is vital that we engage and patronize our independently owned businesses, as they are the core of our neighborhoods and communities," said Nguyen. "Now in its third year, the citywide Elf Scavenger Hunt was developed to directly connect shoppers with small businesses."

"It's also a great way to support those you know and discover hidden gems in our small business community," she said. "I urge all to spend locally this holiday season and support the small businesses that are the heart of Fairfax City."

Likewise, Jennifer Rose, executive director of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, said, "The Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be a part of what is rapidly becoming a Fairfax City Tradition. The Elf Hunt and welcome station are fun, family-friendly programs to encourage the public to shop local and support the small businesses throughout the City of Fairfax."

Nguyen also noted that the City's Economic Development Office is recognized again this year as a "Neighborhood Champion" as part of the American Express Shop Small program.

To learn more about Fairfax City's Small Business Saturday, go to fairfaxcityconnected.com/21shopsmall and visit the welcome station, this Saturday, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Fairfax Welcomes MARA Mode on Main Market

New boutique offers fashions, gifts and home décor.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Billing itself as a lifestyle boutique, MARA Hair and Mode Studio in Fairfax City aims to give its clients the hair and make-up styles that are perfect for them, as well as clothing and accessories. But now, it's expanding its operations so that its existing shop at 4011 Chain Bridge Road will focus on hair and makeup, and its fashions and home goods will move into a new home on Main Street.

As part of this weekend's Small Business Saturday, MARA Mode on Main Market will welcome customers into the iconic blue building at 10417 Main St. that used to house Paint Your Own Pottery. Its first days of business will be an open house, Saturday, Nov. 27, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 28, from noon-4 p.m.

"What started as one stylist's chair has grown into a big family of staff and an amazing and supportive community in Fairfax City," said MARA Hair and Mode Studio



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON DUFFY

MARA Mode on Main Market is at 10417 Main St. in Fairfax City.

founder Jana Klavina. "As our community got bigger, planning to extend our studio has been in the works."

She said the business had several opportunities to expand in other cities. But once the news of its possible departure from Fairfax spread, City Mayor David Meyer spoke with her. And, said Klavina, "That conversation

made me realize that Mara Hair and Mode Studio has a big imprint in Fairfax City."

And now, it's been able to expand just around the corner from its salon. "It's no secret that this location is dear to my heart, and I was ecstatic when the opportunity arose to stay in Fairfax City," added Klavina. "We are spreading our wings in the neigh-



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIELLE WADE

MARA's lead team (from left): Jana Klavina, Breanne Balzano, Danielle Wade, Setareh Sabti and Rebecca Bruce.

borhood with a second location, right here in the heart of Old Town Fairfax, just a few steps away from our hair studio."

Danielle Wade, MARA creative partner and boutique director, said some of the brands and goods available in the new loca-

SEE MARA, PAGE 12

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Next Steps for Confederate Names Task Force

Residents react to proposal to change names of Lee and Lee-Jackson Memorial highways.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



FAIRFAX COUNTY

Lee Highway sign in Fairfax County

The public comment period on whether one or both of Fairfax County's highways, Lee, Route 29 and Lee-Jackson Memorial, Route 50, should be renamed ended on Nov. 12. The next step for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Confederate Names Task Force (CNTF), composed of 28 members and chaired by member Evelyn Spain at their meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 30, is to review the public feedback received and reach their final recommendation.

Recapping the actions since July 2021, the Board charged the Task Force with studying the highway names and recommending to them whether or not to change the names of one or both roadways and provide recommendations on suggested alternative names if such a decision is made. It is noteworthy that if the Board wished to rename one or both roads, they would submit a formal request to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and agree to cover the expense of changing the street signs.

According to Tom Biesiadny, director of the Fairfax County Transportation Department, the cost to manufacture and change the signs alone, 171 signs on 14.1 miles of Lee Highway and 55 signs along 8.43 miles of Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway, would cost between \$1 million and \$4.2 million.

The Board asked staff to explain the existing County process for changing the name of a secondary road in a neighborhood; provide information about changing the names of subdivisions for the benefit of citizens interested in making those changes; coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions that are undertaking name change processes and return to the Board with information about those processes; and provide a report about the history of the naming and renaming of the Magisterial Districts. The Task Force solicited feedback through various methods, including an online survey, email, phone calls, in-person and virtual community listening sessions, and paper surveys at Fairfax County Libraries.

At the Confederate Names Task Force community input meeting held virtually on Nov. 1, caller Colin Smith said that during the last 18 months, he'd seen dozens of small businesses close, more than he'd ever seen in the three decades that he lived in the County. "I believe whatever money is being discussed, potentially earmarked for changing street names through signs, should be spent in more appropriate arenas," he said. He named low-interest loans for small businesses, school renovations, and public parks.

David Collier said that he understood there was a cost associated with it, but he considered the names a wrong that has been in place for a long time, and

it was worthy of the investment. As for the historical perspective argument and that people want to cement history, he said, "I think ... sometimes you need to turn the page and move on. It is clear it is offensive to many."

Jeffrey Herron said that he echoed the sentiment that we don't need to spend "our hard-earned tax money to change street names."

Luella Benedetto said that in her estimation, the County should not be naming things after wars and their participants, generals, and so forth at all, on any side.

Pending the Task Force's recommendation at their Nov. 30 meeting, the next steps could be to begin drafting the report and developing a timeline, leading to a meeting in January 2022 with the Board.

As for what other jurisdictions are doing, on July 17, 2021, the Arlington County Board voted to officially rename US Route 29 Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard within the boundaries of Arlington County between North Lynn Street and the City of Falls Church.

Route 309/"Lee Highway"/"Old Lee Highway" should be renamed Cherry Hill Road, according to a resolution approved by the Arlington County Board on Oct. 19, 2021. The Resolution recommends ultimate approval by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).

The Arlington County website states that the name change will not affect USPS mail services. Arlington County will notify USPS directly, and their Address Management System will be updated. Following USPS updates, the name change will be reflected in the address management systems for major delivery services such as FedEx and UPS.

Under state law, the locality bears all costs associated with producing, placing, and maintaining new street signage. Arlington estimated the cost of the renaming to be up to \$300,000.

| | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| November 15 | Recommendation refinement (Development of Options) If the group is recommending changing the names, identify the top 10 alternatives for each road Task small group to work with Chair and staff to develop report | |
| December 13 | Refinement of options and report Narrow down the list of alternative names from 10-5 Adoption of final report | |
| December 20 | Adoption of final language in report, planning for next steps with Board | |
| January 2022 | Meet with Board to share recommendations & report | |

Meeting schedule for Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Confederate Names Task Force

Post Forest Drive and Random Hills Road Shared-Use Paths Fairfax County

Virtual Design Public Hearing

Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 7 p.m.
<https://www.virginiadot.org/PostForest>

Find out about planned improvements along Post Forest Drive from West Ox Road to Random Hills Road, and along Random Hills Road from Post Forest Drive to Monument Drive to improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity to the I-66 bicycle/pedestrian network. The sidewalk along the south side of Post Forest Drive will be upgraded to a ten-foot-wide shared-use path from just west of Black Ironwood Drive to Random Hills Road. In order to accommodate the ten-foot-wide shared-use path, Post Forest Drive will be restriped without bicycle lanes, and curb and gutter will be modified as needed. The existing sidewalk along the east side of Random Hills Road will be upgraded to a ten-foot-wide shared-use path from Post Forest Drive to the existing shared-use path just beyond the Monument Drive overpass. The project also includes pedestrian improvements at the West Ox Road/Post Forest Drive and Post Forest Drive/Random Hills Road intersections.

The public hearing will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at <https://www.virginiadot.org/PostForest>. The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review project information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2907 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion is being prepared under agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be included in the environmental document.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **January 3, 2022** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Ms. Hong Ha, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Post Forest Drive and Random Hills Road Shared-Use Paths" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.

State Project: 9999-029-457, C501, P101, R201
UPC: 117083
Federal: RSTP-5B01 (148)

In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held
Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at the same time.

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'Almost, Maine': Genuine and Laced with Magic

BY ELLIOT BAIRD

LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY SCHOOL

Here is a Cappies review of the performance of *Almost, Maine* at West Springfield HS on Friday, 11/19/2021.

A shoe falls from the sky, hitting the stage with a significant thunk. An ironing board swings in slow motion at a person's head. Two men collapse to the ground over and over again. This is just another evening in the town of Almost, as depicted by Spartan Theatre's heartwarming production of "Almost, Maine."

John Cariani's "Almost, Maine" is a series of two person vignettes all set at the same time on a Friday night in the titular far north small town. They center around romance and connection, examining the topic from all angles, and are threaded with magical realism. The show ran Off-Broadway in 2006 at the Daryl Roth Theatre, before going on to have a huge life in community and educational theatre.

Every member of this cast presented engaging performances. Their nuance and heart were moving and genuine. The complicated dialogue in the script often called for the actors to speak over one another, and they executed this with a skill that made the scenes feel alive and unscripted. The performances simply seemed natural; the char-



PHOTO BY RAY TECLESENBET

From left, Mad Mitchell and Oliver Bourjaily

acters felt like real people you might have known for years, which made the magical realism even more impactful.

Stand out performances included Jason Richter as Jimmy, Adella Bailey as Glory, and Nick Frazier as East. Richter's frenetic passion delivered a developed, emotionally im-

portant scene. Bailey's quirky charm created a lovable, earnest attitude around her character that tugged at the heart strings. Frazier showed impressive range and growth as his character swung from down to earth to intensely excited.

The technical elements worked in tandem

to create a dreamy Maine landscape. Silhouettes of pine trees poked up against a fading sky, with the northern lights shimmering in the distance. Set, designed by Finley Cochran and Eleanor Heinbaugh, was made up of several different pieces that moved on and off, as well as rotated. It gracefully created the nine different locations used in the show. TJ Green and Rakeb Yihunie's lighting design used patterned light and twilight inspired colors to add depth and a sense of magic to the stage. Green also designed special effects, and their northern lights created the most impactful moment of the show.

Props and costumes showed dedicated attention to detail that truly brought the production to life. Halli Wilkerson and Maddie Schulz's costumes mostly consisted of practical plaid and denim that grounded the characters in their setting, each one unquestionably accurate to the character and scene. An outsider to the town was easy to identify by the way her stylish coat clashed against flannel pajamas and fleeces. Props, designed by Meg Hogan and Isabelle Milley, sold the magical realism of the show. Their playfulness and whimsy were at the core of the production.

Spartan Theatre's cast and crew should be proud of their tender, moving production. Acting and tech worked in unison to create a show that felt undeniably genuine, and most certainly, laced with magic.

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THE CONNECTION Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

Children's & Teens' Connection 2021



During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

With high visibility, this is a great advertising opportunity for every industry, so give us a call about rates and ad sizes at 703-778-9431 or email sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

To submit art, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts, please email kimm.mary@gmail.com.

Advertising Opportunity

History Revisited

Locals African-Americans in their 80s and 90s say Rittenhouse verdict shows that Jim Crow is still alive and well.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The memory of being told that her father was dead is still vivid in the mind of 89-year-old Kit Lewis. He had been lynched and was found hanging from a tree. The men who murdered him were not charged with a crime, says Lewis, who lives in Alexandria, but was born in Mississippi. Learning that Kyle Rittenhouse had been acquitted of murder after claiming his actions were in self-defense, conjured up memories of her father's murder.

"I thought those days were behind us," she said. "That verdict goes to show that our lives are not valued and are not equal to those of white. If a black man had done that and claimed self-defense, he would probably have been sentenced to life behind bars."

African-American octogenarians and nonagenarians, who came of age in the 1920s and 30s, often feared for their lives and freedom because of a justice system that placed a much higher value on the lives of whites than blacks. They now fear for the lives of their children and grandchildren, and say that Kyle Rittenhouse's acquittal proves that the justice system that they experienced as young men and women is still in place.

After 87-year-old Ethyl Norris's daughter passed away from breast cancer, leaving behind two young children, Norris began raising them. Marvin and Carmyn are now 21 and 19 respectively. Both of her grandchildren, who are now in college, are planning to drive home for the Thanksgiving holi-

day. Norris has mixed emotions about grandson traveling this year. While she loves to see him, she always worries when he's driving on the highway.

"Marvin is a smart, educated and talented young man, but because he's 6'2" and black, some people, when some people look at him, especially the police, they will see him as a threat," said Norris, who lives in Vienna "He's doing everything right. He graduated from high school, made good grades, is still making good grades and wants to go medical school when he graduates. But the cards are still stacked against him."

When Marvin is driving, Norris has warned him to wear a shirt or sweatshirt with his college logo and place his school books on both the front and back seat of his car. His driver's license, car registration and insurance card are kept on the sun visor.

"I want him to be able to get those documents with his hands visible at all times," said Norris. "If he's stopped by the police, I pray that doing those things will keep him from becoming another victim of police brutality or arrested for something that

he didn't do. Whether folks will admit it or not, everyone knows that Rittenhouse's verdict shows that black men are guilty until proven innocent, but white men are given the benefit of the doubt."

Always ask for a receipt and a bag when making a purchase is a lesson 92-year-old Hattie Jack-

son of Silver Spring tells grandchildren and great grandchildren. "I don't care about reducing waste, saving and protecting the environment. I am more concerned about saving the lives and protecting my babies, protecting from the police and judges."

"If a white man walked out of a store without a bag or receipt, a policeman would believe him when he said trying to avoid waste and save the planet," said Jackson. "But if my black grandsons walk out of the same store without a receipt to prove they paid for it, they might end up handcuffed in the back of a police car. It's not fair, but it's real. Rittenhouse is just more proof that Jim Crow is still alive and well."

"It's not fair, but it's real. Rittenhouse is just more proof that Jim Crow is still alive and well."

— Hattie Jackson, 92

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Where to Give for Local Impact

FROM PAGE 6

❖ Lamb Center, www.thelambcenter.org, day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178.

❖ LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more. holiday@linkagains-thunger.org. 703-437-1776 www.linkagains-thunger.org.

❖ Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) will provide holiday assistance to hundreds of families. See website for warm coat donation details and volunteer needs. <https://lortonaction.org/2019-thanksgiving-outreach/>

❖ Mount Vernon At Home, 703-303-4060, www.mountvernonathome.org. Mount Vernon At Home membership helps connect senior members of our community. Neighbors helping neighbors with volunteer support is the power of Mount Vernon At Home. The group fundraises all year to make this possible and count on the generosity of the community.

❖ 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.newhope-housing.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.pathway-homes.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. www.potomac.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 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 <https://prsinc.org/>

❖ 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 is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff that has been helping for more than 50 years. 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 www.shareofmclean.org

❖ Shelter House provides crisis intervention, safe housing and supportive services to promote self-sufficiency for homeless fami-

lies 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 non-profit 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@wfcmvva.org and put Holiday Food in the subject line. wfcmvva.org/

Fairfax Welcomes MARA Mode on Main Market

FROM PAGE 8

tion are: The Wooden Postcard Co., mailable, art/keepsake, wooden postcards; Frères Branchiaux candles in a variety of holiday scents; Scout Curated Wears, brass suncatchers with crystals; The Rainbow Vision, curated greeting cards, notepads, 6-12-month planners and journals; Powder Design, socks, scarves, hats and gloves for parents and children; La-

rissa Loden, jewelry from women-designed and owned businesses and made in the U.S.; and Jackson Rowe, clothing from a women-designed and owned company.

"The Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. is excited to have this prime space leased with a proven and talented team of women business owners," said Shannon Duffy, the association's executive director. "The new boutique will contribute to expanding the types of goods and services available in Old Town

Fairfax, adding home goods to the lifestyle boutique mix."

For Small Business Saturday, MĀRA Mode on Main Market will open with a holiday-market concept. "A bevy of activities are planned throughout Historic Old Town Fairfax that day," said Duffy. "And now there will be a new boutique for all to visit."

Still, said Klavina, "The boutique will be blossoming in a new location but not leaving Mara in the slightest. Now, with this

freeing up some space in our little house [on Chain Bridge Road], we're able to do some much-needed expansion to the salon. We'll be adding two chairs to serve our community."

"Our lead team at MARA has grown and, without them, none of this would've been possible," she added. "Together, we will be a haven for our existing team members to grow, expand their vision and create opportunities for new members."

HOLIDAY CALENDAR



Encore Stage & Studio presents "Enchanted Bookshop Christmas" on Dec. 3-5 in Arlington.

sion: Prepay by November 25th: \$10; After the 25th: \$13 Includes skate rental.

DEC. 3-5
"Enchanted Bookshop Christmas."
 At Encore Stage & Studio, Gunston Arts Center - Theatre One, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. When an important holiday present disappears at the bookshop, it's up to our come-to-life book characters to solve the mystery of the missing bookmark and save the day — all without giving away their magical existence. Characters include the Nutcracker Prince, Amy March, the Velveteen Rabbit, the Little Match Girl, and even Ebenezer Scrooge himself. Tickets \$15 for Adults, \$12 for Children, Students, Military and Seniors. Concessions are available for pre-order. Tickets are available online at www.encore-stage.org.

DEC. 3-19
"A Child's Christmas in Wales." Presented by the Vienna Department

Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Torpedo Factory Art Center joins the fun on Alexandria's most festive weekend of the year. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive by fire boat around 3:30 p.m. on the Waterfront. Music fills the halls and the waterfront, beckoning people to browse three floors of open artists' studios. Visit the website: torpedofactory.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 4
Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Old Town's historic waterfront will shine for the 21st annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights sponsored by Amazon. Parade begins at 5:30 p.m.; Dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m. at Waterfront Park (1A Prince St.). Parade viewing areas along one mile of the Old Town Alexandria waterfront stretching from Founders Park (351 N. Union St.) to Ford's Landing Park (99 Franklin St.) Boat parade dockside festivities will entertain parade-goers from 2 to 8 p.m. in Waterfront Park at the foot of King Street. Festivities include a pop-up beer garden from Port City Brewing Company. At 3:30 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive by fireboat at the Alexandria City Marina before attending the annual Torpedo Factory Art Center Holiday Festival. Admission: Free; \$ for food/drink and some activities Visit AlexandriaVA.com/boatparade.



The Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights will be held Saturday, Dec. 4 in Alexandria.

SATURDAYS, DEC. 4, 11, 18
Holiday Market and Winter Village at The Parc in Tysons. At 8508 Leesburg Pike, Tysons. Save the date to purchase your holiday gifts from local artisans and small businesses.

DEC. 4-5
"The Nutcracker." 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. At The Rachel M. Schlesinger Center for Performing Arts NOVA Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. Enjoy this exciting Metropolitan School of the Arts production as Clara fights the evil Mouse Queen and her army of fierce mice to save the handsome and kind Nutcracker doll. On this great adventure, Clara will be transported to a fantastical land where she will meet the dazzling Snow Queen, dancing snowflakes, the Sugar Plum Fairy and many more wonderful characters. Visit the website: metropolitanarts.org

SUNDAY/DEC. 5
Living Nativity. 4-6 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. The Clifton Presbyterian Church and Clifton Betterment Association invites the community to its Living Nativity. Park in town and walk to the church. CBA kids holiday gathering. Stop by the barn, after the live nativity scene at CPC, to see Santa and have some hot chocolate by the fire.

BEGINNING DEC. 5
Old Town Boutique District's Holiday Week. At various boutiques throughout Old Town Alexandria. Head into December with the

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR.
 PAGE 14

HOLIDAYS IN THE MOSAIC DISTRICT
 At 2910 District Ave., Fairfax.
 Santa at Mosaic -- Nov. 26 to Dec. 23
 Holiday Toy Drive -- Nov. 26 to Dec. 13
 Santa on Relay Shuttle -- Nov. 29 at 7 p.m.
 Menorah Lighting -- Dec. 5 at 5 p.m.
 Santa's Motorcade -- Dec. 17 at 5 p.m.

NOV. 27 TO DEC. 19.
Holiday Lights on the Farm. Fridays thru Sundays 5:30 to 8 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. What is "Holiday Lights on the Farm"? It's where you tour Frying Pan Farm Park in the safety and warmth of your car and see an amazing display of holiday decorations lighting up the 135-acre park. The cost is \$20 per private vehicle. Or you can take the tour on a tractor-drawn wagon ride with up to 20 of your family or friends for \$150 per group. Last year this event sold out, so get your tickets early at <https://bit.ly/FPLights>.

NOW THRU JAN. 2
Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Open nightly 5 to 10 p.m.; January 8 to February 27, 2022 (ice skating only), open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring an ice rink, multiple new holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, a retail area, food, music and more. Admission: \$9 for general admission to Village; \$22 for village admission and skating; beginning January 8, \$14 for ice skating; free ages 2 and under. Visit novaparks.com/events/ice-lights

FRIDAY/NOV. 26
Reston Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting. 11 a.m. At Market Street in Reston Town Center. Reston Town Center launches the season with the annual Reston Holiday Parade celebrating its 30th year. The one-hour, half-mile parade along Market Street also welcomes the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a horse-drawn carriage. After the parade, enjoy Mini-Train rides until 4:30 p.m. The Clauses will return for the Fountain Square Tree Lighting at 6 p.m. Afterward, on Market Street, horse-drawn carriage rides continue from 6-10 p.m.

NOV. 26-27; DEC. 3, 4, 10, 11, 19
Mount Vernon by Candlelight. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Take a candlelit guided tour and learn about holiday traditions in 18th-century Virginia. Visit with Mrs. Washington and other 18th-century residents of Mount Vernon in a 45-minute candlelit tour of the Mount Vernon estate, followed by a reception. Hear stories of Christmas-



The Town of Herndon's Holiday Arts and Craft Show will be held Sunday, Dec. 5 in Herndon.

es past from costumed character actors portraying Washington's family, friends, and enslaved or hired staff. Admission: \$36 for adults (ages 12 and up); \$28 for youth (ages 6-11); for members, \$26 for adults; \$18 for youth. Visit the website: mountvernon.org/candlelight

SUNDAY/NOV. 28
"The Elf on the Shelf." 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7740 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons. Travel to the North Pole to glimpse the magical lives of Santa's Scout Elves. Tickets start at \$32.95 with VIP packages available for \$87.95 at CapitalOneHall.com.

TUESDAY/NOV. 30
Clarendon Menorah Lighting. 6 p.m. At Chabad Lubavitch of Alexandria-Arlington. Come out for the Clarendon Menorah Lighting and Community Celebration as you experience the festival of lights. There will be a lighting of a giant 9-foot Menorah, lively music, hot Potato Latkes (pre-packaged), Hot Cocoa, Donuts, (Pre-packaged) Chocolate Gelt and Dreidels for all.

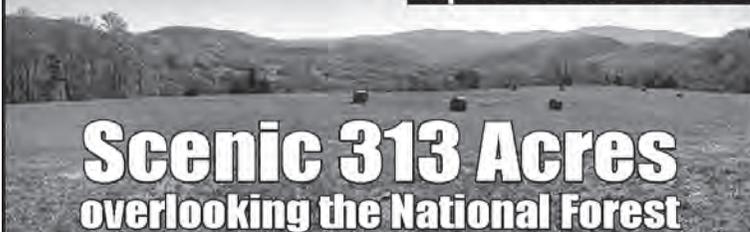
THURSDAY/DEC. 2
Chanukah on Ice. 6-8 p.m. At Pentagon Row (Outdoor Rink), 1201 South Joyce Street, Arlington. Lighting of a Giant 6-foot Menorah. Eat Dinner: Hot Latkes, Kosher Hot Dogs and Refreshments. Admis-

of Parks and Recreation and Vienna Theatre Company. From a story by Dylan Thomas and adapted to the stage by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell. Dates: Fridays and Saturdays, Dec. 3, 4, 17, 18 at 7 p.m.; Sundays, Dec. 5 and 19 at 2 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 18 at 10 a.m. Visit the website: www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

DEC. 3-4
Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend and Parade. Taste of Scotland: Friday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m. Parade: Saturday, December 4, at 11 a.m. Campagna Center is thrilled to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Scottish Walk Weekend in Alexandria. In 1749, the City of Alexandria was established by Scottish merchants. Dozens of Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans parade through the streets of Old Town, joined by pipe and drum bands from around the region, as well as terriers and hounds. The weekend kicks off with the Taste of Scotland Scotch Tasting on Friday evening in the Atrium Building. The parade will depart from St. Asaph St. heading north, head east from Queen St., head south from Fairfax St., and head west from King Street, ending right in front of City Hall. Admission: Free to view; \$75 registration fee to march in parade; \$200 and above for Taste of Scotland Scotch Tasting. Visit the website: Campagnacenter.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 4
Holiday Festival at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 2 to 8 p.m. At Torpedo

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU DEC. 11

Moe's Pop Up. 4-8 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Moe's Tavern Pop Up is a ticketed, family-friendly fan experience running for a limited time on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Nov. 19 - Dec. 11. Adult tickets start at \$37; kids tickets are \$20. <https://moespop-up.com/>

FRIDAY/NOV. 26

Day of Fun. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Work off those Thanksgiving calories with a day of fun activities at Lake Accotink Park. Park staff are inviting everyone in your family - and that includes your pets, too - to a healthy "Fly-off" into the holidays the day after Thanksgiving. Go on a hike at the park, play a game of mini golf and pose for a family photo with the "Fowl" manager. The price is \$10 for the family. Registration is required for this event. Call 703-569-3464.

TUESDAY/NOV. 30

Jazz Workshop Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Jazz faculty member Prof. John

Kocur directs the Mason Jazz Workshop big band in their concert! The Jazz Workshop performs music by Thad Jones, Mike Tomaro, Alan Baylock, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Neal Hefti and many others.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 1

Jazz Combos & Steel Pan Ensemble Concert. 8 p.m. Performance by the Mason Jazz Combos, under the direction of jazz pianist Wade Beach; and the Steel Pan Ensemble, under the direction of Victor Provost.

DEC. 2-4

Used Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. At Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street, Springfield. Thousands of used books at bargain prices. Many like new. Varied categories, all ages. Proceeds support library programming.

SUNDAY/DEC. 5

Mason Symphony and Choirs Holiday Concert. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Join them for a joyous concert celebration by the Dewberry School of Music as we ring in the holiday season! Showcasing Mason's Symphony

Orchestra and Choirs, this evening will feature holiday favorites and festive new works performed by extraordinary student artists. Cost: \$20 Adults, \$15 seniors, \$5 youth (through Grade 12).

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Christmas Around the World. 4-8 p.m. At Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale. Celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. Holiday customs of several nations, reenactors in costumes, music, Biblical storytimes. Tickets online www.parkwood.org/ registrations. Visit the website: <https://www.parkwood.org/registrations>

DEC. 11-12; 18-19

Holiday Dance Show. 12 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. At the Richard J. Ernst Theatre, 833 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Encore Theatrical Arts Projects presents Christmas is Just Around the Corner, a Rockette/musical theater-style holiday Show. The people of tiny Centretown know how to celebrate the holidays and welcoming a new neighbor is an added bonus. Or is it? Cost: \$22-\$30. Visit the website: www.encore-tap.org.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 13

first-ever OTBD holiday week, kicking off Sunday, December 5. Look out for a kick-off event at Hummingbird, tastings, trunk shows and doorbuster deals, and spend

the holidays in the most magical place on earth. Visit oldtownboutiquedistrict.com

SUNDAY/DEC. 5
Town of Herndon's Holiday Arts & Craft Show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At

the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Over 70 artisans and crafts people will exhibit and sell their handmade

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR,
PAGE 15

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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

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 14

work at this annual arts and crafts show sponsored by the Herndon Parks and Recreation Department Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation.

SUNDAY/DEC. 5

Community Menorah Lighting at Mosaic District. 5-7 p.m. At the Mosaic District in Fairfax. It's Chanukah time in the Mosaic District – and they're bringing the celebration to all those that join as they light the candles, sing songs, provide entertainment, spin the dreidel and more! This special event is done in conjunction with the JCC of Northern Virginia.

SUNDAY/DEC. 5

Inclusion Committee Chanukah Celebration. 2 p.m. At Temple Rodef Shalom Falls Church. Celebrate the Festival of Lights together! Enjoy making a Chanukah craft, hear a Chanukah story, share traditions, and enjoy some Chanukah music as we gather.

DEC. 10-11

Colonial Holiday Nights at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Experience the holiday season with Carlyle House focusing on how the Carlyles and their enslaved workers observed the holidays during the 18th century. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. All participants including those under the age of 5 must be registered. Visit novaparks.com

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Civil War Christmas in Camp. 12 to 4 p.m. At Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria. Get in the holiday spirit with a patriotic Union Santa Claus, reenactors in winter camps celebrating the season, period decorations, soldier-led fort tours and kids' crafting activities. Visit the website: alexandriava.gov/forward

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

"Klezmer Hanukkah" with Seth Kibel and the Klezmet. 7 p.m. McLean Community Center Hanukkah comes early this year, but Seth Kibel and the Klezmet keep the party going with festive Klezmer tunes and a little jazz thrown in. Chag Sameach!

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Herndon Winter Market. 12 to 7 p.m. At 777 Lynn Street, front of Herndon Municipal Center, Herndon. A traditional German-style Christmas Market with a family focus supporting the Town of Herndon and surrounding communities. This is open and free to the public. Visit the website: www.herndon-wintermarkt.com

DEC. 11, 12, 18, 19

Tall Ship Providence Christmas Story Time. At 12 p.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Tall ship Providence, 1 Cameron St., Alexandria. Come aboard the tall ship Providence for a special Christmas story time. This year's tale will be "The Christmas Ship," the true story of the schooner Rouse Simmons, the ship that for years supplied Christmas trees to the people of Chicago by making a dangerous winter crossing of Lake Michigan. This story is sure to delight young sailors ages 5 to 12. Check in at the Gazebo on the G-H Pier next to Founder's Park. Visit the website: tallshipprovidence.org

DEC. 17-18

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Kick off the holiday season with fireworks overlooking the Potomac River. Tour the Mansion to learn about holiday celebrations during Washington's time with live 18th-century music. See the lantern-lit historic area, the Mansion aglow in beautiful amber light, and the Upper Garden and

Greenhouse dazzling in blue and lavender with moving wintry light patterns. Admission: \$60 adult/\$38 youth with mansion tour; \$58 adult/\$36 youth without mansion tour; for members, \$50 adult/\$28 youth with mansion tour; \$48 adult/\$26 youth without mansion tour. Visit mountvernon.org/illuminations

DEC. 17-18

Civil War Christmas at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Discover how Christmas was celebrated when the Green family lived at Carlyle House and the Mansion House Hotel was being used as a Civil War hospital. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. Visit the website: novaparks.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 17

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents: Home for the Holidays. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. At The Rachel M. Schlesinger Center for Performing Arts NOVA Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. This December, the ASO brings back the joy of live holiday music that audiences yearned for in 2020. ASO will accompany dancers from BalletNOVA with selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Alexandria Choral Society joins the ASO for choruses from Händel's Messiah and will lead the audience in popular holiday carols. Visit the website: alexsym.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 18

Caroling on Horseback. Town of Clifton. 1:15 p.m. Caroling and Procession. The route through Clifton will follow Main Street to Chapel Road, then Water Street to School Street and back to Main Street. Costumed judging and sharing refreshments will occur after the procession in the floodplain. Visit www.cliftonhorsesociety.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 19

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents: Home for the Holidays. 3-5 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Dr., Alexandria. This December, the ASO brings back the joy of live holiday music that audiences yearned for in 2020. ASO will accompany dancers from BalletNOVA with selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Alexandria Choral Society joins the ASO for choruses from Händel's Messiah and will lead the audience in popular holiday carols. Visit the website: alexsym.org

FRIDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. At Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Founders Park (351 N. Union St.) and Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.) Gather along historic Alexandria's Potomac River waterfront for a spectacular show by Waterskiing Santa and his merry crew. Come early to see the pre-show (on jet skis). Visit waterskiingsanta.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

Olde Year's Day at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 1 to 5 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. The whole family can celebrate the close of 2021 at Torpedo Factory Art Center. Find hands-on activities, meet artists working in their studios, and get inspired for 2022. Visit the website: torpedofactory.org

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. 12 p.m. to midnight. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Experience the region's signature New Year's Eve festival of music and more. Enjoy live performances throughout the day and into the evening for kids, teens, adults and seniors. New events include a kick-off at Market Square and a "Battle of the Buskers," leading up to the midnight countdown and fireworks finale over the Potomac River. Visit the event website for a full schedule of events. Visit the website: firstnightalexandria.org

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"Cancerependipity"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It seems clear that being re-diagnosed with thyroid cancer after initially being diagnosed with non-small lung cancer, stage IV is a good thing. As to whether it's a beneficial thing, 10+ years past my original lung cancer diagnosis remains to be seen. Some damage may have been done and the presumptive friendliness of thyroid cancer (often referred to as "the friendly cancer" because of its cure rate) no longer applies to me, given the miscellaneous damage I've referred to in previous columns: kidney damage being the most significant. Still, according to my oncologist, thyroid cancer is better to have than lung cancer.

'Better' might mean less traumatic (physically, emotionally, psychologically), and let's be brutally simple: less "terminal" as well - by a long shot. So when my newly referred doctor, an endocrinologist (specialty is thyroid, among others) confirmed that my existing diagnosis had changed to papillary thyroid cancer, and suggested that I might never have had lung cancer, a wave of relief swept over me. However, I subsequently learned, as I have shared previously with you regular readers, that I'm still in serious trouble and that my life expectancy is not at all what I hoped. Though the change in diagnosis certainly looks great on paper and the treatment is very manageable, the previous 10 years of mostly infused, toxic chemotherapy has left its mark. Among a number of other life-changing effects, because of the kidney damage, there's only certain medications and dosages I can take.

Rewind to the first attempt to eradicate my thyroid cancer, surgery. I had a thyroidectomy: usually an out-patient operation with the patient back home that same day. The surgery was to remove my thyroid glands and parathyroid glands - and presumably kill any remaining cancer. This surgical operation occurs after the patient goes on a strict no iodine diet for 30 dirty days prior to the procedure. This is because thyroid cancer cells contain iodine and the medicine injected at the hospital contains radioisotopes specifically engineered to kill anything with iodine in it. The less extraneous iodine, the more the iodine attaches to its intended target: the thyroid cancer cells. My operation was scheduled to last two hours. It lasted seven-plus hours. Why? Because the cancer had been allowed to grow untreated for so long (due to the evolving diagnosis), it embedded itself under my collarbone and despite the doctor's best efforts to remove all the cells (he said this was the longest thyroidectomy he had ever performed), he couldn't. That was the purpose of the radioisotopes: to kill any remaining cancer. However, because the radioisotope dose I received was one-third that normally prescribed dosage - due to kidney considerations, the one-third dosage was insufficient to kill the remaining thyroid cancer cells. Thus, I am now left with papillary thyroid cancer that is in effect, incurable. At this juncture, after the surgery and radioisotope injection, there of course is medication to take: Lenvimo. It's a daily pill with side effects, of course, but nothing compared to the side effects from the heavy-duty chemotherapy I had been on for years (every three weeks at the Infusion Center). Unfortunately, and this is where we get to the nub of the issue, the medicine has a two to three year window. As of now, I'm about 15 months into my window. And as you might imagine, this scenario is hardly common in the cancer trial world. To quote my friend Winslow: I'm bereft." Or to use my own expression: "I'm s.o.l."

Nevertheless, I see no advantage to marking the calendar. I'm lucky to be alive. If I had been asked at any time during my lung cancer daze if I would trade lung cancer for thyroid cancer, knowing what I've learned, absolutely, I would have made the trade. Though the trade was never proffered - or possible, obviously, I still have been impacted by the future considerations.

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



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