



Memorandum...

To: Honorable Kerry Donley, Mayor From: Ann M. Dorman, CMP

CC: Members of City Council Date: February 12, 2002

Re: First Night Alexandria 2001

On December 31, 2001, First Night Alexandria returned after a one-year hiatus. Attendees experienced 100+ performers on 27 stages within 15 venues. More than 100 volunteers assisted with every aspect of the event that night along side members of Alexandria's Police and Fire departments and the DASH bus system. It was truly a community event.

Attendees were given a survey card and asked to provide us with information that would be helpful in planning our event for December 2002. We received a 2% return and have attached an overview of those responses. A more detailed year end report will be forthcoming.

Every performer, venue host and volunteer was also asked to provide their feedback and almost all of the responses were positive. Every performer has asked to be considered in 2002 and all the venues that have responded to date have also indicated a desire to participate again.

We ended the year with some surplus cash in the bank after expenses to help begin planning this year's event.

More than 60 people, volunteers, venue hosts, performers, Board members, representatives of city services and others were invited to participate in a strategic planning session on February 12. Their input will help us shape our event for December 31, 2002.

None of this would have been possible without the support of Alexandria's City Council and staff. We sincerely appreciate all you did and hope we can once again count on your support as we move forward with this year's event.



Fascinating Facts about First Night Alexandria

From the Attendees

- **How many people came to FNA December 31, 2001?** 5000-5500 adults and children
- **Where did they come from?** 49% from Alexandria, 32% other Virginia, 8% Maryland, 7% other states and 1% international
- **Would they have come to Old Town Alexandria December 31, 2001 if it weren't for First Night?** 72% no, 11% maybe
- **How did you hear about First Night?** 43% paper, 31% word-of-mouth, 11% TV, 8% WWW, 7% other PR
- **Did you spend money other than the cost of admission and if so how much?** 86% yes - average spent \$67.12
- **What attendees said**

"Dear Alexandria,

My wife and I (many times visitors to the Washington area) and our daughter and her husband (first time visitors) spent several days in the city at the end of this last year. Searching for something different and "low pressure" to do on New Year's Eve, we decided to partake of your First Night festivities. Can't begin to tell you how much we enjoyed it! Met many local folks who were so very accommodating to a family of vagrant Mid-Westerners, and we found the entertainment to be first rate. New Year's Eve in Alexandria will be one of our most cherished memories of this winter's vacation." (Received through ACVA web sight, Jan. 2002)

"We have been to every First Night since the first one. We missed you last year ... WELCOME BACK!"

"This was our 2nd First Night here - Great event!"

"EXCELLENT PROGRAM THIS YEAR"

"Really enjoyed - Thought venues were excellent. Seemed well organized - Will return. Perfect way to spend NY Eve"

"Would have spent more if any shops were open!"

"Great event - well done."

Public Relations Results

Alexandria and FNA received coverage in every major daily newspaper in the region and many local newspapers as well as in the Baltimore Sun and the Philadelphia Enquirer. First Night Alexandria was covered on Channel 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and Comcast 10. On radio, FNA got play on WAGE, WARW, WASH FM, WBIG, WCBM, WETA, WHUR FM, WHFS, WJZW, WMAL-AM, WMXQ-FM, WPFW, WTOP-AM and all night coverage by Radio-Del Ray. The total ad value, if FNA and/or Alexandria had to pay for this coverage, would have been in excess of \$165,000.

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Entertainment and Venues

Attendees had fifteen different venues to select from with twenty-eight different stages and forty-five different acts with over one hundred entertainers. There was something for everyone, children and adults as well - from face painters, storytellers, magicians, clowns and puppeteers to jazz, gospel, blues, country, rock, blue grass, Irish music and dance, 18th century, contemporary world folk, Jewish folk, German music and dance, opera and West African dance to modern dance. It all culminated with a fireworks display at midnight on the Masonic Memorial grounds. The vast majority of the talent is local. FNA spent approximately \$43,000 on talent, venues and fireworks.

ROI in dollars from First Night Alexandria - (primarily paid to Alexandria Businesses)

- Direct costs paid to support the entertainment and venues - \$43,000
- FNA paid for printing programs, brochures, buttons, posters and other promotions - \$17,000
- Cost of City support paid by FNA such as busses, police, etc. - \$8,000
- Staff costs in support of the event. - \$25,000
- Miscellanies costs such as fees, insurance, supplies, volunteer support, etc. - \$9,000
- Estimated dollars spent in Alexandria by FNA and attendees to FNA - \$385,000

True Cost of First Night Alexandria

Many companies and individuals came together to make FNA a success. Over 125 volunteers gave their time and talent before during and after December 31, 2001. Many companies provided their service free of charge or at a greatly discounted rate. All the entertainers worked for reduced fees. Most venues opened their doors to FNA at no cost. Although FNA paid just over \$100,000 in cash for this wonderful event, if it weren't for all the in kind support the true direct cost would have been in the neighborhood of \$450,000

The indirect benefit to Alexandrians, the business community and the city itself is as valuable as the direct dollar impact on the community if not greater. The atmosphere created this evening provided all those who attended an opportunity to come together as a community in a safe environment to celebrate a new beginning as a family and as a community.

We thank the following sponsors for their dollars, in-kind contributions and more importantly for taking a leadership role to "make things happen".

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