

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Christmas Season Floats into Reston

PAGES 6-7



Frosty the Snowman in the 12-foot-tall Snow globe balloon in the 31st annual Reston Holiday Parade, Reston Town Center.

A Thousand Stories

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Encore's 'Perfect Christmas List'

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ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8, 9 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

'Hidden in Plain Sight' for Parents of Teens

Fairfax County police are offering a hands-on, learning adventure for parents and guardians of teenagers. Called "Hidden in Plain Sight," it'll be held Wednesday, Dec. 7, from 6:30-8:45 p.m., at the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Attendees will be guided through a presentation opening their eyes to what's right in front of them. This program begins with a setup of a teenager's bedroom which includes close to 100 "red flags" indicating risky behavior. Parents are encouraged to touch everything and identify these red flags.

Afterward is a PowerPoint presentation detailing the red-flag props the room contained and how they indicate or are used in risky behavior. Police include up-to-date statistics and local trends, and law-enforcement officers will share experiences they've had in the community identifying risky behavior and helping put teens on the right path to a healthy life.

Register at <https://bit.ly/hipsdec22>. Or register for other, upcoming presentations dates at <https://bit.ly/fcpdhps>. Registration is required, and seats are limited for this free event. For further information or to arrange a presentation for an organization, club or group, email PFC Meg Hawkins at FPCDHIPS@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Sully Police Commanders in the Community

The commanders of the Sully Police District, Captain Rachel Levy and 1st Lt. Matt Dehler, are looking forward to meeting with local residents during their next Commanders in the Community event. It'll be held Wednesday, Dec. 7, from 6:30-8 p.m., at the Centreville Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive in Centreville, and refreshments will be served. It's a free and casual event enabling people to ask questions about the district, crime and the police department.

Prevent Catalytic Converter Thefts from Vehicles

Because of the continuing problem of thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles, G & C Tire and Auto Service will hold another etching event. It's slated for Dec. 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at 14008 Willard Road in Chantilly.

Catalytic converters are stolen due to the valuable metals contained within them. Making matters worse, they're easy to remove and difficult to trace, once stolen. It can cost the vehicle owner an average of \$1,000-\$2,500 to replace a catalytic converter, and it's illegal to drive without one.

During the free etching event, G&C will apply anti-theft labels to people's catalytic converters. These ultra-destruct labels are laser cut with a unique code and the URL of a secure, accredited database – the International Security Register (ISR).

They'll break into pieces if an attempt is made to remove them. Furthermore, a fluid that etches into metal is applied to the labels so that, even if they are removed, the code and URL will remain clearly readable. This service will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis; no appointments are necessary.

SEE SULLY ROUNDUPS, PAGE 8



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NEWS



Night view of the irises on SLHS STEAM Team Vidustria installation at Hyatt Park, RTC.



Part of the SLHS STEAM Team responsible for Vidustria

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Robert Goudie, left executive director of the Reston Town Center Association, and Tyson Warren, general manager of the Hyatt Regency Reston

LED-lit Sculpture Installed at Reston Town Center

SLHS student project (2019-2022) sets the stage for future installations.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Vidustria is the name of the new LED-lit sculpture by the South Lakes High School STEAM Team installed in Hyatt Park on Presidents Street in Reston Town Center. A program on Nov. 25 officially recognized the student artists and sponsors responsible for the project.

“It’s such a great example of project-based learning and setting you up for the kinds of things you’re going to do in the workforce in the future,” said Kimberly Retzer, principal of SLHS. “[It’s] being able to work from the inception of an idea to the actual installation, and all the pieces that go in between. So no matter what field you go into in the future, your experience and being involved in this is going to set you apart from others.”

The sculpture’s name draws from the word “vigor” and the Latin term “Industria,” meaning energy. Vidustria is intended to reflect the three-year effort, resilience, determination, spirit, and passion the students, teacher Marco Rando, and others put into the project leading to the installation of the aluminum composite and acrylic panel sculpture. A recurring theme within the sculpture is interconnectivity. The individual energy each student puts into Vidustria is what elevates the project.

It was on Feb. 5, 2020, that students of the South Lakes High School STEAM team took a group of select professionals and stakeholders on a design journey. The students had collaborated for months on a project to deliver a large temporary sculpture they envisioned and fabricated to Reston Town



Kimberly Retzer, left, principal of SLHS, and Marco Rando, art teacher at SLHS

Center in the spring of 2020. “That day, they were presenting their ideas for what it was going to look like,” recalled Principal Retzer.

Lenticular maquettes illustrated the three final proposed designs. One was a sculpture with spaced columns; the next was a solid-form column concept; and the third was three cylinders with negative space between them, allowing the cylinders to spin. Students addressed safety, weather, lighting, and architectural considerations.

“Then something called the pandemic intervened,” said Robert Goudie, executive director of the Reston Town Center Association. The project ground to a sudden halt. As countries across the globe went into lock-



Vidustria viewed from Reston Parkway at night.

down, no one’s priority was the art installation. The temporary sculpture became a long-term touchstone issue in need of resolution.

Fast-forward to late fall 2022. The school staff, supporters, and others celebrated Vidustria’s installation. Thanks went to those who persisted tenaciously to make the project happen: students, including those who went on to graduate and the new students, who took up the mantle, Rando, and the “incredible sponsors,” all of whom made financial contributions or contributed their time and resources pro bono.

“Sometimes these days, we don’t give kids credit for sticking through and seeing something done, and obviously having Marco Rando as their teacher leader speaks vol-

umes,” said Retzer. “It’s really the work of the kids that we’re so proud of. It ultimately shows in the work and the support that we got from our business partners to make all this happen.”

Tyson Warren, general manager of the Hyatt Regency Reston, said, “I know it’s been a three-year project, but we’re glad to be partners. We hope to continue this tradition in the future because I think it’s a great addition to the park, but it’s also a great way for each of you all to have a piece here in Reston.”

Rando, the art teacher at SLHS, said temporary public art is an excellent platform for education. It brings the community into the

SEE INSTALLATION, PAGE 11

BOOKSTORE

A Thousand Stories Opens in Herndon

New Bookstore offers a curated selection.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A new bookstore celebrated its grand opening in the Town of Herndon on Small Business Saturday. A Thousand Stories Herndon Books is located in the Arts Herndon building at 750 Center Street. The shop is the brainchild of co-owners Michelle Ratto and Beth Luke.

"This has been a nice opening day for us," Luke said as she looked around the space, which featured a curated selection of 1,500 titles. Luke recounted the moment before the bookstore's launch when it went from a vision to a reality. Items had been arriving piecemeal.

"But one day, a giant pallet got here. And once we started putting those on the shelves, we were like, 'Oh, this is really happening,'" Luke said.

Pleased to partner with Arts Herndon, Ratto said that the store features new books, focusing mainly on children and young adults with a little bit of adult mixed in and gift items. "Things like mugs, puzzles, stuffed animals, and things like that you can pair with a book, and... there is gift wrapping," Ratto said.



The Hedrick family (from left) Royer, 5; (mom) Elizabeth; Colette, 3; (dad) Clark; and Reyne, 1, cozy up to read a book at the Grand Opening of Herndon's new bookstore.

Arts Herndon, a nonprofit organization, not a town program, offers a local gathering place to celebrate and advance the arts in



Co-owner Beth Luke on opening day

Herndon. "A Thousand Stories will be doing book talks in the gallery," Joanna Ormesher, president of Arts Herndon said. Arts Herndon celebrates the visual and performing arts and the literary arts, including poetry, prose, and open mic events.

In collaboration with Newbery Medalist Kwame Alexander, author of the tween favorite "Rebound," and the National Endowment for the Arts, Arts Herndon has present-

SEE NEW BOOKSTORE, PAGE 5

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BOOKSTORE



Shoppers browse.

New Bookstore Opens

FROM PAGE 4

ed the one-day Children's Literary Festival. Alexander, an American writer of poetry and children's fiction, lived in Herndon and brought many of his new books to the Arts Herndon space, as have other local authors like Chuck Mauro and Barbara Glakas. A Thousand Books will feature a local author section soon in its shop.

Ormesher also said that Arts Herndon would again participate in the Fall for the Book literary festival at George Mason University. She plans to work with A Thousand Stories on that event.

As the afternoon waned, Town Councilmember-elect Clark Hedrick sat on the brightly colored rug with his wife, Elizabeth, surrounded by their three children. The little ones carefully selected books off the shelves and brought them to their parents, snuggling into their laps.

Nearby, Sara Hovell of Herndon, with her daughter Ava, 8, said, "We are looking for gifts for cousins."

A gentleman stood at the counter and paid for his new book. A young girl reached for a small stuffed animal and asked her mom if she could have it.

"From a blank room to this, we're super excited with the progress so far," Ratto said.

A Thousand Stories is open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and is closed on Sundays. Visit www.athousandstoriesherndon.com for more information on book clubs, storytimes, and offerings.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Ava Hovell, 8, looks at some small items at the new bookstore.



Co-owner Michelle Ratto rings up a sale.

Fairfax Water

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 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.

PARADE



Zach Blair, Delilah Russell, Calleigh Russell, and Kenneth Blair set their chairs out curbside for the parade. Not pictured, Wayde Blair and Emily Blair



2022 marks the tenth year Kirk and Sara brought their growing family to the Reston Holiday Parade. From left, Kirk; Jack, 10; Alexis, 8; Madeline, 12; Sara; and Charlotte, 1 1/2.



August Rivers, a South Lakes High School junior, sings the national anthem beside emcee Angie Goff of FOX 5 NBC.



The crowd at the Fountain Square Bandstand applauds.



Frosty the Snowman in the 12-foot-tall Snow globe balloon in the 31st annual Reston Holiday Parade, Reston Town Center.



The Lion dance by the Jow Ga Shaolin Institute in Herndon.

Snow Time at the 2022 Reston Holiday Parade

Grand procession spotlighted musicians, dancers, performers, dignitaries, Santa and Mrs. Claus.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Hours before the 31st annual Reston Holiday Parade passed through Reston Town Center along Market Street, families and couples placed chairs curbside along the half-mile route to guarantee a good view of the festivities.

It took more than 100 volunteers to bring the parade to life, along with Boston Properties who hosts the Reston Holiday Parade along with and community partners. USA Today again nominated the Reston Holiday Parade as one of the Best Holiday Parades according to the parade emcees Angie Goff and Marina Marraco of FOX 5 DC.

The parade featured over 30 groups of musicians, dancers, and characters, from the Jokesters to Snowettes, who performed amid Macy-style helium balloons. And let's not forget Santa and Mrs. Claus in their horse-drawn carriage as the grand finale. The Clauses rejoined the festivities later that evening for the Tree Lighting at Fountain Square.

Ticketed horse-drawn carriage rides started on the day of the parade and will continue every Saturday until Christmas. Check back weekly when tickets become available. One \$30 ticket per party of five to six persons is required. Mini-train rides are available on Sundays. Proceeds will be allocated to Volunteer



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11)



Del. Ken Plum (D-36) and his wife, Jane

Fairfax, Leadership Fairfax, CORE Foundation, Cornerstones, Kids R First, and Friends of Reston.



Dance Xone Extreme is located near GMU in Fairfax.



Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) Board of Supervisors

The Reston Holiday Parade is nominated for the USA Today 10Best 2022 Readers' Choice Award for the Best Holiday Parade. Voting ends Mon., Dec. 5; vote at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Steve, one of the award-winning, sweet and crazy Jokesters, plays with parade-goers Erin Martonik, 11, and her brother Ryan, 8, of Reston. This is their fourth time attending a Reston Holiday Parade.

www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-holiday-parade-2022/
#restontowncenter #RTC #reimagineRTC #ItsSnowtime
www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Toy Soldier balloon



Snow Dudes and lovely ladies from Big Biz Entertainment



The giant Penguin balloon is sponsored by Reston Community Center.



A sample of Conservatory Ballet's production of the Nutcracker; call Reston Community Center box office for tickets.



The award-winning South Lakes Spirit of Reston Marching Band under the direction of Grayson Ford



Ho, ho, ho. The moment that everyone has been waiting for is here. Santa Claus spreads his arms wide, embracing everyone to open "It is Snow Time" at Reston Town Center during the 2022 Reston Holiday Parade. Santa is joined by Mrs. Claus, sitting next to him but hidden from view.



campagna center

VISIT
Alexandria

PRESENT



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RESTON ROUNDUPS

Reston Hospital Gets an A for Safety

Nine HCA Virginia Health System hospitals were awarded an 'A' in the Fall 2022 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, the top score in a national distinction recognizing the hospital system's achievements protecting patients from harm and providing safe healthcare. Four additional HCA Virginia hospitals earned a 'B' in the ranking. Leapfrog assigns an 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D' or 'F' grade to general hospitals across the country based on their performance in preventing medical errors, injuries, accidents, infections, and other harm to patients in their care.

"There is no more important part of our job than vigilantly protecting patient safety," said Elizabeth Mikula, HCA Healthcare Capital Division vice president of quality. "We value the outside review of our patient safety programs to ensure we are providing world-class care to our patients and their families."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent, and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

Run for Reston Association Board of Directors

Four seats will be open for the Reston Association Board of Directors' election in 2023. The month-long election is held every March. All RA homeowners and tenants in good standing can file their candidacy forms for the following positions on the nine-member board:

At-Large Director (3-year term)

At-Large Director (1-year term)

Hunters Woods/Dogwood District Director (3-year term)

Apartment Owner's Representative (3-year term)

For more information click here. Candidacy forms must be filed by 5 p.m. on Jan. 27. Additional information will be provided at an election information session scheduled for Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. Questions may be sent to electionscommittee@reston.org

\$20.7 Million Budget; Household Assessment Is \$763

The Reston Association Board of Directors approved a \$20.7 million budget for 2023 and set the annual assessment fee at \$763. The approval came during a virtual meeting of the board on Thursday, Nov. 17.

The annual assessment fee is charged to all Reston property owners within the association. Reduced rates are available to property owners who participate in the Fairfax County Tax Relief program. RA also offers installment plans.

Invoices for the assessment will be mailed to RA members in mid-December. The due date for payment is Jan. 1, 2023, with a late fee charged for payments received after March 1. Members are encouraged to use RA's online portal to pay their assessments. The association also offers ways for property owners to make payments in person, by phone or mail, or by using the drop box located at RA headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston.

Members with an existing online account who paid electronically last year are encouraged to verify their portal login to ensure their email address and other information is correct.

Email Member Services at Member_Services@reston.org or call 703-435-6530 for additional information regarding 2022 assessment payments.

For more information on the 2023 budget, or to download a copy of the budget, go to <https://www.reston.org/management-and-finance> and www.reston.org.

The largest portion of RA's revenue comes from the annual assessment fee, which pays for the maintenance of all pools, tennis courts, lakes, open spaces, and other amenities, programs and administrative operations.

The 2023 annual assessment is \$763 and provides:

- ❖ Access to 15 outdoor swimming pools and 52 tennis courts*
- ❖ Maintenance of 1,350 acres of open space, including four lakes covering 125 acres as well as numerous ponds and streams.
- ❖ Maintenance of 35 tot lots, 30 multi-purpose courts, 15 picnic pavilions/arbors, 22 ball fields, 31 parking lots, and 55 miles of pathways. This includes clearing the pathways of leaves and snow, and the upkeep of 107 bridges and 26 underpasses.
- ❖ Reforestation and the planting of thousands of native plants, shrubs and trees each year.
- ❖ Free or low-cost educational and recreational programs.
- ❖ Design, maintenance and use covenants enforcement.

— MERCIA HOBSON

SULLY ROUNDUPS

FROM PAGE 2

Donate Children's Toys for Santa's Ride

For more than 30 years, the Fairfax County Police Department's motor unit has been collecting toys and delivering them to children in area hospitals, and to local charities, during the holidays. But help from the community is needed so that they have lots of toys to deliver.

To make local children's Christmas bright, individuals, groups, places of worship, businesses and civic organizations may drop off new and unwrapped toys, books and games before Monday, Dec. 12, at 9 a.m. Place these gifts in the marked, blue boxes in the lobby of the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Donations may also be brought by then to two other locations: Poplar Tree Elementary, 13440 Melville Lane, and St. Timothy Catholic School, 13809 Poplar Tree Road, both in Chantilly.

CALENDAR

ONGOING

Town of Vienna Holiday Decorating Contest. Ring in the holiday season by participating in the 2022 Town of Vienna Holiday Decorating Contest. This year's theme is "Shine Bright, Vienna!" As in past years, the contest is open to residents and businesses located in the Town of Vienna who are encouraged to create a festive, holiday display that will draw visitors to the town. Displays will be judged by the Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) judging panel and voted on by community members. The TBLC judging panel will select business winners on Dec. 8. Community members will also have an opportunity to vote online for the resident and business "People's Choice Award" through Dec. 9 at 12 p.m., and winners will be announced at the regular Town Council meeting at Town Hall on Dec. 9 beginning at 8 p.m., and via social media and the Town website.

NOW THRU DEC. 11

"The Rainmaker." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. "The Rainmaker," written by N. Richard Nash and directed by Deidra La-Wan Starnes. Not only is the Curry family farm being paralyzed by a devastating drought, but Lizzie Curry, to the chagrin of her father and brothers, is unmarried with no viable prospects. A charming, confident trickster named Starbuck comes to town and promises to bring rain in exchange for \$100, setting off a series of events



The Town of Vienna is sponsoring a Holiday Decorating Contest.

that enable Lizzie to see herself in a new light. Show times are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Tickets: \$50 general admission, \$47 seniors (65+), \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

DEC. 1-4

Tysons Library Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Hours: Thursday, 1 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Friday, 2 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 3 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 4 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full gro-

cery sack or half price if less. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Email: tysonslibraryfriends@gmail.com. Call: 703-338-3307.

THURSDAY/DEC. 1

Toys for Tots Happy Hour. 4:30-6:30 p.m. At Brightview Great Falls, 10200 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. They will serve festive cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and plenty of sweet treats. Send an email to Jenn Burns (jburns2@bvsl.net) or Kathy Wagner (kwagner@bvsl.net) to RSVP.

DEC. 2-3

Langley High Feaste. 7 p.m. At Langley High School, McLean. With the approach of the holidays, students



"The Rainmaker" will appear at 1st Stage in Tysons through Dec. 11, 2022.

at Langley High School are preparing for a time-honored tradition of their holiday Feaste, a festive evening that transports the audience back to Merrie Olde England for Renaissance-style dining and musical entertainment. Guests will encounter a transformed Langley

Halle awash with twinkling lights, long, communal dinner tables and a sparkling, holiday-trimmed stage. Students, outfitted with medieval costumes and masks take on the roles of jesters, musicians and sing-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

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FROM PAGE 9

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DEC. 2-4
Holiday Book Sale. At Centreville Library, 14200 St. Germaine Drive, Centreville. Fiction for all ages (many new titles!), Variety of Non-fiction, DVDs, and Holiday Audio CDs Shop for holiday gifts and support the Library. Friday, Dec. 2 from 1-5 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 3 from 10-5 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 4, from 1-4 p.m. The bag sale will take place on Sunday from 2-4 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3
Clifton Art Show. 2-7 p.m. At Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Artists offer their works in Fine Art Painting, Jewelry, Sculpture, Photography, Matted Giclee Prints, and Holiday Cards. With Clifton Homes tour 4-7 pm (admission) and a Horse Parade at 2 p.m. Visit the website: artguildofclifton.org

DEC. 9-11
Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Winter Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Show times: Friday, Dec. 9: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 10: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 11: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestivals.com

SUNDAY/DEC. 11
Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Jody Marshall's Holiday Celebration: One of the top hammered dulcimer players in America, Jody Marshall has been performing for more than a quarter century. She is accompanied by Jim Queen on fiddle, banjo and vocals, Susan Queen on bass guitar and vocals, and Paul Nahay on piano, bringing us holiday favorites old and new. Visit jodymarshall.net.

NOW THRU DEC. 31
Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com

SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER
The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) will take place at Lake Anne Village in Reston from 8 a.m.-noon. SNAP beneficiaries receive up to \$20 match. The market will continue until December. Visit <http://restonfarmersmarket.com/>

GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET
The Great Falls Farmers Market Outdoor Market is open Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. For vendors and weekly highlights see <https://www.greatfallsfarmersmarket.org/>

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Vidustria viewed from Reston Parkway during daylight hours.



Vidustria viewed from President Street at night.



Vidustria viewed from President Street during daylight hours.

SLHS Vidustria Installation

FROM PAGE 3

classroom, where students must form partnerships with talented people who provide services to complete the project. Addressing the assembled students, Rando said, “Kudos to you for putting all those little details together. ... You’re laying the foundation for educational change ... the norm of the future where students are going to have the opportunity to work on something they can put in their community, work with professionals.”

Area businesses supported Reston Town Center Association and South Lakes High School STEAM Team leading to the celebration of Vidustria, a student art installation on Friday, Nov. 25, at Hyatt Park, Presidents Street, Reston Town Center. The Community Partners are Reston Town Center Association and Public Art Reston. Sponsors are Hyatt Regency, Commercial Concrete, Power Services, Thornton Tomasetti, Provectus, Inc., KCS, A Yellowstone Landscape Company, Boston Properties, and FASTSIGNS.

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Vidustria viewed from President Street during daylight hours.

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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 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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Lucky Me – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a diagnosed-with-lung-cancer-at-age-54-and-half adult, I haven't felt particularly lucky. Nevertheless, I rarely if ever, woe is me. I take the bad with good, and vice versa. I'm never too high and hopefully, never too low. I've always felt, since being diagnosed with cancer in late February 2009 that the cancer/diagnosis was bad enough on its own, so I didn't need to make it any worse by dwelling on it and/or considering how unlucky I was; considering that I was lifelong non-smoker and second son of a family with no "immediate" cancer history. Let alone to then be diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer stage IV and given a "terminal"/13 month to two-year prognosis by my oncologist – at age 54 and a half. A prognosis which, on the face of it, offered very little hope. And to invoke a M*A*S*H comment by Lt. Col. Henry Blake, my oncologist wasn't "blowing any sunshine up my skirt."

Yet somehow, I didn't die. Possibly due to a misdiagnosis, and/or possibly affected by my never-woe-is-me attitude and equally never-say-die approach, literally-ish. I always figured that receiving bad news from my oncologist, whenever it arrived would be disheartening enough so that I didn't need to put the cart before the horse, so to speak and write any epitaphs (sort of like Orson Welles advertising that Paul Masson would "not sell any wine before its time"). Rather, I would let the treatment, side effects, scans, and all, good, bad, or indifferent, happen in due course and not react too much in advance of anything actually happening (as in getting sick/being hospitalized). I decided to look before I leaped, and not jump to any conclusions. I would try to take it all stride and not cart any horses.

And sure, there were highs and lows, growth/progression, delays in treatment due to low white blood cell counts, high and low potassium, high creatinine (still to this day), and as it turned out, many post-scan characterizations of "stable disease;" words to live by, you might say (I certainly have – for years). As you might imagine, I've lived very happily with "stable." Certainly "shrinkage" was preferred/the hope, but it occurred less and less while "stable" I heard more and more. I soon realized – and embraced "stable." As I often say, "stable" is hardly the problem. I can live with 'stable.' 'Stable' is unlikely to kill me." Granted, it's not a cure, but neither is it a dreaded complication regarding the underlying problem: cancer and tumor growth.

"Stable" is a way of life for me. "Stable," as I'm extremely fond of saying, has become "my new favorite word." The goal, as much of one as one could have when you're diagnosed with a "terminal" disease, was/is to somehow turn cancer into a "chronic" disease (like diabetes) where you can live a relatively normal life while treatment/monitoring of your disease continues until monitoring is no longer required, if you know what I mean?. Unfortunately, you'll still have doctor's appointments and multiple scans, but you'll be alive and living – with cancer. You'll likely never be cancer-free or have peace of mind, (concerning your cancer), but you'll still have the life expectancy you were anticipating; not one cut short by this dreaded disease. And as an originally-diagnosed-as-"terminal" cancer patient, "chronic" is my brand new/real-time favorite word. And I couldn't think of ever getting here without having previously been "stable." Moreover, it sure beats the alternative, and as the old saying says: "Living is its own reward."

Realistically speaking, I don't need to be cured (of course I dream of that), but it's not front and center, anymore; it's more my subconscious. I'm thrilled to be "chronic." And since (in my mind), "chronic" is the new "stable," ("stable" all grown up, you might say), "chronic" is hardly the problem. I can live with "chronic." Heck, considering that I thought I'd be dead 12 years ago, "chronic" is no more of a problem – for me, than "stable" has been.

Granted, it's not a cure, but it's a living, one I'm incredibly lucky to still have. For a cancer patient who was given a two-percent chance to survive beyond two years, to still be living nearly 14 years later (late Feb. 2023) is a miracle. I was happy to be called "stable." Now, if my life continues as I hope, and I am considered "chronic," I will be just as grateful, every minute of every day, to be called "chronic Ken."

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

HOLIDAY CHEER



Colorful elves fill the stage during a dance number.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAYNOR VAN DER MERWE



From left, are Encore's Maya Tischler, Faith Chun and Kendra Walsh.

Get in the Christmas Spirit

Encore's upcoming musical, 'The Perfect Christmas List.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Bursting with holiday cheer and happiness, "The Perfect Christmas List" is Encore Theatrical Arts Project's upcoming extravaganza. Led by director and choreographer Raynor van der Merwe, each year the Chantilly-based dance company presents an original, Broadway-style, Christmas musical to the delight of all who see it.

Every year, an Elf of the Year at the North Pole is chosen to be part of the wish-fulfillment squad, helping Santa select and deliver a gift to one special child. This year, head elf Harvey announces that elf Chip's younger sister, Ginger, is the winner. Upset he wasn't picked, Chip tries to worm his way into the program – and chaos and mischief ensue.

Encore veteran Scott Dees and daughter Carsten wrote the story, along with Encore grad Becca Perron. The cast of 30 has been rehearsing since August, and the scenes take place in New York City by a gigantic, lit-up Christmas tree and inside Santa's workshop at the North Pole.

"It's a great experience bringing this story to life," said van der Merwe. "We have two amazing guest performers – Brandon Morris, who's about to graduate from GMU's musical theater program, plays Harvey, and recent JMU grad Noah Hamadè plays Chip."

"We also have a phenomenal cast of Encore dancers who sing and act, as well, and are so disciplined and dedicated," continued van der Merwe. "The audience will really enjoy this fast-paced show that'll keep them on their toes. It's for all ages, and we have some specialty numbers, such as, 'Naughty Nice List,' that'll have people wondering,

'How'd they do that?' I always find Christmas songs that further the story, but that you won't always hear on the radio, along with several traditional holiday songs."

Dancing since age 8, Chantilly High senior Caeley Duong is in her sixth year with Encore and plays elf Sprinkles, as well as one of the elfvestigators. As Sprinkles, she wears an apron and chef's cap and likes baking cookies. "And since cookies and baking are a big part of Christmas, she's essential at the North Pole," said Duong. "As an elfvestigator, we all wear fedora hats and carry flashlights."

"My character is the lead elf investigator, is bossy and knows what she's doing. She's also assertive and organized. I'm excited to play her in the dance and then say my lines. In the "Elf Lounge" dance, all the elves are investigating why an alarm keeps sounding at the North Pole. It's calmer than the other numbers and has a jazz vibe and other nuances."

Duong said the audience will like the show's interesting storyline and diverse group of dances, including many new ones that give it a "new, fun energy. Plus, we have some returning dances from previous years that repeat audience members will remember and will enjoy seeing again."

Chantilly senior Maddie Spiewak has danced for 13 years, 10 with Encore. She plays elf Tinsel, who works in the North Pole mailroom with her best friend, elf Sparkles. "Tinsel is kind of bossy and takes ownership of what she's been asked to do, which is to fix a mail truck with Sparkles," said Spiewak. "It's fun because I get to break out of my normal life; and as an elf, I'm filled with Christmas spirit and am joyful all the time."

Her favorite number is "Ragdolls," with dancing Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls. "You



Raggedy Andy dolls with jazz hands are led by Claire Griese (in front).

get to add a character and personality into the dance," she said. "And it's a fun number to do." Spiewak said this show will appeal to everyone and the story is different from previous years because "it's about making a child's wish come true, instead of being about Santa. And it'll get everyone in the Christmas spirit."

A dancer since age 7, Ryleigh Hoag says music's always been a big part of her life. "I'm also a singer and piano player," she said. "And dancing incorporates music and is a nice way to express myself. In the show, I'm a quirky elf called Noel who's a coal miner, gets stuck in the mine and has to be rescued. It's really fun, and I like interacting with Noah [Chip] who's a professional and amazing actor. I also enjoy being a goofy, spirited elf."

Hoag especially likes the "Soldiers" number, a tap dance inspired by the Radio City

Go See 'The Perfect Christmas List'

The curtain rises Saturday, Dec. 10, at noon, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 11, at noon and 4 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 16, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 17, at noon, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 18, at noon and 4 p.m. All shows are in the Richard J. Ernst Theater on NOVA's campus at 8333 Little River Turnpike in Annandale. For tickets and Girl Scout program details, go to www.encore-tap.org. For more information, call 703-222-5511 or email encoreperformers@verizon.net.

Music Hall Rockettes. "We wear red, white and gold jackets, white trousers and white hats with tall, red feathers," she said. "We get to wink and smile and show our personalities, and then we collapse onto each other at the end."

Hoag said the audience will appreciate the "bright and colorful background scenery, and the costumes are really pretty. This year, we have a lot of toy costumes and props, and there'll even be snow and a sleigh. And the little kids will like seeing a younger person playing a big role."

That young person is Emma Packard, 10. Dancing since age 4, she said, "I enjoy performing onstage for an audience – dancing makes me feel like sunshine. I play one of the leads, elf Ginger. With important people like Santa, she's shy; but normally, she's friendly and energetic."

Emma loves playing her because "Ginger has a bunch of fun lines and I like being funny. It's my first time being in Encore's Christmas show, and I'm really excited. I've worked hard to get into the performing company, and I'm really happy I did it."

Her favorite song is "Mailroom" because, in it, she acts and does jazz dancing while choosing a file with the name of a child whose wish will be fulfilled. Overall, she said, "It's a cheerful show with lots of great songs, and everyone will enjoy it."

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