

More than 900 use SoberRide service on New Year's Eve

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The initiative, conducted in conjunction with Lyft, was in operation from 10 p.m. on Dec. 31 to 4 a.m. on Jan. 1, providing residents who may have been drinking with a safe ride home.

“For its hours of operation, this level of ridership translates into SoberRide removing a potential drunk driver from Washington’s roadways every 23 seconds,” said Kurt Erickson, WRAP’s president.

The New Year’s Eve effort was part of a larger initiative to provide free rides home throughout the holiday season, beginning Dec. 16.

WRAP also offers free, safe ride services on St. Patrick’s Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween. Since 1991, the SoberRide program has provided nearly 85,000 rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Washington area.

Nearly 1,000 use SoberRide initiative for New Year's Eve

By Sun Gazette Newspapers



Photo by BolivialInteligente on Unsplash

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SoberRide Provides More than 900 Rides for New Years

Over 900 people in the Washington-metropolitan area used the free safe ride service, SoberRide, this New Year's — from 10 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2022 through 4 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2023 — as opposed to possibly driving home drunk.

“For its hours of operation this New Year's alone, this level of ridership translates into SoberRide removing a potential drunk driver from Greater Washington's roadways every 23-seconds,” said Kurt Erickson, President of the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program, the organization conducting the region's SoberRide effort.

WRAP's most recent holiday SoberRide offering concluded on Jan. 1, 2023 after kicking-off and running nightly since Dec. 16, 2022 providing free safe rides to local residents ages 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking. The local anti-drunk driving service is offered as a way to keep local roads safe from potentially impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

During the most recent 16 consecutive evening period, area residents celebrating with alcohol could download Lyft to their phones, then enter WRAP-provided codes to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe

transportation home. SoberRide was available to both new and existing Lyft users.

Lyft provided SoberRide trips throughout the Washington-metropolitan area to local residents ages 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

WRAP also offers free safe ride services on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2023 Holiday SoberRide campaign included the 395 Express Lanes, Amazon, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation of Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Kendall-Jackson, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2022 Public Partner SoberRide® Sponsors included the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 84,676 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

For more information, visit WRAP's web site at www.wrap.org

The Connection Newspapers
January 10, 2023

InFive: Pie shop closing, bus bomb threat and clearing skies

Top news and notes from around Northern Virginia and beyond.

5. Bye to Mom's Apple Pie...After 20 years in Occoquan, Mom's Apple Pie – a favorite of at least three U.S. presidents – is closing its location in town. But don't despair, the pies will still be there.

4. Bus bomb threat...A busload of students leaving Forest Park High School in Woodbridge had to be turned around Thursday afternoon after a bomb threat.

3. Clearing skies...After some morning rain, skies will gradually clear with high temperatures near 53 degrees. [Click here for your forecast by ZIP code.](#)

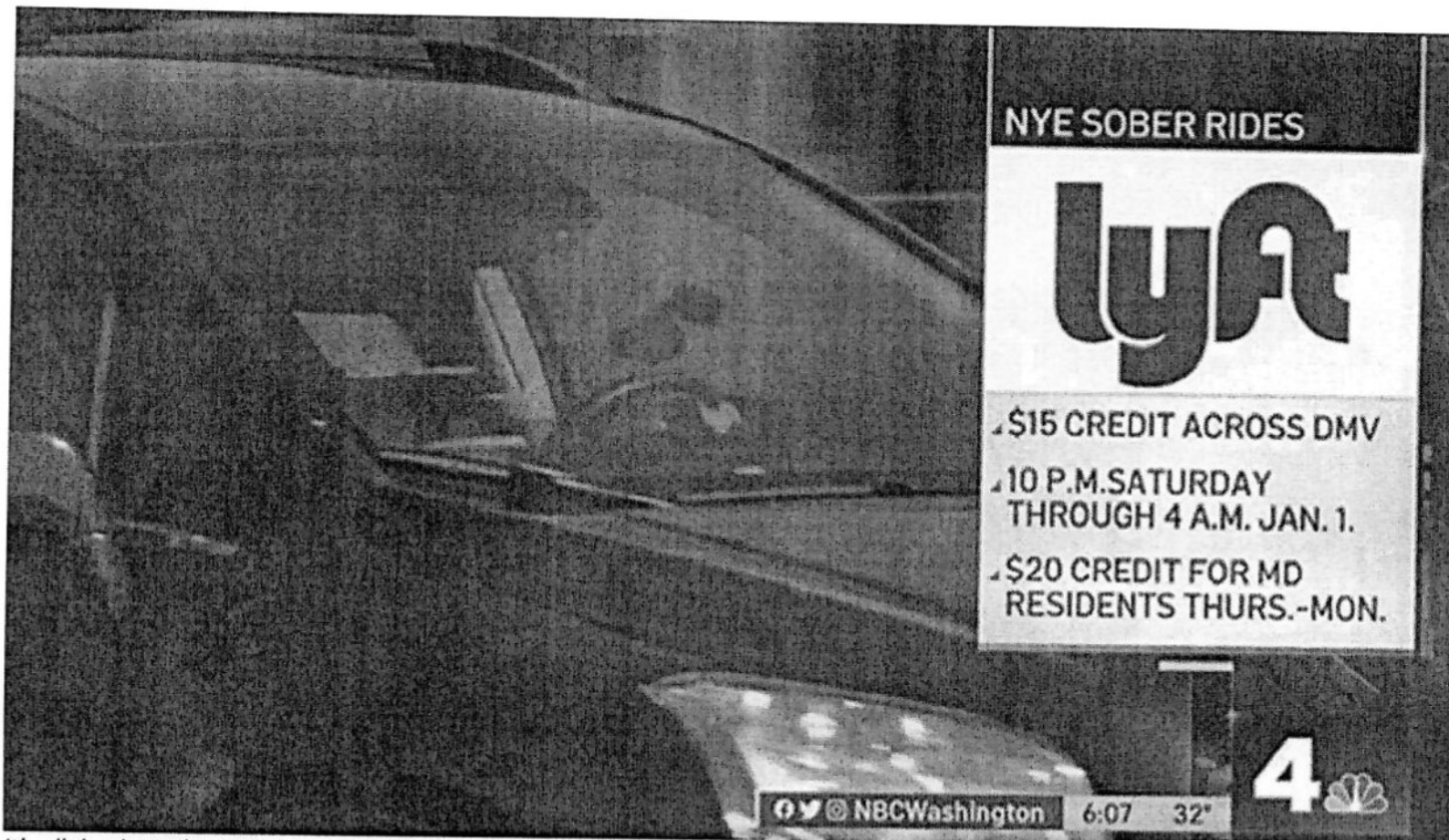
2. State of the county...As the Prince William Board of County Supervisors enters the final year of its terms, its leader sees a tenure of accomplishments.. At Tuesday's board meeting, Chair Ann Wheeler highlighted achievements from 2022 in her annual remarks.

1. SoberRide NYE stats...A total of 907 individuals across the region availed themselves of the SoberRide initiative of the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) over New Year's Eve.

Free and Discounted Rides Available in DC Through New Year's Eve

A nonprofit is offering discount codes for the holiday, to make sure riders make it home safe in 2023.

By NBC Washington Staff



It's all thanks to the Washington Regional Alcohol Program. News4's Jummy Olabanji reports.

If you need a safe way to get home after celebrating the end of the year, nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is offering free and discounted rides around the DMV through New Year's Eve.

WRAP will give Lyft app users in the area a \$15 dollar credit for rides taken home, with a New Year's Eve code that will be posted at 9 p.m. on Saturday.

It's good for use from 10 p.m. through 4 a.m. on New Year's Day.

Until then, you can get \$15 dollars off one ride in Lyft's D.C. coverage area through 4 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 30

Maryland residents can also get a \$20 dollar ride credit starting Thursday, good through 4 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 2.

How to celebrate New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in the D.C. area

By Fritz Hahn, Sophia Solano and Adele Chapin



The Noon Yards Eve party at Yards Park lets families ring in the new year without staying up late, thanks to games, music and a balloon drop at noon. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

From celebrations to resolutions, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day combine for one of the busiest and topsy-turvy 48-hour stretches of the year.

Whether you're looking for a free party at a low-key bar, a family-friendly celebration or fireworks on New Year's Eve, we've got ideas — and we can help you recover with a brisk hike or a decadent brunch on Jan. 1.

If you're going out to party on Saturday, consider using the SoberRide service, which offers a free \$15 Lyft credit for rides home between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. The code, which can be entered directly into the Lyft app, will be posted on the SoberRide website at 9 p.m. Saturday...

Maryland offers residents sober rides on New Year's Eve

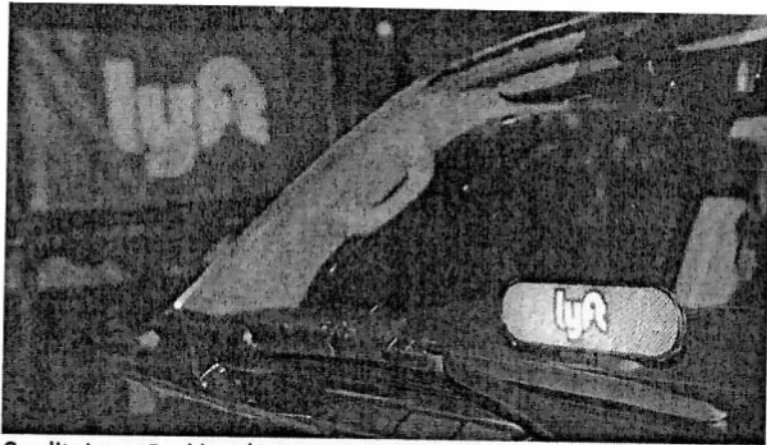


This New Year's Eve, partygoers have plenty of options when it comes to getting home safe. A number of organizations are offering sober rides that won't cost you a dime. FOX 5's Josh Rosenthal has all the details.



Free holiday Lyft rides offered throughout DMV to prevent drunk driving

The 2022 Holiday SoberRide program will operate nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. starting on Dec. 16, 2022 through Jan. 1, 2023.



Credit: Isaac Brekken/Getty Images for Lyft
Lyft welcomes guests to a lounge at Sundance Film Festival on January 23, 2018 in Park City, Utah.

Author: Brittney Melton

WASHINGTON — Stay on Santa's nice list this holiday season by driving safe. Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is offering a SoberRide program to combat drunk driving during the holiday season.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly half of all U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers. Of those, 39% happen on Christmas day and 49% on New Year's Day, a 2020 report stated.

In an effort to reduce that percentage and keep drivers in the area safe, WRAP will be offering safe rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the DMV area during the winter holidays. The 2022 Holiday SoberRide program will operate nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. starting on Dec. 16, 2022 through Jan. 1, 2023.

During the six-hour period each night, people ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol can download Lyft to their phones, enter a

SoberRide® code in the app's promo section to receive their no-cost, up to \$15, safe ride home. A separate promo code will be posted at 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, 23 and 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

Last December, 461 people in the area used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 83,678 free safe rides home in the Greater Washington area.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," said Kamillah Wood, Director of Public Policy for Community Safety at Lyft. "Through our Roadway Safety Program and our partnerships with the public, we hope to empower our community with the tools to protect themselves and those around them this holiday season."

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns within plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Ranier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns within plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

[Click here](#) for more information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative.

WUSA-TV (CBS)
December 13, 2022

DC area's SoberRide program kicks into high gear through New Year's Eve

Kristi King | kking@wtop.com

Free and discounted rides home will be available in the D.C. area through New Year's Eve, compliments of the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program.

WRAP will give Lyft app users in the area a \$15 credit for rides taken home.

"The average fare for this program is less than \$15. So it actually really does take the majority of people home. But let's say your fare is \$20 — we're still going to pay for the first \$15," said WRAP President Kurt Erickson.

The program serves people of legal drinking age in Montgomery County and Prince George's County in Maryland; all of D.C., and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties in Virginia, and all the individual cities and towns within them.

"On SoberRide.com, we will upload a code. You can simply download the Lyft app, if you haven't already done that on your phone, and then enter the SoberRide code in the apps promo section," Erickson said.

The New Year's Eve code will be posted at 9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31. It's good for use from 10 p.m. through 4 a.m. Jan. 1.

Until then, you can get \$15 off one ride taken home in Lyft's D.C. coverage area through 4 a.m. Friday, Dec. 30, by using the code DECEMBSAFE22.

Thursday, Dec. 29, through Monday, Jan. 2, between 4 p.m. and 4 a.m. each day, Maryland residents calling a Lyft ride in the state are eligible to receive one \$20 ride-share credit while supplies last, courtesy of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office. The Lyft code for that credit is NYEMAKEAPLAN2023.

Meanwhile, Metro will stay open until 2 a.m. that night, and it'll be free after 8 p.m.

The last time WRAP offered New Year's Eve SoberRide in earnest in 2019, it was used by 921 people who otherwise might have been driving under the influence.

Since its inception in 1991, more than 83,000 people have taken advantage of the SoberRide program.

Erickson said Halloween was their second-busiest night, with 943 people using the program. That performance makes Erickson confident the local collection of Lyft drivers will be able to handle the demand on New Year's Eve.

"But we would urge people to call ahead — meaning that when they're ready to go or before they're ready to go — go ahead and engage your app and try to get your driver as soon as you can," he suggested.

It costs about \$60,000 a year to host SoberRide.

"We would welcome support and people can make the donation right online," Erickson said.

WRAP is 501(c)(3) charity; donations to help pay for the service and support the fight against drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington Metropolitan area are fully deductible to the extent of the law.

D.C. passengers late on New Year's Eve will have a free ride on Metro

By Brad Matthews - The Washington Times

On New Year's Eve, Metro will offer free rides on buses and trains after 8 p.m. and will extend the operation of trains and buses to 2 a.m., the agency announced Wednesday.

"We want our customers to be safe as they celebrate the start of 2023. We hope customers will take advantage of this offer as we look to start 2023 with less accidents and fatalities on our roadways," said Metro Board of Directors Chairman Paul Smedberg in the announcement.

After 8 p.m., riders on Metrobus or Metrorail will not have to tap a SmarTrip card to enter the bus or rail station. Normal fares and service hours will resume on New Year's Day at 4 a.m. for Metrobus and at 7 a.m. for Metrorail.

"D.C. is open, people are excited to go out on New Year's Eve, and now there will be a safe and free way to get to and from all the events that are happening across the city," said Mayor Muriel Bowser.

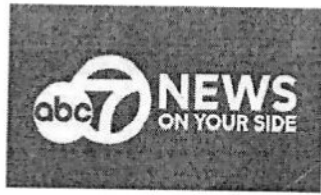
This year's offer is the first time Metro has altered fares and hours for New Year's Eve since December 2016, according to Washingtonian magazine.

Metro is not the only deal offered to potentially drunk revelers during the holiday season. The Washington Regional Alcohol Program is partnering with rideshare service Lyft to offer subsidized rides.

Starting Friday, from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. each night, passengers can use a SoberRide promo code uploaded at SoberRide.com on the Lyft app for up to \$15 off their ride home. Codes will be uploaded on the aforementioned site at 9 p.m. Friday, as well as Dec. 23 and Dec. 31.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," Kamillah Wood, Lyft director of Public Policy for Community Safety, said in a release from WRAP.

- Brad Matthews can be reached at bmatthews@washingtontimes.com.



DUI victim's family pleads with community to find sober ride for New Year's Eve

by Christian Flores

OLNEY, Md. (7News) — During this time of year, Richard Leotta has a hard time telling his son's story, but said he feels it is his duty to do so to save lives.

In December 2015, Leotta's son, Montgomery County Police Officer Noah Leotta, had pulled over a suspected impaired driver. Officer Leotta, then a 24-year-old and the youngest member of the department's holiday alcohol task force, wanted to protect his community from drivers breaking the law.

"He became very knowledgeable and understanding of the serious problem of impaired driving," Richard Leotta said.

Soon, Officer Leotta's family would also become all too familiar with the deadly consequences of drunk driving.

During that traffic stop, he was hit and killed by a drunk driver.

"He was out there trying to protect the victims and the community, and sadly Noah was killed by the exact same crime he was trying to protect us from," Leotta said. "People are supposed to be joyous and happy, and now instead of that you're facing death and injury."

Unfortunately, the Leotta family is not alone in losing a loved one to this crime.

According to MDOT, 800 people in Maryland have been killed by an impaired driver over the past five years, which makes up about one in three roadway deaths.

The National Safety Council reports 49% of all road deaths during the New Year's holiday period are a result of impaired driving.

MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration Highway Safety Office Director Dr. Tim Kerns said law enforcement all across the state is aggressively fighting drunk driving this weekend.

"There will be law enforcement out there, so everyone needs to make a plan. They do not want to be a statistic, either through a crash or they do not want to ruin their holiday with an arrest," Kerns said.

The Highway Safety Office is also partnering with Lyft to provide a discount for the rideshare service this weekend.

However, advocates are working hard to get state lawmakers to strengthen laws to combat drunk driving.

"The problem is the people who are most affected are killed by drunk drivers," said Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety President John Seng. "They aren't able to lobby for themselves or petition government elected officials to improve laws. That comes down to advocates."

After Leotta's death, Maryland lawmakers passed a bill called Noah's Law, which requires those convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol to have a device installed in their car that won't let it start unless they blow under the legal limit.

However, there's a loophole which does not require those granted a probation before judgment to get the device installed.

Leotta will continue fighting for the law to be tightened, no matter how difficult it is to talk about his son's death.

"This is a very tough time of the year for myself and my family in many ways," Leotta said. "But then on the other hand, though we have those emotions, we want to continue Noah's effort."

Leotta, advocates, and officials are all urging people to make plans for a safe and sober ride this weekend.

The Washington Regional Alcohol Program offers a discount for SoberRide this weekend. You can find out more at this link here.

Maryland partnered with Lyft for a \$20 ride credit this weekend. All of those credits have been claimed already, but you can learn more about this partnership at this link.

WJLA-TV (ABC)
December 31, 2022



Metrорail And Bus Service Will Be Free After 8 P.M. On New Year's Eve

Amanda Michelle Gomez



No need to tap your Metro card on New Year's Eve; beginning at 8 p.m., service on trains and buses will be free. Jordan Pascale / DCist/WAMU

Metro announced that all trips on rail and bus will be free after 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve. The agency also extended all service until 2 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 1.

The decision to make service free appears to be a first. Service is typically extended on New Year's Eve, except in 2020 because officials were encouraging people to stay home.

Metro's Board of Directors asked General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Randy Clarke to provide free trips and extend hours on New Year's Eve, which is the most dangerous holiday of the year for drunk driving. In a statement, Metro Board Chair Paul C. Smedberg encouraged locals to take advantage of the offer, so 2023 starts with fewer road accidents and fatalities. He and Clarke said Metro is the safest way to travel on New Year's Eve.

"Eliminating costs and extending services are easy steps we can take to give people the power to

choose Metro as their safe way to enjoy all the region has to offer," said Clarke in a statement.

The number of alcohol- and drug-related traffic fatalities in the D.C. region decreased by 10% between 2020 and 2021, or 95 to 85, according to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program says the decrease marks the lowest recorded for the region in a half-decade.

However, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments reports that regional alcohol- and drug-related traffic injuries (as opposed to fatalities) increased by 17% in 2021, and crashes related to driver intoxication also increased by 14%. Regional arrests for either driving under the influence or while impaired also increased by roughly 4% between 2020 and 2021.

Roughly 25% of the region's total traffic fatalities in 2021 were due to drivers being alcohol and/or drug-impaired, per the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

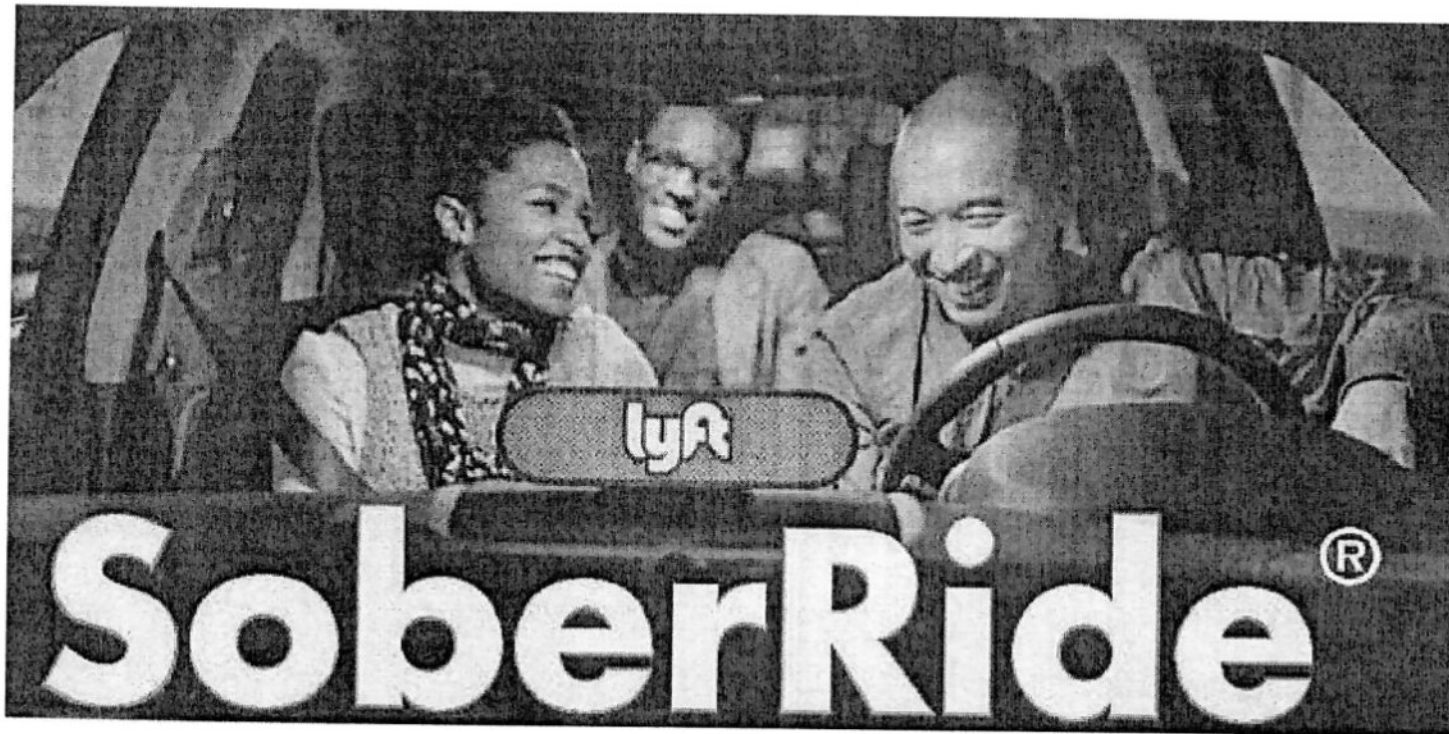
So far there have been 33 traffic fatalities this year in D.C., according to the Metropolitan Police Department. That's a 15% decline from last year, which marked the deadliest year on the roads since 2007. Experts told DCist/WAMU that increased speeding, distracted driving, and decreased seat belt use were among the contributing factors.

Locals will also likely have the option of rideshare on New Year's Eve. Uber usually offers promotions. **The Washington Regional Alcohol Program also typically offers discounted Lyft rides, which started in 2019.**

But Metro will undoubtedly be the cheapest option. Riders do not have to tap their SmarTrip card on bus or rail after 8 p.m. on Dec. 31. Normal fares return Jan. 1 beginning at 4 a.m. for bus service and 7 a.m. for rail.

SoberRide initiative now in effect through New Year's Day

SUN GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS



The Washington Regional Alcohol Program's SoberRide initiative is now in operation for the holiday season, and will remain available through Jan. 1.

The effort teams with Lyft to provide free rides home to those who may have had too much to drink during the holiday season. It will be operational nightly from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly half of all U.S. traffic fatalities during Christmas and New Year's involve drunk drivers.

Last year, more than 460 individuals availed themselves of the service – a figure lower than usual owing to the uptick in COVID cases at the end of 2021 and resulting decline in number of people out during the holidays.

The SoberRide initiative also is operated on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween. Since 1991, more than 83,000 people have received free rides home in the Washington region through the service.

For information, see the Website at www.soberride.com.

'SoberRide' initiative opens for holiday period

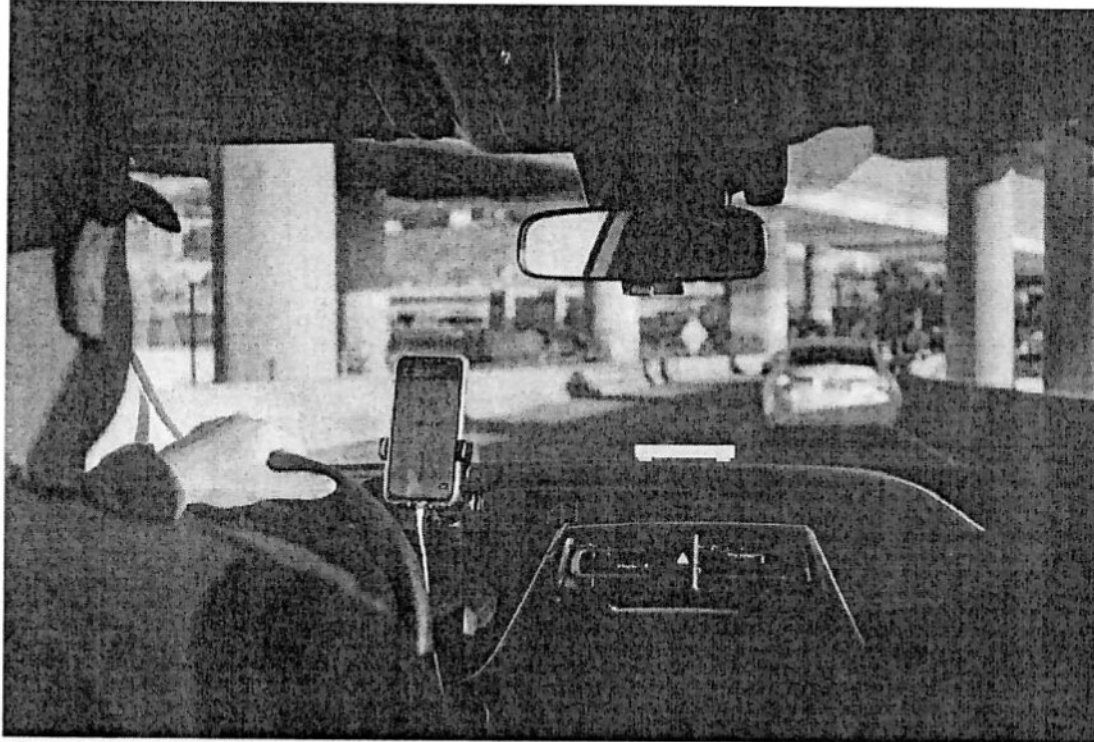


Photo by Paul Hanaoka on Unsplash

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Morning Notes

There's a line for photos with Santa at Tysons Corner Center (staff photo by Angela Woolsey)
Tysons Arrest Leads to Retail Theft Ring Bust — "With some great information from our partners at Nordstrom and Bloomingdales, officers assigned to our Tysons Urban Team were able to make apprehension. At the time of the arrest, the woman had a booster bag containing over \$3,700 in stolen sunglasses...The group is linked to prior thefts over the previous several days of over \$25,000 in merchandise in the DC Metropolitan area." [FCPD/Facebook]

Possible Shots Fired in Herndon — "Town of Herndon Police responded early Thursday afternoon for the report of possible shots being fired in the 300 block of Elden Street, according to a 1:17 p.m. post to the department's official Twitter account. Police reported that one subject was detained at the scene and there were no victims." [Patch]

Fast-Casual Health Food Restaurant Gets Fairfax Ribbon-Cutting — "Fairfax City is Roots Natural Kitchen's 12th location, which was chosen due to its proximity to George Mason University and access to the larger Washington, D.C. area, according to Caballero...Although Friday was the official ribbon-cutting, the restaurant has been open for about two weeks." [Patch]

Belle Haven House Goes All Out on Christmas Decor — "Over 250,000 lights. Three hundred plastic blow molds. Twelve fully decorated artificial Christmas trees. More than 100 inflatable holiday decorations ranging in size from 2 feet to 15 feet...That's what it takes for Kurt Farmer to transform his Alexandria home into Farmer's Christmas House." [Northern Virginia Magazine]

Some Social Media Apps Banned for State Employees — "Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin

banned the use of TikTok, WeChat and other 'Chinese-owned mobile phone applications and websites on state government technology' on Friday. The ban applies to all executive offices and executive branch agencies." [NBC4]

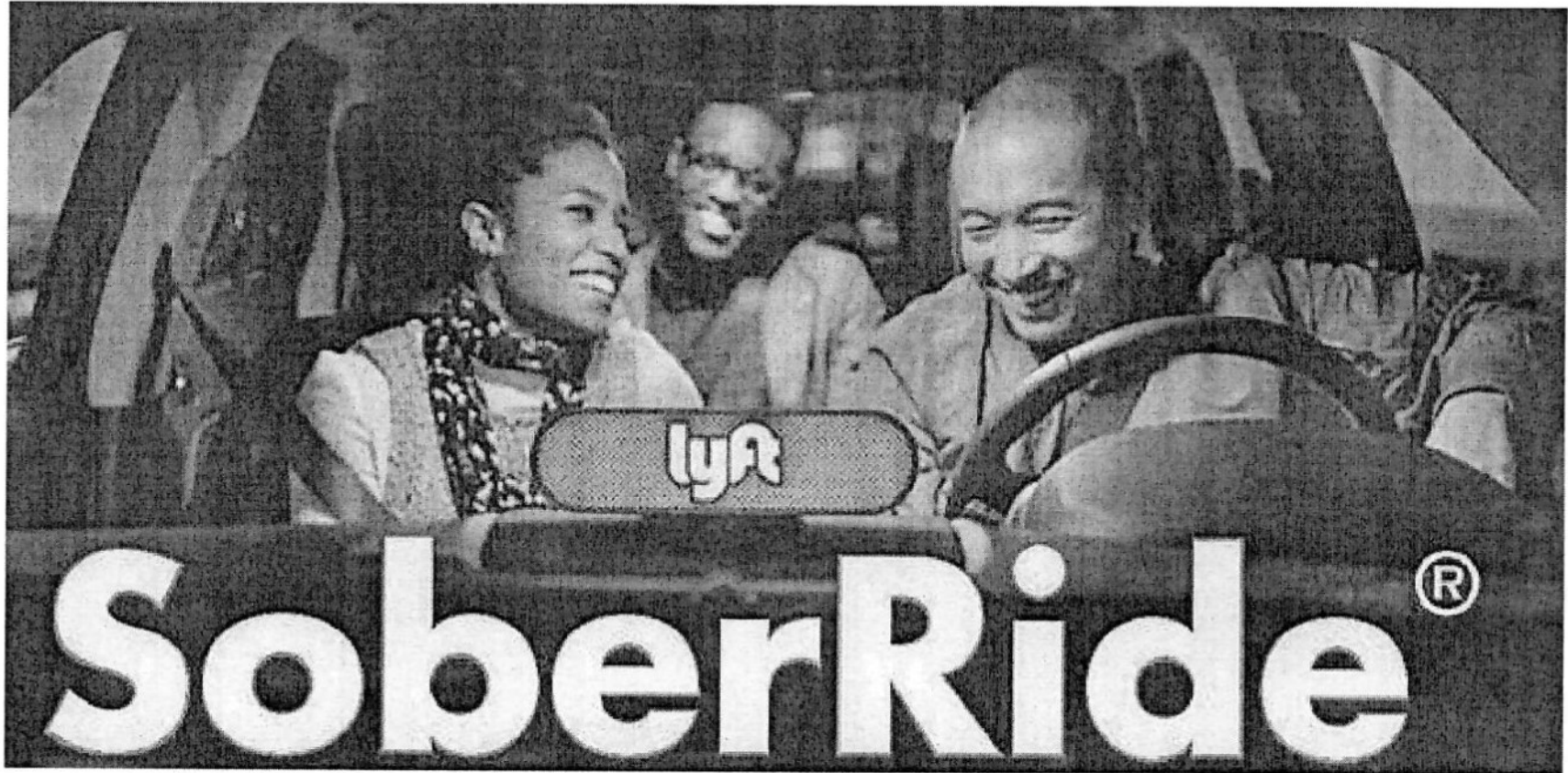
Author Discusses Opioid Epidemic in Tysons — "[Beth] Macy spoke on Tuesday night at a book signing event hosted by Bards Alley Bookshop at 1st Stage theater in Tysons. Macy's newest book is Raising Lazarus, a sequel to her 2018 book, Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors and the Drug Company That Addicted America, on which a Hulu limited series is based." [Fairfax County Sheriff's Office]

Anti-Drunk Driving Initiative Launches — "The Washington Regional Alcohol Program's SoberRide initiative is now in operation for the holiday season, and will remain available through Jan. 1. The effort teams with Lyft to provide free rides home to those who may have had too much to drink during the holiday season. It will be operational nightly from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m." [Sun Gazette/Inside NoVA]

Local Volunteers Honored by County — "Fairfax County recently announced the winners of its 2022 Environmental Excellence Awards, and both honorees in the 'Individual County Resident' category are from around the Richmond Highway corridor." The honorees were a longtime Hollin Hills Civic Association chair and a senior student at West Potomac High School. [On the Move]

It's Monday — Clear throughout the day. High of 37 and low of 27. Sunrise at 7:24 am and sunset at 4:50 pm. [Weather.gov]

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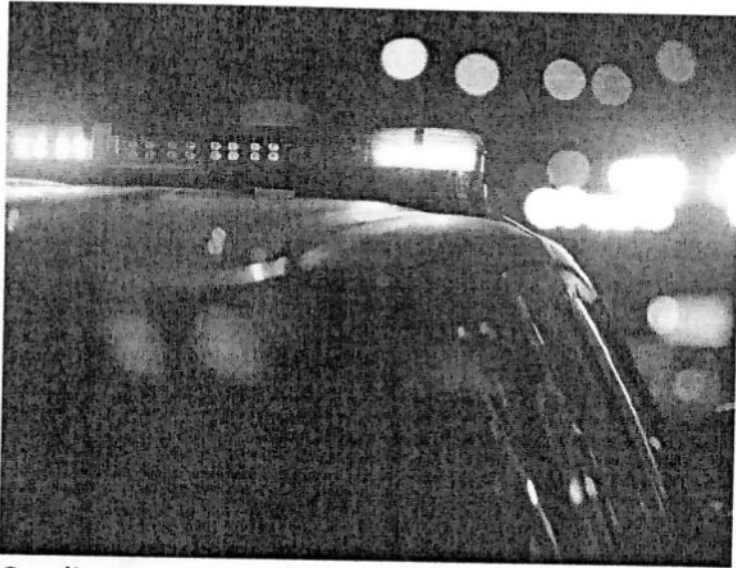
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MoCo Alcohol Beverage Services launches coaster campaign to help reduce DUIs

Local businesses can receive the materials with the phrase “Had one too many? Scan for Ride,” free of charge

by Apps Bichu



Credit: Getty Images

Montgomery County Alcohol Beverage Services has partnered with local restaurants and bars by distributing beverage coasters in the hopes of reducing incidents of impaired driving this holiday season.

These coasters have QR codes on them, according to the ABS, which will guide people to a virtual list of alternative rides to use to get home safely after drinking.

ABS officials stated the QR coded coasters have the phrase “Had one too many? Scan for Ride,” imprinted on them and are distributed free of charge to bars and restaurants in the county.

The list contains contact information for Uber, Lyft and taxicab services, as well as public transport such as the MetroBus, the MetroRail and the RideOn Bus.

Additionally, the online list also includes the Washington Regional Alcohol Program’s SoberRide initiative, which offers discounted rides during the holiday season this year, beginning from 10 p.m. Friday until 4 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2023.

The SoberRide program also operates on other special events such as St. Patrick’s Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween, according to the WRAP’s official website.

“As people get ready to celebrate the holiday season, we encourage them to make a plan for a safe ride home if they decide to drink,” said ABS Director Kathie Durbin in a statement. “Drunk driving is a threat to our community and keeping our community safe is everyone’s responsibility.”

Montgomery County police arrested a total of 190 people for driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, according to its Alcohol Holiday Taskforce’s fifth week of detection. Four police cruisers over the past five weeks were struck by impaired drivers, a Tuesday police news release stated.

ABS officials stated that businesses that have an interest in participating in the coaster program can contact the organization at ABSLicensing@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov.

Bethesda Magazine
December 15, 2022

Morning Notes

Anti-Drunk Driving Initiative Launches — “The Washington Regional Alcohol Program’s SoberRide initiative is now in operation for the holiday season, and will remain available through Jan. 1. The effort teams with Lyft to provide free rides home to those who may have had too much to drink during the holiday season. It will be operational nightly from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.” [Sun Gazette/Inside NoVA]

InFive: Giraffe and zebra bones seized, stadium on the agenda and a breezy day

5. Grades up, attendance down

Attendance at Prince William County Schools took a dip in the first quarter of the school year compared to quarter one of the 2021-22 year, but student grades have improved, according to a school system presentation earlier this month.

4. Commanders stadium update

As the Virginia General Assembly prepares for its 2023 session, plans for a potential Washington Commanders stadium in Northern Virginia will again be on the agenda.

3. Breezy and cool

Clouds will be on the increase today with a high near 43 degrees and northwest wind gusting as high as 23 mph. [Click here for your forecast by ZIP code.](#)

2. Ornaments for wounded warriors

More than 200 volunteers spent a recent December Saturday packaging ornaments for combat wounded service members and their families. The ornament packing party in Dale City, hosted by Semper Fi & America's Fund, resulted in over 17,500 ornaments being packaged in less than eight hours.

1. Giraffe and zebra bones seized

Customs agents at Dulles International Airport recently seized giraffe and zebra bones from the baggage of a Fauquier County woman traveling from Kenya.

InsideOut

If you imbibe a little too much cheer this season, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program's SoberRide initiative is now in operation through Jan. 1. [Click here for details on how to catch a free ride.](#)

Public Safety - Week of December 16, 2022

WRAP offers free holiday Lyft rides

Local nonprofit, Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during the winter holidays beginning on Dec. 16.

The 2022 Holiday SoberRide® program will be in operation nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. through Jan. 1 as way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a SoberRide® code in the app's 'Promo' section to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. A separate Holiday SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, 23 and 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

InFive: Icy pond claims a life, trees for troops and thawing out

5. Icy pond claims a life

A 19-year-old man died on Christmas Eve after falling through the ice at a Haymarket pond. Several others at the scene were taken to the hospital.

4. Commendations withheld

Fairfax County Public Schools are acknowledging a problem after a Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology parent accused school administrators of deliberately withholding National Merit commendations.

3. Thawing out

This morning's chill will give way to warmer temperatures this afternoon with highs near 41 degrees. Even warmer air arrives late week, with highs expected to rise into the 50s. [Click here for your forecast by ZIP code.](#)

2. Trees for troops

Service members and their families received free Christmas trees in time for the holiday season at Marine Corps Base Quantico earlier this month.

1. Weird and notable real estate

Private islands, mountaintop compounds, Dan Snyder's McLean estate, a lighthouse and even a working pirate ship made appearances this year in our weekly look at unique and notable properties around the region. Take a look back at some of our featured galleries [here](#).

InsideOut

If you imbibe a little too much holiday cheer this season, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program's SoberRide initiative is now in operation through Jan. 1. [Click here for details on how to catch a free ride.](#)



SoberRide Begins Dec. 16

The 2022 Holiday SoberRide program will be in operation nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. from Dec. 16, 2022 to Jan. 1, 2023 as way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

The program is offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a SoberRide code in the app's 'Promo' section to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. A separate Holiday SoberRide promo code will be posted at 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, 23 and 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

Last December and while unquestionably impacted by the then resurging COVID-19 pandemic including the Omicron variant, 461 persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2022 Holiday SoberRide® campaign include the 395 Express Lanes, Amazon, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation of Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Kendall-Jackson, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 83,678 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

www.SoberRide.com

Falls Church **Patch**

New Year's Eve 2022: Where To Find Events Around Falls Church

Watch Night Falls Church will celebrate New Year's Eve with indoor activities. See other planned events around Falls Church.

Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



Watch Night Falls Church and other New Year's Eve events are planned to ring in 2023. (Shutterstock)

FALLS CHURCH, VA — Watch Night Falls Church and other events around Falls Church are planned to help residents welcome the new year.

Watch Night is a family-friendly event with entertainment for all ages that started in 1998. The event gives Falls Church its own unique countdown to midnight. The Historic Star, which is the city's first holiday decoration from 1948, is lowered each year at midnight.

However, this year, festivities are limited to indoor venues from 7 p.m. to midnight. Event organizers cancelled outdoor activities, including the lowering of the star, due to rain in the forecast.

Learn more about the event at www.watchnightfallschurch.com.

If you need a ride to the event, a shuttle bus from the East Falls Church Metro will not be provided in 2022. However, Metro will be fare free after 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve to closing. Metro has extended hours to 2 a.m. on Jan. 1. **The SoberRide program also runs through New Year's Eve, providing free Lyft rides up to \$15 to keep intoxicated drivers off local roads...**

Falls Church Patch
December 31, 2022

Public Safety - Week of December 30, 2022

SoberRide® program gears up for New Year's

Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly half of all U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers (49 percent, New Year's Day, NHTSA, 2020), a local nonprofit organization announced Dec. 27 that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during New Year's Eve evening.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2022 Holiday SoberRide® program will operate from 10 p.m. on Dec. 31, to 4 a.m. on Jan. 1 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditional high-risk holiday period. Area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter a SoberRide® in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. A new, separate Holiday SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 9 p.m. Dec 31, on www.SoberRide.com. (WRAP's current Holiday SoberRide® campaign has been operating nightly since Dec. 16.)

"Nearly half of all U.S. traffic fatalities during the New Year's period in 2020 involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's president.

Last December and while unquestionably impacted by the then resurging COVID-19 pandemic including the Omicron variant, 461 persons in the Washington-metropolitan area still used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its

SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," said Kamillah Wood, director of Public Policy for Community Safety at Lyft. "Through our Roadway Safety Program and our partnerships with the public, we hope to empower our community with the tools to protect themselves and those around them this holiday season."

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns therein plus the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 83,678 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Commemorating its 40th year in 2022 after being founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] WRAP is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

Vienna **Patch**

Fireworks, Galas, Live Music: New Year's 2023 Weekend Events In NoVA

This weekend means New Year's Eve celebrations, First Day Hikes and the last weekend of some holiday lights. Check out things to do in NoVA.

Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



Here are the weekend event highlights for Northern Virginia and DC, including New Year's Eve celebrations. (Shutterstock)

VIRGINIA — Get ready to ring in 2023 with various New Year's Eve celebrations and other events around Northern Virginia and DC.

It's the last weekend for some holiday lights attractions such as ZooLights, Enchant Washington, DC, Ice & Lights and Nights of Lights on the Fairgrounds. The Winter Lantern Festival, Meadowlark Winter Walk on Lights, Georgetown GLOW and Bull Run Festival of Lights remain open in the coming days.

To celebrate New Year's Eve, there are various parties and family-friendly events planned in the region. A few of the bigger events include First Night Alexandria with fireworks, Watch Night Falls Church, The U Street New Year's Eve Bar Crawl, Capital Gatsby New Year's Eve DC Gala 2023, New Year's Eve at Farm Brew LIVE and The St. James New Year's Eve Sneaker Ball Benefiting Martha's Table.

New Year's Eve may be a day of rest for some after late night New Year's festivities. But if you want to get out for some fresh air, check out First Day Hikes such as First Day Hikes at Virginia State Parks and First Hike Fairfax.

If you're looking for a way to get around on New Year's Eve, the extended SoberRide program provides free Lyft rides up to \$15 to keep intoxicated drivers off local roads. The program runs nightly through the night of Dec. 31. In addition, Metro will extend Metrobus hours until 2 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 1 and offer free fares on Metrorail and Metrobus from 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 31 through closing...

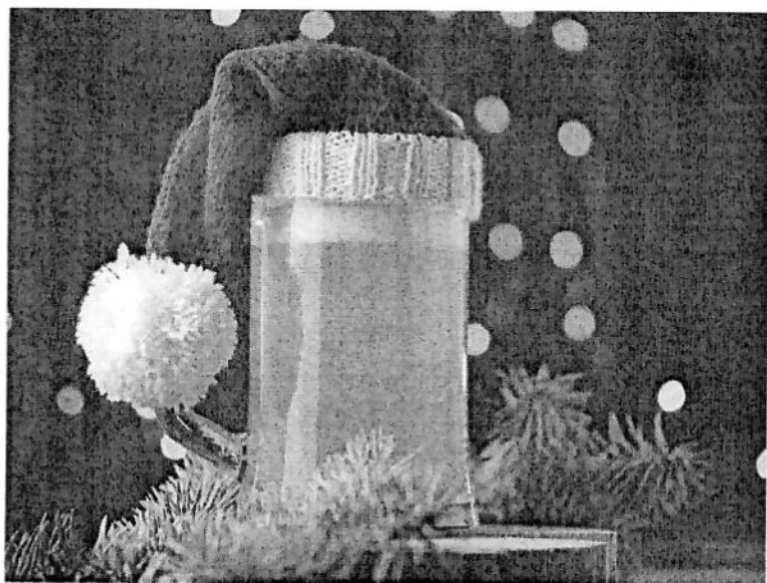
Vienna Patch
December 30, 2022

Old Town Alexandria **Patch**

Free Sober Rides Offered For Extended Holiday Period In DC Region

The SoberRide program will return over 17 days for the holiday season to help prevent impaired driving on local roads.

Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



The Holiday SoberRide program will provide free Lyft rides up to \$15 to keep impaired drivers off the roads in the DC region. (Shutterstock)

WASHINGTON, DC — Would-be impaired drivers in the DC region can catch a free, safe ride home for an extended period this holiday season.

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The SoberRide program seeks to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during high-risk times like the winter holidays. In December 2021, 461 people used the service, a number WRAP believes was impacted by the COVID-19 omicron variant surge. The last time the program regularly ran in 2019, 1,121 people used the SoberRide program during the winter holidays.

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The promotion applies to Lyft's DC region coverage area, which includes the District of Columbia, Arlington County, Fairfax County, cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park, parts of Prince William and Loudoun counties, Prince George's County and parts of Montgomery County.

Washington Regional Alcohol Program, a nonprofit celebrating its 40th anniversary, is credited with helping keep the DC region's alcohol-related traffic deaths lower than the national average. The SoberRide program is also offered on other high-risk holidays for impaired driving: St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween. Since 1991, the program has provided 83,678 safe rides home to keep impaired drivers off the roads.

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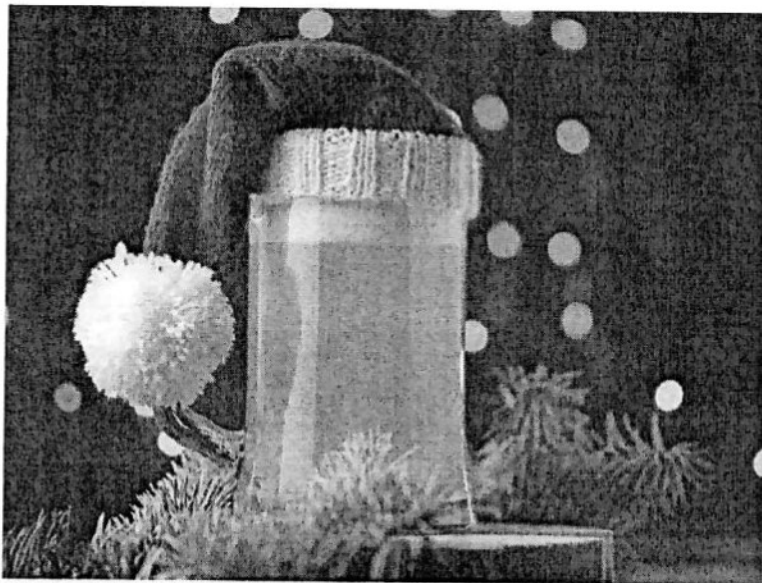
Old Town Alexandria Patch
December 12, 2022

Alexandria Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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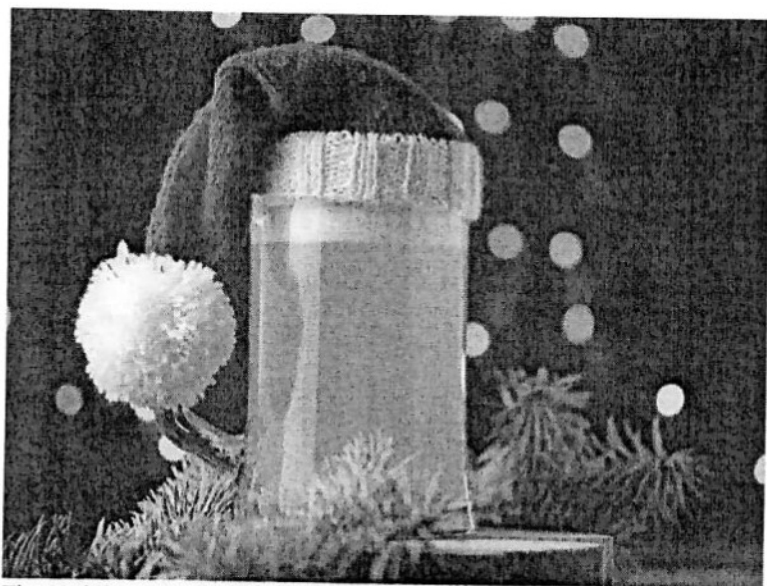
Alexandria Patch
December 12, 2022

Arlington **Patch**

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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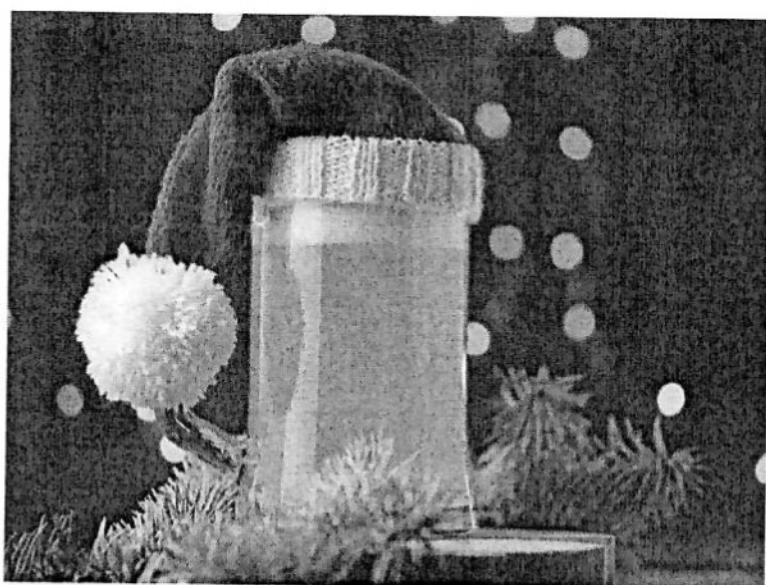
Arlington Patch
December 12, 2022

Burke Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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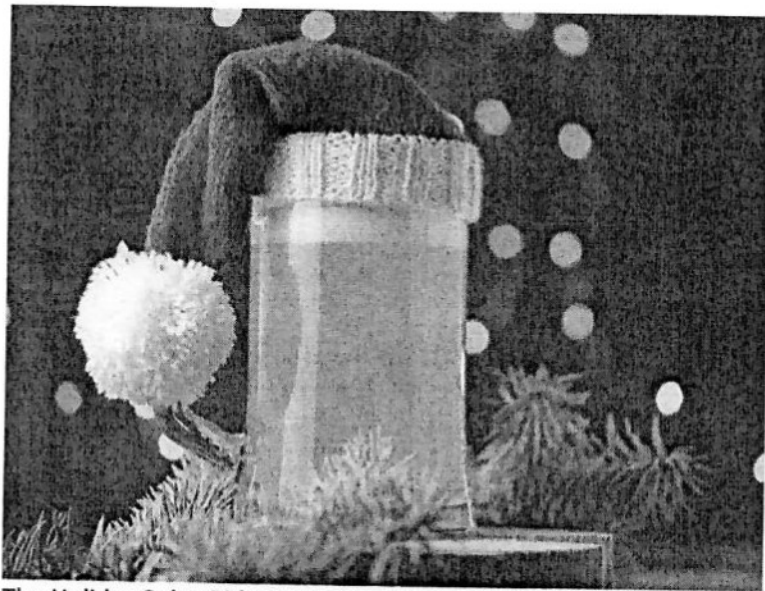
Burke Patch
December 12, 2022

Woodbridge Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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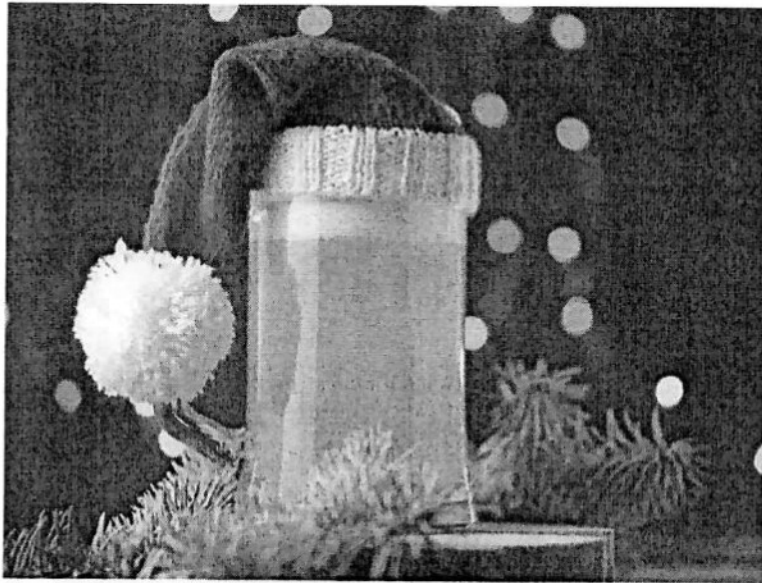
Woodbridge Patch
December 12, 2022

Leesburg Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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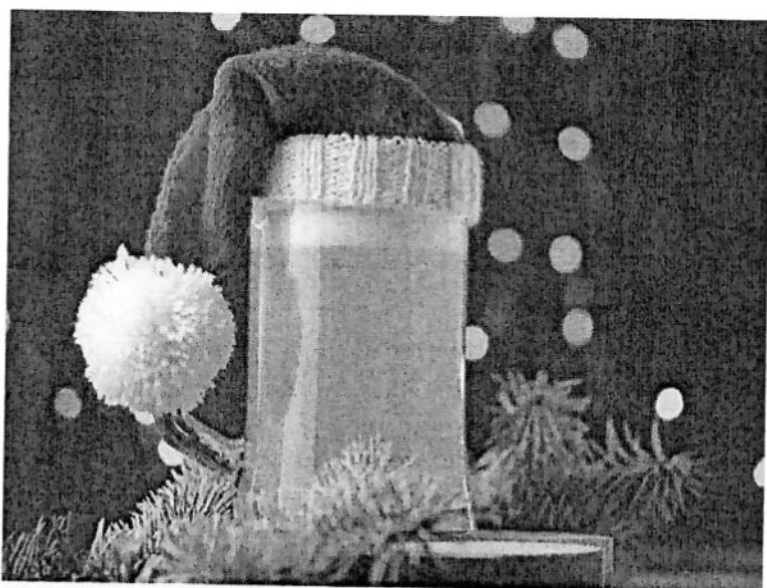
Leesburg Patch
December 12, 2022

Ashburn Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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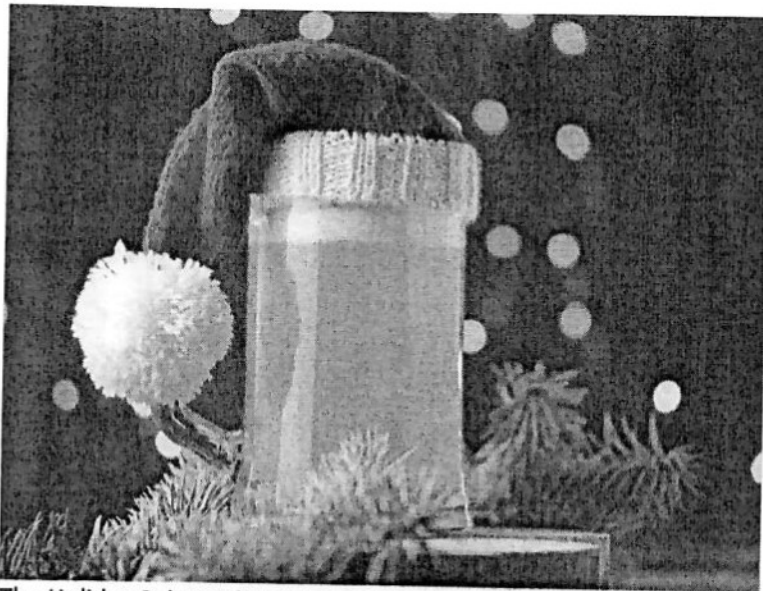
Ashburn Patch
December 12, 2022

Vienna Patch

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Emily Leayman, Patch Staff



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Vienna Patch
December 12, 2022

Gaithersburg Patch

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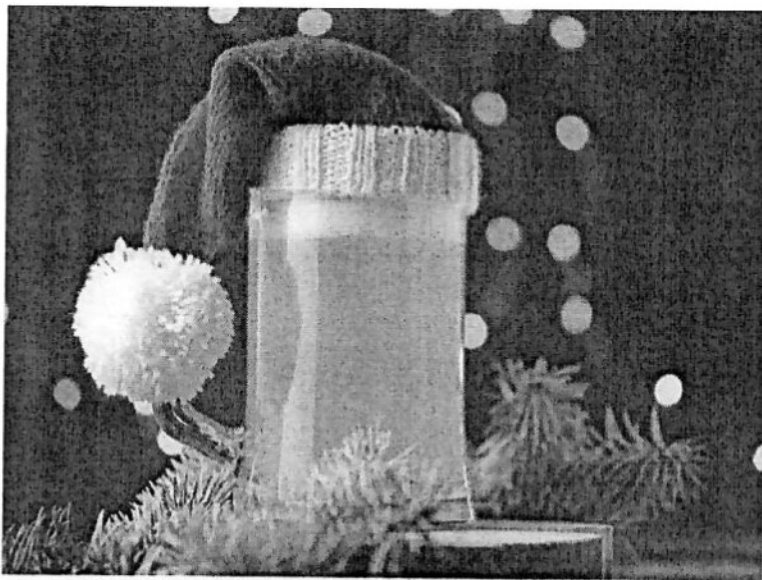
Gaithersburg Patch
December 12, 2022

Herndon **Patch**

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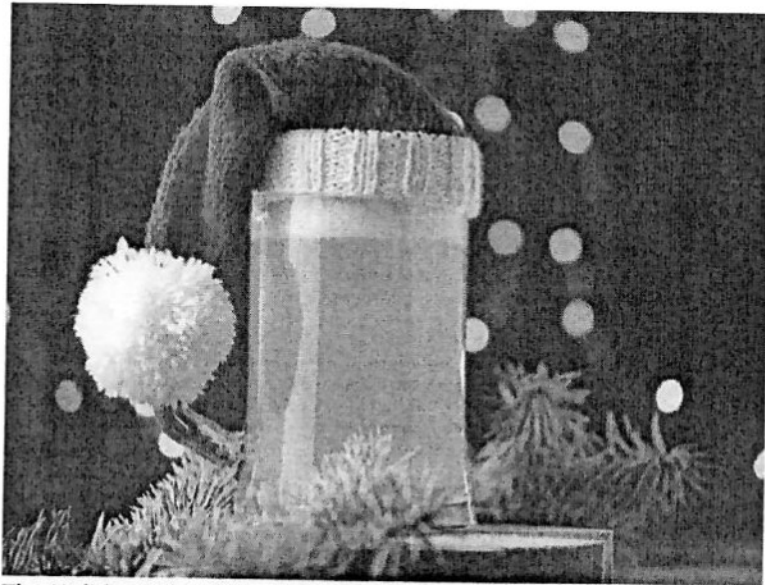
Herndon Patch
December 12, 2022

Reston Patch

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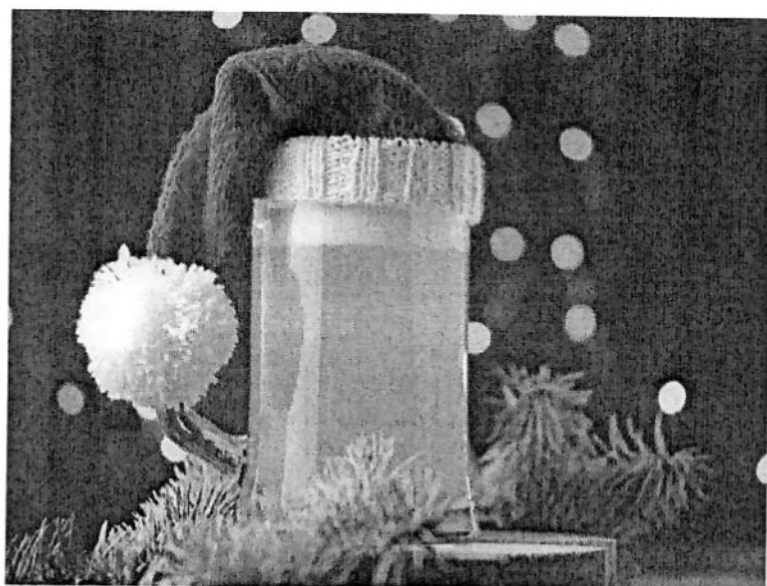
Reston Patch
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Bowie Patch

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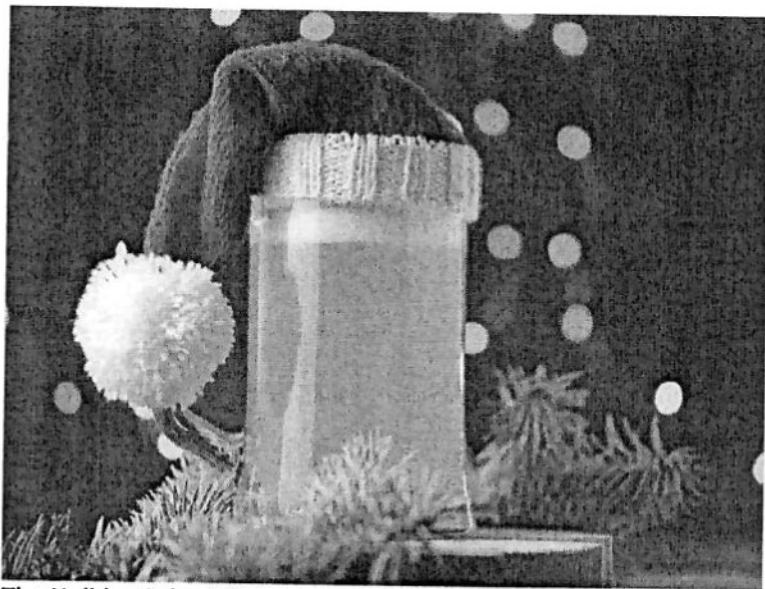
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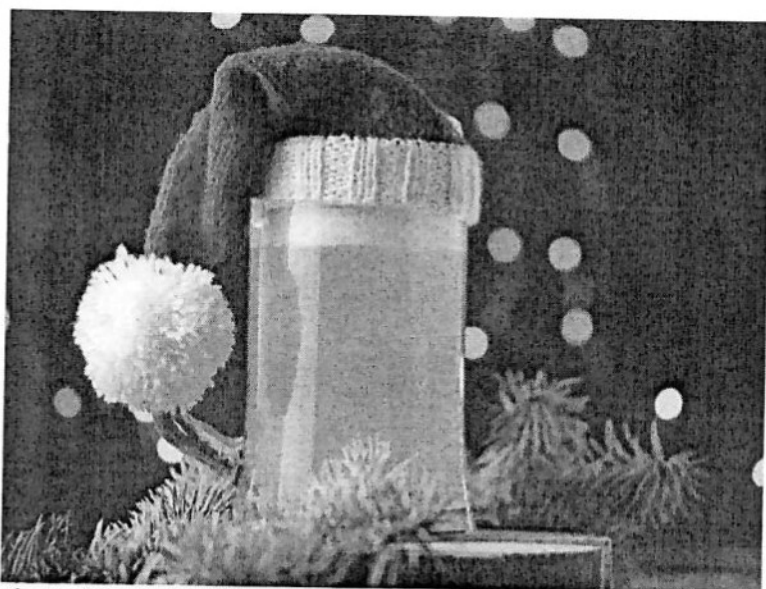
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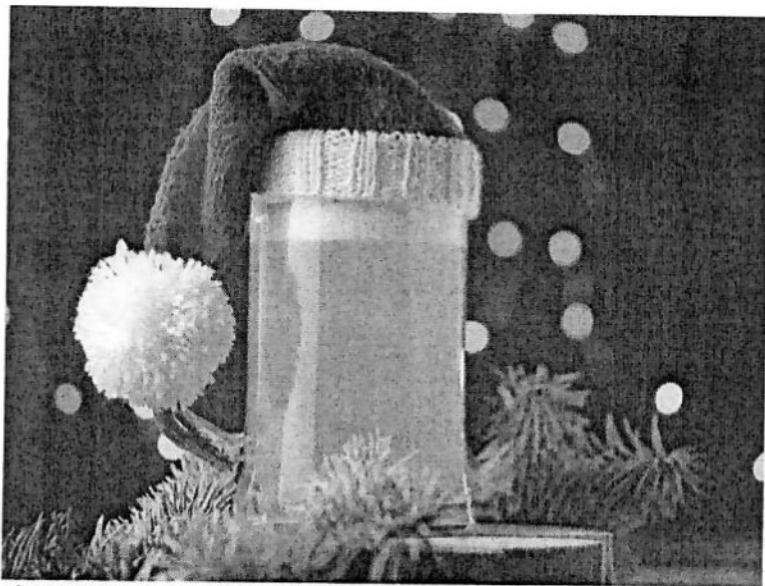
Kingstowne Patch
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Silver Spring Patch

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Silver Spring Patch
December 12, 2022



Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia

Consumer Alert: Drive Safe This Holiday Season

With the holiday season upon us, residents and visitors to the District of Columbia are reminded to stay safe and drive sober during the holiday season. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (“NHTSA”), in 2020, 11,654 people were killed nationwide including seven people killed in the District of Columbia in a motor vehicle related crash that involved an alcohol-impaired driver.

While impaired driving fatalities tragically occur year-round, evidence shows that the holiday season is a particularly dangerous time on the roadways. Every life lost as a result of an impaired driver is one too many. Efforts to eliminate this preventable and violent crime must continue until, as a nation, we are at zero impaired driver fatalities.

From December 14, 2022 through January 1, 2023, law enforcement throughout the region will be joining NHTSA as it kicks off its holiday “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” national crackdown against impaired drivers. Across the District, law enforcement efforts to prevent impaired driving will be increased. When enjoying your holiday celebrations, please plan to get home safely: designate a sober driver before the party begins or plan a way to get home safely at the end of the night. If you are impaired, call a taxi, phone a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation.

In addition, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program’s Holiday SoberRide program will occur nightly from December 16, 2022 through January 1, 2023, 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. During that time, would be impaired riders, 21 years of age or older can redeem a \$15.00 SoberRide offer using their Lyft App by entering the SoberRide promo code in the Lyft app’s promo section. New codes will be released nightly. Riders are responsible for any balance above \$15.00.

For more information, please contact Assistant Attorney General and Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Melissa Shear at Melissa.Shear@dc.gov.

**Office of the Attorney General
for the District of Columbia**
December 14, 2022



DEFENSE VISUAL INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

JBMHH and Washington Regional Alcohol Program team up to offer sober rides home during holiday season

JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, Va.- Downed helicopters, rocket-propelled grenades, and roadside ambushes remain serious concerns to U. S. Soldiers in a combat theater.

What many Soldiers stateside don't realize is that at home, the greatest threat to their lives is much more mundane, but equally or even more dangerous – the private motor vehicle crash while being impaired. According to the U. S. Department of Transportation, automobile crashes are the leading cause of death nationwide for all people ages 18-34 years old.

Preventing automobile crashes is the priority of every Commander, First Sergeant and Soldier. The key to our success lies with the convincing young people to buckle up and to not drive impaired.

Partnership for prevention

That is why the JBM-HH Army Substance Abuse Program and Washington Region Alcohol Program is joining with other national, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials to remind everyone this season to always designate a sober driver before each holiday party or event involving alcohol.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has proclaimed December "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month" to help underscore the public's commitment to preventing impaired driving

and promoting the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs.

The month of December and the New Year's Eve holidays are also often highlighted by significant increase in state and local law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving such as the use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols.

WRAP SoberRide

In support of the president's national initiatives starting on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022, from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. Jan. 1, 2023, WRAP will be hosting their annual SoberRide program in the National Capital Region.

This public safety initiative is a popular free cab service for would-be drunk drivers, which since 1991 has provided more than 80,000 safe rides home to Greater Washington area residents.

WRAP SoberRide provides a free Lyft ride home, up to \$15. Users are financially responsible for anything over \$15.

You must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service. Valid in Lyft's Washington, D.C. coverage area. You cannot reserve a SoberRide or schedule a pickup in advance.

- The SoberRide codes will be released to the public at 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 and Saturday, Dec. 31 and can be used only during the aforementioned periods.
- Visit www.SoberRide.com for codes.

Deadly problem

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nationally, more than 11,654 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes each year. This means, every 30 minutes, or nearly 50

times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

The holiday season is a time for family, friends, and festive celebrations, but it is unfortunately also a time when there is a tragic jump in the number of alcohol-related highway fatalities each year.

The holiday leave period is the second-deadliest time of year for off-duty mishaps. Only the summer months have more recorded fatalities annually.

Looking at the past five years, the Army loses approximately 11 Soldiers during the holiday season, with most at the rank of E-3 or E-4.

An average of 10.2 fatalities occurs in private motor vehicle.

During the 2021-2022 holiday leave period, our Army lost nine Soldiers to off-duty fatal mishaps, with alcohol being suspected in many of the crashes.

The hazards of drinking during the holidays are greater than any other time, due to proximity and opportunity.

Alcohol is more available during this time and Soldiers tend to drink over their personal limits. At least 14% of Army holiday leave mishap fatalities during the past five years involved alcohol.

Arrive alive

Remembering to designate a sober driver before the party begins is just one of several, simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving

during the holiday season, Other important reminders include:

- Never get behind the wheel of a vehicle if you've been out drinking
- If impaired, call a taxi – use mass transit if available – or call a sober friend or family member to come get you.
- Or, just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober.

- If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to always plan to designate a sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food during the event, and make sure all your guests leave with a sober driver.

- Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk.

The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial cost of crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant and not the way you want to spend your holiday season.

Remember this holiday season, if you catch a buzz, catch a ride.

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