

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

## Graduation Celebration for Fairfax High

PAGE 4



Fairfax High School Graduation: Diplomas and a congratulatory hug.

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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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# Oakton Student Pedestrians Dead in Crash

BY MERCIA HOBSON

**F**CPD detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash at Blake Lane and Five Oaks Road in Oakton that happened Tuesday, June 7. Two Oakton High School students died and others were injured in the crash.

Oakton, a Fairfax County Public High School, had been released early that day. "We are devastated to learn this news and are grieving the loss of these students," said Jamie S. Lane, Principal, in a letter to Oakton families and staff, "Our deepest condolences extend to all families impacted."

According to police reports, officers responded to the intersection at 11:46 am for a crash involving two vehicles and three pedestrians. Preliminarily, detectives determined the driver of a 1997 Toyota 4Runner was in the northbound lanes of Blake Lane attempting to turn left onto Five Oaks Road. The driver of the 4Runner was waiting for three juveniles to cross the street prior to completing the turn.

Once the pedestrians cleared the roadway, the driver began turning

left. Detectives believe the driver of a 2018 BMW 530i, an 18-year-old of Fairfax, was traveling at a high rate of speed in the right lane of southbound Blake Lane. The driver of the BMW struck the 4Runner in the intersection, continued traveling south and struck the three pedestrians on the sidewalk. The BMW continued down Blake Lane striking a utility pole causing it to fall to the ground. The BMW came to rest a short distance down the road.

Two pedestrians, both teenagers who attended Oakton High School, were taken to the hospital with injuries considered life threatening and the young women succumbed to these injuries. The third pedestrian, also a teenage Oakton High School student, was taken to the hospital for injuries not considered to be life threatening. The driver of the BMW and his juvenile passenger were taken to the hospital to be treated for injuries that were not considered life threatening. The driver of the Toyota 4Runner, an adult male, was treated at the scene for injuries.

Preliminarily, detectives do not believe alcohol was a factor. Two passengers in the BMW ran from the scene but were identified



**Oakton graduation on June 3. The community is awash in grief instead of joy after a devastating crash by the school killed two students and seriously injured others.**

tified during the investigation. Detectives continue to investigate and conduct additional interviews. Details of the investigation will be presented to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney to determine the appropriate charges on all parties involved. Once charged and arrested, the identity of the BMW driver will be released.

Per Virginia Code 19.2-11.2, we are prohibited from providing information about juvenile victims unless parental consent is provided. It prohibits Virginia law enforcement agencies from directly or indirectly identifying deceased juvenile victims of a crime.

Victim advocates from our Major Crimes Bureau's Victim Services Division have been assigned to this

case to ensure the victim's families receive the appropriate resources and assistance.

Principal Lane said in the letter to Oakton Families and Staff that if a student needs support after hours, contact the CrisisLink Regional Hotline at 703-527-4077 or text "NEEDHELP" to 85511.

Updates by FCPD can be found at <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/>

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# NEWS



Police information officers Sgt. Tara Gerhard and Lt. Daniel Spital provided an incident update to the press on Sunday afternoon after the coyote suspected of rabies infection was located and killed

## Coyote Bites Cause Cautionary Park Closure

**As expected, coyote tested positive for rabies, although it is unusual in coyotes. Report abnormally aggressive mammal behavior, call 911 from a safe place.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday, June 4th, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) made the unusual decision to close Lake Accotink Park following a coyote attack reported there. The closure decision, deemed necessary for the safety of community members, was based on the recommendation of Animal Protection Police Officers (APPOs), in consultation with FCPA naturalists. The park was opened again on Sunday at 3 p.m. after the animal was killed. It later tested positive for rabies,

Three adults sustained non-life threatening injuries, and two dogs also were bitten in the initial encounter with the coyote at about 8 a.m. on Saturday morning in the park. Social media postings and signage alerted the public to the park closure, “until further notice.”

Animal Protection Police Officers (APPOs) actively searched the area of Lake Accotink Park for the animal on Saturday by foot and using helicopter surveillance until dusk. Officers also responded to several Sunday morning calls after a coyote was seen in the area of Carrleigh Parkway, biting car tires and exhibiting other unusual behavior. A group of officers continued the search in the area of the park near Carrleigh Parkway

where the coyote was seen headed on Sunday morning. Police spokesperson, Lt. Daniel Spital, said that later in the morning one of the officers conducting the search was attacked from behind by the animal, which bit his leg. The officer turned and discharged his gun several times to stop the attack. The officer was taken to the hospital for treatment and is expected to recover. The coyote was found dead nearby.

### Guarding Against Rabies

The coyote, a young male, which naturalists say is unlikely to have mated this season, was tested for the rabies virus by the county health department, and the test was positive, confirming the strong suspicion of rabies disease based on the coyote’s behavior. All those bitten in this incident, human and canine, are expected to fully recover since treatment was timely. Untreated rabies is fatal. While this animal was located and dispatched, the rabies virus may still be present in the environment or other infected animals; the virus has a broad spectrum of hosts, including humans and other mammals.

Rabies infection of an animal can be confirmed only after death, through microscopic examination of the animal’s brain. Experts say it’s best to avoid contact with wild animals for you and your pet. They



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Female coyote found dead on Pohick Road in February 2022, one of many killed by vehicle collision each year in urban areas

recommend you discourage contact between pets and wildlife; feed your pet indoors so food left outside does not attract wildlife or strays; and report strays which might be unvaccinated.

American Humane, the country’s first national humane society established in 1877, indicates: “There is no cure for rabies, and it is almost always fatal. The typical incubation period for the Rabies lyssavirus virus which causes the disease is three to eight weeks. An infected animal can only transmit rabies after the onset of clinical signs. Once signs occur, an infected animal usually dies within five days. Human rabies cases in the U.S. currently average two per year. Cases of rabies in domestic pets average 400 to 500 per year.”

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) advises that you always keep your pet’s rabies vaccine up to date. Puppies and kittens should receive their first rabies vaccination at 12 weeks of age. Pets must be vaccinated again in one year, and then a three-year rabies vaccine is generally administered during the rest of your pet’s life. It’s also the law in Fairfax County, “Unless exempt pursuant to Virginia law, the owner or custodian of each dog and domesticated cat 4 months of age and older shall have it currently vaccinated against rabies.” (Fairfax County Code of Ordinances, 41.1-2-1).

Coyotes, like all mammals, may contract rabies. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association: “In the United States, most cases of rabies occur in wild animals — mainly skunks, raccoons, bats, coyotes, and foxes. Most of the relatively few

human cases in this country have resulted from exposures to bats. In recent years, cats have become the most common domestic animal infected with rabies. This is because many cat owners do not vaccinate their cats, and cats permitted to roam outdoors can be exposed to rabid wildlife.”

AVMA explains, “Animals with rabies may show a variety of signs, including fearfulness, aggression, excessive drooling, difficulty swallowing, staggering, paralysis and seizures. Aggressive behavior is common, but rabid animals may also be uncharacteristically affectionate.”

### Coyotes

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) notes that coyotes “are generally nocturnal and seldom seen. You may catch a glimpse of a coyote, however, as they move from one part of their territory to another in search of prey. Observing a coyote in this manner, even during the daytime, does not mean that the coyote is sick or aggressive. If the coyote is scared away by your presence, they are exhibiting natural behavior and this should not be cause for concern.”

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are native members of the Canine species. Coyotes typically weigh 25 to 35 pounds, and can attain speeds of up to 43 miles per hour while in pursuit of prey. They have pointed ears, slender muzzles, drooping bushy tails usually black tipped, with grayish-brown hair with red tinges over the body. They most resemble German Shepherd dogs. Studies

SEE RABID COYOTE, PAGE 10

## GRADUATIONS

# 'You Can Have a Positive Impact on the World'

## Fairfax High Class of 2022 graduates.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**embers of Fairfax High's Class of 2022 will soon begin the next chapter of their lives. But first they had to graduate, and their commencement ceremony was held last Tuesday, May 31, on the school's football field.

More than 550 seniors received their diplomas and, of that number, 145 were honor grads with GPAs of 4.0 or higher. So at the outset of the ceremony, Acting Principal Maureen Keck had attendees applaud them, as well as those going into the armed forces.

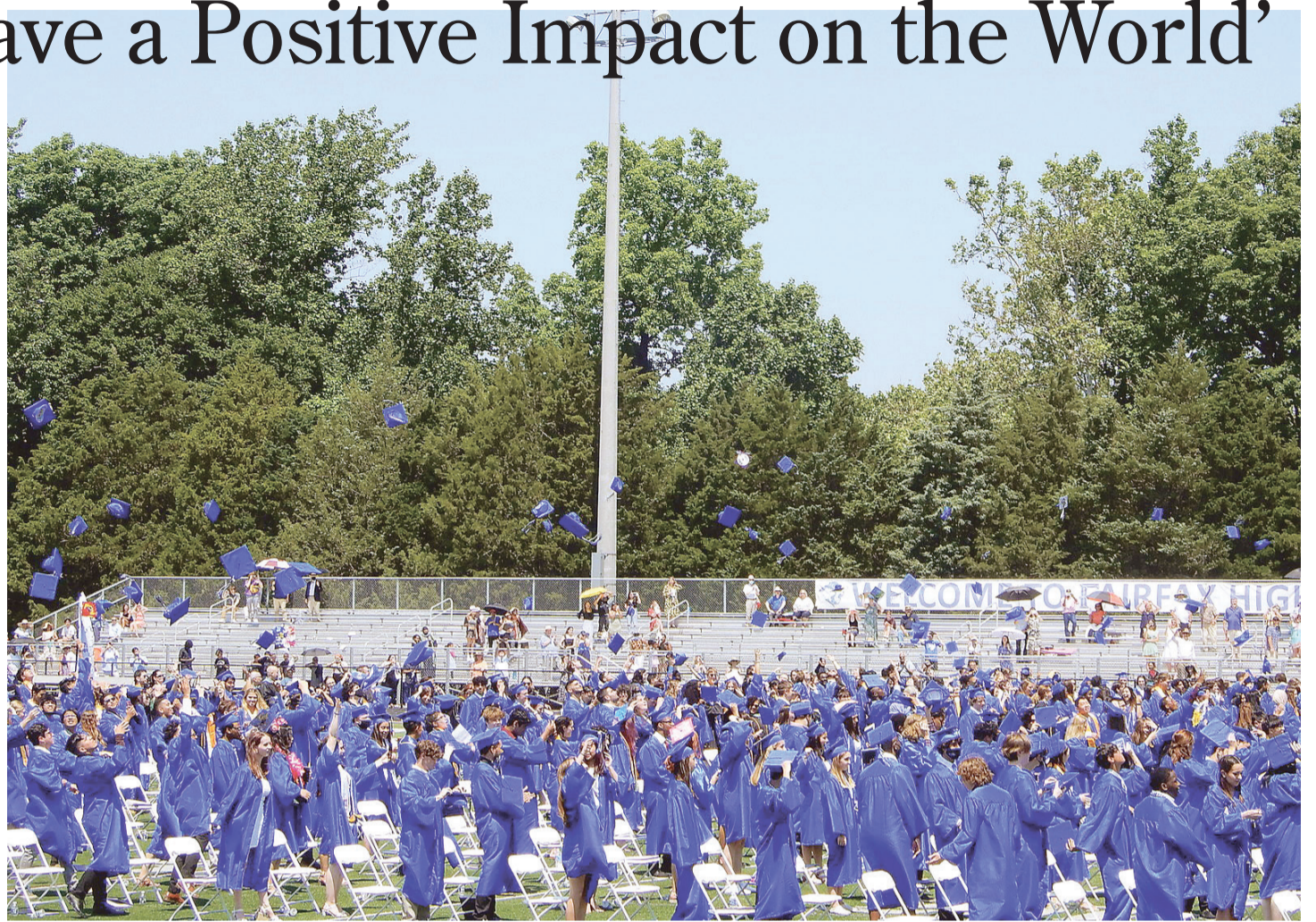
"Seniors, you are remarkable," she told the class. "Most of your high-school years coincided with a global pandemic, unimaginable violence, racism, political unrest and threats to our democracy. You've faced incredible challenges, but you met them with kindness and caring. So today, as you graduate, I encourage you to be vocal and active, vote and get involved in your community — because you can have a positive impact on the world, just as you've had on your school."

Then SGA President Payton Morris introduced the guest speaker, Fairfax High alumnus Nick Scott. "He's a 2014 graduate of Fairfax High School; and at Penn State, he won the sportsmanship award," she said. "And this year, as a safety, he helped his football team, the Los Angeles Rams, win the Super Bowl."

Stepping to the podium, Scott thanked his teachers, counselors and coaches at Fairfax — plus his wife of one year, Holly — for being his "best teammates." He then said, "You might think I have it all figured out, but I don't."

Originally from Pennsylvania, he and his family moved to Boston when he was 11. Then in summer 2012, they moved to Fairfax, where he entered high school as a

SEE FAIRFAX HIGH, PAGE 6



Jubilant Fairfax High grads toss their caps into the air at the ceremony's end.

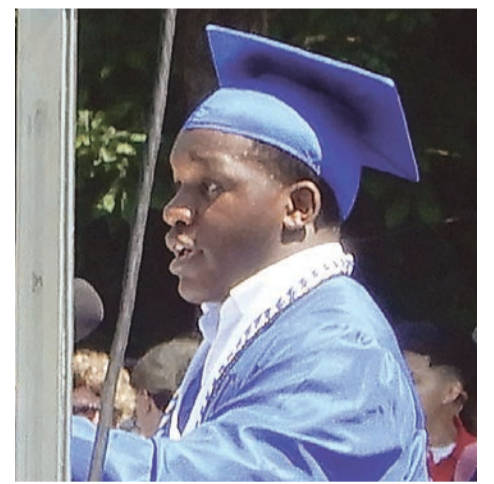
PHOTO COURTESY OF SANG YI



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANG YI  
Guest speaker Nick Scott



Honor grad Lexi Adams



Outstanding Senior Award winner Beni Bisimwa

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Grad Jaylen Mellanson with his family.



Grad Jaylen Mellanson with (back row, from left) godmother Julie Lockett, brother Joshua Mellanson, mom Crystal Ferguson and friend Leslie Outten, plus grandma Nancy Ferguson (in front).



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Wildflowers and trees occupy the landfill since it's 2018 closing. Planning Dept to hold public hearing on landfill park proposal on June 15th

# Proposal: From Landfill to Park Land

Will this park proposal be approved?

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

After repeated past disappointments, Lorton residents who have looked forward to the prospect of a new park located on the site of the closed Furnace Road landfill, again await a decision on the latest park proposal at the site. Called Overlook Ridge Park, Furnace Associates, the current owner of the property at 10001 Furnace Road, submitted the latest proposal to Fairfax County's planning commission in mid February 2022. The department requested an extension for their review in March, which was granted. Called a 2232 Review, it seeks to determine the "compatibility of proposed public facilities with locational guidelines established in the Comprehensive Plan" (per Virginia Code Sec 15.2-2232). The county planning commission will hold a public hearing on the proposal, as part of the process, at the Government Center, June 15, 7:30 p.m.

The current proposal for the public park, on about 20 of the overall 250 acres, would provide an extensive recreation area with "bird sanctuaries, hiking and equestrian trails, exercise and picnic areas, pollinator and sculpture gardens, kite-flying areas, multiple smaller parking areas, bathroom facilities, an amphitheater with an earthen stage, and a scenic overlook," according to the proposal submission. It would sit at the highest point in Fairfax County, with vistas of the river and northern Virginia surrounds and several overlooks providing views in all directions. The area can be seen from a distance now as a high grassy ridge.

The site would remain privately owned, with Furnace Associates, continuing to maintain the landfill elements, such as the gas wells and stormwater systems. Fairfax County Park Authority would operate the park amenities, once built, with a targeted completion date



in 2025. Furnace Associates is fulfilling the commitment made by the previous landfill owner, to build a park as part of the legal agreement which established the landfill. Still to be resolved is the question of liability for any damages or injuries related to leaking methane gas or other problems at the site.

"We're still discussing that with the county," company spokesperson Lisa Kardell said. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will continue to monitor and inspect the site for a period of at least ten years after the landfill closing date.

This portion of the landfill, used for construction and demolition debris, was closed in 2018. The first park proposal for reuse of the land was submitted in 2014 by then owner EnviroSolutions (ESI). The county denied that proposal, which included a request to continue landfill operations through Dec. 31, 2040, and the addition of solar panels, a methane-capturing system, a baseball batting area, and a golf range. In its denial, the county said all structures atop the landfill should instead be open-air facilities to prevent the build-up of landfill gasses.

Waste Management became the new owner in 2018 when it acquired EnviroSolutions. In August 2020, the company's site operating arm, Furnace Associates, requested changes to the prior proposal and

SEE LANDFILL PARK PROPOSAL, PAGE 7

## Frontier Drive Extension and Braided Ramps Fairfax County

Joint Virtual Location & Design Public Hearing and NEPA Public Hearing

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 7 p.m.  
<https://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive>

**Find out** about plans to extend Frontier Drive (Route 2677) from its southern terminus at Franconia-Springfield Parkway (Route 289) to Loisdale Road (Route 789) to relieve congestion and improve access to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station and surrounding area. The project includes a four-lane divided roadway with a shared-use path and sidewalk, new braided ramps at the Frontier Drive/Franconia-Springfield Parkway interchange, a new intersection at Metro Access Road with Frontier Drive, reconfigured sections of the Metro station circulatory road and access to parking garage entrances, all existing access points will be maintained. This project will involve changes in limited access control.

**In compliance** with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration and will be available for public review and comment. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is included in the EA.

VDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) will host the joint public hearing as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at <https://www.virginiadot.org/FrontierDrive> and <https://wmata.com/plansandprojects>. The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

**Review** the EA and other project information and meeting details on the VDOT webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-1794 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel. Materials are also available to review at Metro's Headquarters, 300 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024. Please call ahead at 202-962-2511 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

**Give your comments** during the meeting, or by **July 29, 2022** via the comment form on the VDOT or Metro website, by phone at 202-962-1901, by mail to Mr. Zamir Mirza, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or Office of the Secretary, WMATA, 300 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024, or by email to [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov) and [franconia@wmata.com](mailto:franconia@wmata.com). Please reference "Frontier Drive Extension and Braided Ramps" in the subject line.

VDOT and Metro ensure nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775. ASL interpretation will be provided. Languages other than English interpretation/translation services can be provided free of charge upon request. For ASL assistance, contact Metro at 202-962-2511.

State Project: 2677-029-204, P101, R201, C501 UPC: 106742  
Federal: STP/F-5B01 (030)

*In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held Monday, September 19, 2022 at the same time.*



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# GRADUATIONS

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Some of the students during the ceremony in the 93-degree heat.



Happy seniors with their diplomas

## Fairfax High Class of 2022

FROM PAGE 4

“At Penn State, I thought I’d be a big star, but I didn’t play my freshman year,” said Scott. “And in my sophomore and junior years, the team added big, star running backs to its offense. So I joined special teams and moved to defense at safety. I realized I could have pride in that, instead of in just myself. And in my senior year, I was regarded as one of the best special team’s players in the country.”

As a result, he was drafted by the Rams in the seventh round of the 2019 NFL Draft. Making the Los Angeles roster as a rookie, he led the Rams in special team’s snaps with 378. Eventually, Scott even picked off legendary quarterback Tom Brady, played in this year’s Super Bowl helping LA to win.

The lesson to learn from all that, he told the students, is to “Embrace your role, but never settle for it. Ask what it is, try to be the best at it, be yourself, have a positive attitude and be willing to sacrifice. This entire country is composed of teams – in college, business and in the military. And without teams, we can’t accomplish much on our own. So have fun on your team – it won’t go unnoticed.”

“I learned the importance of stretching yourself and having higher aspirations,” continued Scott. “But you can’t just dream – you need to do the work to accomplish it. You have to compete; and as you strive to do your best, you’ll succeed.”

“These are tough times in our country. But if you have a positive attitude, great work ethic and are willing to do everything your role requires, you’ll win your own Super Bowl of life. We are Lions. Congratulations to the Class of 2022.”

Next, honor grad Lexi Adams told the seniors, “In our sophomore year, a pandemic broke out, along with racism and wildfires. But we are a comeback class. We’ve all experienced a lot of life together, and it’s formed us into the people we are today. You’ve been equipped with the skills you’ll need to succeed in the coming years. We are Fairfax; we are family.”

Then Fairfax City Mayor David Meyer and City School Board Chair Carolyn Pitches pre-



Graduate Jhon Franz Lizarraga with sister Jennell and dad Jhon.

sented three special awards to a trio of noteworthy graduates. First, though, Meyer told the class, “Remember that the City of Fairfax will always be your home. You’ve grown into young women and men who give us hope for the world.”

\* The Service Award went to Darwin Otchere. It’s for loyalty and service to the school. “He’s completed 950 hours of community service and is passionate about racial justice and equity,” said Meyer. “And he was secretary to the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission. His dedication will continue next year in Virginia Tech’s Corps of Cadets.”

\* The Faculty Award for outstanding service, leadership and school spirit was given to Shirley Nguyen. “Her teachers said she’s mature beyond her years,” said Meyer. “She strives to improve and better herself and whatever she’s involved in. And she was president of the Crush Cancer Club and a Vietnamese Student Assn. member.”

\* The Fairfax Award for service to both the school and community went to Payton Morrison. “Known for her scholarship, service and leadership, she’s been exceptionally giving of herself and made the school a great place to come to,” said Meyer. “She’s the epitome of a student-athlete, was SGA president and, as its captain, she led the gymnastics team to its first state title and became one of the most-decorated athletes in the school’s history. She’ll be attending the



Diplomas and a congratulatory hug.



From left, are new grads Jordan Choi and Cynthia Chen.



Grad Jessica Reeves with friend Sammie Nahom.

University of Oklahoma.”

Director of Student Services, Laura Rotella, then presented the Outstanding Senior Award to Beni Bisimwa. “This award is given to the student who best represents the Senior Class as a whole, is loyal and dedicated to the school and embodies the class spirit,” said Rotella. “And the graduating class selects the recipient.”

After accepting his award, Bisimwa in turn presented the Senior Class gift to Fairfax High, which is a bench outside the school. Then came the awarding of the diplomas, the turning of the tassels and the throwing of caps into the air – and just like that, the members of the Class of 2022 officially became graduates.

# Proposal: From Landfill to Park Land

FROM PAGE 5

clarification of the development conditions and requirements. They sought changes related to stormwater management, to reduce walking and bike trail slope degrees, and to protect existing trees previously approve in landscape plans. The most recent, February proposal, incorporates the county's planning department clarifications and suggestions, which already have been com-

pleted at the site.

Furnace Associate's district manager, David Kaasa, said, "Fairfax County has several steps that you have to do to get to that point of building the park. That's really what we're in the process of doing right now." He clarified the steps as including the 2232 Review, site plan revisions, permit modifications, and building permits, as well as the June 15th public hearing, which is part of the 2232 Review.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Proposed Overlook Ridge Park area visible from distance as a high ridge of green

## BULLETIN BOARD

### JULY 6-29

**Host French Teens.** Ten volunteer families are needed to host French students from July 6-29. Enjoy an international experience and help promote international understanding and worldwide friendships. Call Tiffany 484-347-3459. Visit the website: <https://www.smore.com/n2csd>

### SHEPHERD'S CENTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA SPRING 2022 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia continues to offer educational, health and wellness and

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

entertaining programming to our Senior Community. The programming includes Adventures In Learning, Active Wellness Classes, Great Discussions Book Club, Caregivers' Support Group and much more.

The Adventures In Learning program began in April and repeats every Thursday for 8 weeks. There is ongoing AIL programming all year long. Topics this session include Health & Wellness, Arts & Entertainment & Travel as well as World Affairs Past & Present.

The Active Aging and Wellness Program is an Exercise Class to

improve strength, balance and mobility for older adults. This class is held on Wednesdays (via Zoom) from 10:45-11:45 a.m. for eight week schedules. The cost is \$50/session and you can learn more about it and register on the website.

The Great Decisions Book Club is held the 3rd Friday of every month from February – November. Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. This program is designed by the Foreign Policy Association to bring people together in study groups to discuss, debate and learn about important

global challenges of our time. The Caregivers' Support Group, started in 2002, is for caregivers of adult family members. Most of the care receivers have dementia, but that condition is not a requirement. Some are cared for at home, some in local assisted living facilities, and some are out of state. Meetings are gently facilitated and encourage sharing of feelings, problems, helpful information, and bright spots. These sessions are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 10:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. For more information, contact Jack Tarr,

703-821-6838, [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net); or Lynn Rafferty, 703-508-1365, [radmom8992@gmail.com](mailto:radmom8992@gmail.com).

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

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FROM PAGE 5

## TWO POOR TEACHERS

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A Vienna band, The Coozies, provided the soundtrack early on.



Jessica on vocals for The Coozies.

# Shaved Ice, Burritos and Food Trucks are a Hit at Taste of Springfield

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

At one time, a ball of ice sweetened with sugary juice was called a snowball, but after borrowing the moniker “Shaved Ice,” from Hawaii, they were all about shaved ice at the Taste of Springfield, in the town center parking lot.

The Hawaiian Dream, is the big seller at the Le Petit Ananas shaved ice truck. “We get all our syrups imported from Hawaii,” said Morgan Taylor, who was in the truck with Hanna Kimmey. The truck traveled over to the town center lot from Mount Vernon

where they normally dish out shaved ice on a hot Saturday. Kona Ice was the other shaved ice truck at the event along with an assortment of food trucks, and tents that housed remodeling businesses, chiropractors, clothes, perfume and a car dealer.

The Coozies, a band from Vienna, was hammering out the classics for the crowd. They played Jimmy Buffett, the Eagles and other familiar tunes. “Relaxed beach covers,” described a singer named Jessica. “Keeping people positive is our main goal,” she added.

Tickets were sold and these were worth \$1 each, so the vendors only dealt in tickets which simplified the transactions. People are using cash less and less so to have each

tent or truck outfitted with a card scanner might not work, so the tickets were a solution. Alexandria resident Catherine Nale was munching on a burrito, and got it from a truck that actually handed out samples instead of a full meal. That’s the way a “taste” event should be, she thought. “The only stand that did it right,” she said.



A shaved ice called the “Hawaiian Dream.”



Morgan Taylor and Hanna Kimmey are shaved ice pros in the Le Petit Ananas truck out of Mount Vernon.



Much of the food and drinks for the Taste of Springfield came from the food trucks.

## Burke Author Dives into Historic Event

On March 25, 1911, fire tore through the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory in New York City, killing 146 workers, and led to the development of a series of laws and regulations that better protected the safety of factory workers.

Fast forward 100 years and Burke resident Joyanna Peters looked into this event turning it into her novel “The Girl in the Triangle,” about a girl named Ruth who was at this historic event. “It was a turning point for fire safety and workplace safety,” said Peters, who had a tent in the Taste of Springfield event on June 4.

It may have happened over 100 years ago, but it was reminiscent of current events. As the fire raged at the factory, workers jumped out the window, which reminded Peters of the 9/11 tragedy, with people falling to their deaths.

She camped out in her home office during the pandemic, researched this historic fire and worked on the novel, which she called her “pandemic project.” The book hit the streets in July 2021 and landed her the Ben Franklin Award from the Independent Book Publishers Association. It can be purchased on Amazon and other book sites.



Burke resident and author Joyanna Peters and Tara, 4, at Taste of Springfield.



# Inova Pride Clinic: First Dedicated Medical Clinic for LGBTQ+ Community

**I**nova Health System is proud to announce the opening of Northern Virginia's first dedicated medical clinic for the LGBTQ+ community. The Inova Pride Clinic, located at 500 North Washington Street, in Falls Church, VA will serve as a primary care clinic with an emphasis on the specific needs of the LGBTQ+ community in a safe, respectful and compassionate environment.

"As a leader in health equity, and with Inova Fairfax Hospital recently designated as a LGBTQ+ Healthcare Top Performer by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Inova has long embraced innovative approaches to bridge gaps in healthcare," said J. Stephen Jones, MD, President and CEO, Inova. "We know many LGBTQ+ patients are at greater risk for health issues because of a lack of regular healthcare in an environment where they feel respected and comfortable. The Inova Pride Clinic will ensure inclusive and judgment-free care, and supporting long-term health and wellness – without barriers."

Led by Dr. Jorge Ramallo, who is board

certified in internal medicine and pediatrics and a member of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) and the American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM), the Pride Clinic's team of clinicians will bring their expertise in addressing the unique health needs of this community, such as gender affirming care, HIV prevention, adolescent health, STI treatment and prevention, and mental health.

In addition to the full range of preventive care, health screenings and chronic disease management, our primary care doctors and team members are experienced in all LGBTQ+ specific healthcare needs, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention and gender-affirming care, including counseling for youth and adults about health, gender identity and sexuality.

"In any part of healthcare, it's critical that we meet patients where they are," said Dr. Ramallo. "The sad truth is that many LGBTQ+ patients have encountered some form of discrimination in a healthcare setting in their lifetime, which has made doctor



A rainbow of dignitaries and elected officials joining Inova for the opening of Northern Virginia's first dedicated medical clinic for the LGBTQ+ community.

visits stressful and avoidable for many. By creating a dedicated medical home, we can help encourage members of this community to get the care they need."

"Starting my career as an HIV social worker, I saw firsthand the stigma and healthcare disparities that existed for the LGBTQ+ communities," said Karen Berube, Vice President, Community and Population Health, Inova. "With no clinic of this kind in North-

ern Virginia, we knew we had to make an investment in the health of the LGBTQ+ community. I am incredibly proud that this vision has become a reality. I am hopeful that with this clinic, there will never be another LGBTQ+ person who feels afraid to pursue the care they need in a compassionate and respectful environment."

For more information on the Inova Pride Clinic, visit [www.inova.org/prideclinic](http://www.inova.org/prideclinic)

## CALENDAR

### NOW THRU JUNE 11

"Xanadu." Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. At The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. This is a hilarious, roller skating, musical adventure about following your dreams despite the limitations others set for you.. Tickets are \$20-30. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/xanadu>

### NOW THRU AUG. 27

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road Lorton. Explore history in different ways with this drop-in summer program. Each Saturday will have a host of different activities around a different theme. Savor history, dig in the dirt, and play games as we learn about the 18th century at Gunston Hall. Visit the website: <https://gunston-hall.org/events/summer-saturdays-2/>

### NOW THRU JUNE 12

Art Blossoms 2022. At Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, 2905 District Ave. #105, Fairfax. A new exhibit at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic gallery in Fairfax offers its own interpretation of the beauty of nature in a show titled Art Blossoms 2022, featuring artists from the highly acclaimed Torpedo Factory Artists' Association. This is the third year hosting a floral inspired show and it's one of the favorites of gallery visitors. This exhibit by Torpedo Factory Artists' Association members includes paintings, fine art photography, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics and exquisite jewelry.

### SATURDAY/JUNE 11

Oh Susannah! Music. 10:30-11:15 a.m. At Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax. At Kidz Korder, your young children can get their day started singing along with Oh Susannah! Outdoors near the Splash Pad in historic Fairfax City. Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

### SATURDAY/JUNE 11

Lesson Zero. 8-11 p.m. at 8430 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The Austin Grill presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO. For additional information see: [www.youtube.com/lessonzero](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero](http://www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero)

### SATURDAY/JUNE 11

Inova Health Fair. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Inova Schar Cancer Institute 8081 Innovation Park Drive, Fairfax. The Schar Cancer Center and Saville Center for Cancer Screening and Prevention will be on hand to provide informative sessions from our team of experts, free cancer screenings, and recommendations for healthier living.

### SATURDAY/JUNE 11

Declaration Day. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Save the date for the commemoration of the 246th anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. This program will be complimentary to all attendees. Visit the website: [gunstonhall.org](http://gunstonhall.org)

### SUNDAY/JUNE 12

Model Trains Running. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Table Top N gauge Model Trains will be running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and ages 4

and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3, ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 special events); seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

### SATURDAY/JUNE 18

Raymi Performs. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Ossian Hall Park, 7900 Heritage Drive, Annandale. Led by Juan Cayrampoma, this D.C.-based band will bring the haunting sounds and mystic power from the Andes to Fairfax County. Their love and respect for tradition and knowledge shine through their music and the instruments they use. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for concert capacity and inclement weather updates.

### SATURDAY/JUNE 18

Groovy Nate! Music! 10:30-11:15 a.m. At Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax. Groovy Nate creates fun and educational shows using exotic musical instruments, comedy, and puppet skits - a la Sesame Street meets Parliament/Funkadelic, meshed with The Electric Company, Kraftwerk, and Dub Reggae! Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

### SATURDAY/JUNE 18

"Father of the Bride." At Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Join the Fairfax Library Foundation for free outdoor movie screenings and food trucks. Refreshments will be available for purchase from on-site food trucks. Food trucks will open one hour prior to each movie. Contact Cheryl Ann Lee at 703-324-8300 or [events@fairfaxlibraryfoundation.org](mailto:events@fairfaxlibraryfoundation.org).

## Licking Loneliness – One Visit at a Time

**S**ince 1987, all-volunteer Fairfax Pets on Wheels has been licking loneliness by bringing companionship and improved quality of life to residents of participating nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult day health care centers throughout Fairfax County. Sponsored by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, FPOW is approved by the American Kennel Club as an AKC-recognized therapy dog group, and Fairfax Pets on Wheels volunteers make a difference every day by sharing the unconditional love of their pets during thousands of hours of therapy visits every year.

Pet visitation is proven to have a calming effect. Regular visits by trained volunteer/pet teams help reduce anxiety, relieve depression, lower blood pressure, encourage communication, and increase socialization. What's more, touching animals helps chase away loneliness, depression, and withdrawal and encourages a meaningful connection to happier times.

Do You Have a Pet That Makes People Smile?

Fairfax Pets on Wheels currently has a waiting list of long-term care facilities in Fairfax County that would like to be part of the program. But more volunteer/pet teams are



Fairfax Pets on Wheels takes a friendly kitty to visit with an older man participating in county programs.

needed to meet the demand.

If you have a lovable dog, cat, or bunny that would enjoy putting a smile on someone's face, consider becoming a Fairfax Pets on Wheels pet visitation team, and share the power of the human-animal bond with our neighbors who need it most. You'll touch someone's life—and change your own.

To learn more about how to become a pet visitation team — or to explore other volunteer opportunities with Fairfax Pets on Wheels — visit [fpow.org](http://fpow.org) or send an email to [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov).



FILE PHOTO/US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE OPEN SOURCE

A healthy coyote among cattails.



FILE PHOTO/US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE OPEN SOURCE

Healthy coyote pictured in an area of heavy vegetation.

## Coyote Bites Cause Cautionary Park Closure

FROM PAGE 3

by the Urban Coyote Research Project have proven that coyotes rarely prey upon domestic pets. Their most common food items were found to be small rodents (42%), fruit (23%), deer (22%), and rabbit (18%). In urban areas they prefer wooded locations where they can hide from people, frequently using parks and golf courses. Coyotes usually sleep above ground in the open or in cover; only denning when raising their young. They typically mate in February and birth pups in April. It's a hard life in the wild; most die before they reach three years of age while those in captivity can live up to 21 years or more. By far, the most common cause of death for urban coyotes has been collisions with vehicles, causing about 40 to 70% of their deaths each year.

In this incident the public relied on the police division tasked with animal issues. The primary function of the Fairfax County Police Department Animal Services Division is to help protect county residents while humanely assisting with pets and animals. According to the county website, "Animal Protection Police Officers (APPOs) assist with a wide array of encounters between animals and humans, from reports of stray dogs, to raccoons in living rooms, to potential neglect or cruelty situations. APPOs are trained law enforcement officers responsible for enforcing county ordinances and state laws that pertain to animals and their treatment. Source: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/specializedunits/animalprotectionpolice](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/specializedunits/animalprotectionpolice)

Also, Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources operates a Wildlife Conflict Helpline, toll-free at 855-571-9003 (M-F 8am - 4:30pm).

### What To Do If Human Is Bitten?

Wash the wound thoroughly and vigorously with soap and lots of water for 15

**"If you, or someone you know, or a pet, touched or was bitten or scratched by the rabid coyote between Saturday, June 4 and Sunday, June 5, you are urged to call the Fairfax County Health Department Rabies Program at 703 246-2433, TTY 711.**

minutes, then treat with a disinfectant such as ethanol or iodine.

Call your physician immediately

### What To Do If Pet Is Bitten?

Consult your veterinarian immediately and report the bite to local animal control authorities.

Even if your dog, cat or ferret has a current vaccination, he/she should be revaccinated immediately, kept under the owner's control, and observed for a period as specified by state law or local ordinance. Animals with expired vaccinations will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Dogs, cats and ferrets that have never been vaccinated and are exposed to a rabid animal may need to be euthanized in accordance with regulations or placed in strict isolation for six months.

## Coyote Tests Positive for Rabies - What Now?

With Fairfax County Health Department's June 6 confirmation of rabies in a coyote found in the north Springfield/Lake Accotink area following laboratory testing. In

2022 to date, the county has confirmed 16 rabid animals: 14 raccoons, one fox, and one groundhog. The weekend's coyote bite incident was fairly unusual. According to the health department, there were no confirmed coyote bites on humans in Fairfax County within the past year prior to this weekend. Coyote attacks on humans are rare, as are cases of confirmed rabies in coyotes. Only a few cases of coyotes with rabies were documented in Virginia Department of Health records. In the past ten years, there were only five reported cases in Virginia counties: one each in Loudoun, 2018; Franklin, 2016; Williamsburg City, 2014; and Bedford, 2011.

Now that this rabid coyote case has been confirmed, what should be done about area coyotes?

Dr. Katherine Edwards, a certified wildlife biologist and the county's wildlife management specialist, says "Large-scale population reduction of coyotes based on this one animal is not warranted, nor would it be effective for rabies control. Coyotes are only one of several wildlife species susceptible to rabies and confirmed cases of rabies in coyotes are rare in the Commonwealth. Rabies is endemic in our area and there are multiple wildlife reservoir hosts for the disease present in the county, including raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats. It would be difficult if not

impossible to reduce population densities of susceptible wild animals to a low enough threshold to prevent the spread of rabies among wildlife." Nor would that tactic be socially acceptable given public concern for animal welfare.

This year, Fairfax County has 15 positive cases of rabies in species other than coyotes; out of 96 tested animals: 14 raccoons, and one fox tested positive. In 2021, there were 26 positive cases of rabies out of 281 animals tested: 15 raccoons, one skunk, two foxes, four bats, one groundhog, one beaver, and two cats.

Notably absent from positive rabies case statistics here are domestic dogs, which are more likely to have received the rabies vaccine. While both dogs and cats are required to be vaccinated in the county, cats are more likely to be unvaccinated and allowed to roam outside where they may come into contact with infected wildlife. According to the Health Department, typically two to five free roaming cats test positive per year here.

Edwards said, "Rabies is a fatal disease but is preventable. Vaccination of pets is a key component for rabies prevention and control. It is required by Virginia law that dogs and cats four months of age and older be current on their rabies vaccination. Vaccinating pets against the rabies virus protects them from getting the disease and also provides a barrier of protection for people and their family if a pet is bitten by a rabid animal.

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter offers low-cost vaccination clinics for dogs, cats, and ferrets on various dates throughout the year. Upcoming dates for this year's clinics, which require advance registration one month prior to the date are: Aug. 28, Oct. 2, and Dec. 4, at a cost of \$20, cash or check only. For more details and registration, see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/communityassistance/rabiesclinics](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/communityassistance/rabiesclinics)

# An Iconic Building without Its Columns

Connolly secures federal funds for Old Town Hall repairs.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

From the outside, Fairfax City's Old Town Hall looked like its stately, venerable self. So residents were shocked when, early in the morning of Aug. 14, 2020, a corner pillar just fell right off.

A traffic camera captured its demise around 4 a.m., as the 21-foot column broke away from the building and landed on University Drive. A few hours later, Public Works Director David Summers and his crew were on site, inspecting the damage.

"Like a tree, it slowly shifted, tipped over and fell, landing on the sidewalk," he said. "Luckily, though, he added, "These columns are just cosmetic; they don't support anything."

Still, the City had a third-party structural engineer evaluate the remaining three columns and the building's overhang to check its integrity. In addition, a Virginia historical architect advised Fairfax officials about needed repairs to the then-120-year-old building.

Constructed in a classical revival style, Old Town Hall was built in 1900 by Joseph E. Willard, who later donated it to the City. In 1987, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the City of Fairfax Historic District.

After the column fell, MTF Architecture assessed the building's condition and made several recommendations for its rehabilitation. Its report said the failed column must be replaced, but the other columns could be reused. It stated, "The probable cause of failure stems from moisture and lack of ventilation," noting that these same issues would keep degrading the other three columns if not resolved.

The firm then recommended a new, cast-aluminum plinth – a structure at the base of each column – be installed to both support and ventilate the columns. Over the years, the column that fell had rotted internally; but because it had a coating around it, the interior damage wasn't visible from the outside.

In addition, the concrete porch floor must be replaced and will be supported by a steel foundation to strengthen it and make it more durable. It'll also be made ADA-compliant, and an ADA ramp will be added to the side entrance, as will stairs leading to the parking lot.

But that's not all. The building's stone foundation walls must be reconstructed, the existing stairs on the west side will be replaced, and stairs will be added to the north side of the portico.

Phase-one work has already begun. All of Old Town Hall's columns have now been removed,



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The front of Fairfax City's Old Town Hall without its iconic columns.

and the building's front is covered with scaffolding. Kadcon Corp. is replacing the portico, stairwell and one column and is rehabilitating the other three columns. Then landscaping and a new retaining wall will be provided on the building's Main Street frontage.

In January, Fairfax City Council approved \$590,000 for the cost of the phase-one construction. And now, the City has received good news about paying for the rest of the needed repairs.

It recently received \$2.1 million in federal Community Project funds earmarked for Old Town Hall's rehabilitation. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11th) is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Operations, and – much to the delight of the City's administration – he included this project in his FY 22 package of omnibus appropriations.

"Old Town Hall is the iconic center of our civic life in the City of Fairfax," said Mayor David Meyer. "The building is 122 years old and is used nearly every day.

It was in need of significant restoration, and thanks to Congressman Gerry Connolly, our beloved Old Town Hall will receive the most significant and substantial restoration since it was built in 1900. We are incredibly grateful for Congressman Connolly's commitment to preserving history and supporting our City. This would not have happened without his vision and leadership."



MTFA Architecture's rendition of the building upon completion of the work

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## Celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage

### Recognize surge in hate crimes, discrimination.

BY DEL. KATHY KL TRAN

While Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month has just ended, communities throughout Virginia recognized the many contributions of AAPIs to our Commonwealth and country.

AAPIs include people with roots in dozens of countries and are the fastest growing minority group in Virginia, making-up seven percent of the population. In Fairfax County, AAPIs are the largest minority community, comprising over 20 percent of the population. I hope you have had an opportunity to celebrate the rich diversity of Virginia's AAPI community by participating in cultural festivals or learning about a community changemaker.

While we celebrate, it is important we also acknowledge obstacles AAPIs continue to face. For example, we are currently experiencing a rise in hate and violence towards AAPIs that can be traced to former President Trump and his allies' racist COVID-19 rhetoric.

From March 2020 to December 2021, 10,905 hate incidents nationally were reported to Stop AAPI Hate, including harrasment, workplace discrimination, assault and murder. Of these,

185 incidents were reported in Virginia. Last year, the horrific attacks in the Atlanta area that killed eight people, including six AAPI women, shed light on the disproportionate targeting of AAPI women.

AAPIs have dealt with systemic discrimination and racism throughout U.S. history, from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, to the prohibition until 1952 on Asian immigrants becoming naturalized citizens.

We also confront pernicious stereotypes on a daily basis. The "perpetual foreigner" myth furthers the notion that AAPIs are not truly American. This othering erodes our sense of belonging and sows distrust about the AAPI community. A recent study by Leading Asian Americans to Unite for Change and The Asian American Action Fund found 33 percent of U.S. adults believe "Asian Americans are more loyal to their country of origin than to the United States," up from 20 percent last year.

At the same time, AAPIs are often stereotyped as the "model minority" — polite, hard working, self-reliant, and prosperous. While seemingly positive, this myth obscures the racism AAPIs face and the economic, educational, and

health disparities within the AAPI community. It is also a deliberate effort to drive wedges between AAPIs and other minority communities.

I joined other AAPI state legislators to co-found the General Assembly's Virginia AAPI Caucus in 2021. Our caucus lifts up the concerns and priorities of AAPI Virginians and works closely with other caucuses to support the wellbeing of vulnerable Virginians. This year, we introduced legislation and budget proposals to strengthen public education, expand health care, increase language access, grow entrepreneurship and small businesses, and improve refugee services as well as to address hate. You can learn more at <https://www.vaapic.org/>.

As AAPI Heritage Month comes to a close, we should celebrate the contributions of the AAPI community, reflect on the racism and discrimination AAPIs continue to face, and recommit ourselves to working for a Commonwealth that is more just, equitable, and inclusive.

*Kathy Kl Tran serves in the Virginia House of Delegates representing the 42nd District, which includes parts of Mount Vernon, Lorton, West Springfield and Fairfax Station. She is the first Vietnamese American elected to Virginia state government and is the First Vice Chair for Policy for the Virginia AAPI Caucus.*

## Budget Specifics

### The budget contains historic investments in K-12 education including the state share of teacher pay increases, and many other things.

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

Last week, I wrote about some of the local effects of the bipartisan budget agreement that we sent to the Governor last week. This week I will write about some of the broader issues addressed in the budget.

First, I was not pleased with the tax cuts which I believe are short-sighted. The budget contains several other priorities I do not support such as a new \$100 million "college laboratory school" program and new funds for school resource officers, but bipartisanship requires compromise.

The overall budget is about \$180 billion over a two-year period or biennium. The General Fund portion of the budget which we have the most discretion around totals about \$59 billion over two years. It balances and contains a constitutionally-mandated \$1.1 billion deposit to our "Rainy Day

Fund" which is now projected to total \$3.8 billion by FY2023 as required by the Constitution of Virginia. It also contains a \$750 million deposit against our \$15 billion unfunded retirement liability with the Virginia Retirement System.

The budget contains a number of tax cuts which reduced available revenue by over \$4 billion. Specifically, it reduced revenues by \$1.6 billion by increasing the standard deduction to \$8,000 for individuals and \$16,000 for joint filers. It eliminates the state sales tax on food for human consumption and personal hygiene products at a cost of \$372 million but leaves the 1% local option sales tax that funds K-12 in place. The budget also contains rebates of \$250 and \$500 for single and married tax filers which will cost \$1.0 billion. It also makes the Virginia Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) partially refundable at a cost of \$315 million and exempts military retire-

ment pay from state income taxes in \$10,000 increments starting in 2022 up to \$40,000 in 2025.

The budget contains historic investments in K-12 education including the state share of teacher pay increases of 5% each year

and \$1,000 bonuses for each school employee. It partially eliminates the cap on state support for non-teaching personnel that has been in place since 2010 and contains state funded teacher recruitment bonuses of up to \$5,000 per position.

It also contains a new \$1.0 billion school modernization fund which directs funds to localities through three separate streams.

SEE SUROVELL, PAGE 13

### 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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**NEWS DEPARTMENT:**  
[south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Mary Kimm**  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Bonnie Hobbs**  
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415  
[bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Mercia Hobson**  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Mike Salmon**  
Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Ken Moore**  
Contributing Writer  
[kmoores@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kmoores@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Susan Laume**  
Contributing Writer

**ADVERTISING:**  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

**Debbie Funk**  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

**David Griffin**  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Classified & Employment Advertising**  
703-778-9431

**Editor & Publisher**  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
[@MaryKimm](https://twitter.com/MaryKimm)

**Publisher**  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**In Memoriam Managing Editor**  
Kemal Kurspahic

**Art/Design:**  
Laurence Foong  
**Production Manager:**  
Geovani Flores

**CIRCULATION**  
**Circulation Manager:**  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)



# Sign Up for Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

The 2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics committee will offer a total of 77 individual events in this year's competition. "Not only are we celebrating our 40th anniversary," said Herb Levitan, NVSO Chair, "but it's also a record year for the number of events that will take place, Sept. 10-24 at 25 venues throughout Northern Virginia."

NVSO began in 1982 with approximately 300 participants and has grown to nearly 900 (pre-Pandemic). Levitan said, "We're expecting a large turnout this year since we had nearly 700 with half the events last year."

Opening day ceremony will take place at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 S. 2nd St., Arl., Saturday, Sept. 10 at 9:30 a.m. Seven track events and one rowing ERG event will follow the opening. The

public is invited to attend.

A full schedule of events and venues is on the website at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us). To participate one must be 50 years old by Dec. 31, 2022 and reside in one of the sponsoring jurisdictions. The registration fee is \$20 which covers an unlimited number of events. There is an added charge for orienteering, cycling and ten pin bowling. Registration will open Wednesday, July 6 and close

Aug. 31. Registration is online only at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us). NVSO will follow guidelines set by the CDC, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the local jurisdiction and the individual venues.

NVSO is sponsored by the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. For more information, email [nvso1982@gmail.com](mailto:nvso1982@gmail.com)



A competitor in the 2021 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics diving competition.

PHOTOS BY HENRY S. WINOKUR 2021



A competitor in the 2021 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics diving competition.

# Budget Passes 88-7 in the House

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

After many months and long deliberations among the budget conferees, I traveled to Richmond last Wednesday to join my colleagues to take a final vote on the biennial budget. The budget conference report was agreed to by a vote of 32-4 in the Senate, and 88-7 in the House.

You can view the full conference report at [budget.lis.virginia.gov](http://budget.lis.virginia.gov) or look at The Commonwealth Institute's side-by-side comparison of House and Senate final budgets with the conference report at <https://thecommonwealthinstitute.org/>.

Now, I will highlight a few of the best funding proposals and some of the shortfalls included in this conference report, in my opinion.

The budget compromise in-

cludes a critical increase in the standard deduction, increasing it from \$4,500 for individuals and \$9,000 for joint filers to \$8,000 and \$16,000, respectively. Although this change will reduce state income from tax revenues by an estimated \$1.6 billion over the two-year budget, this amount is about \$500 million less than the original proposal from Governor Youngkin. In return for this compromise, Senate Democrats achieved a long-time victory of making 15 percent of the earned income tax credit (EITC) refundable for low-income working families in Virginia. Also included are the one-time rebates of \$250 for individual taxpayers and \$500 for families this year, which were first proposed by former Governor Northam in his final budget proposal.

While Governor Youngkin had

called for the complete elimination of the grocery tax, the compromise reached calls for cutting the 1.5 percent state tax on groceries, but not the additional 1 percent grocery tax that localities may levy. This agreement will preserve important local funding for public services.

The budget also makes key investments in mental health and Medicaid services with increased reimbursement rates for group homes and others that provide services to people with mental illness or intellectual or developmental disabilities, as well as for medical professionals who provide services to Medicaid recipients. In addition, the approximately 1,800 Virginia dentists currently participating in the dental Medicaid program will see \$116 million in new state and federal funding dedicated to boost-

ing the lagging reimbursement rates.

State employees, teachers, state-supported local employees, direct-care staff at state behavioral health facilities, correctional officers, and sheriff's deputies will see one-time bonuses and targeted salary relief. The deal preserves a 5% raise each year for those employees, as well as a \$1,000 bonus that the Senate had proposed in its budget. This budget makes historic investments in our public schools with more than \$1 billion in funding for school construction, and funding to allow schools to hire more support staff, reading specialists, and make sure there is a full-time principal in every school. Here in Fairfax County, FCPS will receive \$241 million more in funding over the next two years.

State and local governments also stand to save \$1.85 billion over 20 years in pension costs for public employees; this budget deal proposes depositing \$750 million this year in the Virginia Retirement System and an additional \$250 million in the next budget to pay down unfunded liabilities. The contributions would increase the funded status of state employee and teacher pension plans by 1%.

Another victory is the addition of \$40 million to the Virginia Housing Trust Fund, for a total of \$150 million in the next two years.

Thanks to the hard work of Senators Surovell and Ebbin, the \$2 million for River Farm was also preserved in HB 29 (the caboose budget) to fund ADA improvements at the site. Also locally, Good Shepherd Housing will receive \$400k in federal TANF funding.

Regarding areas of concern, \$100 million in funding has been proposed for lab schools without a full plan for implementation in

the Commonwealth. While innovations and partnerships in K-12 education are important, we cannot allow these investments at the expense of fully funding our public education system or allowing for the privatization of our public schools.

While I am pleased that this budget provides key investments in public safety by ensuring police officers, corrections officers, deputy sheriffs and other law enforcement personnel are given a much-needed pay raise, and local police departments are provided with funding for training and equipment, I am disappointed in the lack of funding in gun violence prevention programs. Senate Democrats achieved \$8 million in funding in the budget compromise to create the Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevent Grant Fund, but that amount falls far below the \$22 million that was originally in the Senate budget.

I can say that I am disappointed that two of my own initiatives that I fought very hard for did not make the final cut. One is my \$350,000 appropriation to create a Special Assistant for Disability Advocacy in the Governor's office. The other was key funding to outfit the brand new Lee District Community Center here in the 44th district, which just had its grand opening a few weeks ago. I plan to resubmit amendments for this important funding at the next possible opportunity.

Overall, while it falls short in some areas, this budget takes us in the right direction in raising our investments to where we should be and will make a real impact on the issues facing Virginians. Now this final budget approved by the General Assembly will head to the Governor's desk.

## Surovell

FROM PAGE 12

School construction has historically been a locally-funded activity and many conservative areas have refused to raise taxes to keep up with maintenance.

Higher education received over \$200 million of additional support for in-state tuition, financial aid, but the state is still only funded in-state student tuition at 50% of historic levels. Several universities have kept tuition flat in light of this.

The budget increases Health and Human Services funding by \$1.4 billion including investments which will reduce our Medicaid Waiver Waiting List for developmentally and intellectually disabled persons. It

provides \$86 million in new funding to raise personal care rates for personal attendants and \$85 million for increased dental insurance reimbursements so more dentists will take Medicaid funded dental patients. It raises the salaries of state mental health workers to the 50th percentile with salary increases averaging around 37%. Our mental health system has been unable to keep up with demand or retain employees. It also funds a state reinsurance program for our state healthcare exchange which will reduce insurance premiums for individuals purchasing their insurance from the exchange.

The budget contains \$47 million to fund local police departments like Fairfax and Prince William County, about \$70 million for raises to our Sheriffs, and \$113 million for raises with the Virginia

State Police and our correctional workers. It also funds raises for state employees ranging between 10-15% over two years along with \$1,000 one-time bonuses.

Finally, it also contains funds to widen I-64 to four lanes between Richmond and Williamsburg and creates a new State Trails Office with \$41 million to develop major trails in the Commonwealth. We also authorized \$1.0 billion of capital improvements at our Western Hemisphere-leading Port of Virginia. The remaining transportation budget is programmed by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. As always, you can reach me at [scott@scottssurovell.org](mailto:scott@scottssurovell.org).

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# HOMELIFESTYLE

## Using Interior Decor to Herald the Arrival of Summer

From throw pillows to rugs, small changes in a home's accessories can create the lazy days of the coming season.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

With Labor Day in the rear view mirror and the official start of summer just two weeks away, three local design aficionados are focusing on accessories that create a seamless transition from spring to summer. Their ideas run the gamut from foliage to rugs and offer inspiration for embracing the beauty of the new season.

Light and airy color combinations, particularly those found in works of art can evoke a relaxed aura. Having recently completed a series of breezy beach scenes, reminiscent of summer, interior designer and artist Gretchen Fuss, formerly of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria, says that paintings can set the tone of an interior space. "Attention to detail and design is all about truly living in a comforting environment. Each space needs harmony and purpose." Fuss works with other tastemakers to create a piece of art commissioned by a client.

In fact, Bethesda designer Eleanor Burch uses beach inspired elements to create ocean inspired spaces. "Beige, blue and white color schemes can take you away to a lazy summer day at the beach even if you're sitting in your living room," she said. "Even adding rattan baskets or using rattan placemats at dinner can create a sense of peace."

Seasonal foliage can be used to make the transition from spring to summer and blossoms are plentiful in the Washington region, says local designer Georgia Hoyler, owner of Passerine, an online shop which carries handmade vintage rugs from around the world. "Flowers offer an array of bright floral arrangements," she said. "But for a more dramatic statement, consider clipping flowering foliage from your yard to bring the season in. When it comes to branches as decor, bigger is always better. Oversized branches bring a sculptural element to a space that evokes a natural drama. Opt for an asymmetrical arrangement to create a more graceful line. By refreshing their water daily, a cut branch can last up to two weeks in your home."

From the understated elegance of a cotton knit throw draped casually on the back of a chair in the family room or a quilt in airy hues topping the bed in a guest room, trading heavy textiles for their warm weather counterparts throughout one's home is a cost effective way to embrace the carefree spirit of summer. "The simple replacement of throw pillows from stripes to tonal, block print floral patterns, for instance, makes a substantial impact with little effort," said Hoyler. "Beyond just pattern updates, consider the fibers of your textiles. Swapping a heavier weight cotton velvet or wool that



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGIA HOYLER.

When updating a home's interior to reflect a change in seasons, designer Georgia Hoyler, owner of online boutique Passerine, says that the most substantial change that you can make without replacing a single piece of furniture is updating your rug.

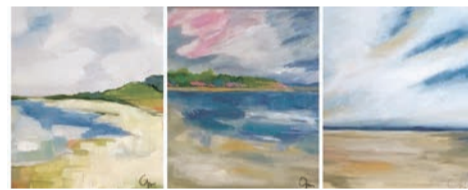


PHOTO COURTESY OF GRETCHEN FUSS

Works of art, such as these beach scenes can herald a new season.

works for winter to lighter linen in pillows and bedding subconsciously feels fresher. Most importantly, consider the color palette. Consider romantic, cooler hues of spring and summer, such as soft blues, creams and whites."

The most substantial change that you can make without replacing a single piece of furniture is updating your rug," says Hoyler. "On cold winter nights, the shag of a Moroccan rug's thick pile may have appeal, but spring was made for a vintage Persian area rug," she said. "The lower pile height of an antique Persian Tabriz, Farahan or Bahktiari make them perfect options in warmer months."

Changing the lighting in a space can be a minor endeavor that can have a major impact when transitioning for one season to another. "Knowing that summer's longer days typically pull brighter, natural daylight tones in your home, consider how to control your lighting," said Hoyler. "Swap the warm 2700 kelvin bulbs that you craved in winter for energy-efficient LED bulbs to compliment the change in natural light outdoors. If you have an outside space you like to enjoy in warm spring or summer evenings, install solar-powered landscaping spotlights or string twinkle lights over your patio or deck to draw you outdoors, even as the light fades."

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## It's My Idea, and I Do Think Much Of It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And while I ended last week's column referring to two cities, Rome, and Milwaukee, that weren't built in a day (figuratively speaking), neither as it happens are they cities that I've visited. In fact, there are lots of cities that I've not visited, for all the usual reasons. Reasons which, after receiving a diagnosis of "terminal" cancer, become insignificant, and life in the post-cancer diagnosis years takes on a whole new/urgent meaning. A meaning which invariably presents itself in the organization and planning of a presumptive "bucket," list, a list of people you want to see, places you want to go, and things you want to do before you succumb to your disease.

It is a question/concept I have been presented with frequently over my many cancer years, most of them while characterized as "terminal." Even my oncologist suggested it one time after a particular infused medication I had been taking stopped working and we were deciding how next to proceed. He said that perhaps I should stop treatment for a while, and since I was likely feeling as good as I ever would, perhaps take that trip I had always dreamed of. He added that I might feel worse after we started new treatment; never knowing exactly whether the side effects would be manageable, or even if the treatment would work.

As it has turned out, I never took my oncologist seriously. I figured my treatment was not something to stop just to take a vacation - because it might get worse if I didn't. I just didn't think like that. My thought was keep doing what we're doing and not allow the cancer - to the extent we had any control, to get any kind of foot hold. To me, it felt like giving up/giving in to the cancer, and I never wanted to do that. And pursuing one's bucket list, during, and as direct result of, the intervals of my cancer treatment, seemed ill-advised, or at least, ill timed - to me. Just because my treatment wasn't working at a certain point, never seemed like a good reason to do even less and try to live more. My attitude was then and is now to live as normally as possible and not create artificial diversions/accomplishments to satisfy some arbitrary list that might not otherwise exist if you weren't "terminal." I never wanted to realize that the reason I was doing something was because I was dying, and it needed to be done - or else. I never wanted to impose that kind of pressure on myself. Cancer creates enough pressure on its own. A cancer patient doesn't need to increase that pressure by trying to check off a list.

But perhaps I'm just being contrary. I've heard much about a so-called "bucket list" these last 13 and half years. And as I've said, I've never bought it to it because I thought the price was too high. I never have wanted to deny my cancer reality by living a life unsuitable to who I am at my core. I'm not exactly Popeye the Sailor Man, but "I am who I am," and if I'm not doing things that I normally do, and instead doing things that I don't normally do, I would know the only reason I'm doing these things - that I don't usually do, is because I'm dying. To me, I'd be reinforcing a negative, and the last thing I've wanted to do during my cancer career was allow negativity to take root anywhere, anyway, anyhow. I've always felt that when I die, I want to die on my own terms, doing my own things for my own reasons.

To summarize my philosophy, I don't want to do things because I have cancer, I want to do things as if I don't. Granted, some days are harder than others, but at the end of every day, I'm more determined than ever to make the best of a bad situation. And for me, a vacation from my treatment was never going to work.

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

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