

CONNECTION

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Holiday Favorite to Live Orchestra

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Fairfax Symphony & Fairfax Ballet present Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker, Dec. 17 & 18 at 4 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts.



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NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
December 15, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 15, 2022, 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, 2023, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,510 to \$4,640.*
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$19,400 to \$22,090.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,480 to \$1,790.*
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$41 to \$44.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge for meters larger than the standard 5/8" residential meter. See the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges for details.
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.46 to \$3.65 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.85 to \$4.00.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$50 to \$53.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
- A decrease in the Overhead Charges for Labor from 103% to 102%.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge Inspection Fee from \$40 to \$42.
- An increase in the Returned Payment Charge from \$20 to \$25.

*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 \$228 million budget for calendar year 2023¹. Water sales are expected to provide \$202 million and the remaining \$26 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2022	2023
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 59,399	\$ 66,276
Power and Utilities	11,804	14,120
Chemicals	9,905	11,956
Purchased Water	7,312	7,513
Supplies and Materials	5,358	5,462
Insurance	1,146	1,370
Fuel	963	1,015
Postage	584	618
Contractual Services	11,831	12,912
Professional Services	1,320	1,365
Other	2,322	2,613
Sub-Total	111,944	125,220
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(10,949)	(11,141)
Total	\$ 100,995	\$ 114,079

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$46,327,337
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$55,563,000

¹ 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](https://www.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. Tonya Clement at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments 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 14, 2022 to be included in the record of the public hearing.

NEWS BRIEFS

Forensic Advancements Lead to Arrest in 1988 Rape Case

A 34-year-old sexual assault case was closed on Monday with the arrest of George Thomas Jr., 61, of Arlington.

George Thomas Jr. was charged with two counts of rape, sodomy and abduction for a sexual assault that occurred at 10:40 p.m. on Aug. 24, 1988. George Thomas Jr. and the late Gregory Allen Thomas of Arlington abducted the 22-year-old victim as she left her job at the Skyline Mall at 5195 Leesburg Pike.

The two brothers approached the victim in a parking garage and physically assaulted her. The victim was forced into her car and made to drive to a secluded location. The victim was led to a wooded area, and both men raped her before forcing her back into her car. The victim was made to drive to another location and raped again.

The victim was able to escape to her car and drove away following the second assault. Fairfax County police officers responded the evening of the assault and forensic evidence was collected. A DNA Profile foreign to the victim was developed from the forensic evidence collected and searched against the Virginia DNA databank. The profile was also submitted to the National DNA databank. The victim provided details that were used to create a composite sketch of one of the suspects. Detectives received numerous tips with possible suspect information and followed up on all leads. No arrests were made.

Detectives continued to investigate the assault throughout the years, submitting

forensic evidence to national databases in hopes of identifying a suspect. An FCPD fingerprint examiner identified fingerprints found in the victim's vehicle to new arrest records on file.

One of the fingerprints was identified to Gregory Allen Thomas, who died in 2009. A second fingerprint recovered from the vehicle belonged to his brother, George Thomas Jr. Detectives obtained Gregory Allen Thomas' blood card from the medical examiner. DNA analysis confirmed Gregory Allen Thomas was involved in the 1988 sexual assault. Detectives later provided a DNA sample for George Thomas Jr, who also matched DNA evidence recovered in 1988.

On Monday, Nov. 21, deputies with the United States Marshals Service and Metro Transit Police arrested George Thomas Jr. in Maryland. He was taken to the Adult Detention Center and was held without bond.

"Advancements in technology allow us to revisit cases decades old with the resources at our disposal. No matter the time that has passed, our detectives and professional staff will always fight for answers, resolution, and some measure of justice for those affected by these crimes," said Major Ed O'Carroll, Bureau Chief, Major Crimes, Cyber and Forensics Bureau.

Anyone with information about this case is asked to call detectives at 703-814-7000. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS

Va. State Police Investigating Fatal Crash

At 11:16 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 14, Virginia State Police responded to a crash that began on the ramp from northbound I-95 to Route 644 west and concluded on the ramp from Route 644 west onto I-395 north.

A 2013 Honda Accord was traveling north on I-95 when it took the ramp to Route 644 west at a high rate of speed. The Honda then ran off the left side of the road, through the guardrail and became airborne. As it traveled, it struck several trees, overturned and landed on the ramp from Route 644 to I-395 north where it was struck by a 2018 Toyota Highlander which subsequently struck the jersey wall.

The driver of the Honda, Bryan R. Osorto-Tejeda, 19, of Fredericksburg, Va., was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital for treatment of serious injuries. He was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle.

The passenger in the Honda, Odaly Y. Hernandez, 19, of Woodbridge, Va., died at the scene. She was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle.

The driver of the Toyota, Ansah Yeboah, 36, of Stafford, Va., was transported for treatment of minor injuries. He was wearing a seatbelt.

A passenger in the Toyota, Jacqueline Yeboah, 34, was transported for treatment of minor injuries. She was wearing a seatbelt.

A 3-year-old female and a 4-year-old male, who were passengers in the Toyota, were also transported for treatment of minor injuries. They were both in age appropriate safety restraints.

Extreme speed is being investigated as a contributing factor in the crash. Osorto-Tejeda has been charged with failure to maintain proper control (46.2-853).

The crash remains under investigation.

Fatal Crash in W. Springfield

A 37-year-old Maryland man died in a three-vehicle crash on the morning of Nov. 11.

At 7:40 a.m., officers responded to the crash on Fairfax County Parkway near Whitlers Creek Drive. Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined Noe Solis Espinoza was driving a 1999 Ford Ranger northbound on the Fairfax County Parkway. Solis Espinoza lost control of his vehicle, crossed over the raised median and entered the southbound lanes near Whitlers Creek Drive. Solis Espinoza struck the driver of a 2018 Ford Escape, continued

southbound and collided with the driver of a 2019 Honda Ridgeline. Solis Espinoza was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The driver of the Ridgeline was taken to the hospital for injuries not considered life threatening. Detectives do not believe alcohol was a factor in the crash. Detectives continue to investigate to determine if speed was a factor in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

‘Campus for Economic Development’

Fairfax City’s Economic Development Office has a brand-new home.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When Fairfax City’s Economic Development Office began five years ago, it had a staff of one – Economic Development Director Chris Bruno. It now has five full-time staff members with five support people and just moved into its own office in Northfax – the hottest and trendiest new part of the City.

So it was with genuine excitement, enthusiasm and joy that the EDO officially cut the ribbon on its new digs at 10300 Eaton Place, Suite 235, last Wednesday, Nov. 16. It’s in WillowWood Plaza, near the new Point 50 shopping area and the Amazon Fresh grocery store, just off Fairfax Boulevard.

Addressing the City officials, staff members and other well-wishes attending the ceremony, Bruno said how much he appreciated the “really big show of support” by Fairfax Mayor David Meyer and City Councilmembers, past and present, “to help us pull this together.”

Bruno said locating the EDO there shows the City’s commitment to Northfax. He also stressed that several other major players have offices there, as well. They include GMU’s Mason Enterprise Center, the City’s small-business incubator that Fairfax and the university work on together; the Small Business Development Center; PTAC (Procurement and Technical Assistance Center); and ICAP, which helps businesses purchase technology.

“So this has become a campus for economic development, and it allows us to elevate the City’s brand to become a national and international competitor for business growth,” explained Bruno. “And it’s symbolic of the type of work happening here.”

Some examples of that work are Restaurant Week, which attracts new visitors to Fairfax while bringing in revenue to the local restaurants, plus the City’s busi-

ness-investment programs to fill its commercial-office space. Another noteworthy example is the EDO’s Re-Connected program, which supported Fairfax’s small businesses during the pandemic when shutdowns left them struggling to survive.

“Our Re-Connected program made over 1,500 financial grants to our small businesses,” said Bruno. “And we especially targeted minority and women-owned businesses for help. In addition, we’re a founding member of the Regional Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance.”

Speaking next was Economic Development Authority (EDA) Treasurer and Commissioner Fred Cornett. (The EDO and the EDA work together to promote economic development and redevelopment in the City). “The organization [EDO] has grown from a board of volunteers to an impactful agency in the City,” he said. “And a lot of it is due to Chris and his leadership. We’ve moved forward on lots of regional projects and were the landlord for Draper’s [Steak & Seafood Restaurant], which [is on City-owned property and] opened earlier this year.

“We negotiated the operating partnership between MEC, the EDA and the City,” continued Cornett. “And [the City’s former Assistant Fire Chief] Andrew Wilson did an incredible job overseeing construction here for the new MEC office, plus the buildout of Draper’s. It’s the first time the EDA’s had a physical presence in the City [instead of just an office in City Hall], and that’s a testament to the growth of business in this City.”

Agreeing, Meyer said, “We want to thank Economic Development for being collaborative and strengthening and diversifying our economic base in the City. We have a remarkable EDA. Six years ago, they didn’t have the funding and mission they have today. And it’s thanks to City Council and former Mayor John Mason [who was at the ribbon cutting].

“He served 12 years and turned this City around and set it on a good path in the region. This Class A office complex was constructed during his tenure; and today, it’s very exciting to see everything happening here. Economic development makes all else happen. In the last two years, the City has ended [each fiscal year] with revenues above what we expected – and from new sources.”

As a result, said Meyer, “We’ve been able to improve the quality



Besides EDO staff members, ribbon-cutting participants include (from left) Councilmember So Lim (in green), Chris Bruno, Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson, David Meyer, Fred Cornett, Councilmember Janice Miller and (at far right) City Treasurer Tom Scibilia.



The EDA staff and mayor pose by the neon Fairfax City Economic Development sign. From left are Andrew Wilson, Ashleigh Scarborough, Matt Easley, Nicole Merlene, Tatjana Mara, Tara Borwey, Chris Bruno, David Meyer, Serrita Farnsworth and Michelle Smith.

of life for everyone in the City. We built a new fire station and gave raises to City staff. From 2016 to now, our tax base increased from \$5.7 billion to \$7.2 billion, and we’ve had over \$900 million of private-capital investment in both commercial development and City infrastructure.”

He noted, as well, that Fairfax’s revenue from its meals tax has greatly increased, due to its “vibrant restaurant industry,” and that City Council was able to reduce the City’s most recent real-estate tax rate from \$1.07 per \$100 of assessed valuation to \$1.01.

“It’s remarkable, and it’s because we all did it together – all the City offices and staff,” said

Meyer. “This is really how a city should work. This positions us to meet the needs of a more diverse and growing population that will have more demands for services, over the next decade. And it’s because of all your hard work. And, Chris, kudos to you and your team for all you’ve done.”

After the ribbon-cutting, Bruno said his office moved to this new site “to work on filling the commercial vacancies in the City and engaging different types of businesses to come here – especially life sciences and technology businesses.”

Nicole Merlene, the EDO’s business-investment manager, said, “We’re here to help existing City businesses succeed and expand,

plus attract new businesses to previously vacant spaces in priority areas for the City. In the future, we’ll also help the City’s Small Area Plans become reality and help the City grow and develop.”

As for the EDO’s new office, she said, “It’s really great to be in an economic hub of some of our City’s biggest employers in Northfax’s WillowWood Plaza. Being here highlights the best the City has to offer in terms of office space and amenities.” Furthermore, she added, being located in the same building with MEC and other business-development entities enables all of them to be “a one-stop shop for small businesses, government contractors and emerging technology companies.”



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NEWS

Man Dies in Police Custody

A man in police custody died on Friday, Nov. 11 while being taken to a nearby hospital.

At 4:18 p.m., officers responded to numerous calls for service for a man running into traffic and conducting himself in a disorderly manner in the 6500 block of Amherst Avenue, Springfield. An officer found Temiki Murray, 44, of Lorton, blocking southbound lanes of Amherst Avenue. The officer attempted to speak with him and guide him onto the sidewalk. Murray immediately ran back into traffic.

Officers followed from a distance directing additional officers to Murray's location. Murray stopped running in a nearby parking lot. Officers reengaged and explained they were there to help him. Fire and rescue personnel were requested to respond. Murray

was then placed into handcuffs to prevent him from running back into traffic. No force was used while taking him into custody.

Murray was then taken to a nearby hospital in an ambulance. While enroute to the hospital, Murray suffered a medical emergency.

He was pronounced deceased at the hospital. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the specific cause and manner of death.

Police will release the body camera footage and audio recordings within 30 days or when it no longer jeopardizes the integrity of the investigation.

All information provided in this release is based on preliminary investigative findings and may be subject to revision as the investigation progresses.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATING IN TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department will be participating in the Annual National Capital Region Fire and EMS Departments' 2022 TOYS FOR TOTS Campaign. The intent of the campaign is to "bring holiday joy and deliver a message

of hope to children." Stations will accept donations now through Sunday, December 11, 2022.

Collection boxes will be placed outside the front door of each fire and rescue station every morning. Residents will be able to drop off toys until 8 p.m., each evening.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

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BALLET



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Fairfax Symphony & Fairfax Ballet present Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, Dec. 17 & 18 at 4 p.m. at GMU Center for the Arts.

Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker'

Two Fairfax County arts institutions—the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) and The Fairfax Ballet Company — collaborate to present their sixth production of the holiday masterpiece, Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. This Fairfax production is a cherished annual tradition with just two performances on Dec. 17 & 18 at 4 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts. The FSO production is remarkable, featuring live musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage. Audiences delight in The Fairfax Ballet's magical dance performance with original choreography, as the Fairfax Symphony under the direction Christopher Zimmerman performs Tchaikovsky's captivating score. This production is one of the most popular concerts on the Fairfax Symphony season schedule.

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and The Fairfax Ballet Company showcase guest soloists from New York City Ballet dancing the lead roles this year. Performing with the live orchestra presents a special opportunity for the young dancers.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Don't Miss

TCHAIKOVSKY'S 'THE NUTCRACKER'
SATURDAY, DEC. 17 & SUNDAY DEC. 18
AT 4 P.M.

at George Mason University Center for the Arts
Tchaikovsky's music performed live by the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, with guest soloists from New York City Ballet and more than fifty dancers and students ranging ages 7-18
<https://www.fairfaxsymphony.org/december-17-18-nutcracker>

"This performance provides an extraordinary learning experience for our Fairfax Ballet Company dancers as their first opportunity to perform together with a live professional orchestra," said Karla Petry, executive director of The Fairfax Ballet and owner of The Russell School of Ballet.

Andrea Cook is artistic director for The Fairfax Ballet Company, a Fairfax County native and Chantilly HS alum. She leads the choreography in one of the most complex theatrical ballets in the Company's repertory.

Watch video of *The Nutcracker* with the Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Ballet:
<https://youtu.be/uuj6ftqQ24E>

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MEDIA

Alexandria

Mount Vernon Gazette

Casinos Coming to Bristol, Portsmouth, Danville, Norfolk

Casino update in two parts

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

Part one of two.

Like many Virginians who remember the big announcement a couple of years ago that Virginia would soon have its very own casinos where you could stay at a five star hotel, enjoy a musical performance or laugh with comedians, eat and drink all night at exciting new restaurants, and also visit the local sites in different and interesting parts of the state, you may be wondering just what is happening with those casinos that were coming to Virginia?

Well, funny you should ask, because just last week the Virginia Lottery Board, which oversees the regulatory framework governing the establishment and operation of the lottery and privately-operated sports betting and casino gaming programs, unanimously approved

the casino facility operator's license for the Rivers Casino in Portsmouth. It is now the second casino operator's license issued in Virginia. The first was awarded in April to Bristol's Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, which opened a temporary casino facility in July. There are two more proposed casinos working through this arduous process: Caesars, with an ownership interest from the Eastern Band of Cherokees, in Danville, and the Pamunkey Indians' Headwaters Casino in Norfolk. There is so much to write about that I am publishing this casino update in two parts, this week and next.

In 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation to legalize gaming in Virginia. As a member of the House General Laws Committee and Chair of the ABC & Gaming Subcommittee, I had the opportunity to play a role in working with my colleagues, and especially the patron of the bill, Chairman of Appropriations, Del-



Krizek

egate Barry Knight, to adopt this landmark legislation. The bill authorized casinos in five Virginia cities – Bristol, Portsmouth, Danville, Norfolk, and Richmond – pending approval by residents in a local voter referendum in each locality. Richmond's referendum failed, but the voters overwhelmingly supported the casinos in the other four cities. Also, the legislation allows each project to open a 'temporary casino' while the permanent location is being constructed.

I am pleased to share that Virginia's first casino – a temporary facility in Bristol - opened in July, following a festive Grand Opening ceremony which I had the pleasure to attend, along with other state leaders. 'Bristol Casino – Future Home of Hard Rock' (<https://www.hardrockhotelcasinobristol.com/>) is the first casino to be licensed and opened in Virginia, which is a historic milestone for the Commonwealth. The Bristol casino

was the first to open because it had secured an existing location for the project, the former Bristol Mall. This temporary facility is operating until the permanent location opens in late 2024, which also will be located on that same site.

Each of these casino projects will bring significant tax revenue to the state, along with critical economic development opportunities – in terms of jobs and revenue – to their host city, and the surrounding region. I am particularly proud of the positive impact the Bristol project will have on all of the communities in Southwest Virginia. The General Assembly included in the legislation a provision that revenue proceeds from the Bristol casino would be shared with the 12 counties and two cities in what has historically been an economically depressed region. Quarterly payments to those local governments are being used to fund a host of critical education, transportation, and public safety projects benefiting local residents. In just the first

SEE CASINOS COMING, PAGE 15

Stop Wildlife Killing Contests

It is hard to imagine anything so callous and unsporting as organized games to kill wildlife in large numbers solely for cash and prizes. As a growing number of states, including Maryland, take responsible steps to crack down on this extreme activity, why does the

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) allow wildlife

killing contests to continue?

During these events, participants compete to kill the most, the largest or the smallest foxes, coyotes and bobcats for cash and prizes over a period of one to two days.

After the killing is over, contestants gather to weigh and count the bodies and pose for photos

next to the bloody animals. The animals are then typically tossed away like trash.

In 2021, the DWR expressed strong support for a ban on killing contests.

I found "no scientific evidence to support claims" that the events serve any wildlife management purpose and worried that the events were reflecting poorly on the hunting community. It came as great surprise, then, when just five months later the DWR inexplicably did an about-face and testified in opposition to a bill that would pro-

hibit the blood sport.

Killing animals in competitions for prizes is an anathema to traditional subsistence hunting and robs our communities of wildlife we all share and respect. DWR is currently taking comments from Virginians about the regulations it should consider for 2023-24. Ask the DWR to restore some sensible balance here and stop sordid wildlife killing contests from taking place.

Eileen Hanrahan
Lorton



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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Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Be Part of 2022 Children's and Teens' Connection

One week of December for many years, this newspaper has devoted its pages to the creativity of local students, teens 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.

You can see last year's editions

by visiting <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/PDFs/> and scrolling down to Children's Edition.

We welcome contributions from public and private schools, art classes, individuals and homeschoolers. We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture, gardens and any other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email. Writing should be submitted in text format: docx or google docs, or pasted in the body of an email. Artwork should be photographed or

scanned and provided in jpeg format.

These can be submitted via google drive as well. Please share all google drive files with kimm.mary@gmail.com

Some suggestions, but different ideas are welcome:

- ❖ Drawings or paintings or photographs of your family, friends, pets or some favorite activity. These should be photographed or scanned and submitted in jpeg format. Photos of sculpture or larger art projects are also welcome.

- ❖ Short answers: What is one thing that you would change about school? What do you want to be

when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite possession? What makes a good friend? What is the best gift you've ever received?

- ❖ Your opinion (100 words) about movies, food, music, sports, restaurants, video games, toys, trends, politics, etc.

- ❖ Poetry, short story or other creative writing.

- ❖ News stories or photos from school newspapers.

We must be able to print the full first and last name of the student artist/writer with the submission, along with student's age, grade and

school or town name.

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Home schoolers' contributions are welcomed.

Please send all submissions by Monday, Dec. 5, 2022. The Children's Connection/Gazette will publish the middle of December, the edition with publication date Dec. 14, 2022.

Email submissions for the Children's Connection to kimm.mary@gmail.com



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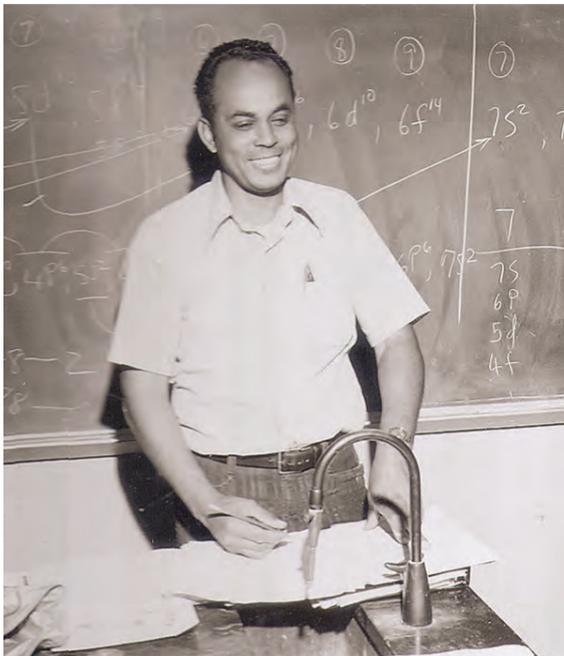
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Native American Heritage Month

Time To Embrace Shared Values, 30-Year FCPS Employee Says.



Rufus G. Kelly Jr., a high school chemistry teacher and father of FCPS senior technology support specialist Rick Kelly, inspired Rick to consider a career in education.



Thirty-year FCPS employee Rick Kelly speaks at a professional event for IT staff.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

LaVerne Kelly, music educator and the mother of FCPS Employee Rick Kelly, celebrates her Native American heritage at the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia powwow.

Rufus “Rick” Kelly knows he could do information technology work anywhere. But the Fairfax County Public Schools’ senior technology specialist says his Native American roots and cultural upbringing led him to a 30-year career in public education.

While working for a large technology company in his 20s, Kelly says he realized he wanted to do something else with his life.

“I was making good money, I was doing fine for myself, but it wasn’t enough,” Kelly says. “I needed to satisfy my social conscience. My parents were teachers, I was familiar with education, and while I didn’t want to be a teacher, there was something about education that appealed to me.”

Kelly says he was raised to value education. “We prioritize making sure you are always doing something to take care of those who come behind you,” Kelly says of his tribe’s beliefs.

Over 30 years at FCPS, his work has gone beyond information technology. At one point, the Virginia Department of Education reached out to the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, and asked their chief Lynette Allston to attend a meeting on school curriculum.

“Our chief was unavailable, but she knew I worked in education so she said, ‘Please represent us and make sure our voice is heard,’” Kelly said. “I went to Richmond, I sat on a panel and provided input on some changes they were consider-

ing making on the state standards of learning as it related to Virginia’s Indians.”

This school year, Kelly again seized an opportunity to share Native American culture through his job. At an FCPS technology event in August, he met new superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid, Ed.D. While conversing with her, he asked if she’d like to join him at the upcoming Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia powwow.

“I knew she was from the Pacific Northwest and she mentioned she had never been to a powwow, so I invited her and she came,” Kelly

said. “I serve as the master of ceremonies, so I had her come right up to the front with me where we introduce all our special guests. We had some social dancing, she observed for a while and then she came on in and joined the circle. It was wonderful.”

November is Native American Heritage month, and Kelly says he sees it as another opportunity to set the record straight.

“To me, this is a way to celebrate our culture in a way that is attractive, interesting, and pulls people in,” Kelly said. “There is a really rugged history we have and

we can talk about broken treaties and things like that, but we can also celebrate the values that bring us together – the belief in family, the belief in education, the desire to take care of your elders, these

are Nottoway Tribal values that we share with many people. Native American Heritage month provides a vehicle and gives people an opportunity to focus, whether they are a member of this group or not.”



FCPS information technology manager Rick Kelly offers a blessing for the governor’s inauguration at the State Capitol in Richmond, Va.



Primary chief of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia Lynette Allston, FCPS Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid and 30-year FCPS employee Rick Kelly at the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia’s annual powwow.

NEWS

FACETS Hypothermia Program Begins Nov. 27

FACETS will begin its annual Hypothermia Prevention and Response Program, starting Nov. 27. This year's program will again rotate between various faith community partner locations throughout the winter to provide a warm, safe, and healthy environment for individuals experiencing homelessness. The first location will be Anandale United Methodist Church.

"Providing shelter and services during the coldest months is important for keeping people safe," explained Joe Fay, Executive Director, FACETS. "We have 29 faith partners that are welcoming those who are homeless inside during winter nights. Other churches are partnering to provide meals. We are grateful for their continued commitment to protecting those less fortunate in our community."

FACETS, a nonprofit that helps those affected by poverty, hunger, and homelessness in Fairfax County, will be running the program from Nov. 27 through April 1. The Hypothermia Prevention Shelter helps neighbors experiencing homelessness find respite from the cold winter. The program serves people across Fairfax and Falls Church in partnership with the

Fairfax County government and over 40 faith communities.

FACETS' faith partners are also providing meals for the program with different partners rotating week to week. In addition, FACETS offers personalized case management to all guests who want to participate to help them move off the streets and into safe and stable housing.

With the second-largest homeless population in the region, homelessness is a real challenge in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community. With critical help from volunteers and partnerships with the faith and business communities, FACETS works to prevent and end homelessness throughout Fairfax County by offering a full spectrum of services, such as basic needs and financial assistance, counseling and outreach, educational enrichment programs, and permanent housing.

Clients seeking program updates should call FACETS at 703-352-5090 ext. 1302. Households with children who are in need of assistance or shelter should call 211.

Donations are welcome. More information can be found at www.FACETSCares.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Please help us to help those less fortunate this holiday season. Thanks to the generosity of those who live and work in Fairfax County, FCFRD was able to provide the Marines with approximately 25,000 toys last year!

Children who are served by this campaign include toddlers and youths through age 17. The campaign will only accept new, unwrapped toys. Toys used as weapons or considered to be weapons (i.e., toy guns or knives of any kind) will not be accepted. Checks or money orders for donations must be made payable to TOYS FOR TOTS.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will accept donations through Sunday, December 11, 2022. Toys will not be accepted after this date.

ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

So many of our Military families today find themselves in financial crisis, now more than ever. This will be especially true during this Holiday Season. To give back, Able Forces Foundation (AFF) is once again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Warrior Family Christmas program. As in years past, Able Forces Foundation will adopt families from each of the five Military Service branches. All adopted families are identified by

military Advocates on military bases or military Recovery programs in the Washington, DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF. Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have: • A Christmas Tree • Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8) • Stocking Stuffers • the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child 100% of all donations go directly to support this program. There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go to: www.ableforces.org/adopt to make a contribution.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GrandInvolve Seeks Volunteers. Would you like a unique and interesting volunteer experience to make a difference in a school, classroom, or in one child's life? GrandInvolve.org facilitates rewarding, flexible adult volunteer opportunities at Fairfax County Title I elementary schools, providing classroom assistance with math, reading, and other simple educational tasks. Visit www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us for details and to complete an interest form. Or email info@grandinvolve.org.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

GUNSTON CORNER VILLAGE CENTER

The Merchants at the Gunston Corner Village Center
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VOLUNTEERS

Park Authority Celebrates 2022 Outstanding Volunteers

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board feted outstanding park volunteers for their service during the Elly Doyle Park Service Awards program in a virtual program on Friday evening, Nov. 18. The awards honor Doyle, the former Park Board Chairman, who was a volunteer advocate for the park system at its inception. Established in 1988, and adding new awards over the years, the honors recall Doyle's years of outstanding service toward the preservation of parkland and establishment of natural and recreational areas for the benefit of county residents. In addition this year, Doyle was selected posthumously for the Chairman's Choice Award. She was described by the park authority's board chairman, William Bouie as a "woman who let nothing get in the way of her zeal and determination to build a better park system, which would serve Fairfax County residents for generations. She understood the importance of ... setting aside green spaces, protecting open space and stream valleys and doing what it took to find the means, the funding and the political support to do so."

Board of Supervisors Chairman, Jeff McKay praised volunteers and volunteerism, noting 3,555 volunteers provided over 103,000 service hours in fiscal year 2020, even though impacted by the pandemic. He urged all to hear the call to volunteerism citing former President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter's actions, saying, "... approaching 100 years of age and I think if he can still find the stamina and time to swing a hammer for Habitat of Humanity, or advocate for other important causes, then each of us should be able to make room in our hearts and in our busy lives for volunteer services."

Park Authority Foundation Director, Roberta Longworth, who's organization seeks park donations and sponsors the annual Doyle awards said, "Every donor is important and each gift is appreciated. The Foundation inspires philanthropy and a passion for parks that helped bridge the gap between identified needs and available public funds for our parks and open space. Whether by large corporate grants or small contributions from children's lemonade stands, or through family foundation's IRA distributions, donations through a will or other planned gift, or the donation of vehicles, we see the impact of giving from thoughtful park lovers each year. With that, I ask that this holiday season or any time of year, would you please consider a donation to the Fairfax County Park Foundation?"

Elly Doyle Awards

This year's Elly Doyle Award, the highest award of the evening, was bestowed on Stephen Markle and Willow Martin.

Stephen Markle is a leader for both Invasive Management Area (IMA) site and park volunteer teams. Since 1998, he volunteered his time in Alexandria's Gil McCutcheon Park, helping to protect and preserve the 18-



COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Elly Doyle, for whom the park service awards are named, was honored this year as the posthumous recipient of the Chairman's Choice Award.



COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Pravinchandra and Hansaben Dave, who volunteer at South Run Rec Center, inaugural recipients of the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award.



COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Stephen Markle, a volunteer at Gil McCutcheon Park, received the 2022 Elly Doyle Award.



COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Willow Martin, a volunteer at Oakton Community Park, received the 2022 Elly Doyle Award.



COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

Yasmine Marrero, a volunteer at Accotink Park, a recipient of the 2022 Youth Volunteer Service Award.

acre park by working with volunteers to repair trails to assure their safe use. In his IMA lead role, Markle organized more than 137 workdays and contributed approximately 2,276 hours to the restoration and maintenance of the park. Markle commented, "It's always nice to have somebody say thank you. You know, I'm most honored when I'm knee deep in bushes ... clipping back something, and one of the users of the park will stop by and say thank you. ... When people say thank you, that means a lot."

Willow Martin is an Invasive Management Site leader



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Ava Belmont, a volunteer at Laurel Hill Park, a recipient of the 2022 Youth Volunteer Service Award.

for Oakton Community Park. She served as a volunteer in various capacities for many years, and became an IMA Site leader in April 2021. When the Greater Oakton Community Association asked her to help with the park, she enthusiastically took on the project, knowing it would likely be a large and multi-year effort. Over the year, she organized monthly sessions involving more than 200 people, cleared areas of invasive plants, and planted numerous new trees and native flowers. She recently conducted guided tours of the trail work completed

FOOD DRIVE



Scouting for Food

Scouts collect nearly 30,000 pounds of food locally to help feed hungry people.

Scouts from the Greater Annandale, Burke, and Fairfax areas collected food from neighborhoods as part of the Scouting for Food program. Two BSA Districts were involved, Old Dominion District and the Patriot District.

Scouts collected 13,213 pounds of food for ACCA (Annandale Christian Community for Action). Scouts collected 14,735 pounds of food for ECHO (Ecumenical Community Helping Others) in Springfield. Order of the Arrow (OA) worked inside to sort various foods to put on the shelves.



At St. Stephen's United Methodist Church (SSUMC) in Burke, 1,600 pounds of food were sent to the Capital Food Bank and 400 pounds were kept for St. Stephen's Food Bank.



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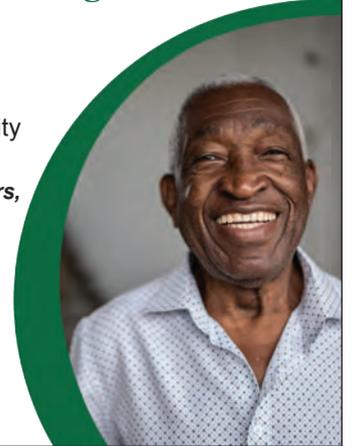
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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FRIDAY/NOV. 25

Reston Holiday Parade. 11 a.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston. Reston Town Center launches the season with the annual Reston Holiday Parade. The one-of-a-kind, one-hour, half-mile parade along Market Street also welcomes the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a horse-drawn carriage. Since 1992, rain or shine, the parade has been an annual tradition on the day after Thanksgiving. The Clauses will return for the annual Tree Lighting at 6 p.m.

DEC 1-23

"Snow Maiden." At Syntetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell St, Arlington. In a frozen forest, a lonely boy builds a girl from snow. When she mysteriously comes to life, mischief, laughter, and enchantment abound. But what will happen when the ice begins to melt? Told through dazzling movement, dance, and acrobatics, Snow Maiden is a magical tale of hope, friendship and the transformative power of dreams. Based on the beloved folktale Snegurochka, Snow Maiden is a holiday treat for friends and fans of all ages.

DEC. 1-31

Home for the Holidays Art Show. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Works by local artists on display the entire month of December. Visit www.artsherndon.org. Call 703-956-6590.

DEC. 2-17

The PARC at Tysons Holiday Market. Fridays and Saturdays. Celebrate the holiday season with local makers, crafters, and artisans from the Fairfax County area! Visit the holiday market at The PARC at Tysons on the first three Fridays and Saturdays of December for a pop-up shop of local artisans and small businesses offering holiday-inspired goods. The PARC will be transformed into a festive indoors and outdoors winter village, featuring a local holiday market and (free!) snowtastic activities for the whole family to enjoy! Food and beverages can be purchased onsite from local businesses as well.

DEC. 2-18

Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 27th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2023 wall calendars to support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 2-4, Dec 9-11, Dec 16-18). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: delrayartisans.org/holiday-market

DEC. 2-11

Fairfax City Holiday Market. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Fairfax City Downtown Holiday Market will be open the first two weekends of December on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Shop at the market of craft vendors as you enjoy Old Town Square in the heart of Historic Downtown Fairfax covered in holiday lights. The festival will include live holiday music, hot drinks, heated tents and gourmet



The Holiday Boat Parade of Lights will take place Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022 in Alexandria.



The McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival will take place Dec. 2-3, 2022 at the McLean Community Center.

treats, and more!

DEC. 2-3

Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. Taste of Scotland: Friday, December 2, 2022; Parade: Saturday, December 3, 2022. Campagna Center is pleased to announce a new presenting partnership for the 51st Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade on Saturday, December 3. The parade will be produced by Visit Alexandria in partnership with Campagna Center and the City of Alexandria, as part of Alexandria's Biggest Holiday Weekend. Learn more about the 2022 parade at ALXscottishwalk.com, or send questions directly to alxscottishwalk@visitalexva.com.

DEC. 2-3

McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival.

At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival will feature a wide variety of high-quality handmade items just in time for the holidays. This indoor show features the work of 80 talented, juried, regional artisans. Produced by MCC in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Handcrafters Guild, the juried show will be held Friday through Sunday, Dec. 2 through 4. Show hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 2; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3; and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4. Admission is \$5, free for children ages 12 or younger. The admission price is good for all three days of the show. Visit the center's website, www.mcleancenter.org, or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

DEC. 2-3 AND 9-10

Holiday on the Farm. 5:30-7:30 p.m. (timed entries). At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. See the farm as you never have before, lit up with hundreds of holiday lights. Wagon rides, indoor activities, food, animal interactions and campfires. One-hour entry in 15-minute slots starting at 5:30 p.m. For times and to register, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Old Town's waterfront will shine for the 22nd Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights sponsored by Amazon on Saturday, December 3, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. when more than 50 brightly lit boats cruise along one mile of the

Potomac River shoreline. Boat parade dockside festivities will entertain parade-goers from 2 to 8 p.m. The boat parade is part of a weekend of festivities including the 51st annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade. Head to Waterfront Park at the foot of King Street, near the official parade start line at the Alexandria City Marina, for festivities from 2 to 8 p.m. including a pop-up beer garden from Alexandria's award-winning Port City Brewing Company, hot chocolate from Dolci Gelati, gourmet popcorn from America's Favorite Gourmet Popcorn and holiday music from 97.1 WASH-FM.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Christmastide at Gunston Hall. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Discover Christmases of the past through activities from the 1920s and the 1780s. See how Christmas has changed over time. Help visitors feed their curiosity by thinking about life for different people—enslaved, indentured, wealthy, and poor—at 18th-century Gunston Hall during the holiday season. This family-oriented event includes crafts, games, and live music. Visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/events/christmastide-at-gunston-hall/>

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Cookies with Santa. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join Reston Association when Santa makes his first stop in Reston. Join the holiday countdown with a cookie jar full of fun and see Santa Claus before he embarks on his annual journey around the world. With a craft, cookies & cocoa and activities to jumpstart your holiday season and a letter to and from Santa will sure be a highlight. Don't forget your camera! Registration and fee is only for the child, but parents must stay at the event. Contact Ashleigh@reston.org or 703-435-6577.

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR, PAGE 13
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

SANTA COMES TO SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER

Springfield Town Center is making it a season to remember for the Springfield community. Come out and celebrate with special festivities including family photos with Santa, “Kringle Mingle”, and other seasonal events and performances by local community organizations. Santa will return to his seat at Springfield Town Center from November 12th through December 24th to listen to every child’s holiday wish. Pets are again welcome to visit with Santa this year on Mondays starting November 14th. Feathered, whiskered and hooved pets are all welcome, animals must be kept on a leash or in a crate at all times when not visiting with Santa.

SATURDAY/NOV. 26

The 5 Browns. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Celebrate the holidays with a concert that fills the Center with all of the spirit and power of five grand pianos played together on one stage. The 5 Browns, a quintet of incredibly talented pianists and siblings—Ryan, Melody, Gregory, Deondra, and Desirae—all simultaneously attended The Juilliard School.

SATURDAY/NOV. 26

Elf Scavenger Hunt. In and around Fairfax City. The Elf on the Shelf Scavenger Hunt will begin on Nov. 26 with a “Welcome Station” at Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax, from 9 a.m. to noon. Visitors to the welcome station can enjoy treats, receive giveaways, have a photo taken with Santa, and pick up an elf scavenger hunt passport. The passport identifies 30 businesses throughout the city that have hidden an elf in their business. Shoppers that find 5 or more elves and make a purchase at one participating business by Monday, Dec. 5, can email their passport to economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov to have their name entered into a drawing to win one of 10 Fairfax City Flex eGift Cards valued at \$50 each.

SATURDAY/NOV. 26

Snakes Aren’t Slimy. 1-2 p.m. and

2:30-3:30 p.m. At Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 7701 Royce Street, Annandale. Snakes native to Fairfax County showcase superior adaptations that enable them to get a meal or to keep from being a meal. The way their bodies are formed causes them to behave in ways that some people find alarming. In late November, local snakes should have already found a place to snooze away the winter. Preschoolers ages 3 to 5 are welcome to attend one of two sessions to learn more about snakes that Hidden Oaks Nature Center has in its exhibit year-round.

SATURDAY/NOV. 26

Small Business Saturdays. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Celebrate Small Business Saturday by supporting artists at the Workhouse Arts Center with a 20 percent discount on all art in gift shops, galleries, and artist studios! For three consecutive Saturdays. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/small-business-saturday>

SUNDAY/NOV. 27

Historic Schools of Burke. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Using rare photographs and documents, maps, and other illustrations, historian Jeff Clark will lead us on an exploration of the public schools that served the greater Burke community during the period of 1870 to 1945.

TUESDAY/NOV. 29

Steel Band Ensemble and Braddock Road Brass Band Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU’s Dewberry School of Music, Fairfax. Free and open to the public.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 30

Jazz Combos Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU’s Dewberry School of Music, Fairfax. Free and open to the public. Concert held at DeLaski Performing Arts Building, Room 3001

NOV. 30-DEC. 3

Used Book Sale. At Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street,

HOLIDAY EVENTS AT LORTON WORKHOUSE ART CENTER

Small Business Saturdays - 20% Off

SATURDAYS, NOV. 26, DEC. 3, DEC 10
Visitors can celebrate Small Business Saturday by supporting artists at the Workhouse Arts Center with a 20% discount on all items in gift shops, galleries, and artist studios! For three consecutive Saturdays—Nov. 26, Dec. 3, and Dec. 10—visitors can get a head start on their holiday shopping while supporting artists and their small businesses.

Thanksgiving Weekend Comedy Showcase

SATURDAY, NOV. 26, 7 - 8:30 PM
Comedy showcase featuring comedians Patrice DeVeaux, Charlie Ross, Prince Arora, and Eddie Morrison. Tickets are \$20. The show will be held in the McGuireWoods Gallery in building W16.

Holiday Card Making: Family Workshop

SATURDAY, DEC. 3, 10 AM - 12 PM
In this one-day workshop families will design and decorate holiday cards together. From drawing a family of penguins singing holiday songs to a giraffe wishing a happy birthday, this workshop will add joy and cheer to the festive season. Tuition is \$55; materials provided. Location, Room 30, building W3.

Ceramic Gingerbread Houses

SATURDAY, DEC. 3, 1 - 5 PM
In this one-day workshop participants will create a “gingerbread” house made out of clay. Students will construct the house and decorate it using cut-outs, sprigging, and applied colors. Students are encouraged to bring ideas, photos, and favorite tools if they have them. Post-workshops finishes will also be discussed. Materials provided. Tuition is \$110; materials included. Location, Ceramics building W8.

New Year’s Eve In Lorton with Anthony DeVito

Saturday, Dec. 31 - Showtimes 7 pm and 9:30 pm
New Year’s Eve comedy celebration. Participants will ring in the new year with one of the hottest comics in the country, Anthony DeVito. The show is hosted by Apple Brown Betty, and features comedian Dewayne White. Tickets are \$55 for the 7 pm show. Tickets for the 9:30 show, which includes music until midnight and a champagne toast, are \$65. Both shows will be held in the McGuireWoods Gallery in building W16.

Springfield. Friends of the Richard Byrd Library Used Book Sale (free event). Get all your reading at bargain prices. Thousands of like new books to choose from. The Friends of the Richard Byrd Library is a nonprofit volunteer organization. Funds raised support adult and children’s programming at the Richard Byrd Library. Contact the Friends at rbfriends@gmail.com. Wednesday, Nov 30th, 2 - 5 p.m. Friends’ members only (join at door)

Thursday, Dec 1st, 10 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. open to all
Friday, Dec 2nd, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday, Dec 3rd, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Living Nativity. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, at Hanover Ave. and Monticello Blvd., in Springfield. The outdoor celebration will include costumed actors, readings, carols, live music, refreshments and live animals, including a sheep, goat, cow and Delilah the camel. Visitors are welcome to interact with and

take pictures with the animals. Everyone is welcome! A toy drive to benefit Springfield children will also take place and visitors are welcome to contribute an unwrapped toy or funds. Participation in the toy drive is optional and not required to visit the Living Nativity.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy Present A Celtic Family Christmas. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy return for the holidays with their musical family for a jubilant evening of lightning-fast fiddling, lively step dancing, and loads of Irish music. This husband-and-wife duo brings the spirit of Cape Breton Island, Canada to the stage and captivates with their electric chemistry as they perform foot-stomping renditions, heartfelt ballads, and incredible Irish dancing in A Celtic Family Christmas.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Cathedral Brass Christmas. 6-7 p.m. At Living Savior Lutheran Church,

5500 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. A festive, free, family-friendly performance of both traditional and contemporary Christmas music by The Cathedral Brass. Sure to put you in the holiday spirit. Visit the website: www.livingsaviorlutheran.org

DEC. 3-4

Holiday Weekend Model Train Show. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Saturday, December 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 4 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Model trains including Z, N, HO, LEGO and G scale will be on display and running. Visit the gift shop with lots of holiday gift items and Santa may stop by to visit. Admission: Museum members and children 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$6. Visit our website, www.fairfax-station.org. On Facebook, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR. On twitter, www.twitter.com/FFXSTNRR, or call 703-425-9225.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Claus & Paws. 2-4 p.m. Dress up your pet, bring your camera and take a photo with Santa to share with family and friends this holiday season. Santa will also have a gift for your four-legged family member. This event will be held outdoors at the Lake House, Reston Contact Ashleigh@reston.org or 703-435-6577.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Historic Clifton Holiday Homes Tour. 4-7 p.m. In the Town of Clifton. Kick off the holiday season at the Clifton Holiday Homes Tour. This year’s tour will feature four historic houses, an open caboose, arts and crafts show in the Town Hall, and a gospel ensemble in the Clifton Primitive Baptist Church. Tickets: Prior to Tour: \$20 adults, \$5 child; Day of Tour: \$25/adults, \$5 child. Tickets are available for purchase in town shops/restaurants. Visit <http://cliftonva.gov>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Herndon Homes Tour. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tour Herndon homes decorated for the holidays. Tickets \$15 through Nov. 26; \$20 Nov. 27-Dec. 3. Buy in person at Arts Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon; (credit, cash or check) and Herndon Florist, 1675 Reston Parkway Suite G, Reston; (cash or check) or online through Dec. 2 at holidayhomeshernndon.eventbrite.com. More information at holidayhomestourofherndon.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Gifts from the Heart Exhibit & Shopping Event. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Reston Community Center at Lake Anne, Reston. People can enjoy the artists’ creations on display in the Jo Ann Rose Gallery through January 9, 2023; 3D Gallery exhibit items will remain on display through February 18, 2023. Artist entry fees and 10 percent of all sales will be donated to Cornerstones. The exhibit showcases original works of art in a variety

of media – including oil, acrylic, watercolor, collage, stained glass, ceramic, sculpture and mixed media – with a wide range of sizes and prices. The December 3 sales event will offer the community a chance to purchase artwork and get into the holiday spirit. RCC will also offer a virtual artists’ directory, which will connect visitors with the dozens of artists displaying their wares at Gifts from the HeART. Interested shoppers can shop directly from the artists’ links. Find the directory online at www.reston-communitycenter.com beginning December 3.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Model Train Show. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. At W&OD Caboose Open House, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Contact herndonhistoricalso-ciety@gmail.com

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Tree Lighting & Sing-Along. 5-6 p.m. Carols, tree lighting and

a visit from Santa. At Town Hall Square, 730 Elden Street, Herndon. Visit dulleschamber.org or call 571-323-5300.

DEC. 3-4

“The Nutcracker.” At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. Presented by Metropolitan School of the Arts. Sat., Dec. 3 and Sun., Dec. 4 at 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. on both days. This year, MSA is replacing the Russian musical suite with Ukrainian folk dance in support of the Ukrainian crisis, and invited Colleen Prince, a dancer/choreographer from Carpathia Folk Dance Ensemble of Washington, D.C. to help choreograph the MSA Nutcracker. Tickets range from \$30 to \$32 per person. Go to www.metropolitanarts.org for more information, and purchase tickets at <https://ci.ovationtix.com/35491/production/1140336>.

SUNDAY/DEC. 4

Great Falls Tree Lighting. At Great

Falls Village Center Field, Great Falls. Join in on Sunday, December 4 for the annual tree lighting at the Great Falls Village Field. There will be pony rides, a petting zoo, school choir performances, Live Nativity, and a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

SUNDAY/DEC. 4

Herndon Holiday Arts & Crafts Show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than 70 arts and craft vendors offer unique gifts, decorations and handmade items. Free admission and parking. At Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. Visit herndon-va.gov/events. Call 703-787-7300.

SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Wintermarkt. 12-7 p.m. Bringing the Old World charm of Christmas in Europe to Herndon. Family-focused events, entertainment, and items for all members of the household. Downtown Herndon, 777 Lynn Street, Herndon. Visit Herndonwintermarkt.com or call 571-323-5300.

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Outstanding Volunteers

FROM PAGE 10

there during the second annual Oakton Day in the Park. Martin shares, "I volunteer, because I have spare time and I want to use that spare time to do something meaningful."

Youth Volunteer Service Awards

Two recipients of the Elly Doyle Youth Volunteer Service Award were named: Ava Belmont and Yasmine Marrero.

Ava Belmont volunteered with the Laurel Hill Park Volunteer and IMA teams, leading subgroups during larger events and providing guidance to volunteers with less experience. She volunteered regularly during high school, until leaving for college at York in Pennsylvania this year. She is known as Laurel Hill PVT/IMA's "most consistent and long-tenured volunteer team member." Belmont took on leadership responsibilities and assisted in directing activities, such as Earth Day trash pickups. Working in Laurel Hill park since 2020, she also volunteered previously at the front desk at Mount Vernon Rec Center and taught skating classes. Outside the park arena, she was one of 23 Fairfax County public school recipients of the 2022 Student Peace Awards, designed to recognize young people who work as peacemakers. Belmont volunteered as president of the Our Minds Matter Teen Advisory Committee and of Mount Vernon High School's Our Minds Matter Club. Belmont's efforts enhanced the beauty and ecology of Laurel Hill Park and set an example of leadership in her community and school. Receiving the award, Belmont said, "by continuing to try to encourage other people to volunteer, I might be able to inspire some other young people to be change makers and volunteers within their community, because it just takes one person to make a difference."

Yasmine Marrero began her service to the Fairfax County Park Authority with the Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP), as a monthly trail cleanup volunteer. Fitting with her passion as a steward of the environment, she later created the Young FLAPPers subgroup conducting monthly cleanups for fellow high schoolers. During the 2021 school year, she coordinated the first FLAP quarterly Trash Off: A High School Showdown. Some 200 volunteers participated and an estimated 3,000 pounds of trash was removed from Lake Accotink's trails and waters. Marrero has volunteered more than 200 service hours and her contributions helped provide a cleaner, safer

SEE VOLUNTEERS, PAGE 15

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OPINION

Casinos Coming to Bristol, Portsmouth, Danville, Norfolk

FROM PAGE 6

month of operation, the Bristol casino generated over \$2 million to be shared among these localities.

'Bristol Casino - Future Home of Hard Rock' has already become a major tourism destination, befitting any property that is connected with the legendary Hard Rock brand owned by the Seminole Indians. Within weeks of opening, the casino has attracted visitors from every US state, including Hawaii and Alaska, including yours truly who came to witness the grand opening. While the current site is temporary, I can tell you that it very much is a full-service casino, with 30,000 square feet of gaming space, featuring 870 slots, 21 tables and a sportsbook, all open to the public 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, with ample parking. The space includes a main casino floor as well as non-smoking and high-limit gaming areas. Guests are able to enjoy Mr. Lucky's restaurant, Brick'd (a brick oven pizza and grab-and-go food outlet), and Bristol Bar, a sports bar and lounge with live entertainment. For fans of apparel featuring Hard Rock's iconic logo, the casino has a retail shop offering the brand's signature Rock Shop merchandise, and this is just the temporary casino.

I would encourage my constituents and all of us throughout Northern Virginia, to schedule a vacation to check out the new casino in Bristol, which is an easy interstate drive to reach and a great weekend getaway

trip. Bristol, famous as the 'Birthplace of Country Music,' is a friendly and charming community, nestled in the mountain foothills, surrounded by lots of natural beauty and offering plenty of fun entertainment and outdoor adventure for the entire family.

Just this past week, Portsmouth announced that The Rivers Casino will open a temporary site, on January 15th, 2023. When completed it will be a \$300 million-plus facility creating over 1,000 permanent jobs and will be the largest private sector investment in Portsmouth's history. They are keeping to a promise to include meaningful local minority investment, and have surpassed their goal of \$5 million in equity investment from private investors who are minorities or minority-owned businesses, half of which came from Portsmouth. Already, the newly hired employees are active in the community with charitable works including a recent program lending a hand to Portsmouth's Wesley Community Service Center packaging food, and clothing, and sorting books.

Next week I will write about the progress on the casinos in Norfolk and Danville and importantly, what is being done to increase the Commonwealth's commitment to protecting the public from problem gambling now that more people will have easier access to gaming. Also, Virginia has a Problem Gambling Hotline at 1-888-532-3500.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

NOW THRU NOV. 17

ESL Class. 7-9 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced level English classes. Classes will be in-person or online. Classes will meet twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Books are included in class cost. Email: Heather@andberg.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Outstanding Volunteers

FROM PAGE 14

and enjoyable experience for all those who frequent Lake Accotink Park. Receiving the award, Marrero said, "It shows that we've had a direct significant impact on our community and I'm very proud to know that it's also great because it shares what we do with the rest of the county and I really hope that they take some of what we do and implement it in their own communities."

New Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award

This year, the Park Authority Board presented the first Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award, established this summer. The new award recognizes significant and tangible contributions that enhance diversity systemwide and fosters a culture of in-

clusion in the parks. The first recipients are Pravinchandra and Hansaben Dave. Together they aided the Adapted Aquatics program at South Run Rec Center over a period of more than ten years. Each week, year round, the Daves volunteered as assistant swim coaches for children with disabilities, contributing more than 900 hours of instruction throughout their tenure. Says Hansaben, "I just do it [volunteer] because the joy I get is an honor for me."

Other Awards

The Park Authority recognized many other volunteers as recipients of Special Recognition, Eakin Philanthropy Award, Harold L. Strickland Award, and Outstanding Volunteers at each park. For the full list of 2022 winners see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/awards/ellydoyle>

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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Weight For It, Wait ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the first time in almost my entire six-decades plus of eating, I heard something from a doctor (my oncologist) that I had never heard before: "Kenny, you need to gain some weight."

The first reaction I had was to recall (in my mind) Robert Di Niro's famous "You talking to me?" bit from the movie "Taxi Driver." But since I was the only cancer patient sitting in the examining room and the oncologist was speaking directly to me from approximately three feet away, it was me. I just couldn't believe, process even, these never-before-heard words.

These words were directed at me for good reason. I'm not even fitting into my older brother's hand-me-down jeans anymore, almost all of which were too tight. Now, these jeans are all too big. In addition, my belt hangs around my waist as it no longer has enough holes to make for a tight fit anymore. And when I had to wear a suit last week to attend a funeral, it was very nearly tent city. To say I was swimming conjures water. Let me assure you, there was no water where I was swimming. I was on dry land and standing helplessly in front of a mirror reflecting on my appearance. Ultimately, I did find something to wear. However, the problem was; I was the one wearing it, not the Kenny from last year.

This juxtaposition from my normal overweight to this very uncharacteristic underweight was not exactly my intention. It's more a combination of teeth issues and the dry-mouth side effect of my thyroid cancer medication. Though I'm not exactly a shell of my former self, I am nonetheless, svelte, you might say? And why might I be svelte? Because I've never heard the word used to describe me before so I'm not sure it applies. But to quote Popeye, that famous sailor: "I y'am what I y'am." I just hope that my future weight gain doesn't involve eating spinach out of a can. Early suggestions from the peanut gallery suggest otherwise: to include drinking multiple cans of boost per day, eating Ben & Jerry's ice cream at will, without caring which one is will, and eating more than a bagel and cream cheese for breakfast/lunch every day.

This need to eat - for my health, is the complete and total reversal of my lifelong relationship with food. Generally speaking, I am not a "healthy" eater. I'm more a carbohydrate kind of person who prefers cake, cookies, and ice cream. Vegetables, fresh fruit, fish and the like were never much on my dietary radar. If they ever were, I'd try and jam the signal so I wouldn't be embarrassed by my refusal to even try anything different. Eating has always been the bane of my existence. I'm a meat and potatoes chocoholic who doesn't eat well in front of others. A dinner invitation to eat a meal at somebody's home is fraught with anxiety for me. Invariably, there will be food I won't eat. As such, I'll try to sit next to my wife at the far end of the table away from the hosts so I can sneak food I don't eat onto her plate. Since she's a good eater, possibly what I discard onto her plate won't be left in limbo.

This self-assessment comes from a former adolescent who spent countless hours in the Husky Department in Filenes, Jordan Marsh, Kennedy's, and Raleigh's in downtown Boston trying to find "school clothes." As a result, I've stood over so many piles of clothes in dressing rooms which didn't fit and/or had to try on and then walk a kind of shame onto the floor where my mother was anxiously waiting to see if what I had tried on, even fit and if it did, would it meet with her approval. Twice a year, I endured this shopping hell; fall and winter, spring and summer. I remain partially traumatized to this day. Not to mention all the "fat"-type nicknames my brother had for me: "Fatso," "Blimp," "Endicott Chubb," and "Corpulent," to name a few. But since he was my biggest booster, it never really bothered me. Still, I was never ever told I needed to eat. Far from it. I ate plenty, just the wrong stuff. Yet, in 2022, that's what I'm being told. Eat anything I want; whatever it takes to gain weight.

You might as well try to turn an ocean liner around after it's headed out to sea. It hardly turns on a dime, and as far as my eating habits/tendencies, et cetera, neither do I.

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



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