

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Treated Locally

PAGE 10

Anatoliy Kirda had the biggest catch of the day, a 39 pound Blue Catfish.



OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 18

PHOTO COURTESY VFA

66 Express Lanes
Open Early

PAGE 3

Down the Drain?
Then What?

PAGE 14

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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 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

Inova Experiencing Unprecedented Patient Volumes

Due to another spike in flu, COVID-19, RSV and other illnesses following the Thanksgiving holiday, Inova's hospitals are experiencing unprecedented patient volumes and strain on hospital capacity.

Inova Emergency Departments, in particular, across the system are experiencing a significant surge in patient volume and are operating at or over capacity. For every patient discharged another is waiting to be admitted.

While Inova is equipped to handle the current surge, the following recommendations could help stem the surge:

- ❖ Get vaccinated for both flu and COVID-19 and boosted for COVID-19 if you're eligible.
- ❖ Continue to practice safety measures including hand hygiene, masking, and social distancing as appropriate.
- ❖ Stay home and away from others if you or your children are not feeling well.

❖ Know where to go for your medical care. <https://www.inova.org/know-where-to-go>

In addition, patients are encouraged to consider if the hospital-based emergency department is the appropriate level of care to meet their medical needs. For emergency needs, Inova's freestanding emergency departments provide the same level of emergency care and may have shorter wait times.

If your condition does not require emergency care, consider whether primary care or an Inova GoHealth Urgent Care Center is more appropriate. <https://www.inova.org/locations/inova-gohealth-urgent-care> Inova also partners with DispatchHealth, which provides urgent medical care at your home.

If you are experiencing a life-threatening medical emergency, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency department.

Click here <https://www.inova.org/know-where-to-go> for guidance to determine what level of medical care you need.

Pedestrian Fatality in Fairfax City

A Fairfax City man died last weekend after being struck by a car while he was crossing the street. City police identified him as John Blevins, 56.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, at 7:03 p.m., police responded to the intersection of Main Street and Trapp Road for a report of a traffic accident involving a motor vehicle and a pedestrian. According to police, Blevins was wearing dark clothing when he tried to cross Main Street toward Trapp Road, when he

was struck by a vehicle traveling east in the left through lane.

The driver remained on the scene. Blevins was taken to Inova Fairfax Hospital, where he died as a result of his injuries. The crash remains an active investigation. Police request anyone with any information about it or who may have witnessed it to contact Sgt. Carruthers at 703-385-7924.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Police Charge Driver in Motorcycle Fatality

Fairfax County police have charged a Fairfax man in connection with the Oct. 25 death of a Fairfax motorcyclist. However, his charges are traffic-related and not felonies.

That day at 6:19 p.m., officers responded to West Ox Road at Ox Hill Road for a report of a crash involving a 2018 Yamaha MT07 motorcycle and a 2000 Jeep Grand Cherokee. Killed as a result of the crash was Andrew Dearing, 27; police say the Jeep's driver was Mazher Rajput, 79.

Detectives with the Crash Reconstruction Unit determined that Rajput was driving in the northbound turn lane on West Ox Road, waiting to turn left onto Ox Hill Road. Dearing was traveling south on West Ox Road in

the left lane. But according to police, Rajput did not yield to the motorcycle, and the two vehicles collided.

"The motorcycle proceeded straight through the intersection from the southbound left lane and struck the Jeep," say police. "Dearing was thrown from his motorcycle and taken to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased."

On Nov. 18, Mazher Rajput was charged with failure to yield when turning left and failure to abide by a traffic light. He was served two magistrate summons and is scheduled to appear in court in January 2023.

— BONNIE HOBBS

BULLETIN BOARD

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

TUESDAY/DEC. 13

Travel with a Dementia Patient – How to Guide Families. Virtual event. 2-3:15 p.m. Featuring Jennifer L. FitzPatrick MSW, LCSW-C, CSP of Jenerations Health Education. Panelist: Kiersten Parsons Moderator: Ni'Asia Griffin. For more information and to register, visit: <https://www.jenerationshealth.com/In-glesideaugust>

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.

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,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 19

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With scissors in hand, Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R-VA) cuts the ribbon for the I-66 express lanes. Youngkin was not on hand for the opening of the Silver Line Extension earlier in November.



Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R-VA) addresses the crowd at the I-66 express lanes event.

I-66 Express Lanes Open out to Gainesville

Officials cut ribbon on the \$3.7 billion express lanes project where tolls and carpooling are part of the picture.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

It was a victory for car commuters this week as officials cut the ribbon on the I-66 express lanes outside the beltway, opening up an option on this heavily traveled interstate highway between I-495 and Gainesville in Prince William County.

“Today’s ribbon cutting celebrates the opening of the 66 Express Lanes, the cornerstone of the Commonwealth’s efforts to transform I-66 into a reliable travel corridor that will move more people through Northern Virginia and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area,” said Gov. Glenn Youngkin, who helped cut the ribbon alongside officials including W. Sheppard Miller III, Virginia Secretary of Transportation; Stephen C. Brich, VDOT Commissioner; Thomas Nelson Jr., Federal Highway Virginia Administrator; Jeffrey McKay, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; and Ann B. Wheeler, Prince William County Board of Supervisors. Youngkin was not on hand for the opening of the Silver Line Extension earlier in November.

On a 22.5 mile segment of I-66 from the Capital Beltway (I-495) to Gainesville, there are now two Express Lanes and three general purpose lanes in each direction to give drivers a choice. To travel on the express lanes, it will take an E-Z Pass that will collect tolls from vehicles with one or two passengers, but vehicles with three or more passengers can use the lanes for free, providing they have an E-Z Pass Flex that can be switched to the “toll free,” status. The tolls vary depending on the amount of traffic on the road at that particular time. They call this “dynamically-tolled,” where the dollar figure is adjusted to maintain a smooth flow of traffic.

“The multi-modal mega-project – among the largest public-private partnership (P3) infrastructure projects in the United States this century – has been funded by \$3.7 billion in private investment, including approximately \$2.2 billion in design-build costs, an up-front \$579 million concession-fee payment to fund additional transportation improvements along the I-66 corridor, \$800 million in transit subsidy over the 50-year term of its contract with VDOT (through 2066), and \$350 million for future I-66 corridor improvements,” according to I-66 Express Mobility Partners announcement.

“Additionally, I-66 Express Mobility Partners returned \$600 million in anticipated public subsidy to be used for other projects. The Commonwealth offered a contribution of up to \$600 million for project costs, which I-66 Express Mobility Partner’s bid didn’t require.”

“Toll prices will fluctuate depending on the amount of traffic and the time of day,” the instructional video states, and the dollar figure on the video goes up and down but seems to stay under \$10 on the website. Out on the road though, the amount on the I-495 Express Lanes has reached \$20 and more during rush hour. Only time will tell if this will be similar on I-66.

The lanes opened in phases, typical of road projects of this size. The first section



Express lanes, formerly called the HOT Lanes, are all over the Northern Virginia area.

located between Gainesville and Route 28 in Centreville, opened early on Sept. 10, followed by the lanes between Route 28 and I-495 opening in the westbound direction on Nov. 19, and in the eastbound direction on Nov. 22. Overall, the new express lanes opened ahead of schedule, VDOT said.

I-66 Inside the Beltway

Things are a little different on I-66 inside the beltway. Toll is collected on vehicles heading east in the morning and west in the afternoon. In the mornings during the week,

between 5:30-9:30 a.m., vehicles with one person are tolled, and vehicles with two or more passengers can ride for free. Again, this takes the E-Z Pass Flex that has a switch when there is more than one person. As of Dec. 5, it will take three people aboard to get the free ride. They call that “HOV-3+.”

In the afternoons, it’s the same heading west between 3-7 p.m. On weekends and federal holidays, travel inside the beltway on I-66 is free.

Express Lanes Everywhere

For any drivers on the interstate highways in Northern Virginia, the express lanes are not new. On I-495, there are express lanes between the Springfield Interchange and the Dulles Toll Road in the north; on I-95, the express lanes go all the way to Stafford County; and then on I-395, the express lanes are inside the beltway all the way past the Pentagon. All the express

lanes have an HOV requirement to avoid the toll. The planners hope this gives people an incentive to carpool, reducing the number of cars on the highways and cutting down on air pollution.

There are plans in action to extend the I-495 express lanes on the southern part of the beltway to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, and officials are looking at other plans to extend the lanes across the American Legion Bridge into Maryland in the north. On I-95, the express lanes are being extended south to Fredericksburg.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGGIE SHIRCLIFF

Playing elves are (from left) Francesca Busson, Rowan Manning, Samantha Regan, Beckett Cable, Mikayla Ironroad and Lana Ironroad.

Snowmen, Elves, Music and 8-Foot-High Puppet

CFTC presents 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Filled with all the beloved characters from the animated TV special children know and love, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" is this season's holiday show from City of

Fairfax Theatre Co.

Performances will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8, 9 and 10, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 11, at 2 p.m., at Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road SW in Vienna. Tickets are \$20, adults; \$15, children 12 and under at the door or via <https://fairfaxcitytheatre.ticketleap.com/rudolph-the-red-nosed-reindeer/>.

Because of his shiny nose, Rudolph doesn't think he belongs in Christmastown, so he searches for a place that'll accept him. Along the way, he meets fellow misfits and learns that Christmastown really is his home. He also discovers that his difference makes him special – and enables him to guide Santa's sleigh and save Christmas.

The cast and crew of 50 have been rehearsing since September, and Director Sierra Hoffman, a 2017 Fairfax High grad, said it's wonderful having people of all different ages, from age 7 to adult, in the same room together. "We have so many incredibly talented cast members, I'm really impressed," she said. "There are lots of families in the show, some people in their first play and others, very experienced."

In trying to recreate such an iconic movie, said Hoffman, "We're borrowing lots of its costumes and puppetry. For example, we're building a huge, 8-foot-high puppet of Bumble, the abominable snow monster. And the scenery will portray outdoor snowscapes, the North Pole and Santa's workshop."

Her favorite number in this musical is "The Island of Misfit Toys" because "It's a really cute song, the toys' costumes are adorable and it's a classic song that everyone remembers from the movie." She said the audience "will love this show's nostalgia, and it'll get people in the Christmas spirit and spread the joy. The music will be great, and the stage and costumes will be visually appealing."

Music Director Luke Hemmingson said the show has "tons of fun, holiday numbers – some from the movie and some that are original to this musical," such as "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree," "A Merry, Merry Christmas to You" and "When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter." Some characters will sing solos, while others – including elves and reindeer – will perform together in groups.

"There'll also be sing-along opportunities for the audience," said Hemmingson. "These songs are so

classic that we want the audience to really join in the fun. And the cast brings so much Christmas energy, it lights up every song. Their powerful voices really shine with their love for the holidays."

He especially likes the tune, "We are Santa's Elves," because "It's just so jolly and the performers are having such a good time that the audience will, too. They'll also love how festive the whole show is, and all the cute moments will warm their hearts."

Playing King Moonracer, ruler of the Island of Misfit Toys, is Fairfax City resident Shalon Ironroad. "He's ethereal, warm and a strong leader," she said. "He flies around, collects all the toys that don't fit in and gives them a home. They're atypical – for example, a Charlie [instead of a Jack] in the box, a train with square wheels and a broken airplane – and would otherwise be cast aside."

Loving her role, Ironroad said, "Being a woman, I wouldn't be the usual choice for it, so I thought, 'OK, I can fit in.' I love the idea that even the toys that don't fit in can have a place to be. And really, that's the message of the show – what makes you different can be your strength."

Her favorite song is "Have a Holly Jolly Christmas" because "Everyone is in it, and it showcases each character and sets the magical tone for the rest of the show. I grew up watching the animated version of "Rudolph," so seeing this show will make people feel extra nostalgic. The kids are absolutely adorable – including two of mine – and there's some really great talent in the cast, especially Chris Dockins, who plays our cheerful narrator, Sam the Snowman."

Another City resident, Jack Lockrem, portrays Yukon Cornelius. "At his core, he's a guy looking for something to call his own," said Lockrem. "He especially wants to find an ore patch of silver and gold so he can get some money. At first, he's all for himself; but when he meets Rudolph and Hermey the misfit elf, he discovers the importance of friends. And he even ends up saving them when they get into a spot of trouble with the abominable snowman."

Lockrem enjoys his role because his character is "larger than life – very expressive and physical – and a more joyous character than my last role as the Thane of Ross in 'Macbeth.' And I like singing, 'Fame and Fortune' with Hermey and Ru-

SEE RUDOLF, PAGE 5

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2022

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MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Supervisor Dan Storck invites you to our Holiday Open House!

**Thursday,
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**Meet Team MVD,
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Mount Vernon District
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your neighbors!**

Food, Fun and Laughter!
Kindly RSVP using the QR code.
Questions? Call 703-780-7518

Mount Vernon Governmental Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Mount Vernon, VA 22306



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGGIE SHIRCLIFF

From left are Jack Lockrem (Yukon Cornelius), Sawyer Cable (Rudolph) and Rhett Thomas (Hermey).

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

FROM PAGE 4

dolph. I've known Rhett Thomas, the actor who plays Hermey, for several years, so it's great working with him in a different role. And this number has fun music and choreography."

Lockrem said the audience will love all the show's familiar tunes, the dancing and "the amazingly talented child actors. Also, this musical is multigenerational, and Santa and Mrs. Claus are a couple in real-life."

Playing Boss Elf, in charge of all the other elves at the North Pole, is Cody Yeatman. "He's old, but acts like a child," said Yeatman. "And he's energetic but has a hard time understanding anything that's not part of his daily routine. For exam-

ple, he can't understand why Hermey wants to be a dentist."

After playing several serious roles lately, Yeatman, too, likes playing something lighthearted. "I can just let go," he said. "I portray how carefree Boss Elf is with my movements, such as waving my arms and flipping my hair."

His favorite song is "We are Santa's Elves" because he gets to conduct the other elves while they sing, and it's a "cheerful, happy and fun" number. Yeatman also said the audience will enjoy singing along and engaging with the actors. "This show is about Christmas, a family holiday," he said. "And it's also an opportunity to socialize with family and friends and bring the community together."

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Continuing Our Progress

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL (D-34)

It has been an honor to serve our community in the Virginia legislature for the last 12 years. I am letting you know that I will run for re-election to represent the 34th District in the Senate of Virginia in 2023.

A New District

The redistricting of state and federal elected officials' districts made substantial changes in the Senate district I have represented for the last six years. The area of Fairfax County south of Alexandria and east of Interstate 95/495 is currently divided between three state Senate districts. After the election in 2023, there will only be one district and it has been renumbered as the 34th Senate District similar to the configuration in our area before 2001. The new boundaries are roughly everything in Fairfax County south of Alexandria, west of the Potomac River, north of the Occoquan River and east of the CSX railroad tracks that run from Alexandria to Richmond, Pohick Creek and the former Lorton Prison.

I am excited to be reunited with many of my existing neighbors, former constituents and I look forward to working for a district that is more of a community than the current fragmented district. My life in elected public service began in 2009 when I was first elected to the 44th House of Delegates District after Del. Kris Amundson's retirement. I was elected to the current 36th Senate District after Sen. Toddy Puller announced her retirement in 2015.



Much Accomplished - More to Do

Since 2009, one of my top objectives has been the reconstruction and redevelopment of U.S. 1 to facilitate the extension of the Yellow Line Metro subway to the south. As a result of Sen. Puller and me securing \$2 million in 2011 to conduct the U.S. 1 Multimodal Alternative Analysis Study, our community reached a consensus on a road design and supporting development which has resulted in a near \$1 billion transportation improvement project that is currently underway in the corridor with the full support of Delegates Paul Krizek and Mark Sickles along with Supervisors Dan Storck and Rodney Lusk.

In 2020, I was proud to carry legislation to abolish the death penalty in Virginia and lead reforms of Virginia's criminal justice system. I led the fight to require Alexandria to stop discharging 150 million gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac River every year and to require Dominion Energy to spend an additional \$2 billion to clean up its coal ash ponds to the

highest standards.

Expanding Medicaid and health care to 300,000 Virginians in 2017 was a proud moment for me, an advance that has created tens of thousands of Virginia jobs and made health care available to over 10,000 people that I represent. I also proudly carried a bill to prohibit people from operating a motor vehicle while holding a cellphone and to provide driving privilege cards to 300,000 Virginians awaiting legal status – many of whom live in our community where one in four residents was born in another country.

As a graduate of West Potomac High School, James Madison University and the University of Virginia School of Law, I recognize that state and local public education invested in me so I could have success. Fairfax County Public Schools now receive \$463 million more per year or about \$2,700 more per student than when I was first elected in 2009 – a 98% increase over 2010. We still do not pay our teachers nearly enough, but we have made significant progress.

I was also honored to negotiate Virginia's new minimum wage bill with Del. Paul Krizek which will increase Virginia's minimum wage will rise to \$12.00 per hour on Jan. 1, 2023. I was also proud to lift the ban on collective bargaining on our local public employee unions and expand all workers' rights to hold employers accountable for wrongful conduct.

We have much work to do to improve our quality of life. I hope I will earn your vote as your state Senator on Nov. 7, 2023. Please share your suggestions and views with me at scottsuovell@gmail.com.

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.connectionnewspapers.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 school-

ers' 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

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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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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OPINION

Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

Politicians' request that we remember the victims of gun violence and their families with "our thoughts and prayers" is no longer enough. Events of the past couple of weeks in Virginia and around the country remind us that our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are less secure from gun violence in the United States than in any other developed country in the world. No place is secure from persons intent on causing gun violence: in a tour bus, at home, in a Walmart, in a nightclub, in school, on a college campus, in a place of worship — no place!

That the Founding Fathers had in mind the unregulated access to firearms when they wrote the Second Amendment is baloney. That is why they qualified the right to bear arms with a "regulated militia" now represented by the National Guard and the armed forces.

Certainly thoughts and prayers are needed for the victims and families of the football players at the University of Virginia, the mother and her three children in Chesterfield, Virginia, and the employees at the Walmart in Chesapeake, Virginia. Elsewhere, we must remember the patrons and their families at the LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs and the innumerable killings that take place daily but do not meet the threshold of four persons killed to be called a "mass shooting."

Thoughts and prayers need also to be directed to political leaders to develop the political will and courage to respond to this na-

tional emergency and these tragedies. Once political leaders fear voters who demand action on gun violence more than they fear the NRA, the Civil Defense League and the gun manufacturers, change can occur.

In 2020 Virginia took historic steps to pass sensible gun safety laws including my bill to require universal background checks for all gun purchases and laws to disarm domestic abusers and to restrict access to guns by persons in crisis. Those advancements resulted in Virginia being rated 14th in the Nation in gun safety laws by the Everytown for Gun Safety organization. There were attempts this year and likely will be next year to roll back these advances, but the public needs to send a clear message that we need to do more — and not less — to protect our children and families from gun violence.

The presence of guns is a common denominator in too many examples that can be given on the loss of human life. Many of the gun-related deaths are suicides. Some are accidental that tragically include the deaths of young children. Too many of the deaths are from weapons of war that have no practical use in a civilized society.

The protections of the sensible gun safety laws on the books in Virginia need to remain in force. Additional gun safety laws that will allow the hunter, the hobbyist, and the responsible citizen to keep their guns but are directed at those who are irresponsible should be enacted. Add to your thoughts and prayers that persons in power do what is necessary to protect the citizenry from gun violence.

Major Casinos Coming to Virginia

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

Part Two of Virginia Casino Update

Last week I wrote about the two new casinos in Bristol and Portsmouth that are either opened already, as is the case with Bristol's temporary site, or about to open, like the first Virginia permanent casino site in Portsmouth by Rush Street Gaming's Rivers Casino. That first casino is to open on January 15th, 2023. Today I will focus on the next two Virginia casinos to be coming online a little bit later, in Norfolk and Danville.

Not to be outdone, ahead of their casino opening, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, the first tribe in Virginia to be federally recognized and in all likelihood the first tribe to make contact with the Europeans centuries ago, has been on the ground since July 2020 in Norfolk, helping the area's most vulnerable citizens facing food insecurity during the pandemic. The Tribe reached out to 50 food



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Photo of design for the completed Caesars facility in Danville, seen during the groundbreaking event in August.

pantries in the city that were operating prior to the pandemic and found only 20 still operating. They committed to partner with 10 food pantries throughout the city and support them financially in order to ensure that they remained open and able to help those in need. For those two years, the Tribe's aid provided for approximately 350,000. It is the Tribe's goal to see that no person in Norfolk ever goes hungry again. This is an extraordinary commitment by the Pamunkey Tribe considering their casino is still at

SEE KRIZEK, PAGE 19

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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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PHOTO VIA FCPS

Ian Hsu and Khoi Dinh at Nanoracks near the Johnson Space Center in Houston to deliver TJ REVERB

TJ Space Launches REVERB CubeSat SpaceX-26

Rocket delivers TJREVERB to International Space Station.

BY MICHAEL ROTH AND
KRISTEN KUCKO
VIA FCPS

Students from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology's Satellite Team, TJ Space, engineered a satellite from scratch that was launched into space on Saturday, Nov. 26.

"The satellite will be handed over to astronauts onboard the International Space Station who plan to deploy the satellite in January 2023," reports FCPS.

The launch is the culmination of seven years of work for TJ Space. Led by Robotics lab director Kristen Kucko, many students from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology have had a hand in this historic launch.

"TJ REVERB is significant because the CubeSat was designed, built, coded and integrated entirely by high school students," said Kucko. "The students did not use a satellite kit, nor did they have an industry or university partnership to assist them. Building satellites is not an easy task. According to Col. Nick Hague, Astronaut, countries have not been able to build CubeSats. The students in TJ Space should be proud of their accomplishments."

CubeSats are a small satellite, about the size of a tissue box. The technology was developed by Cal Poly and has become the industry standard. CubeSats allows for more standardized and cheaper deployment of satellites. TJ was the first high school in the world to launch its own CubeSat in 2013, called the TJ3SAT. While TJ3SAT was unable to achieve contact when deployed, it was an engineering feat for a high school.

In the Fall of 2016, a student from TJ decided it was time to build another satellite.

This project was more ambitious: They wanted to build a CubeSat with a scientific mission. Their goal was to test if an Iridium radio would work in space. The students won a grant from NASA and were able to begin the development of TJREVERB. But as it happens, the students who started TJREVEB graduated and left it for the next class to continue the work. New students had to relearn the fundamentals of satellite building as well as the specifics of TJREVERB. This was not an easy task. In addition to the normal requirements of school, students had taught themselves CubeSat fundamentals.

Quickly the focus of the project went from a science mission to an engineering project. As the development of the CubeSat Chassis progressed, the students built a Flat Sat and launched a High-Altitude Balloon testing Iridium's performance at 20,000 feet. Unfortunately, the Flat Sat did not work, and the future of the project appeared to be in doubt going into the spring of 2019.

The program transitioned faculty leadership in May 2019. Kucko started managing the project and became the Principal Investigator. She came to TJ from industry having previously worked at Apple as Technical Specialist. She joined TJ's faculty as a Design and Tech Teacher in the Fall of 2018 and became the Robotics lab director in the fall of 2019.

One of the key changes Kucko brought to TJ Space was adding outside mentors to assist the students, including Jin Kang of Maru Space Tech, Dan Courain, Justin Annibali of Global Space Exchange and Cain Sauer of Avian. Once the mentors arrived on the scene, they guided the students with complex aspects of the CubeSat building, including electronics, programming, and systems integration.

COVID Shuts it Down

Work continued in earnest throughout

Award for Pathway Homes' Urban Gardens

Pathway Homes received the Best Housing Program award during the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference (VGHA) for its work in establishing an urban garden program. Pathway Homes, a nonprofit providing mental health services — starting with safe, stable housing — to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity, started the program to address a variety of behavioral and health needs of its clients.

Every year, the conference honors innovative, effective efforts that address housing needs during the Virginia Housing Awards luncheon, held this year on Nov. 17. This year, it recognized Pathway Homes for its community garden program which was launched last year during the height of COVID. It was started as a way to help clients eat better, enjoy the outdoors, and find outlets for mental health during a time when the pandemic isolation exacerbated mental health issues for the population that Pathway Homes serves.

"We are delighted to be recognized by VGHA for our community gardening program. Community gardening is a pathway to provide socialization, future employment opportunities, and education about ... connection between good nutrition and mental health. This effort has been embraced by our clients and is a source of inspiration and pride," said Pathway Homes CEO Sylisa Lambert-Woodard.

Pathway owns, leases, and manages nearly 500 properties in Northern Virginia. Pathway started its first garden at a Herndon, Va. property that houses 12 clients. Clients have been engaged and excited. The new garden program is part of Pathway's focus on the intersection of mental and physical health. With the success of the initial garden, Pathway has started adding gardens to more of its properties. Each house has several raised garden beds constructed by volunteer teams. These raised garden beds address mobility challenges and provide added flexibility in crop decisions, including



FILE PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Pathway Homes' urban community garden

moving or removing certain herbs and plants depending on weather or environmental factors. In a next phase, the nonprofit plans to help clients participate in farmer's markets to earn extra income from their harvest.

Healthy eating is expensive and disadvantaged populations tend to not eat healthy because they cannot afford it. A community garden is another way to level that playing field. By growing produce themselves, it provides access to nutritious foods that they may not be able to afford on a fixed income as low as \$774 per month. Pathway's clients have income that falls below 300% of Federal Poverty Level with most below 200%.

For more than 42 years, Pathway Homes has enabled tens of thousands of people in Northern Virginia with serious mental illnesses and other co-occurring disabilities to get housing and supportive services to help them recover their lives. Following the housing first model, Pathway Homes is a partner in preventing and ending homelessness, ensuring 1,578 people in 2022 had access to services and almost 500 permanent supportive housing units.

<https://www.pathwayhomes.org/>

the 2019-20 school year until COVID ended in-person learning at TJ in March 2020. Since TJ REVERB required so much hands-on work, the project came to a halt. In the meantime, almost everyone who had been contributing to the design and development of the CubeSat graduated in either 2020 or 2021.

New Team in August 2021

When in-person school resumed for the 2021-22 school year a new group of students took it upon themselves to finish TJREVERB. The new team reverse-engineered the satellite and, in many cases, started fresh. The students spent upwards of 13 hours per week to finish it by the end of the 2021-22 school year. The mission shifted from "If Iridium Works" to "If Iridium works under

these conditions."

With the hard work and dedication of the team, the students engineered a functioning satellite that accomplished its mission by May 2022. They showcased their work to the Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force, General John W. "Jay" Raymond. He was impressed that high school students were able to create a complex system.

Prepping for Launch and Presenting their Research - Summer of 2022

On July 20, 2022, Ms. Kucko and two project leads, Alan Hsu ('23) and Khoi Dinh ('24) traveled to Nanoracks near the Johnson Space Center in Houston to deliver TJ

SEE SPACE LAUNCHES, PAGE 18

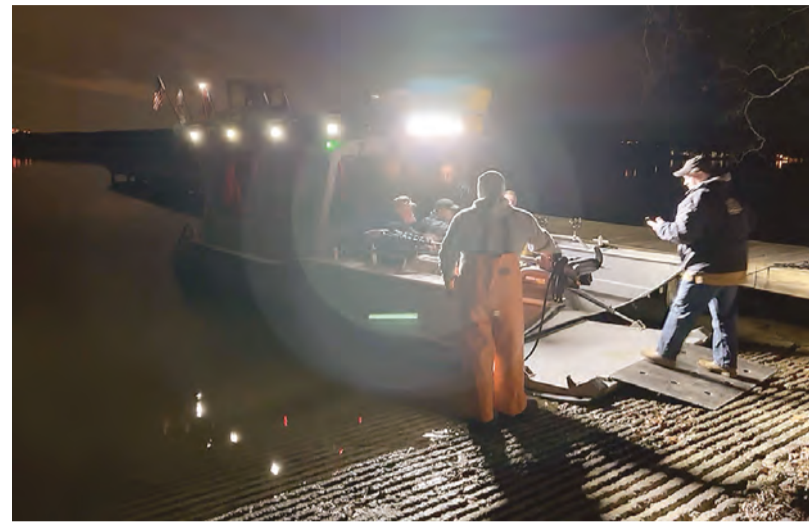


PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Before dawn, three Ukrainian soldiers board the specially equipped Veterans Fishing Adventure boat, Knot4gotn, as the crew prepares to leave the dock. The Ukrainian men have had limbs amputated because of wounds of war.



Capt. Ed Moore poses with his passengers for the day, (seated) Ruslan Tyshchenko, Alex Fedun, (standing) the Veteran's Success Resource Group representative, and Anatoly Kirda.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME

Volunteer crew member Scott Cole watches the net buoys for signs that bait fish have swum into the nets.

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Enjoy a Fishing Adventure

Assistance goes beyond prosthetics.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

When retired Marine Ed Moore found out that three Ukrainian soldiers with amputations would be in the area to be fitted with prosthetics after injury on the battlefield, he did what any Marine would do ... he offered to take them fishing.

Veterans Fishing Adventure was started by Moore and his daughter Haley. They've been offering veterans and their families fishing and boating trips on the Potomac River and Occoquan River for four years. With up to four boats, they offer as many as three trips per week. Veterans Fishing Adventure specializes in offering those with physical limitations an opportunity to participate and allowing those with disabilities to take their children fishing. Their non-profit, volunteer organization with specially fitted boats is able to offer this opportunity to be on the water at no cost to U.S. service veterans, to enjoy a pastime that many of us enjoy without much thought for the logistics. <https://veteransfishingadventure.org/>

Early, at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, because fishing often starts early, the three soldiers, their translator, and the boat crew gathered dockside at the Pohick Bay Regional Park Marina. First activity of the day — set nets to catch bait fish for the day's fishing excursion. After 13 fish, mostly shad with one or two carp, were netted by volunteer crew members Scott Cole and Tim Majewski, plus boat captain Moore head the Knot4gotn east into the sunrise for a promising day of fishing adventures and sightseeing along the Potomac River.

Onboard, tucked warmly in the boat's cabin on the chilly morning, the three heroes of Ukraine set out for a day of stress relieving fishing adventure.



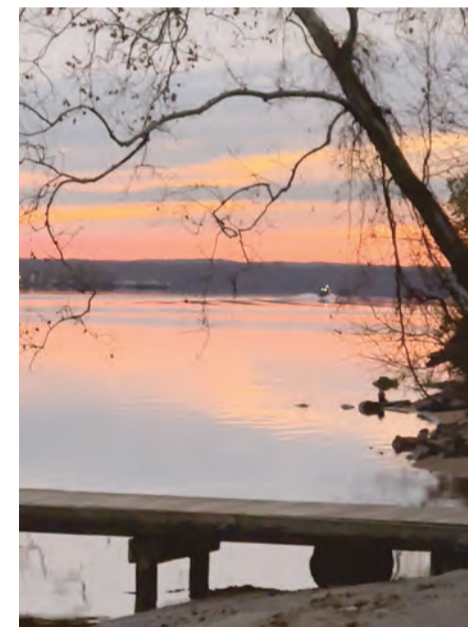
The group huddles in the warmth of the cabin after leaving the dock.



The crew hauls in the nets and removes Shad and Carp for use as bait during the day's fishing excursion.



Scott Cole, volunteer crew, brings in fish that by size would make most fisherman happy but for today will be used to attract even larger catfish.



Bait caught and the boat secured, the Knot4gotn motors east into the dawn, perhaps symbolic of brighter days ahead for the trio of Ukrainians.



PHOTO COURTESY VFA

Ruslan Tyshchenko smiles at the size of his catch, held by translator Boris



PHOTO COURTESY VFA

Anatoly Kirda had the biggest catch of the day, a 39 pound Blue Catfish

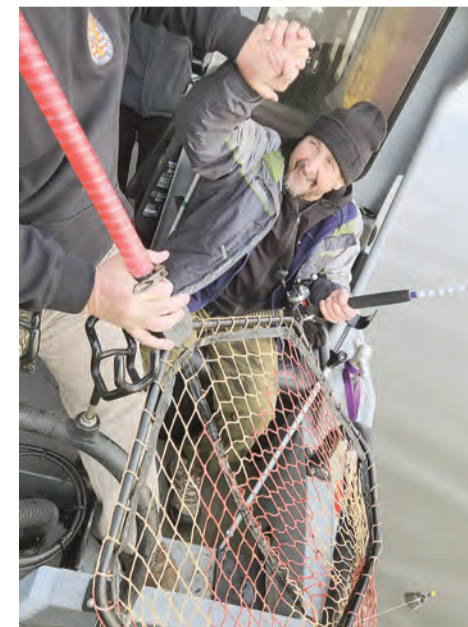


PHOTO COURTESY VFA

Anatoly Kirda celebrates his catch with Moore giving a high five and a huge smile

War Takes Heavy Toll on Ukrainian Women

United Nations warns of war impacts to women globally.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

As the war in Ukraine continues with brutal shelling of civilian targets, humanitarian catastrophe mounts in a war not confined to soldiers or distant battlefields. For millions of women and girls, the ongoing war continues to take a heavy toll as it grinds on. Whether joining the fighting at the front, remaining behind, or fleeing, the United Nations warns for women "access to livelihood opportunities and basic services, including life-saving sexual and reproductive health care and information, has been severely disrupted."

Two Ukrainian women share their experience of the war. For the past three to four months all their time has been spent in hospitals supporting their husbands who lost legs while fighting for Ukraine. Iryna Kirda and Iryna Tyshchenko, are now in the Washington metro area temporarily, while accompanying their husbands, who are being fitted for prosthetic devices in Silver Spring, Md.

Before the war, Kirda, who has four adult sons, was working as a nanny. She supplemented her income by leading a 'health group' — what we would call women's exercise classes. After Russian bombardment of her Kiev suburb, she was evacuated from her home for a time. Once she could return, she spent her time holding charity events to support the war effort.

Before the war, Tyshchenko was an anchor for a television news station. On the first day of the war, all the television stations closed. From the first day, food disappeared from shelves, and they could not withdraw money from the banks. Her apartment in Kharkiv was heavily bombed. The Russians were close by, but not where she was. So friends came to hide in the basement of her building, though rockets flew overhead and a plane was shot down just a kilometer away. As the Russians were eventually pushed farther away, their rockets and drones remained a threat. True to her journalism profession, she has been taking videos to document the destruction of her apartment building and other devastation. Her adult daughter evacuated to the Czech Republic.

Both women speak of the difficulties and how hard life has become. Both talk



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Iryna Tyshchenko and Iryna Kirda support their husbands on an easier day safely within the borders of the United States

about how very scary it is to wait for a call with news of their husbands. Kirda says she doesn't know how God gave her the strength to survive. But she knew she had to be strong when that dreaded call did come saying her husband was wounded so badly. She knew he would look in her eyes for her reaction and she would be ready to show her support for him.

For the moment, life is a little easier. They said they feel so lucky to come here and love the United States, calling the opportunity to have the help a blessing. While their husbands enjoyed a day of fishing on the Potomac, a Ukrainian friend took them shopping at T.J. Maxx and Nordstrom Rack. They described doing more looking than buying, but hoped to find small gifts for those waiting at home.

What's next for them is hard to know. They will remain here while their husbands are under medical care until mid-December. Tyshchenko is videoing the care to show American cutting edge procedures to doctors at home.

They expect to return to Ukraine where life continues to be difficult and dangerous in the coming winter without reliable power, water, food or safety. And while their husbands are determined to overcome their wounds, the women are likely to take on additional continued responsibilities to assist in their care and recovery.

In a policy paper released in September,

the United Nations outlined the devastating impacts on women and children. "The war in Ukraine has led to more than 4.2 million refugees and over 7 million internally displaced people, most of them women and children. The war contributed to growing risks, including trafficking, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and forced labor. ... The war has widened gender gaps in food insecurity, malnutrition, energy poverty, and increased gender-based violence inside Ukraine and around the world. Women-headed households in Ukraine were already more food-insecure prior to the war, compared to male-headed households. Rural women in the territories occupied by the Russian military are increasingly unable to perform agricultural work due to high insecurity and lack of resources. Certainly a disproportionate share of the responsibility to accommodate, feed, and care for internally displaced people is adding to the burden of Ukrainian women, multiplying their domestic responsibilities."

The U.N. includes a need to "prioritize women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership in conflict response, recovery, and peace building," among their recommendations for dealing with this humanitarian crisis. They have names like Anastasia, Boyka, Daniela ... and Iryna.



After the day's fishing, the fisherman received a police boat escort for their return to the dock



The fisherman, draped in the Ukrainian flag, had smiles and waves for the crowd waiting at dockside to welcome their return.

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Receive Treatment Locally

FROM PAGE 10

Ruslan Tyshchenko, age 44, a sapper commander, served in the National Guard of Ukraine for 25 years as a combat engineer. Since the beginning of the war, he led a group of sappers, involved in removing mines in liberated Ukrainian territories. A sapper is a combat engineer with duties such as demolitions, bridge-building, preparing field defenses and road repair.

On June 8, while performing a combat mission near the city of Balaklava in the Kharkiv region, he came under fire from an enemy tank. Shrapnel hit a vital artery. With major damage to his artery, he lost his left leg and severely injured his right.

Oleksandr "Alex" Fedun, age 23, an entrepreneur in the Zaporizhzhia region, left his business and family at the outbreak of the war to defend Ukraine. On May 14, during a combat mission, Fedun's car was ambushed by the Russians and he received serious injuries to both legs caused by a mine explosion. He was able to save his own life by applying tourniquets to stop the bleeding, but when he was evacuated to the hospital, both legs had to be amputated.

Anatoliy Kirida, age 59, was a career seaman, away working on Israel's offshore oil rigs when Russia attacked Ukraine. He left immediately to volunteer at home. He first fought in Kiev. After that city was secured he moved on to Izum in the Kharkiv region. He was in his trench when a Russian mine flew it causing his injuries which resulted in the loss of his right leg.

The three men, among the most severe-



A crowd of dozens of well wishers who gathered to greet the Ukrainians included retired Cmdr. Kirk Lippold (center), police and fire personnel, veterans and avid fishermen.

ly wounded, are here in the U.S., two with their wives, receiving medical care thanks to assistance from three non-profit organizations: Veteran Success Resources Group, United Help Ukraine, and Medical Center Orthotics & Prosthetics.

Veteran Success Resources Group is dedicated to facilitating access to professional and personal resources for veterans and their families. United Help Ukraine was started in 2014, after the initial 2014 Russian attack on Ukraine, by a small group of people who met at a protest in Washington, DC. Most, but not all of the founding members have a personal connection to Ukraine. Along with other avenues of support for the country, the group sponsors dedicated fundraisers for the

Ukrainian wounded, including those who are being treated in American hospitals, and support for their families. They are covering the non-medical expenses to bring the three soldiers and the wives of the two who are married to Silver Spring, Md. for prostheses and physical therapy.

Medical Center Orthotics & Prosthetics recently announced "Operation Renew Prosthetics," providing care to the most severely injured Ukrainian soldiers who have had amputations. They previously assisted a hip disarticulation amputee, donating time and expertise, and are assisting the three soldiers with complete leg prostheses this month. They expect to assist two more patients who will visit their facilities in the

coming months.

A day of fishing on the Potomac River provided a break between medical appointments for the three Ukrainian men. Fishing is an activity that many Ukrainians once had time to enjoy in their county filled with lakes and rivers. There the main fish species caught is the Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). The catch for this day on the Potomac was Blue Catfish. A large fish, but not as large as Ukraine's Wels Catfish, the largest freshwater fish in Ukraine which can attain a weight of 100 kg (220 pounds) at the age of 80-100 years.

Kirida had the catch of the day on Saturday, pulling in a 39 pounder. The boat did well according to Moore, with most of the fish released back into the Potomac. Two were saved for the soldiers to sample. As Moore explained that the mercury levels limit the amount

of fish recommended for safe eating, the soldiers broke into spontaneous laughter. Telling Moore that food scarcity in wartime Ukraine had sometimes forced the soldiers to eat dogs, frogs and snakes as they held positions in the forest, doubting that a little mercury would be an issue.

When the boat returned to the dock on Saturday afternoon, dozens of community members were on hand to greet and applaud the fishermen. Police and fire trucks stood sentinel. Retired Cmdr. Kirk Lippold, who commanded the USS Cole when the ship was attacked by al-Qaeda in 2000, presented the men with copies of his book,

ADVENTURE

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Receive Treatment Locally

FROM PAGE 12

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME

“Front Burner” which captures a critical moment in America’s battle against terrorism.

“Catch the Fever” presented each man with a new high-end fishing rod. Even Santa and Mrs. Claus were on hand to show support. And many photos were taken to mark the day.

Although it may be traditional to enjoy a fish fry after a day of successful fishing, Moore didn’t want the Ukrainians to leave without experiencing an American Thanksgiving feast. He hosted a meal at his house on Sunday, serving the fresh caught fish on the side, along with the usual Thanksgiving fare. Five turkeys, two hams, stuffing, gravy, green beans and pies fed bellies, and sustenance for the soul. With ongoing deprivations and food scarcity in Ukraine, it may be a meal they will remember for the food, but more significantly, a reminder of what can be accomplished after injury.

All those that encountered the men during their visit no doubt hope that their morning sail toward the bright dawn sky will be symbolic of the start of brighter days to come for these determined Ukrainians, and the Ukrainian people, though they face contin-



Even Santa and Mrs. Claus (Ryan and Shannon Riegel), who arrived by motorcycle, were on hand to welcome the soldiers.

ued daunting struggles.

For more information about the Veterans Fishing Adventure or to inquire about a trip: info@veteransfishingadventure.org. For more information on or to donate to the organizations mentioned in this story, see <https://unitedhelpukraine.org/>; <https://vetresourcegroup.org/>; and <https://mcopro.com>



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WATER TREATMENT

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Mike McGrath, Director of Wastewater Treatment, explains primary treatment at a settling tank.



Overhead view of the Noman Cole plant, a poster on display there.

Down the Toilet. Down the Drain. Then What?

Locals tour the Noman Cole Plant in Lorton.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

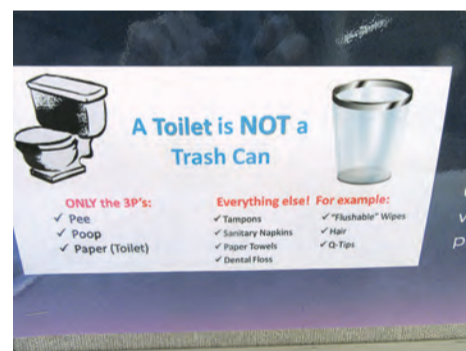
In Fairfax County, one person generates 90 gallons of wastewater a day, on average. Once that water disappears down the drain or toilet, most people forget about it. It's gone.

But it's not really gone. The water and everything it carries along with it travel through underground pipes to a wastewater treatment facility, commonly called "the sewage plant."

Fairfax County, a 407-square-mile jurisdiction with 1.1 million people who flush, bathe, clean, wash and water lawns, has 3,380 miles of sanitary sewer infrastructure, including 63 pumping stations that move wastewater to five treatment plants.

On Nov. 19, officials with the county's Noman Cole Pollution Control Plant at 9399 Richmond Highway in Lorton conducted a public tour of the facility's 360 acres of grounds, buildings, streets, pipes, pumps, holding tanks, deodorizers, disinfectors, ponds and control room. They explained the five steps that clean the water before sending it into Pohick Creek, ultimately the Potomac River. Visitors studied tanks of bubbling water, some water appearing to just be sitting there and some with foamy surfaces, all steps that the initially chocolaty liquids go through in the cleanup process.

The Noman Cole plant is the only plant the county owns. Built in the 1970s, it was originally designed to handle 18 million gallons a day. Today, every day, it treats 40 million gallons, equivalent to 60 Olympic swimming pools, and can treat up to 67 million gallons



Exhibits gave visitors guidance on what not to flush.

No-no's

Exhibits explained how to prevent backups and overflows. The drain lines from homes to the county's sewer system are only big enough to carry water, toilet paper and human waste. Here are the most common, problematic "unflushables."

- ❖ Wipes, even those labeled "flushable"
- ❖ Cotton balls and swabs, feminine hygiene products, dental floss, paper towels
- ❖ Fats, oils and grease, including oils and grease from cooking
- ❖ Medications

for its 300,000 customers. This translates into more than 420 million gallons of wastewater a year, explained Mike McGrath, the county's Director of Wastewater Treatment. These numbers represent 40 percent of the county's total wastewater flow or volume.

The Cole facility has more than 7,000 "major assets," said McGrath. The instrumentation and control system has more than 20,000 "tags." Each tag is a signal that is collected, usually multiple times a minute.



Simranjit Chauhan showed visitors felt tube liner material and described a way to replace old pipes without digging them up.

Instruments and equipment may have multiple tags. The plant operates 24 hours every day and has five backup generators for power outages.

These statistics are mind-numbing numbers, but explicit indicators of an engineering marvel that most residents take for granted. From the dirty wastewater that enters the plant, called influent, to the cleaner water that leaves, effluent, wastewater treatment is a complicated process involving biology, chemistry, engineering, technology and human expertise.

How Wastewater Is Cleaned Up

McGrath literally and verbally walked the group through wastewater treatment stages, including what experts call "preliminary, primary, secondary and tertiary treatment." On average, depending on the distance, it takes up to five hours for a drop of water to get to the Noman Cole plant. One drop that comes in leaves the plant cleaner in about 22 hours.

SEE NOMAN COLE PLANT, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

WATER TREATMENT

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Kelvin Villacourta released air from a balloon to demonstrate how a pump works to move water.



The compacted “leftovers,” solid materials removed from wastewater, like plastics, fabrics and fast food wrappers.



This wastewater is undergoing secondary or biological treatment using bacteria.



Noman Cole Plant

FROM PAGE 14

Raw sewage coming in is mostly water and carries items like plastics, sticks, rags, rocks, socks and even dead animals. Mechanical screens remove these objects and pumps whoosh the wastewater to clarification tanks where solid matter settles (sludge) or floats (scum).

At another stage, biological and physical methods consume and remove organic matter. The plant grows 20 tons of microbes a day to treat wastewater. Microorganisms can reduce nitrogen levels and clarifiers help remove phosphorus. A disinfection process uses ultraviolet light to kill 99 percent of the pathogens.

Visitors got a mild olfactory hit a few times – clearly not chocolate -- and McGrath offered, “We invested over \$20 million to keep the odors down.” Pointing to the bio-tower, he said, “It has enormous sponges to remove odors.”

The plant removes 90 percent of pollutants, McGrath noted, like pathogens. “Without adequate sewage collection and treatment, more citizens would get sick from waterborne diseases and our county’s streams would be more polluted. Before the implementation of reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment, thousands of people in the United States died of waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, typhoid, polio and hepatitis.” Decaying organics rob the water column of oxygen and suffocate fish. Solids silt up streams.

Wastewater plants in the Chesapeake Bay region target nitrogen and phosphorus for



McGrath explains the stages of wastewater treatment as visitors peered into tanks

reduction. Nitrogen and phosphorus can stimulate excessive algae which block sunlight needed by submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). SAV beds help improve water quality and serve as fish nurseries.

Everyday, two full dump trucks haul solids in the form of ash to the I-95/Lorton landfill, the material removed from the incoming wastewater.

Plant employees conduct 25,000 tests a year to meet Clean Water Act and other requirements. For 30 years, George Mason University scientists have monitored the outgoing water at Gunston Cove and found improvements in recent years. While the

discharged water is much cleaner going out than coming in, it is not potable for humans.

Why tour a sewage plant?

Julia Christ, an eleventh grader is studying the nitrogen cycle at West Springfield High School and wanted to learn more. Mount Vernonite Greg Crider remarked, “I was curious about how wastewater is treated. I’m impressed.”

McGrath applauds the plant’s staff. “Every hour of the year, the 130 or so employees at the Noman Cole plant are protecting public health and improving the environment by reclaiming clean water from sewage. Read-



A biotower, odor control technology.

Information

Tutorial on the wastewater treatment process, U.S. Geological Survey, <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/visit-wastewater-treatment-plant>

Fairfax County treatment plant service areas, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/wastewater/wastewater-treatment>

ers Digest readers rank it as the second most important job in the United States.”

Pointing to a pipe crammed with grayish-brown, compacted detritus removed from the wastewater, McGrath told the group, “Every month or so we get calls asking if we’ve found a diamond ring.” And while he’s proud of the plant’s operations, he said with a laugh, “No, no diamond rings.”

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022

NOW THRU DEC. 6

DWCNV Toy Collection. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Drop off items at 13155 Compton Rd., Clifton, or drop off items at 12714 Chestnut St., Clifton. Democratic Women of Clifton and Northern Virginia sponsors of Fairfax Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue, will collect new, unwrapped toys for children of all ages; gift cards to Best Buy, Target, Old Navy, etc for older children, and monetary donations for purchase of new coats. Mail checks payable to FF&FR to DWCNV, P.O. Box 143, Clifton VA 20124, or bring items to any of three collection points: 13155 Compton Rd. or 12714 Chestnut St., in Clifton, or 12301 Delevan Dr., Herndon, before Dec 6th. The Women also are collecting monetary donations (checks or grocery store gift cards) payable to Britepaths, at DWCNV, P.O. Box 143, Clifton VA 20124 by Dec 31, to stabilize low-income working families. Visit the website: www.democratic-womenofclifton.org

DEC 1-23

"Snow Maiden." At Synetic 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 Sne-gurochka, 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. 2-11

Traveling Players presents "Commedia Christmas Carol." Tickets are now available for "Commedia Christmas Carol," which runs Fridays-Sundays, Dec. 2- Dec. 11 at Traveling Players



Alexandria's Biggest Holiday Weekend

<https://visitalexandria.com/holidays/biggest-weekend/>

Celebrate the return of top signature events, including the 51st Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade and the Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.

The Christmas Walk will take place in historic Old Town Alexandria at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022. Alexandria was founded in 1749 by Scottish merchants and was named after Scotsman John Alexander who owned the land that became Alexandria. Bagpipers include the Kiltie Band of York and the City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums plus a bagpiping Santa closing the parade. This year's Grand Marshal is Redella "Del" Pepper, the recently retired, longest-serving member of Alexandria City Council with more than 36 years of service to the community.



Encore Theatrical Arts Project (ETAP) presents "The Perfect Christmas List" Dec. 10-18, 2022 at NOVA's Annandale Campus.

Studio in Tysons Corner Center. Performed by Traveling Players middle and high school students, the play is a new imagining of Dickens'

Dec. 3, 2022. Campagna Center has a new presenting partnership for the 51st Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk. 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 Fryling 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.fairfax-county.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

2022 Alternative Gift Market & Craft Fair. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston. Shop online Nov. 25-Dec. 4. After two years, Unitarian Universalist Reston's Alternative Gift Market and Craft Fair is back in person this year. With the holiday shopping season upon us, enjoy socially conscious gift-giving. Visit UUReston.org/agm

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

classic ghost story, a perfect holiday treat for the whole family. Visit <https://www.travelingplayers.org/performances/>

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 treats, and more!

DEC. 2-3

Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. Taste of Scotland: Friday, December 2, 2022; Parade: Saturday,

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.

NOV. 30-DEC. 3

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 1

Wind Symphony Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU's Dewberry School of Music. Cost is \$12 General Public; \$8 Seniors; \$5 Students.

DEC. 2-3

Fall: Dance Innovations. 8 p.m. At GMU's Mason School of Dance. Cost is \$15 General Public; \$10 students, faculty/staff, and seniors; \$7 Groups.

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.

SATURDAYS/DEC. 3, 10

Small Business Saturdays. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. 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—Dec. 3, and Dec. 10—visitors can get a head start on their holiday shopping while supporting artists and their small businesses.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Holiday Card Making: Family Workshop. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. 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.

SATURDAY/DEC. 3

Ceramic Gingerbread Houses. 1 - 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. 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-workshop finishes will also be discussed. Materials provided. Tuition is \$110; materials included. Location, Ceramics building W8.

DEC. 3 TO FEB. 5, 2023

Women Playing Hamlet. 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. A non-tra-

ditional look at one of Shakespeare's most revered works, presented in modern English, Women Playing Hamlet follows a young actress tackling the role of Hamlet in a comedic romp that examines gender norms, actors' egos, and Shakespeare. Women Playing Hamlet, by William Missouri Downs. Visit the website:

<https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/women-playing-hamlet>

MONDAY/DEC. 5

Drew Blue Shoes. 10:30-11:15 a.m. at Old Town Hall, Fairfax City, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Magician Drew Blue Shoes amazes children with a magic and comedy show that will have them going bananas. FUNDAY MONDAY is perfect for preschoolers, but all children are welcome.

FRIDAY/DEC. 9

Vienna Boys Choir. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The holiday season isn't complete without the return of the Vienna Boys Choir melting hearts with their heavenly voices. Admired across the globe for their pure sound and technical mastery, the cherubic ensemble features boy sopranos and altos from eight to 14, representing 31 countries, and harmonizing their incredible vocals for an unforgettable night. Built on six centuries of tradition, the Vienna Boys Choir counts Joseph Haydn and Franz Schubert among its illustrious alumni. The group's yuletide program has something for everyone.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 16

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.

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 holidayhomeshherndon.eventbrite.com. More information at holidayhomestou-rofherndon.org



don 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 holidayhomeshherndon.eventbrite.com. More information at holidayhomestou-rofherndon.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.restoncommunitycenter.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 herndonhistoricalsociety@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.

HOLIDAYS AT THE GRANGE

Dec. 3-4. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Great Falls Studios Artfest. Saturday/Dec. 10. 3 p.m. Holiday Afternoon Tea. Sunday/Dec. 11. 4:30 p.m. Amadeus Presents Sounds of the Season. Visit the website: www.gfgrange.org.

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.

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Space Launches

FROM PAGE 9

REVERB. Hsu and Dinh integrated the satellite into a Nanoracks Dispenser. The complete and integrated satellite was then shipped to the Kennedy Space Center, Florida to await its launch on SpaceX-26.

In August of 2022, TJ Space traveled to Logan, Utah and presented their paper "Identifying and Overcoming Challenges in High School CubeSat Programs," at the annual Small Satellite Conference. The Small Satellite Conference is the premiere venue for small satellites. It brings both industry experts and universities together to advance small satellites. TJ Space was the only high school team to present their paper and have a booth. The team received an overwhelmingly positive response from conference attendees. Students met and made connections with NASA and government officials, corporate representatives, and universities. When the students were not networking, they attended sessions and learned about commercial space opportunities.

Preparing for Launch and Deployment

TJREVERB awaited launch on SpaceX-26: A Falcon-9 rocket with a Dragon Cargo Resupply Capsule. The rocket would deliver TJREVERB along with supplies to the International Space Station. The launch was scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 22 ... and would be streamed live on the SpaceX YouTube channel.

The astronauts aboard the International Space Station will deploy TJREVERB on Friday, Jan. 2, 2023 (tentatively). TJ Space will begin receiving data from the CubeSat approximately three days later. The plan is to plot and confirm geolocation data as well as observe and document how often the satellite can be contacted.

What started as an idea seven years ago will turn into reality over the next few weeks.

CALENDAR

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Let us know about an upcoming event

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OPINION

Krizek

FROM PAGE 7

least another year from opening. The Tribe has also been partnering with the Norfolk Tides, a local minor league baseball team, to provide free tickets to thousands of children through local community groups such as the Booker T. Washington High School Foundation and the Southside Boys and Girls Club.

I have visited the Pamunkey Nation. They have been thwarted at every turn throughout their history by broken treaties, disease, land grabs by settlers, slavery of their citizens, the 1925 Racial Integrity Act which tried to erase their very identity and forced many of the Pamunkey to move north to where people of color were more accepted. It is a real testament to their resilience to have survived and maintained their culture and now to exercise their sovereignty. It is only fitting that they will benefit from their casino to provide them the opportunity to continue to give back to their community and surrounding communities in Hampton Roads too.

MEANWHILE, earlier this summer, I went to the groundbreaking of where the casino and hotel will be in Danville. This will be an iconic site as it includes what the city of Danville calls the “Three Sisters” smokestacks as a reminder of the city’s once prosperous industrial past. The city has already benefited from an upfront investment of \$15 million and a \$5 million payment to the city for the purchase of the casino site. It’s going to be truly a destination for people from all over the country as it will include a 500-room hotel, entertainment spaces to hold up to 2,000 people, and multiple restaurants from fine dining to a sports bar and food hall. The project supports 900 construction jobs for all stages of the project, and the capital investment is over \$600 million. This part of the Commonwealth has gone through rough economic times for decades, and this invest-

ment is already making a big difference. Caesars is planning to open a temporary site next summer, a year before the permanent construction is completed. It will not include hotel rooms but the surrounding community should be able to accommodate the increase in visitors to the smaller, temporary site.

In just its first quarter of operations, the one casino that is open right now, the Bristol Casino, delivered over \$2.5 million in tax revenue for the Commonwealth, which distributes funding to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund, the Family and Children’s Trust Fund, and the host locality of Bristol and the neighboring region. The Problem Gambling and Support Fund was included in the original casino legislation and is receiving \$20,000 a month in revenue from the Bristol Casino, and there is also over \$100,000 a month from online sports tax revenue that is being used to not just prevent problem gambling but to treat it too. I will be introducing a bill to establish and maintain a problem gambling treatment and support advisory committee to enable collaboration among prevention and treatment providers and gaming operators on more efforts to reduce the negative impacts of problem gambling.

It is important that we don’t ignore the negative repercussions of increasing the availability of gaming to those with an addiction to gambling and how problem gambling can negatively affect people’s lives. Indeed, if you or someone you know has a gambling problem you can call the Virginia Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-532-3500.

As these casinos open throughout the Commonwealth over the coming years, the revenue stream will grow exponentially, providing much-needed funding and jobs to economically revitalize local communities and fund essential programs and services, and with important financial support to prevent and treat problem gambling.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

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.

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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.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped 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 change 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.

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