

Great Falls CONNECTION

In rehearsal for "A Child's Christmas in Wales": Left to right, Carleigh Jones, Julia Leipertz, Matt Baughman, Abigail DeGennaro, Kathy Ohlhaber. Saturday, Dec 11 and Sunday, Dec. 12. At The Vault, Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Rd, Tysons, Va. 22102.



Holiday Events Begin Child's Christmas in Wales

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Grange Coming Home?

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Give Locally

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PHOTO BY JOCELYN STEINER

NOVEMBER 24-30, 2021

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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:

-- \$1,000s --		
Category	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.

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 decades of volunteer service, and as the longest serving woman on the FCPS School Board," said Tamara 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

Seven Tips for Holiday Mental Health

PRS, a local nonprofit that helps individuals living with serious mental health issues and facing life crises, continues to field more client inquiries and callers through its 24/7 hotline from those experiencing crisis or severe anxiety due to the pandemic. The upcoming holiday season can exacerbate these feelings. In response, the nonprofit has put together a list of seven tips to help more people cope and manage the holiday season better.

"The pandemic has added stress, grief, and uncertainty for most. For those who already suffer from mental health challenges, it can be even harder," said Joseph Getch, CEO, PRS. "With the holidays upon us, a time of emotional highs and lows, we wanted to share tips that can be helpful for everyone to navigate the season during the ongoing public health crisis."

Seven tips to help anyone manage mental health during the holiday season:

Evaluate Rituals: If you've lost a loved one, it's important to take time to acknowledge that holidays are full of rituals you may have shared with your loved one. Determine what feels better: to continue with the structure of how things used to be or to make it different this year.

Prepare: Control the things you can by planning in advance for holiday meals and purchases. Also, delegate to family members and guests to reduce your burden.

Turn Off and Tune Out: The 24/7 nature of media and social media can increase anxiety. Be purposeful about turning off the TV, radio, cell phones and tuning out for several hour increments every day to help provide

perspective and calm.

Keep in Touch: Connecting virtually by phone, Zoom or in person with loved ones and friends is a great way to reduce stress and remember what is important during the holidays.

Stay Active: Being physically active is important to maintain overall health. Take a break and work out or go on a walk to reduce stress during the holidays.

Help Others: Many nonprofits need help delivering services for others who are struggling. Helping others helps provide purpose. If you cannot give or volunteer, then help a neighbor who may need a chore done or errand run.

Call/Text/Chat: Calling or texting a local hotline or chatting online with the Lifeline is always an option if stress and anxiety seem insurmountable. Call: 800-273-TALK [8255], Text: "CONNECT" to 855-11 or log-on to SuicidePreventionLifeline.org/chat.

PRS (www.prsinc.org) is a regional nonprofit helping those living with serious mental health issues and anyone who faces life crises achieve independence and self-sufficiency. PRS provides clients with skill training and support to help them recover and rebuild their lives through programs such as: Recovery Academy Day Programs, Community Support Services, Employment Services, Community Housing, Coordinated Specialty Care and CrisisLink. CrisisLink is a 24/7 phone, chat and text hotline. For 24/7 support from CrisisLink, call 1-800-273-TALK or text 'Connect' to 855-11. For 24/7 chat support, visit <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

Returning a Local Grange to Its Community

An experiment poised to breathe vibrancy to a historic complex.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Nov. 17, about 40 Great Falls locals gathered at the Fairfax County Park Authority-owned Great Falls Grange No. 738. No one present was a granger, even though the Grange was once the focal point of the farming hamlet of Forestville. As a social organization in the community until 1980, the Grange encouraged families to work together to promote the economic and political well-being of the community and agriculture.

Instead, the Great Falls locals of 2021 banded together to learn more about how through their combined efforts and the support of organizations and businesses, they might return management and marketing of the Great Falls Grange complex to the hands of a newly formed nonprofit and make it their own.

Gary Pan, a co-chair of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, Inc. recognized in 2019; Jorge Adler, principal officer of the nonprofit; Bill Canis, president of the Great Falls Citizens Association; and Charles Owen, owner of Fine Landscapes Limited, gave presentations. Pan began by introducing the Foundation's board members, who represented a myriad of local organizations. "I just wanted to give you a sense of the scope here," he said.

The Foundation intends to take back from the Fairfax County Park Authority the management and marketing of the Great Falls Grange Complex, leading to the Grange ultimately becoming once again a community gathering place through its rentals. Two resources named on the National Register of Historic Places are located in the complex at 9818 and 9812 Georgetown Pike, Route 193. They are the one-and-a-half-story 1929 Great Falls Grange Hall No. 738 by builder L. B. Morris; and the adjacent Forestville Schoolhouse, built on the site in 1889 as a one-room schoolhouse and expanded in 1911. Both are contributing structures added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 (VDHR # 29-441), together with a non-contributing picnic shelter. The complex also includes its grounds and a parking lot.

According to the National Register's Statement of Significance, the Grange Hall was a focal point for the entire farming community. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the Grange Hall hosted various events, including ice cream socials, dances, carnivals, voting, and lobbying. The National Register of Historic Places reported that the Grange sold the building and surrounding property to the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1980, "after long and heated debates over ownership and the ability to maintain the



Gary Pan, co-chair of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, Inc



Charles Owens, owner of Fine Landscapes Limited, shares how a network of eight participating landscape contractors would step in and install native plants in various locations throughout the Great Falls Grange complex at no cost.



Jorge Adler says the community needs to raise \$170,000



About 40 or so Great Falls locals gathered at the Fairfax County Park Authority-owned Great Falls Grange No. 738 on Nov. 17.



Official logo for the newly recognized [2019] Great Falls Grange Foundation. The grassroots organization seeks to manage and operate the Fairfax County-owned Great Falls Grange No. 738.

hall," as the building needed repairs. After the Park Authority acquired the complex and began operating it as a rental, it discovered it was underutilized and expensive to rent, needing maintenance repair and ADA accessibility upgrades.

For the much-needed Grange renovation project that included a wheelchair lift, Fairfax County Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) assisted in securing \$350,000 from county carry-over funds in 2013, and the Fairfax County Park Authority funded the balance, reported by the Connection Newspapers in 2015. These initiatives failed, though, to reverse the pattern of limited rentals that predated the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pan said the first step toward reclaiming the Grange as a Great Falls community center was to enhance its aesthetics through an Adopt the Grange Commitment. "We're looking to you as the organizations to get on board with this."

The second step was to enter into an agreement with the Fairfax County Park Au-

thority regarding grounds beautification.

Charles Owen described how multiple nurseries, a network of eight participating landscape contractors, would step in and install native plants in various locations. "That would go a long way towards helping them promote their businesses," he said. "But what we're trying to do is somewhat of an educational thing. ... This is more of a creative integration of perennial plants that will give that seasonal appeal... and it won't cost the community or the Foundation," Owen said.

Step three would be to complete negotiations on a licensing agreement with the Park Authority by the end of this year and go live at the start of the spring, Pan said, taking on additional responsibilities such as setting rental rates. With these actions and the community's support, the complex could become a sought-after destination venue for weddings, anniversaries, and parties. Rental revenue would cover annual operating and maintenance costs, enabling nonprofits, citizens, and community organizations to use

the space for a minimal fee, and eventually for free.

Pan said that the nonprofit organization, Preservation Virginia, might assist the Foundation in locating potential grants. Preservation Virginia also helps with historic tax credits.

Jorge Adler said they would like to set a goal of \$170,000 to cover the first year's expenses. If they could sign the licensing agreement with the Park Authority in January, it would be ideal to begin the fundraising in January, February, and March.

Pan warned that if the community did nothing and waited, the complex might end up like Dranesville Tavern. "Does anyone know what goes on there?" he asked. "All buses, school buses, are parked in the back lot. They [the county] use it for storage," he said. "There are a couple of other historical properties that they don't actually maintain. They are storing stuff. I wouldn't want to see that happen here."

Bill Canis closed by saying, "This can be a lot more than it is today. ... I hope you will partner with us in making that happen."

Where to Give for Local Impact

❖ Alice's Kids (@aliceswillhelp) 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](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 Uniformed 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.habitat-nova.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

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

❖ LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more. holiday@linkagainsthunger.org. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.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-northern-virginia.org/ HelpLine: (571)458.7310, Email: info@nami-nova.org

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COMMUNITY

Where to Give for Local Impact

FROM PAGE 4

❖ National Capital Food Bank, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, (571) 482-4770 . www.capitalare-afoodbank.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.neighborhood-healthva.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 families and victims of domestic violence in Fairfax County. It is our mission to get families back into stable housing in order to provide them the opportunity to continue their journey to self-sufficiency. www.shelterhouse.org

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

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

SEE WHERE TO GIVE. PAGE 11

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mcleancenter.org

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To Participate:

Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone camera

or type the URL below into your web browser:

qrco.de/MCCsurvey



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

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."

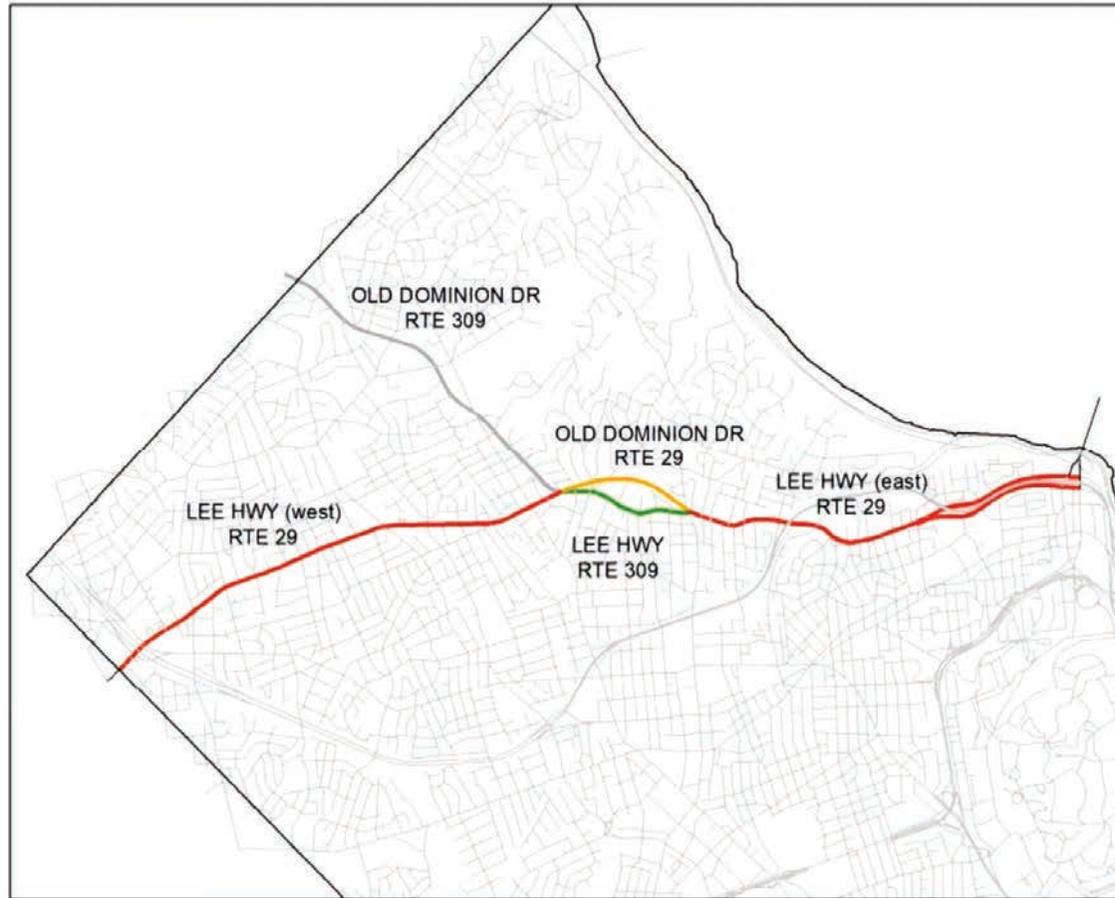
Jeffrey Herron said that he echoed the sentiment that we don't need to spend "our hard-earned tax money to change street names."

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

Graphic Illustrating the Renaming as Adopted (Route 29) and further Proposed (Route 309):



Updated October 2021. Please note that the Lee Highway (Route 309) segment reflects a recommendation but not yet final approval by the CTB.

TAB NAME	ADDRESS RANGE	CHANGE
LEE HWY (29) (EAST)	1401 - 4019	change to LANGSTON BLVD
LEE HWY (309)	4030 - 4699	change to CHERRY HILL ROAD
LEE HWY (29) (WEST)	4700 - 6929	change to LANGSTON BLVD
Map of Arlington highways with name changes		

SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY



Lee Highway sign in Fairfax County.

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.

History Revisited

Local 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 holiday. Norris has mixed emotions about grandson traveling this year.

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

— Hattie Jackson, 92

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, m

ade 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 Jackson 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."

Correction:

On page 4, Great Falls Connection, Nov. 17-23, one of the people is identified incorrectly. The caption should read:

Pastor Dave Zucuchelli (Ret.), Smith Chapel United Methodist Church in Great Falls, (left) joins Andy Wilson, president of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial Foundation, at the podium before the benediction.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

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PHOTOS BY JOCELYN STEINER

In rehearsal for "A Child's Christmas in Wales": Left to right, Carleigh Jones, Julia Leipertz, Matt Baughman. Abigail DeGennaro. Kathy Ohlhaber.



In rehearsal for "A Child's Christmas in Wales," From left, Sally Cusenza, Sarah Cusenza, Julia Leipertz, Carleigh Jones, Abigail DeGennaro. Kathy Ohlhaber. Matt Baughman. Shayne Gardner, Jennifer Levy, Greg Patti.

Irresistible Charm of 'A Child's Christmas Wales'

One of the first performances to grace The Vault at Capital One Hall.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

A modern Yuletide classic to enchant those young and old is "A Child's Christmas in Wales" from Dylan Thomas. It's a tale of a small child experiencing magical adventures that became lifetime memories. As Thomas described the setting, "like a cold and head-long moon bundling down the sky."

Based upon Dylan's original work, as adapted by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell, "A Child's Christmas in Wales" brings Dylan's poetic sensibility to the simple story of a family at Christmas time," noted Roberts. The adaptation also has music and a variety of carols and other songs to further conjure the magic of the holiday along with beautiful language.

"This play may be called 'A Child's Christmas in Wales' but it is for theatre goers of any age who enjoy some kind of family celebration at the end of the year; who live or come from anywhere in the world," said Jessie Roberts, director of the live theater adaptation from Northern Virginia's Ibiala International.

"We are excited to feature The Vault theater, with a set of performances for the holidays of 'A Child's Christmas in Wales' — one of the first performances in this amazing space," said Jonathan Griffith, managing director of Capital One Center. "The Vault, a versatile black-box theater, is one of the premier performance venues within Capital One Hall that is a part of the unique pub-



COURTESY JESSIE ROBERTS
Jessie Roberts, director



CREDIT ALAN KARCHMER/COURTESY CAPITAL ONE HALL
Interior view of The Vault, Capital One Hall

lic-private partnership with Fairfax County." "It is exciting to be one of the first full theatre productions to be mounted in this incredible new space. The intimacy of The Vault is perfect for a warm, family show like 'A Child's Christmas in Wales,'" added Roberts. The production of "A Child's Christmas in Wales" is "a community theatre production with cast drawn from dedicated, talented people in the community."

For Linda Sullivan, president/CEO of

ArtsFairfax, "Capital One Hall is beginning to showcase some of Fairfax County's amazing arts organizations. The Vault is the only black box theatre in Tysons ... and provides local arts groups with the flexibility they need when creating an engaging audience experience." The Vault has capacity for about 225 patrons.

"A Child's Christmas in Wales," aims to captivate; a play about "a never to be forgotten day at the end of the unremembered

Where and When

Ibiala International presents "A Child's Christmas in Wales" at The Vault, Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Rd, Tysons, Va. 22102. Performances: Saturday, Dec 11 at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 12 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m. Tickets: \$20. For information/tickets go to www.capitalone-hall.com/events.

year ... I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or twelve days and twelve nights when I was six." as Thomas wrote.

Note: Capital One Hall event attendees over the age of 12 must provide proof of full vaccination, the last dose of which was administered at least 14 days prior to entering Capital One Hall, or an approved COVID-19 negative test taken no more than 48 hours before entering Capital One Hall. Proof of vaccination can be physical vaccine card or a photo of your card. The name on the card or negative test must match the name on your photo ID. All attendees, including those under the age of 12, must wear face masks regardless of vaccination status while inside Capital One Hall except when actively eating or drinking. Entry requirements subject to change.

CALENDAR

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.

NOW THRU NOV. 30

"The Artist's Palette." At Great Falls Studios Gallery, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. "The Artist's Palette" features the work of members of NOVA Plein Air Artists.

NOW THRU JAN. 2, 2022

LuminoCity Festival. 6-9 p.m. At Roer's Zoo-fari, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The LuminoCity Festival, immersive light display experience, unforgettably spectacular night of

lights. The festival includes African, Asian, Arid, and Ancient-themed exhibits of spectacularly lit art displays set up in the zoo's walk-through area. www.roerszooafari.com.

NOW THRU DEC. 12

"Secret Things." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. "Secret Things," a deep and heartfelt story

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

'Secret Things' Touches the Heart at 1st Stage

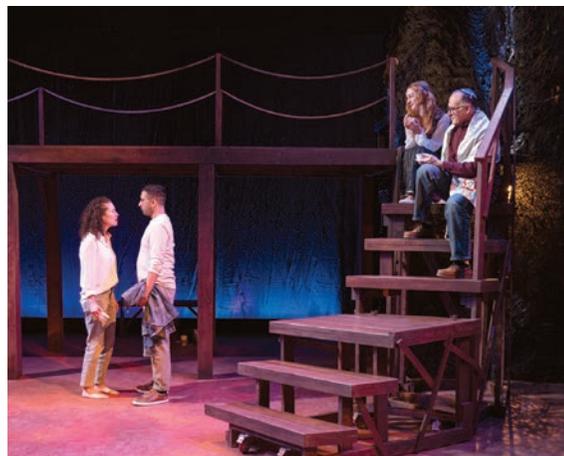
Asking "Who am I?" and "Will you help me?"

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Full of mystery and magic with amusing comic touches, 1st Stage has produced a superior production of "Secret Things," by award-winning playwright Elaine Romera. The appealing "Secret Things" takes a willing audience on a fascinating, time-shifting journey of discovery as a young Latinx searches for unknown ancestral roots. She may find more about herself and her own heart than she expected.

"Secret Things" has a simple premise, but it is far from straightforward. Delia, a Latinx journalist played with radiance and confident charm by Alina Collins Maldonado, is a Time magazine reporter in the 1990s. She receives an anonymous package with articles about Mexican-Americans claiming to have hidden Jewish roots. The package suggests they settled in the northern Mexico area 500 years before, after escaping the Inquisition. The intrigued Delia wants to investigate what might be only a myth about these Crypto-Jews.

SEE SECRET THINGS', PAGE 11



COURTESY 1ST STAGE:

From left, Alina Collins Maldonado, Luis Alberto González, Luz Nicolás and Lawrence Redmond in "Secret Things," at 1st Stage in Tysons, Va. Performances through Dec 12, 2021.

Where and When

1st Stage presents "Secret Things" at 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons, Va. 22102. Performances now through Dec 12, 2021. Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. Run time is approximately 2 hours with no intermission. Tickets: \$50 general; \$47 seniors 65+; \$15 student; \$15 educators. Tickets at www.1ststage.org or 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

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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.

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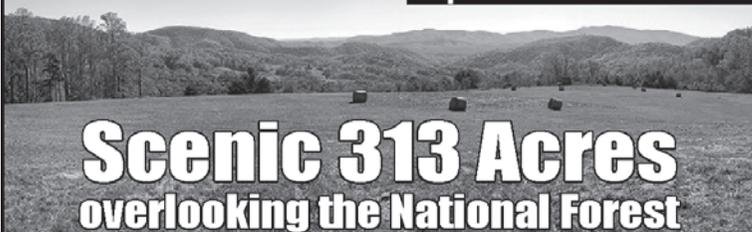
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

of truth, discovery, and romance imbued both with gorgeous magical realism and fascinating true history of Sephardic Judaism in the American Southwest. General admission tickets are \$50. Senior (65+) tickets are \$47. Student, educator, and military tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

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>.

SATURDAY/NOV. 27

Irish Dance Streaming. 11 a.m. Via Zoom. Enjoy your Thanksgiving leftovers while watching a "Best of Foley Academy of Irish Dance 2021" compilation video via Zoom. It features performances from the Reston Founder's Day event, the Foley Academy Spring Recital, Ballyshaner's Irish Festival in Old Town Alexandria and the Reston



"Joy to the World: A Christmas Musical Journey" with Damien Sneed will be presented on Wednesday, Dec. 1 at The Alden at McLean Community Center in McLean.

Multicultural Festival. Register at: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/8506729>

SUNDAY/NOV. 28

Celtic Music. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring IONA. Tickets must be purchased in advance at www.oldbrogue.com - \$20 general admission.

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. Music and dance that transports audiences 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.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 1

"Joy to the World: A Christmas Musical Journey." 7 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A multi-genre recording artist and instrumentalist, Damien Sneed is a pianist, vocalist, organist, composer, conductor, arranger, producer and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. "Joy To the

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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COMMUNITY

Where to Give for Local Impact

FROM PAGE 4

❖ 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@wfcmv.org and put Holiday Food in the subject line. wfcmv.org

'Secret Things'

FROM PAGE 9

Delia is originally from New Mexico and vaguely remembers unexplained family rituals. She is estranged from her family. Her mother and aunt (Luz Nicolas in enigmatic dual roles) and father (Lawrence Redmond in dual roles as a soft-touch Dad and a Rabbi who does not wish to offend anyone) live in New Mexico.

To set off, Delia must first convince her editor the story is worth pursuing. He is an annoying ex-boyfriend (with bits of continual misogyny from Matthew Sparacino). Her quest for truth only becomes more complicated after meeting a man named Abel (quietly magnetic, genuine Luis Alberto González) who may or may not melt her heart

What might Delia find out about purported Crypto Jews? What might she find about her own heart as she finds tantalizing crumbs to follow? What will she

decide is real, even a place called Sephardia?

Well directed with a needed fluid touch by Alex Levy, "Secret Things," explores issues of identity rarely depicted on DC area stages. The technical aspects of the production include quietly effective visual and sound clues. The spartan set design is by Jessica Cancino, shadowy lighting by Alex Casillas; Kelsey Hunt's unpretentious costumes and scene setting sound by Ethan Balis. There are scenes that are overly drawn out that can reduce the play's enjoyment.

1st Stage's "Secret Things" offers a ready audience an opportunity to become unmoored from accepted realities to find surprising possibilities about ancestry and inner lives.

Note: Health and Safety: 1st Stage patrons, staff, artists, designers, and volunteers must be fully vaccinated. Patrons are required to show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination alongside a picture identification.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

World: "A Christmas Musical Journey" will take the audience through Sneed's original arrangements of gospel, jazz and classical favorites. Tickets are \$30/\$20. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org.

DEC. 1, 4, 5

Play Auditions. Reston Community players are having auditions for "A Delightful Quarantine." Audition Dates: Wednesday, Dec. 1, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 4, 3 - 6 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 5, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with possible callbacks by invitation only. 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Advanced sign up via Signup Genius through link Reston Community Players' website is recommended, but walk-ins will be accepted too. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the script. Auditioning roles for all ages and ethnicities including two children's parts. Performances will be Feb. 25 through March 12, 2022 in Reston. Visit www.restoncommunityplayers.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 2

A Magical Cirque Christmas. 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7740 Capital One Tower Road,

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Tysons. Experience the enchantment of Christmas as Magical Hostess Lucy Darling takes you through an evening of dazzling performers and breathtaking cirque artists. Visit CapitalOneHall.com.

DEC. 2-FEB. 19

New Art Exhibits. At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. MPA will open its two newest exhibitions on Dec. 2, 2021. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit www.mpaart.org/ or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

FRIDAY/DEC. 3

Christmas: with Amy Grant & Michael W. Smith. 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7740 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons. Ring in the holidays with Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith, Grammy winning Christian artists. They'll lift you into the spirit of the season. Visit CapitalOneHall.com.

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"Cancerependicity"



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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