



**First
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ALEXANDRIA

2011 Annual Report



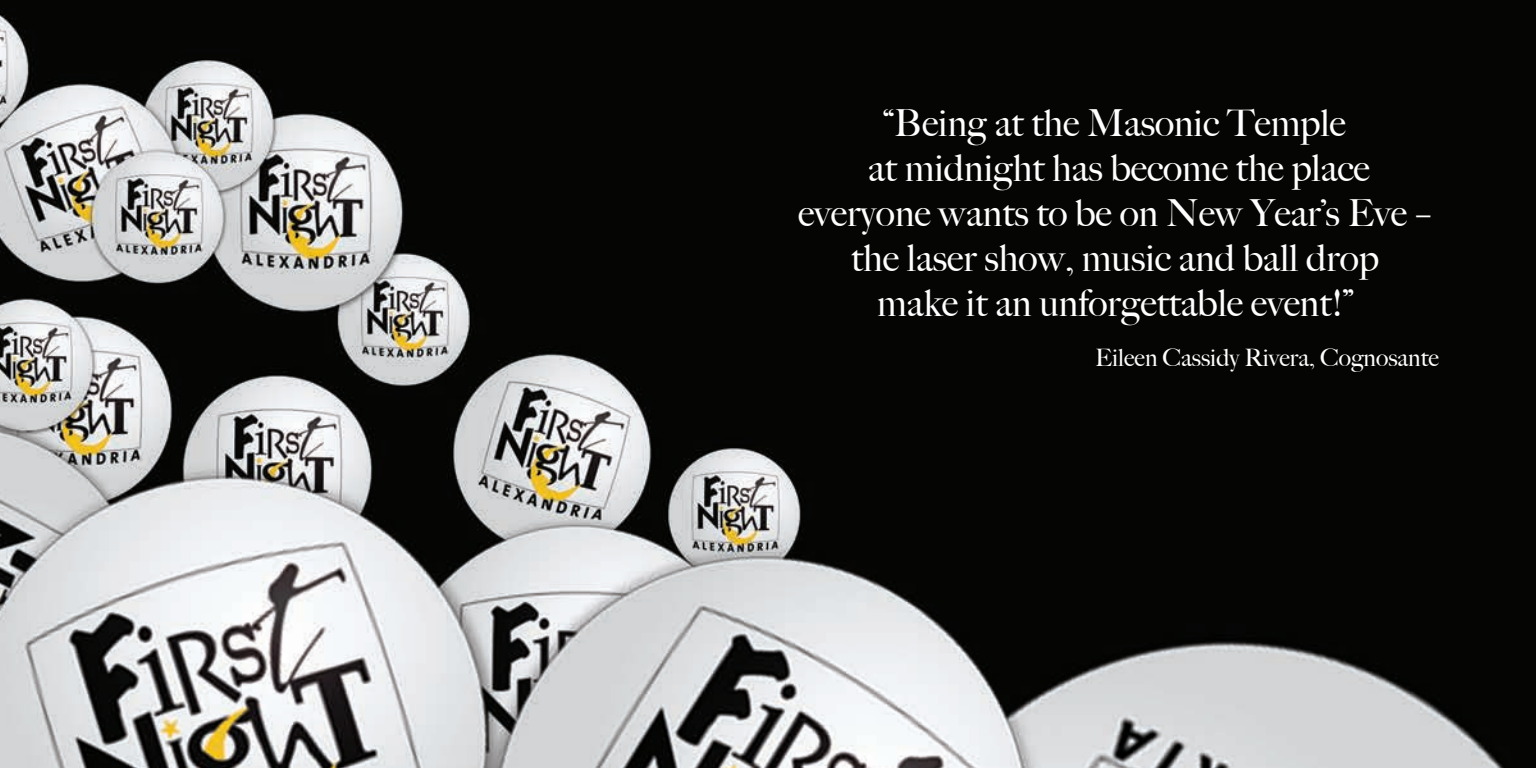


Where were you on December 31, 2011?

If you weren't in Old Town Alexandria, you missed the

6,000 ping pong ball drop

and another terrific Old Town New Year's Eve Party!



“Being at the Masonic Temple
at midnight has become the place
everyone wants to be on New Year's Eve –
the laser show, music and ball drop
make it an unforgettable event!”

Eileen Cassidy Rivera, Cognosante



Let the Celebration Begin!

We seem to start earlier each year and 12/31/11 was no exception. On Friday, December 30th Fox 5 in the Morning was live from the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Guests were treated to Teddy the Clown, Barbara Scheeler from Lets Make a Face face painting and music by Keira Moran, a junior at TC Williams High School in Alexandria who last summer was a winner of the 2011 National “Smashtune” songwriting contest and a finalist in the Kauai Music Festival Songwriters Contest

(left) A special guest appearance by Professor Art Safari helped remind folks that the Fun Hunt is back for the third year with clues written by another TC Williams rock star, Lauren McCracken.

“Wow, to coordinate so many people and functions everything on our end went so smoothly. I really love that the scavenger hunt [Fun Hunt]...”

First Night Attendee



**“First Night Alexandria 2011 –
More fun, more events, more
excitement than ever before. Families
and singles mingled at the best
New Year’s Eve party around!”**

Carol Supplee, Imagine Artwear

The Media Kept Coming!

All day on December 30th and 31st you couldn’t watch a local TV network affiliate without seeing something about First Night Alexandria! And while some of it was to boo-hoo the fact that there were not going to be fireworks again, they were intrigued by the fact that at midnight, when New York City drops one ball, we’ll drop 6,000 in Alexandria!

The Third Annual Fun Hunt

On December 31st we kicked off at 1:00 with the third annual First Night Alexandria Fun Hunt. 162 teams of 4-6 players each followed clues around Old Town, writing down answers and finding specific locations from clues to be eligible for CASH prizes! The Fun Hunt combined navigation, geography, history and FUN during the afternoon. At 5:00 pm prizes were awarded preceding an evening of entertainment in 17 different indoor venues. This year’s Fun Hunt was sponsored by **Dominion Virginia Power**.

For those visitors that were not scavenger hunt fans, there were free afternoon activities and face painting at the Torpedo Factory Art Center or for a small fee they could do a special beaded bracelet at Potomac Bead Company.

The Main Event

First Night Alexandria was presented in four “spotlight” areas, with venues within an easy walk; traffic and driving were kept to a minimum. The George Washington Masonic Memorial, with three unique performance spaces and plenty of free parking, was a one stop destination for many people who stayed all evening to get front row spots for dancing to DJ Ray Casiano, the multimedia finale at midnight and the 6,000 ball drop.

Revelers were told in advance that by taking balls home and posting a photo of themselves, their souvenir balls and their 2011 First Night Alexandria badge on the First Night Facebook page they would be eligible to win a prize. Twenty lucky people each won two free tickets to First Night Alexandria on December 31, 2012 and one of them was picked to win \$500! The environment was unharmed – every single ball was picked up and taken away!



Our Volunteers

We can't talk about the finale without thanking Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and the members of the work release force from the Alexandria Detention Center. In addition to many other volunteer projects around Alexandria, each year they set up the barricades needed at the George Washington Masonic Memorial for the finale. We hope next year they'll be able to attend First Night Alexandria!

The success of First Night Alexandria, in fact the event itself would not be possible without the support of our terrific volunteers on December 31st.

“Thanks to all those who volunteer for this event to make it a fantastic and fun family event.”

First Night Attendee

These volunteers sell admission badges at all the venues and provide information to attendees, approximately half of whom traditionally come from outside Alexandria. For their efforts, they receive free admission, a box dinner and a souvenir apron – all of which were made possible because of the sponsorship of the **Alexandria Hotel Association, Dominion Virginia Power** and **LCOR**.

For several years we have offered free admission badges to active members of the military. We were able to continue that practice this year with a generous sponsorship by **Spectre Group International**. Several hundred members of the armed forces took advantage of this offer and many brought their families.





Curtis Blues at Bittersweet



Mike Rose at Little Theatre

“First Night essentially captures the essence of Alexandria: our history, our residents and families, our businesses, and the symbiotic relationship between them.”

John Taylor Chapman,
Fairfax County Public Schools

We can never adequately thank the army of supporters First Night Alexandria enjoys. First Night Alexandria is a private, non-profit organization that has an independent Board of Directors. The City of Alexandria, through various grants, provides approximately 31% of the \$218,000 budget to produce the event; the generosity of businesses and individuals provides 25%. The final 44% of the budget comes from the sale of admission badges, the price of which is purposely kept low to make it a budget-friendly way for families to spend New Year's Eve together! Imagine - 100 performances for just \$20!

Children 12 and under have been and continue to be free when accompanied by a paying adult. Free admission badges are offered to residents of several homeless shelters in Alexandria and to the families of the first responders that are working on New Year's Eve. Please take note of our sponsors listed in this report; First Night Alexandria could not do this without them!

“Please have more food vendors selling water!”

First Night Attendee



Our Supporters

Since 2010 First Night Alexandria has partnered with the Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association in marketing Alexandria as a destination for New Year's Eve and to attend First Night. This partnership has provided regional marketing that a small non-profit such as First Night could not afford. We are indebted to the incredible staff of ACVA for helping to spread the word about how much fun you can have in Alexandria, staying, shopping, dining and attending First Night!

These businesses and individuals make it all possible. We are grateful for their generosity and hope you will thank them too when you do business.



First Night Alexandria 2011 Sponsors

Premiere Sponsors

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for the Arts
Alexandria Marketing Fund

Finale Sponsor

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John Taylor Chapman
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Ann & Rick Dorman
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Terry Garman
Charlotte Hall
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Hotel Monaco
IDI Group Companies
Imagine Artwear

R.L. Kane

King Street Blues

Lorien Hotel

Gary & Lynette Matz

Morrison House

Potomac Riverboat Company

Cathy Puskar

Eileen Cassidy Rivera

Rotary Club of Alexandria

Public safety personnel from the Alexandria Police, Sheriff, and Fire departments are partners with First Night Alexandria. They keep us safe on December 31st and every other day of the year.

We especially want to thank Sgt. Joseph Seskey of the Alexandria Police Department. He and his team coordinate all the public safety efforts at special events in the City of Alexandria, including First Night. Thank you!

The following Alexandria businesses, non-profit organizations and churches opened their doors for this successful community celebration. We thank them and hope you will be back to visit them throughout the year

Alexandria City Hall	Imagine Artwear
Alexandria's Union Station	Jefferson-Houston School
American Legion Post 24	Little Theatre
Beauty Full Boutique	Lyceum
Christ Church	Nickells & Sheffler
Downtown Baptist Church	Old Presbyterian Meeting House
Durant Arts Center	Torpedo Factory Art Center
George Washington Masonic Memorial	Washington Street United Methodist Church
Hooray for Books	

We are indebted to each member of the board of directors for their time and energy

Honorary Chair

Mayor William D. Euille

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“We loved the whole evening!”

First Night Attendee

Keira Moran at Nickells & Scheffler

Facts and figures
that make a difference
to all our
wonderful sponsors

Over the past 11 years, First Night Alexandria and those who attend have returned approximately \$4.3 million to City of Alexandria businesses for goods, services and fees.

62% of the expenses of First Night Alexandria were paid to Alexandria businesses this year.

88% of respondents rated their experience at First Night as fun or entertaining.

67% of respondents came from outside Alexandria. Many of them from Arlington and Fairfax Counties

20% of visits to the First Night home page came from mobile devices.

The sale of admission badges covers only 44% of the operating costs of First Night Alexandria.

First Night Alexandria's largest single expense continues to be great entertainment.

How did people hear about First Night?

Ten years ago 3% said it was returning attendees, and only 8% said the web.

In 2011 31% were returning attendees and 31% heard about First Night through the web and social media.

96% of the attendees responding to our survey spent an average of \$35.31 in addition to the price of admission. While the individual expenditure was down, the attendance was up from the previous year.

Hotels in Alexandria love First Night. Many of them offer special packages including admission badges and the Alexandria Hotel Association is a sponsor! 16% of attendees said they stayed in a hotel with an average stay of two nights.

Many restaurants in Old Town were specifically mentioned as destinations for dinner on New Year's Eve.

79% of survey respondents said they would not have come to Alexandria on New Year's Eve if there were not a First Night!

First Night Alexandria continues to be an impulse purchase. 70% of online sales were made on December 30 and 31.

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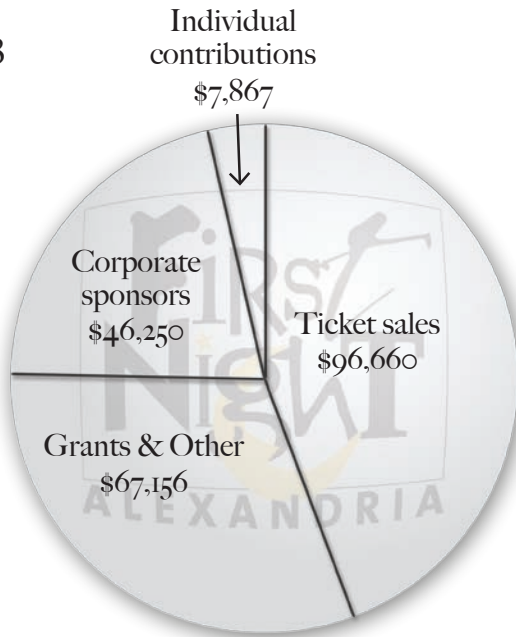
"Bring back the fireworks.
The multimedia event
was a big letdown."

First Night Attendee



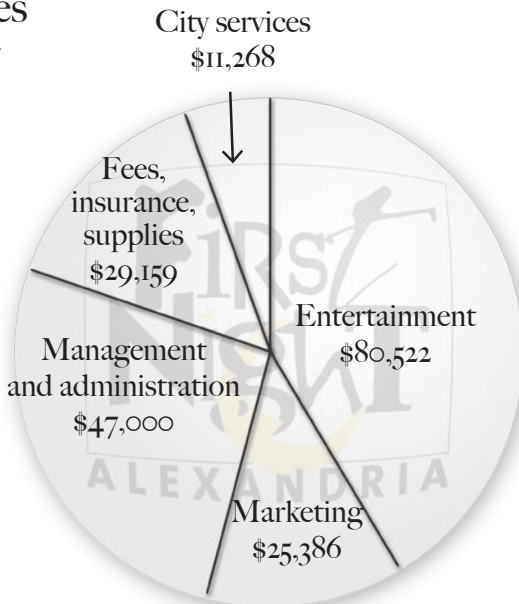
Income

\$217,933



Expenses

\$193,335



“First Night Alexandria has become a tradition, both for my family and our City. It is a safe, affordable and fun way to ring in the New Year. I can’t think of a better way to celebrate the excitement of New Years.”

Vice Mayor Kerry Donley

The number of attendees coupled with the growing number of returnees requires First Night Alexandria to continue its evolution. The ongoing success of First Night Alexandria will require the effort of more than a few dedicated volunteers and businesses supported by a dynamic Board of Directors and the best City partnership anywhere! To remain a true community event, support must expand to meet the demand.

2012 fund raising has already begun!

Lend your support to keep this family-friendly community celebration of the New Year through the performing arts going. Help us with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your contributions will help provide what we need to hire all the performers for First Night Alexandria on December 31, 2012.

Go to FirstNightAlexandria.org/donate and make your contributions.

Thank you for your support!!!!

*“As a board member I am excited
that we had such a great turnout;
people seemed positive and the event
generated an air of friendliness;
everyone was patient and cooperative.
I loved the light show and the music!”*

*Deborah Tompkins Johnson
Dominion Virginia Power*



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