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Kenji Wong, 4th grade, Greenbriar West, with his art at the Chantilly High Pyramid Art Show on April 5.

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

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

**Paying More  
but Still Short  
for Metro and  
Schools**

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**Pickleball Too  
Loud for Neighbors**

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**Students  
Shine in  
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## Supervisors Adopt Budget Plan: Tax Rate Increase

Challenges, needs, and the reality that the county cannot do it alone.

MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

As expected, following the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' approval of the FY 2025 Budget Mark-up Package on April 30, the Board adopted the FY 2025 Budget on May 7, with the board's nine Democrats voting yes and Republican Supervisor Pat Herrity voting no.

The board set the Fiscal Year 2025 real property tax rate to \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value, increasing the rate by three cents rather than the county executive's proposed four-cent real estate tax increase. The average tax bill hike will be just over \$450. It is the first increase in six years and is occurring alongside rising home valuations.

Chairman Jeff McKay read a series of three motions, which the board voted on separately.

With Fairfax County's FY 2025 tax rate resolution having established the real property tax rate of \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value, the board then voted nine-to-one and adopted the FY 2025 tax rate resolution adopting tax rates for Fairfax County (as detailed in the attachment to the memorandum to the board dated May 6, 2024). Supervisor Harrity voted no.

Lastly, the board approved, in a vote of nine to one, with Supervisor Harrity voting no, the FY 2025 appropriation resolution for county agencies, the FY 2025 appropriations resolution for school board funds, and the FY 2025 fiscal planning resolution appropriation resolution as set forth in attachments three, four, and five of the memorandum to the board dated May 6, 2024.

FY 2025 begins on July 1, 2024, and ends on June 30, 2025.

Following the motions, McKay said the board had heard "from hundreds of folks throughout the process." He thanked Supervisors Kathy Smith (Sully) and Dalia A. Palchik, Providence, who participated in the budget process, as well as budget staff.

"It's an intense period of time, but as I mentioned before, our budget staff is working on this stuff year-round. It just gets accelerated here in the last couple of weeks," McKay said.

Due to the county's diminishing commercial tax base, the adopted FY 2025 Budget Plan proved financially tight and relied even more than usual on residential property owners for funding. Highlights of the process leading to the adopted FY 2025 Budget Plan include that the real estate tax rate of \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value is down one cent from County Executive Bryan Hill's proposed four-cent increase in his FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan presented Feb. 20. Nevertheless, the increase in average real estate tax bill will be approximately \$450.

Fairfax County provides a real estate assessment site at <https://icare.fairfaxcounty.gov/ffxcare/Main/Home.aspx>, allowing



SCREENSHOT FAIRFAX COUNTY CHANNEL 16

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved the FY 2025 Budget Plan on May 7.

searches by address, tax map reference number, or map search.

The operational transfer of funding for Fairfax County Public Schools includes \$165 million, which is \$89 million less than the \$254 million FCPS requested. The FY 2025 Budget Plan increases general county employee compensation from 3.25 to 6 percent and funds a 2 percent market rate adjustment, benchmark adjustments, and public safety collective bargaining contract obligations. The plan cites \$34 million in cutbacks by county agencies. Such reductions, though, in future years would affect county personnel and resident services.

Future Fairfax County challenges are significant, and the Commonwealth is adding to them.

Fairfax County is unable to fund everything on its own, especially since it must rely heavily on real estate taxes as a revenue source for expenditures. "About 80 percent of our revenue comes from property taxes (real estate and personal property). The Virginia General Assembly either caps or controls other revenues," according to the county's Budget and Finance Department.

The FY 2025 Budget Mark-Up states, "The state must recognize its own role in directly supporting public schools and Metro infrastructure."

The Fairfax County Public Schools division needs county and state funding support. Virginia's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study confirmed that the state underfunded Fairfax County Public Schools, like other Commonwealth divisions. The analysis said Virginia had a "complex and unreasonable" funding formula. Local homeowners pay a disproportionate share for school support. Implementing all JLARC recommendations will provide Fairfax County Public Schools with \$568.7 million in state money annually.

Metro is the only major transit system in



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay.

Supervisor Pat Herrity, Springfield District.

On April 8, 2024, Governor Glenn Youngkin announced recommended amendments to the state budget. He proposed that Northern Virginia localities (which are part of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), Loudoun County, Fairfax County, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Alexandria, and Arlington County) could use previously allocated state aid to address Metro's shortfall. NVTC would redirect most of the \$113.8 million, or about \$98 million, to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). It amounts to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

An April 16 unanimously board-approved letter by Chairman Jeff McKay, Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw, and Dranesville District Supervisor James Bierman urged the county's General Assembly delegation to oppose the governor's proposed funding cuts and retain the necessary funding to address WMATA's estimated \$750 million shortfall. The letter said the Governor's FY 2025-2026 Biennial Budget amendment would eliminate state funding to NVTC that matched local WMATA contributions.

The letter said that doing so would add "an overly disproportionate burden on budgets" for NVTC localities. Furthermore, if the amendment moved forward, NVTC's Fairfax County funding for the Connector bus fleet replacement would run out in October 2024 without state aid.

On Thursday, April 25, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Board of Directors approved a \$4.8 billion fiscal year 2025 budget and increased fares by 12.5 percent. In the future, Metro will face similar difficulties in balancing its budget annually unless there is dedicated funding.

The Virginia State Budget has yet to be approved, and Youngkin and the General Assembly continue negotiating. A special legislative session is planned to begin May 13.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION

**Absent state aid, Fairfax County funds held at the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission would be used to fund Metro according to the governor's proposed budget amendment. The image shows the gates to the Herndon Metrorail located alongside the Dulles Toll Road.**

the country without some form of dedicated and sustainable funding, as it reported in its April 25 news release, which announced that its Board approved a \$4.8 billion operating budget for Metrorail and bus service. The April 30 Fairfax County Budget Guidance for FY 2025 and FY 2026 states that funding the Metro system is a shared responsibility between the state and localities. Metro fuels Northern Virginia's economy which benefits the Commonwealth's economy overall.



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## NEWS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MELISSA HALL



Band Director Melissa Hall conducts the young musicians outdoors.

# Outdoor Band Concert under the Springtime Stars

**Centreville  
High presents  
'Bandemonium!'  
plus food trucks.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

The only thing cooler than an outdoor music festival under the stars is one that also features face painting, dancing and food trucks. And that's exactly what Centreville High will offer during the Wildcat Band's third annual "Bandemonium!" set for Friday, May 17, at 6:30 p.m., in the school's bus loop.

The school's Winterguard, Chamber Ensembles, JazzCats, Percussion Ensemble, Concert Band, Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble plan to dazzle the audience with a variety of entertaining music. Meanwhile, food trucks El Jefe Wood Fired Pizza, Little Lady Grill, Two Smooth Dudes, Kona Ice and Adam's Delights Ice Cream will be onsite for guests to purchase food to enjoy while the

musicians are performing.

"Last year's 'Bandemonium' was an even bigger success than our inaugural year, with over 700 audience members in attendance," said Director Melissa Hall. "It is such a joy to have created a new tradition at Centreville High, and it's always so well-received by our surrounding community. The students and I are excited to bring it back, bigger and better this year – the third time's the charm."

The event promises to have something for all ages to like. Attendees will have the option to get their faces painted, get henna tattoos and even dance to some swinging jazz tunes. And a new highlight this year will be the bands playing the soundtracks to the blockbuster "Harry Potter" movies, plus "How to Train Your Dragon" and "Star Wars," while clips from them are shown.

"Bandemonium" brings together all members of the school's Performing Arts Department, as it spotlights band, orchestra, choir and theater students in performance. In addition, students in Centreville's Art Club will be doing the face painting.

Some 500 folding chairs will be available for guests to sit in, but people are also encouraged to bring their own picnic blankets

SEE CENTREVILLE HIGH, PAGE 9



Centreville High's "Bandemonium!" will be held on Friday, May 17.

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# NEWS

## Centreville Preschoolers Release Ladybugs For Earth Day

Students at Chesterbrook Academy Preschool in Centreville celebrated Earth Day, April 22, by releasing more than 10,000 ladybugs throughout their schoolyard. They did so to protect the environment and help local vegetation thrive. Leading up to Earth Day, the children learned that ladybugs serve as a natural pesticide by feeding on insects that could otherwise harm the health of gardens, trees and shrubs.

Chesterbrook teacher Ms. Samantha helps students release some ladybugs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NABEELA ASIF TRINGALI





## McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER 2024 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTION

# Absentee Voting

### Wednesday, March 27 – Monday, May 13

Residents of Dranesville Small District 1A are encouraged to vote for members of the MCC Governing Board.

**TWO WAYS TO VOTE:** 1. in person (fill out a ballot at McLean Community Center) or 2. by mail. If you prefer to vote by mail, simply phone or send an e-mail to request ballots for members of your household. The requested ballots will be mailed to your home.

**DEADLINE:** Completed Absentee Voting ballots must be received in the ballot box at MCC by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 13.

**TO REQUEST A BALLOT:**  
**CALL: 703-790-0123, TTY: 711**  
**E-MAIL: [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org)**  
 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101 // [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)



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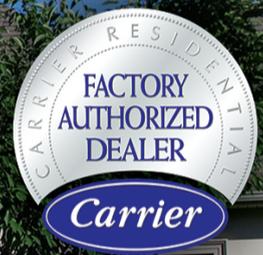
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## Senior Services for You

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

If you are an older adult like me and enjoy connecting with others, Older Americans Month (OAM) and our Senior Safety Summit are for YOU! OAM is celebrated every May as a time to honor the contributions of older adults and address the issues impacting them. This year's theme in the County for OAM is "Powered by Connection." Social connections are incredibly important to our health and overall well-being, serving to enrich our lives and create a sense of belonging.

A great way to celebrate the power of "connection" for OAM and meet up with your neighbors is to join me and Neighborhood and Community Services on Wednesday, May 15, from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., for the 6th Annual Senior Safety Summit at the Lorton Community Center. From 10 – 11:30 a.m. enjoy the popular exhibit hall with many County agencies and local organizations featuring information especially for our senior community. COVID, pneumonia, RSV and shingles vaccines will be available for residents to get immunized. Following the exhibit hall enjoy a free boxed lunch provided by Retirement Unlimited Inc., in coordination with the Paul Spring Retirement Community. Food will be available on a first

come first served basis. Beginning at noon join us for raffle prizes and four presentations by AARP, Department of Family Services, Fire and Rescue and KEG Consulting LLC, featuring driver safety.

The County has many services and resources available for our senior community to assist in everything from aging in place, to classes at the Rec Centers, even health and wellness workshops. The Department of Family Services, Adult and Aging division is a great County resource that supports older residents, family caregivers and people with disabilities to help individuals live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. Neighborhood and Community Services has 15 senior centers located throughout the County that serve adults 50 and over. Here in the District we have the Gum Springs, Lorton, Kingstowne and Hollin Hall Senior Centers. The Park Authority also offers countless opportunities to form new connections with others that share your interests! Go birding or hiking; channel your creative side with various crafts, painting or even quilting; treat yourself by enjoying afternoon tea; try out dog training or obedience classes; or go on nature walks or garden tours. For other ways to stay connected, subscribe to the Golden Gazette which is a free monthly newsletter with a variety of topics and community news for older adults and caregivers.



Supervisor Storck and attendees enjoying the popular exhibit hall at the 2023 Senior Safety Summit.

## In Support of Mural on Water Tank, Gateway to Gum Springs

The Urban Land Institute identified the water tanks on Fordson Road as the gateway into Gum Springs. The West Ford Legacy Foundation (WFLF) is spearheading a community project by having a mural painted on one of the water tanks because the water tanks have become enormous in size and unsightly.

To ensure WFLF was not seeking to circumvent community control from any Gum Springs community-based organization, WFLF met with Vincent Carter, New Gum Springs Civic Association (NGSCA) on March 25th and extended an invitation to NGSCA to participate as a partner. WFLF also reached out to Ron Chase, Director of the Gum Springs Historical Society/Gum Springs Museum, who is opposed to the community mural project. Viewpoints from those who live, work, visit and/or

worship in Gum Springs were obtained from an online survey implemented on March 27th. There are currently more than 300 signatures of supporters.

Letters of support were received from Virginia State Delegate Paul Krizek and the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations.

Unfortunately, without engaging in a thoughtful analysis or communicating with WFLF, the Mount Vernon Supervisor chose to not take a position to support a worthy community project that would not only benefit Gum Springs but also surrounding communities. The Mount Vernon Supervisor did not provide a letter of support.

No valid reasons have been provided for opposing the community project. It would be useful for the opposers to answer two questions: 1) How would a mural depicting the founder and history of Gum Springs substantially jeopardize



the property surrounding the water tanks or quality of life for residents of Gum Springs; and 2) How is a mural depicting history and shows a sense of place and belonging as a

negative community benefit?

So, who or what is exactly the community?

**Queenie Cox**  
Gum Springs Homeowner

# County in a Pickle Over Noisy Pickleball

Nearby courts will be converted to appease the pickleball players.

By MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

When the hard, plastic ball hits the solid wood or plastic paddle in pickleball, it is noisier than tennis. So noisy that the residents around the pickleball courts at Kendale Woods Park in Annandale complained and now those particular courts will be closing, but the Fairfax County Park Authority is finding new courts a little farther away to keep everyone happy.

This park is wedged in this suburban neighborhood so tightly, the players also took some of the available parking spots to magnify the inconvenience for the surrounding residents, setting up a situation that could have boiled over, had officials not stepped in.

"It was far too close, not an ideal spot for the pickleball court," said FCPA spokesperson Ben Boxer. To remedy the situation and keep everyone happy, the park officials are making some more pickleball courts over at Mason District Park.

Starting on Monday, June 3, the FCPA will soon begin work to revert the existing racquet courts at Kendale Woods Park to tennis-only courts. Work is expected to be

completed on Monday, June 17, weather permitting, the county said.

The move comes in response to concerns raised by the surrounding community pertaining to noise and as the site does not meet the court guidelines established with national best practices identified in the Fairfax County Pickleball Study Report from December 2021.

There were comments on social media supporting both sides of the issue.

"Good, pickleball is just a fad. Tennis is timeless and should stay," said one.

Others chimed in that the tennis courts won't be used. "And where are you putting Pickleball only courts? Don't you read the news? Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the U.S. Swimming Pools and playgrounds produce much more annoying noise. The courts will be empty, what a waste of our tax dollars!" said another.

Another social media comment said there were only five houses close to the courts.

### Pickleball Study

The Fairfax County website has the pickleball summary, plus a link to the official pickleball study from December 2021. "This report on the Park Authority's Pickleball Study



Pickleball courts at Kendale Woods Park.

presents findings and recommendations on how to strategically respond to increasing demand for the sport," the opening sentence to the 101-page study reads, and goes on to say that the county approach to providing

pickleball facilities is comparable to similar jurisdictions. "Current shared-use courts can satisfy most players with relatively minor improvements, yet opportunities exist to leverage the growing interest in the sport," it said.

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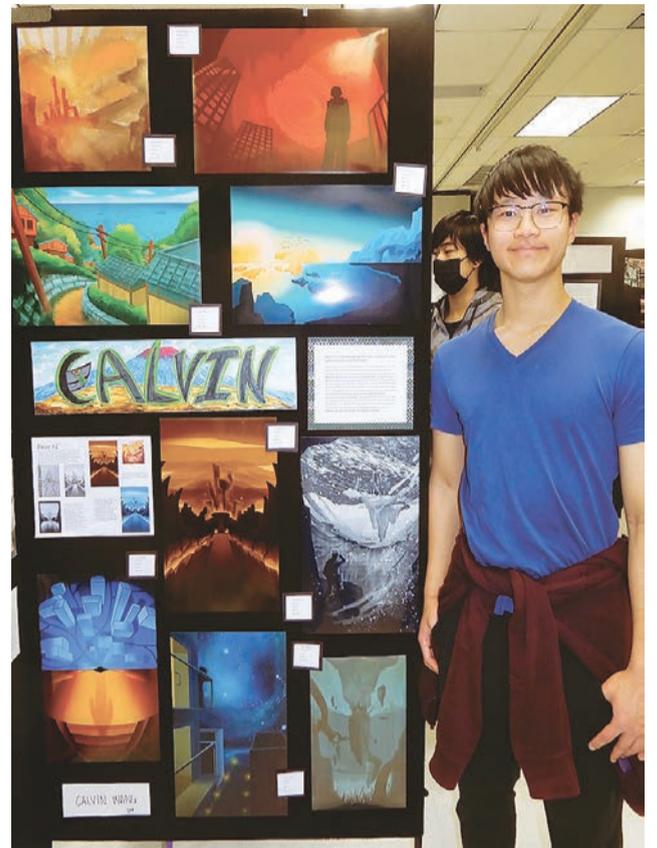
FAIRFAX



Chantilly High senior Fatma Zamrawi made this stained-glass decoration.



Chantilly senior Mai Li Esler with her chalk, charcoal, paint and quilling art.



Chantilly junior Calvin Wang displays his digital artwork.

# Students Shine in Chantilly High Pyramid Art Show



Ketan Gupta, 2nd grade, Poplar Tree.



Alessandra Martinez, 2nd grade, Brookfield Elementary.



Lamrana Turay, 3rd grade, Brookfield.



Trim Shala, 3rd grade, Greenbriar West Elementary, wears the paper-bag hat he made.



Ryan Waters, kindergarten, Lees Corner Elementary, made the top snowflake.



Kenji Wong, 4th grade, Greenbriar West.

**Chantilly High's Pyramid Art Show was April 5.**



Eliora Ra, kindergarten, Poplar Tree Elementary.



Harper Rao, 5th grade, Greenbriar East Elementary.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/ THE CONNECTION



Chantilly senior Ridhima Gandhi works in colored pencil, charcoal and paint.

# Centreville High Presents ‘Bandemonium!’ Plus Food Trucks

FROM PAGE 4

and camping chairs. As with previous years’ events, the performers will entertain on two stages. In case of rain, the concert will be moved indoors into the Skip Maiden Auditorium.

Regarding the food, El Jefe will offer its signature pizzas while Little Lady Grill serves up sandwiches and other grilled delicacies. Two Smooth Dudes will feature a variety of gourmet tater tots, as well as wraps, salads and pineapple smoothies. And besides the ice cream and shaved ice from Adam’s Delights and Kona Ice, respectively, also for sale will be sheet cakes celebrating the students who make up the Centreville Wildcat Band program and especially its graduating seniors.

As for the music, it’s sure to have everyone tapping their feet.

Centreville’s Jazz Ensemble, the JazzCats, will perform tunes illustrating the theme, “ColorFULL.” Music from several jazz genres – including swing, funk, rock and Latin – will be featured. Three vocal selections, “Blue Moon,” “Orange Colored Sky” and “Rio de Janeiro Blue,” will highlight student vocalists from the Centreville Choral Department. And this year, Centreville Orchestra students will also perform with the Jazz Band.

Besides playing selections from the “Harry Potter” movies, the Concert Band will offer a piece by composer Jorge Vargas called “Golondrina.” According to Hall, “This charming work is inspired by the joropo llanero – a South American musical style and dance that originated in Venezuela. While this style is present throughout the piece, you can also hear Mexican and Spanish influences in it, as well.” And for anyone wondering what a gallop would sound like with the chaos that ensues when a dog sees a squirrel, this band will conclude the night with “Squirrel Chase” by Carol Brittin Chambers.

Music from “How to Train Your Dragon” will begin the Symphonic Band’s portion of the show, followed by “Tumbleweed” by Tyler Arcari. “As you can tell by the title, this robust piece evokes the thrilling sounds of the American Southwest,” explained Hall. “Its rousing themes revive the glory days of the American cowboy and all the trials and tribulations of living in this rustic, but unforgiving, frontier. You’ll hear music that paints a sophisticated musical tapestry using all the color available to the modern concert band.”

This band will conclude with “The Country Club Stomp” by Ja-Rod Hall. (No relation to the director). “Experience a New Orleans vibe with this exciting, parade-in-

spired crowd-pleaser,” said Melissa Hall. “The lively work is based on an infectious, rhythmic groove and spirited melody. Elements of jazz, as well as a strong reference to the West African circle dances from which this music evolved, make it an exciting closer.”

Centreville’s Wind Ensemble will open its set with Brian Bal-

images’s “The Wild One!” which Hall describes as “a blistering, adrenaline-packed, circus march that will bring the audience to its feet.” She said band members are also excited to perform a medley from episodes 1-3 of “Star Wars.”

Next, they’ll take everyone on a fun-filled trip down memory lane with the songs, “2001: A Space

Odyssey,” “Singing in the Rain” and “The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.” Said Hall: “From bold and dramatic to toe-tapping and upbeat, these timeless film classics define all that is loved about the silver screen and the beloved movies of Tinseltown.” This band will then end the night with its traditional, end-of-year performance of

“The Stars and Stripes Forever” by John Philip Sousa.

“As always, this is a free, family-friendly event that we hope will bring in many guests from the Centreville community,” said Hall. “Come celebrate another tremendous year of in-person music-making, along with the Centreville High Wildcat Band family.”

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# COMMUNITY AT GLANCE

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

## Fairfax County School Board

Fairfax County School Board Student Representative, 2024-2025 elected

PHOTO FCPS.EDU/NEWS

The countywide Student Advisory Council (SAC) elected Megan Sawant, a junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, to represent students on the Fairfax County School Board for one year starting July 1. Sawant targets increasing student engagement with the School Board, academic recovery, and student alcohol and drug abuse.



## Fairfax County Public Schools

Safeguarding Environment in Hands of Students.



SCREENSHOT FCPS.EDU/NEWS

Centreville Elementary School students recently released their classroom-raised trout as part of one of many nature-based educational programs. The Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources collaborated on the Trout in the Classroom program, which taught students about conservation. The students released their trout into a natural stream at the Elizabeth Furnace Recreation Area near Front Royal.



## VDOT Rt. 7 Construction

Rt. 7 is six lanes wide, at last; at least?

PHOTO COURTESY OF VDOT

VDOT reported that Rt. 7 is now continuously at least six lanes wide for about 20 miles from Leesburg to Tysons. Is this easing your commute?

## Rt. 7 Tunnel to Nowhere: 0 stars for a path to it for pedestrians and cyclists; five stars for mammal and reptile crossing.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The Route 7 Corridor Improvements Project included

the pedestrian underpass that the Fairfax County Park Authority requested. However, no designated pathways to and from the tunnel exist for humans, connecting both sides of Rt.7.



The pedestrian tunnel under the six-lane divided Rt. 7 in Fairfax County, where it passes by unincorporated Great Falls near the Park Authority's operational 19th-century water-powered gristmill at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site does not serve the purpose for which it was constructed. Still, it is probably serving another good use.

Mike Murphy is the senior communications specialist at the Virginia Department of Transportation. When asked why the recently completed and beautiful tunnel with overhead lights leads nowhere, Murphy said that the Fairfax County Park Authority requested the tunnel to improve safe pedestrian access to Colvin Run Mill Park on the north and south sides of Rt. 7. The tunnel would allow citizens to enjoy the park's natural resources throughout and provide much-needed maintenance access to the southern portion of the park. In short, he said, it works.

Murphy said that the tunnel would enable park staff to interpret the cultural and natural heritage resources on the south side of Route 7 by guiding small site tours and school groups to the locations of the original mill dam, quarry, and other structures and features. However, it is at the Fairfax County Park Authority's discretion and responsibility to construct (and fund) new pathways in and out of the tunnel on parkland to improve pedestrian access to the underpass.

The project is not yet fully funded, said Ben Boxer, spokesperson for Fairfax County Park Authority. "The archeology investigations and design are in progress, and the trail alignment and bridge location are scoped. We are currently preparing to meet with the Architectural Review Board (ARB) in June to discuss the scope before finalizing the design."

Until the pedestrian paths are fully funded and constructed, the tunnel is more than likely being put to good use by facilitating safe wildlife movement under Rt. 7, reducing in part the possibility and number of animal/vehicle collisions and deaths on Rt.7. The animals that find the tunnel may increase their territories to locate food, water, and mates as it safely connects the two sides of Rt.7's natural habitats previously separated by the multi-lane, high-traffic-volume highway.

## Fairfax

FACETS Gives Five Awards to Volunteers for Efforts to Prevent Homelessness



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRITTANY CUMMINGS PHOTOGRAPHY  
Betsy Miles of Fairfax receives FACETS' Volunteer of the Year award from Joe Fay, executive director of FACETS.

FACETS held its volunteer appreciation event on April 26. "We are excited to recognize the people and organizations in these five volunteer award categories, making it possible

to center our services on the community," said FACETS Executive Director Joe Fay. FACETS presented the Volunteer of the Year award to Betsy Miles, FACETS' administrative volunteer, in recognition of almost a dozen years of service to the organization.

Facets recognized all 40 hypothermia host locations with the Volunteer Group of the Year Award. Over 18 weeks of service, they welcomed 380 guests. Thanks to their support, FACETS connected with and housed 18 individuals.

Bob Hunter quickly became a valuable team member, helping with food distributions, diaper deliveries, and the maintenance of FACETS vehicles, which presented him with the Fledgling of the Year Award.

A VCU student, Lena Roberts won the Intern of the Year Award for her work on the Permanent Supportive Housing team. Starbucks Corporation won the Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award for taking on many Hot Meals shifts and supporting FACETS as an event sponsor.

## Great Falls

Great Falls' Forestville Historic School House part of a NOVA Historic Schoolhouse Day tour.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Jani, 5, and his parents visited the Forestville Schoolhouse at 9812 Georgetown Pike to experience a day as a student in a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century schoolhouse. Jani, 5, is joined by Julie Maher, director of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, Bill Canis, Winnie Frost, and upon Jani's request, Oshi, the guest Pomeranian.



Raise your hand if you knew that Saturday, May 4, was Historic Schoolhouse Day in Northern Virginia.

"It is a day established by The Historic Schoolhouses of Northern Virginia (Association)," said Julie Maher, the director of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, which operates the Forestville Schoolhouse at 9812 Georgetown Pike, as she welcomed people into the schoolhouse.

Participants in the free event could pick up a passport at any of the seven schoolhouse locations, get it stamped as they visited each one, and complete a scavenger hunt. Mayer showcased a collection of carefully selected historical artifacts, teaching materials, news clippings, photographs, and more inside the Great Falls Forestville Schoolhouse.

The charming, freshly painted schoolhouse boasted the added comfort of its first-ever HVAC system, which was turned on and functioning for its first day, coinciding with Historic Schoolhouse Day in Northern Virginia. This made it an inviting space for visitors.

According to the displayed materials, the Forestville Schoolhouse's initial one-room school dates back to February 1889, with the second classroom on its left added in 1912. Fairfax County Public Schools reports that the added classroom is one room of the three-room deconstructed Floris Schoolhouse transported by horse and cart to the Forestville location to create its two-room graded school.

The Historic Schoolhouses of Northern Virginia Association organized the event, which included a day of fun, information, and interactive experiences celebrating Fairfax County's school heritage and early education. The tour fea-

SEE COMMUNITY AT GLANCE, PAGE 11  
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## COMMUNITY AT GLANCE

FROM PAGE 10

tured the seven schoolhouses of Laurel Grove, Sydenstricker, Crouch, Oakton, Second Street, Vale, and Forestville.

The Great Falls Grange Foundation rents the schoolhouse, the nearby Great Falls Grange, and the Pavilion as event spaces. Visit <https://www.gfgrange.org/> to learn more.

### Student Jade Arnold of Great Fall Receives Youth Native Habitat Award

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The Youth Native Habitat Garden Grant Committee hosted a ceremony on Sunday, May 5, at 2 p.m. at the Great Falls Library and presented Jade Arnold of Great Falls with



a certificate and \$300 cash to establish a native habitat garden.

Many Great Falls Garden Club members and the Friends of the Great Falls Library attended and offered Jade their support and congratulations. The two organizations jointly financed the award, available to students in grades 5-11 living in the 22066 zip code.

Holding her certificate, Arnold named some of the first native garden plants she would purchase: "Southern Sundrops, Blue wild indigo, Turk's Lily and American Wisteria."

### Walker Bridge Project Update

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Update: Walker Road (Rt. 681), known for its narrow Walker Bridge, is a vital link between Rt.



7 and the Village of Great Falls.

Certain drivers and homeowners familiar with Walker Bridge in Great Falls are concerned about its potential dangers. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) declined the Great Falls Citizens Association's request to pause the Walker Road Bridge Replacement Project until safety studies are conducted. VDOT proceeded with preliminary construction work, which involved relocation of utility service to accommodate the larger replacement bridge.

The GFCMA May 1, 2024 Newsletter highlights what it says is VDOT's lack of transparency regarding a safety study. Despite VDOT's promise to complete the [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

study and present its findings at a public forum, GFCMA says it has been unable to obtain crucial details such as the study's scope and the entity responsible for conducting it.

"VDOT has not been transparent and GFCMA has not been able to learn the important details of the study, its scope, or who will be conducting the study," states the Newsletter.

Mike Murphy, senior communications Specialist for the Virginia Department of Transportation Northern Virginia District, has yet to respond to The Connection's request for comment on the matter.

### Herndon Big Truck Day 2024

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Big Truck Day returned on Friday, May 3, in The Town of Herndon, at its Public Works Maintenance Complex. Children, like brothers Michael, 6, and Bryan, 8, enjoyed seeing big trucks up close. "I like this snow plow," said Bryan. "I'd like to work here," said Michael.



Tammy Chastain, Public Works director, said that the department hosts Big Truck Day to interact with parents and children, show them what they work with and do, and be more personal about who they are. "You know, we're out there collecting your garbage, and come see what we know and what we operate."

### Rock'n at 30th Season Opening of the Chamber's Friday Night Live!

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Jenn Griffith of Great Falls joins her Reston friends Ben and Kristi Guidry, Jenn Heffner, Melissa Romano, and John Devaney for the first Friday Night Live! performance of the 2024 concert season on Friday, May 3. Supported by volunteer staff of almost 100 people on Friday, the live concert on the Town Green behind the Herndon Municipal Center featured the tribute band Three Sheets to the Wind, belting out AM Gold Yacht Rock classics from the 1970s and 1980s.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS  
SEE COMMUNITY AT GLANCE, PAGE 17

## CIVIL WAR BOOKS, RELICS & MEMORABILIA SHOW

Saturday, May 18, 10:00 – 4:00

Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, Rt. 50, Fairfax, VA

Admission, \$5 Per Person

Vendors Welcome

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**VDOT** Virginia Department of Transportation

### PUBLIC NOTICE

### Gunston Cove Road Lorton Market Street Proposed Through Truck Restriction Fairfax County

Notice is hereby given that the Virginia Department of Transportation is accepting comments through **June 10, 2024** regarding the approximately 1.05-mile proposed restriction of through truck traffic on Gunston Cove Road/Lorton Market Street (Route 1572) from Richmond Highway (Route 1) to Lorton Road (Route 642) in Fairfax County.

The proposed alternate route for trucks is approximately 1.98 miles via Richmond Highway and Lorton Road.

Submit your written comments to Mr. Nhan Vu, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax VA 22030, or email [meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov). Please reference "Gunston Cove Road/Lorton Market Street Proposed Through Truck Restriction" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.



Members of the 28th Massachusetts Infantry, Company B, teaching visitors how to handle wooden “muskets.”



The ever-popular hayride is about to start.

# Visiting the Past, Caring about the Future

Combining local history with Earth Day activities, Fairfax City’s HisTree Day was April 27 at Historic Blenheim.



Illustrating a mid-19th-century laundry are (from left) Anna Lee and Isabelle Schwarz with Lee’s twins, (from left) Joey and Charlie, 4-1/2.



From left, James McVicker, Nick Bright and Jim McVicker (James’s dad) portray recruiters for the 8th Virginia Infantry, Company G, at the start of the Civil War.



From left are Anthony Jones and Dr. Michael Hill, both representing the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Company B; and Ed Gantt, 23rd Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops. There were 175 units of Colored Troops – and nearly 200,000 African Americans total – who fought in the Civil War. Hill also portrayed Dr. Alexander Augusta, the first Black Union doctor.



Lee Cramp with the Potomac Wheelmen representing 1890s bicyclists. That’s when women first started riding bikes to promote the suffrage movement.



Decorating cookies at Fairfax City’s information booth are (from left) Emily Humphreys and Phoebe Wilhelm of Girl Scout Troop 55065 of Providence Elementary.



Promoting monarch-butterfly conservation are (from left) Yvonne Sening, Nicole Powlison and Dara Aldridge with the Woman’s Club of Fairfax (GFWC).

SEE MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 13

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# NEWS



From left, Ashim Dey and Evgeniya Struts, with Save Soil, raise awareness about soil depletion and advocate for policy changes to increase organic content in soil.



Kevin Romance with FABB, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling.



With Friends of Accotink Creek, Katy Johnson and Philip Latasa give away native plants rescued from the City's Stafford Drive Park before stream restoration there. Rescues continue this summer; for dates, see [www.accotink.org](http://www.accotink.org).



George Mason's 8th Green Machine Regiment Band performing at HisTree Day.



From left, Melissa Pennett and Stefanie Kupka, with Fairfax City's Environmental Sustainability Division, discuss composting and how people may recycle and reduce their waste at home.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

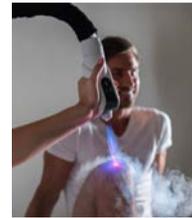
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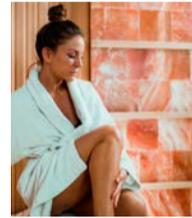
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Cutting the ribbon are (from left) Page Johnson, Rachid Elkhassouani, Josh Jnah, Adam Bradley, Tara Borwey, Beth Young, Catherine Read and Doug Church.



Listening to Josh Jnah (with microphone) speak are (from left) Rachid Elkhassouani, Page Johnson, Adam Bradley, Catherine Read and Beth Young.

# Celebrating Red Hot & Blue's New Fairfax Location

**'Hometown restaurant' for barbecue and 'true Southern cuisine.'**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**F**or the popular barbecue restaurant Red Hot & Blue, it's out with the old and in with the new. In February, it closed its signature Fairfax City location on Chain Bridge Road and, instead, is focusing on its recently opened eatery at the other end of the City.

The new spot is at 10940 Fairfax Blvd. in the Fairfax Marketplace shopping center, near Audacious Aleworks. And if customers want to enjoy both places at once, they can order food via QR Code from Red Hot & Blue – while enjoying a beer at the brewery – and the restaurant will bring it to them.

People may dine leisurely inside Red Hot & Blue or take advantage of its outdoor seating. But for those in a hurry, needing to get their food quickly and go, the owners say they can get them in and out in just two minutes.

Hours are 11 a.m.-9 p.m., daily, and catering is available. For ordering, see RedHotandBlue.com or call 703-520-0872.

In addition, said Red Hot & Blue CEO Adam Bradley, "We do school-spirit nights, giving a portion of the proceeds back to the school."

He and the restaurant's owners, Rachid Elkhassouani and Josh Jnah, gathered outside of it for its ribbon cutting, emceed by Fairfax City Economic Development's Tara Borwey. And possibly no one was happier about the new loca-



Outside the new location are (from left) Josh Jnah, Catherine Read and Rachid Elkhassouani.

tion than Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read.

"Red Hot & Blue has been such a great community partner in the City of Fairfax for such a long time," she said. "And their [former] location near City Hall hosted so many community events that people in the City of Fairfax really see Red Hot & Blue as a hometown restaurant."

"The fact that its new location was chosen here, in the Kamp Washington area, benefits me, personally," continued Read. "The opening of the Hill Street pedestrian cut-through makes this location a three-minute walk from my house – even with my dog. So this has opened opportunities for my neighborhood, Fairchester Woods, and Cobbdale, to take advantage of Red Hot & Blue without having to go across town."

"We welcome Josh and Rachid and commend them on their great analysis for where this should be in Fairfax City. It offers excellent barbecue and true Southern cuisine, and we look forward to having you here for a very long time." Read then gave an enthusiastic plug for

the restaurant's Idaho Stuffed Pig – a large potato stuffed with Carolina pulled pork, cheddar cheese, green onions and butter – which is her favorite item on the menu.

Next, Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Chairman Doug Church called Red Hot & Blue and its owners "just incredible members of the Chamber. It's been such a nice partnership. And they're the host for our annual Independence Day Parade breakfast for local people, politicians and leaders. It's always very well attended, and we really do appreciate it. I'm also a big patron of theirs. Congratulations, guys, and thank you so much for your support."

In response, Elkhassouani thanked everyone for coming to the ribbon cutting and said he and Jnah took over the previous location in 2018. "This one is about the food quality and the speed of service," he said. "It's an honor to be in Fairfax City. Go, Red Hot & Blue!"

Then, pointing to Bradley, Jnah thanked him for his help in making the new location a reality. Also thanking the City, Jnah said he and



Pitmaster Soufiane Radwane holds a Memphis-style, beef brisket sandwich before adding coleslaw and barbecue sauce to it.

Elkhassouani pride themselves on offering their customers barbecue that's made fresh daily. "That's very important," he added.

Fairfax City Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson said he looked forward to "counting the money" this restaurant will yield. And Beth Young, the City's Economic Development Authority Chair, told the owners, "I'm excited that you're here, and we're very happy to have you."

Bradley said the new location was the culmination of two years of planning and he was pleased to see it finally come to fruition. "We know there's growth and opportunity here," he said. "Thanks to all of you, and we want the community to know Red Hot & Blue is as good as always, just faster and more focused on barbecue. That's what we're about."

The first Red Hot & Blue opened in Arlington in 1988, thanks to the collaboration of a group of friends who shared Southern roots, an appreciation for authentic, Memphis-style barbecue and a love of blues music. The Memphis-style barbecue is slow cooked in a pit with the ribs covered in either a dry rub of salt and spices before cooking or a sauce. And the restau-



A Memphis-style, beef brisket sandwich on a platter.

rant honors the blues' influence on American culture in its name.

The menu features hickory-smoked ribs, plus barbecued pulled pork, smoked chicken, tender beef brisket, smoked sausage, sandwiches, salads and desserts including chocolate chess pie, banana pudding and fruit cobbler.

Jnah said the most popular item at their new location is the beef brisket, slow cooked for 12 hours with hickory smoke and served with potato salad. And customers may also have different meats on one platter.

Other favorites, said Elkhassouani, are the St. Louis-style ribs, Kansas City chicken wings (smoked before frying), macaroni and cheese, baked beans and homemade hushpuppies. "We feature Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Memphis and Maryland styles of barbecue," he said. "And Red Hot & Blue's signature barbecue sauces come in mild, sweet, vinegar and hot versions."

Elkhassouani said that, after the pandemic, curbside pickup and outdoor seating became especially important, and this location offers both. Besides that, he added, "People come here because of our Southern hospitality, great barbecue, good service, friendly people and fresh food every day."

# Fernandez Is Sully Police Officer of the Quarter

Officer Joseph Fernandez was recently honored as the Sully District Police Station's Officer of the Quarter for January, February and March. He was feted at the April 10 meeting of the station's Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

Fernandez has been with the Fairfax County Police Department for just over two and a half years and, at the time of the ceremony, was assigned to Sully's Midnights A patrol squad. Capt. Ryan Low, the station's assistant commander, wrote the letter nominating him for the honor.

"Officer Fernandez has consistently demonstrated a dedication to the arrest of impaired drivers," wrote Low.

"Since starting with the Department, he has maintained a strong desire to remove intoxicated drivers from the roadways and protect the community."

Low noted that, during every shift, Fernandez proactively sought out drunk drivers. In addition, he

routinely volunteered to participate in DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols throughout the county.

"Fernandez was Sully's representative for last summer's crime initiative targeting impaired drivers," wrote Low. "His dedication to arresting impaired drivers continued into 2024. He currently leads all FCPD officers for the number of DWI arrests."

In fact, he's done so well in this field that Fernandez was selected to become a full-time member of the Department's DWI Enforcement Squad.

"Although he will be leaving the Sully District Station, we are confident he will continue his success with combating impaired driving throughout the county," wrote Low. "Due to his hard work, reliability and dedication to protecting the community members of Fairfax County, we are honored to select Officer Fernandez as Sully's CAC Officer of the Quarter."

- BONNIE HOBBS



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left are CAC Chair Tom Pickett, Officer Joseph Fernandez, and Capt. Ryan Low.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## WEDNESDAYS

### THROUGH SATURDAYS

**Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### AT COLVIN RUN MILL.

**Mill tours every weekend from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

May 19th; June 2nd and June 16th – Mill in Motion: the mill is operating, the miller is grinding grain, the Northern Virginia Woodcarvers and a local blacksmith are demonstrating their skills. On June 16th, Father's Day, Mill in Motion welcomes fathers and grandfathers with free admission.

May 19 – Engineering Then & Now: Learn about engineers of the past, including Oliver Evans who invented the system that runs Colvin Run Mill; speak with contemporary engineers and participate in engineering problem-solving.

June 8 – Brownie Badge Day: Girl Scouts can earn two badges.

June 15 and 19 – Colvin Run Before & After the 13th Amendment (12-Adult): Learn how enslaved and free African Americans helped build and maintain the mill and the Colvin Run community. Discover how, after slavery was outlawed, African Americans developed more connections to the community and created spaces of their own.

## PARK AUTHORITY, MASTER GARDENERS OFFER FREE

### VEGETABLE GARDEN CLINICS

As spring blooms, the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Fairfax County Master Gardeners extend a warm invitation to all gardening enthusiasts for a series of free Vegetable Garden Plant Clinics. These educational programs, offered in collaboration with the Fairfax County Master Gardeners and the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), aim to cultivate a deeper understanding of gardening practices and foster a sense of community among green thumbs of all levels.

Join expert gardeners at a variety of locations as they provide valuable insights, answer questions, distribute soil sample kits, and offer complimentary analyses of plant and pest issues. These clinics are scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following Saturdays: May 11, June 8, July 13, Aug. 10 and Sept. 14. Clinics will be held concurrently on each of these dates at eight locations across Fairfax County:

Pine Ridge Park, 3401 Woodburn Road, Annandale  
Baron Cameron Park, 11300 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston  
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean  
Grist Mill Park, 4320 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria  
Grove Point Park, 6432 Bowie Drive,

Springfield  
George Mason Park, 9700 Braddock Road, Fairfax  
Hogge Park, 3139 Glen Carlyn Road, Falls Church  
Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

**Walk With Dr. Rinka Mehra.** 10 a.m. Meet at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Walk with Dr. Rinka Mehra is a new initiative aimed at encouraging families to participate in a monthly walk to promote a healthy community and encourage active lifestyles. Walk with Dr. Mehra offers participants the opportunity to engage in safe physical activity while gaining valuable health information and connecting with others in their community. Visit <https://www.themehraclinic.com/about>

## FAIRFAX COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS

### READY FOR 2024 SEASON

**The opening of the 2024 Farmers Market season** is fast approaching and the Park Authority, along with dozens of local food producers, will have tons of fresh and healthy foods waiting for you at all 10 markets located throughout the county. This year, you can expect to find locally grown produce, delicious baked goods and prepared foods at the farmers markets. Additionally, enjoy a variety of family-friendly activities from musical performances, games, and don't forget to bring your food scraps to support our community composting efforts! The 2024 season begins April 17 with the McCutcheon/Mount Vernon Market. Check out our full market schedule for the latest times and locations.

## WEDNESDAYS

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon  
April 17-Dec. 18, 8 a.m. - noon  
Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria

Oakmont  
May 1-Nov. 6, 8 a.m.-noon  
Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton

Wakefield  
May 1 – Oct. 30, 2-6 p.m.  
Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale

## THURSDAYS

Annandale  
May 2 -Nov. 14, 8 a.m. - noon  
Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale

Herndon  
May 2 -Nov. 7, 8 a.m. - noon  
Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn St., Herndon (by the Red Caboose)

## FRIDAYS

McLean  
May 3-Nov. 15, 8 a.m.-noon  
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean

Kingstowne  
May 3-Oct. 25, 3-7 p.m.  
In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center, Alexandria

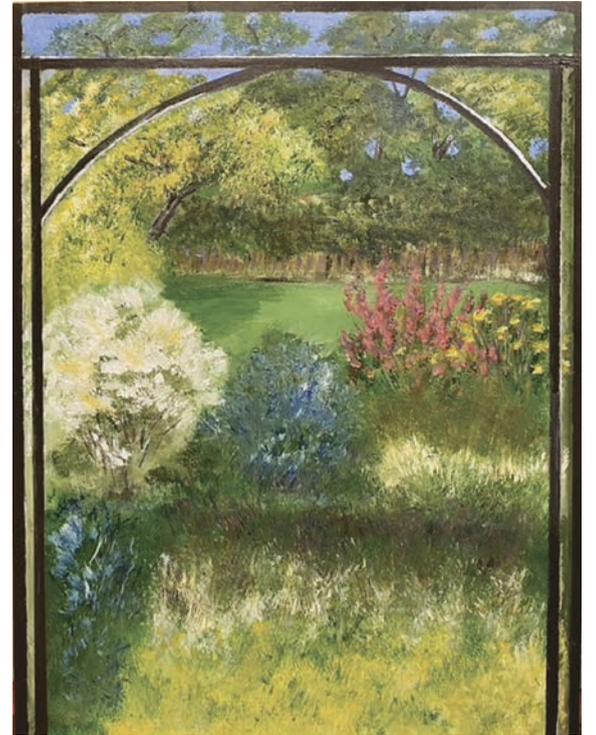
## SATURDAYS

Burke  
April 20-Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-noon  
VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke

Reston  
April 27-Dec. 7, 8 a.m.-noon  
Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston

## SUNDAYS

Lorton  
May 5-Nov. 10, 8 a.m.-noon  
VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station



The McLean Art Society Spring Art Show and Sale will take place May 10-12, 2024 in Arlington.

## McLean Art Society Spring Art Show and Sale

At the Exhibition Hall of Church of the Covenant, 2666 N. Military Road, Arlington. Sponsored by McLean Art Society and featuring works of over 20 talented local artists. Attendees can participate in a free raffle to win an original work of art, jewelry or fine art note cards, with hourly drawings throughout the week-end. A reception is planned for Friday, May 10 from 5-8 p.m. with the announcement of awards juried by acclaimed oil painter, Kurt Anderson, whose own works are featured in many of the leading galleries and museums in the country. Guests can enjoy an array of refreshments and meet the artists and the jurors. Hours of the show are Friday, May 10, 5-8 p.m., Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. -4 p.m., Sunday, May 12, 12-3 p.m. Free to the public.

The Dream, Design, and Build: Home Expo 2024 takes place on Saturday, May 11, 2024 in Reston.

## Dream, Design, and Build: Home Expo 2024

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At AKG Design Studio, 1081 Old Reston Ave., Reston. Sponsored by AKG Design Studio and GMJ Construction LLC. In collaboration with several experts in the home renovation industry, the Dream, Design, and Build: Home Expo 2024 will offer attendees opportunities to learn and experience demonstrations as well as product showcasing. It will feature ABW Appliances, We Are Eden, The Lester Group Inc., Virginia Marble & Granite, Smart Automation Solutions, ABC Glass and Mirror, Genesis Chimney Services, Truist, Sherwin Williams, Kohler, and MP Movers LLC.

Bld., Lorton  
Visit the Farmers Market website for complete information about this year's markets – including details on SNAP benefits for eligible households available at designated locations. Contact the Community Horticulture Office at 702-642-0128.

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 8

**Union Jobs and Career Fair.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center,

Chantilly. Free event to meet with Union recruiters and hear about and apply for exciting career opportunities.

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 8

**"Parasite" Film.** 6:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Greed and class discrimination threaten the newly formed symbiotic relationship between the wealthy Park family and the destitute Kim clan. Winner of a Cannes Film Festival and Oscar

award.

## MAY 9, 11

**"Les Miserables."** 7 p.m. At Hayfield Secondary School Auditorium, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. The Hayfield Dramahawks present the musical "Les Miserables." Come enjoy this show which will make you laugh, cry and everything in between! They also offer affordable concessions, making it a great

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 18

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# COMMUNITY AT GLANCE

FROM PAGE 11

Friday Night Live! drew a packed crowd to its first production of 2024, leaving little, if any, standing room on Town Green beyond the sidewalks. The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce produces and presents the free event, perfect for all ages.



PHOTO BY  
MERCIA  
HOBSON/ THE  
CONNECTION

Father-son cyclist team, Dan and Max Friedman, moments before joining the peloton.



Supervisor Walter Alcorn (Hunter Mill) invited the community to explore the district on two bike-friendly routes, long and short, highlighting the district's Reston and Vienna areas. This year's routes included a stretch on Fairfax County's portion of the W&OD Trail, the newly opened shared-use path along Route 7, and a stop at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens.

With a start at the North County Government Center, Alcorn thanked the many groups that would be supporting the day's ride, from the Reston Bike Club marshals, Reston Community Center that provided food and drinks, NOVA Parks, and the Fairfax County Police Department officers, who riders would see along the route. "They're going to keep all of us safe," said Alcorn.

Among all the riders was a father-son team, Dan and Max Friedman. "I've been biking for about a year now, but this is going to be my longest distance," said young Max. Dan explained that he runs races with his other son, but bike riding and the Tour de Hunter Mill would allow him and Max to go the distance.

"Remember, don't go too fast," Alcorn warned. Alcorn thanked his office staff, saying, "You guys have been great. So, with that, we are ready to roll."

## Reston

Tour de Hunter Mill District 2024

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Supervisor  
Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION



Supervisor Walter Alcorn and his office staff bid farewell to the Tour de Hunter Mill District long-distance riders heading toward the W&OD trail and the newly opened shared-use path alongside a portion of Rt. 7. Alcorn rode with the shorter-distance riders.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION



And, they're off, on the Tour de Hunter Mill District.

## Vienna

The Town of Vienna adopts ordinance changes committing to mature tree canopy: Vienna volunteers plant future tree canopy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF VIENNA

The future tree canopy in the Town of Vienna is taking root. Volunteers planted 75 native trees and shrubs along the East Creek Trail in Vienna on Saturday, April 27, 2024, as part of the new Robinson Trust initiative.

In a two-step action, the Town of Vienna demonstrated its commitment to its existing and future tree canopy. On Saturday, April 27, as part of the new Robinson Trust initiative, volunteers planted 75 native trees and shrubs along the East Creek Trail in Vienna.

During its regular meeting on Monday, April 29, the Vienna Town Council adopted amendments to the Town Code that shifted the ordinance's approach from tree replacement to tree conservation during

SEE COMMUNITY AT GLANCE, PAGE 19

# Here's What's Happening at MCC!

MAY  
10

**Presented by The Alden**

(the) Unruly Theatre Project  
Friday, May 10, 7 p.m.

Free admission

MAY  
16

**Presented by The Alden**

Performing Arts Movie  
"Wagner & Me"  
Thursday, May 16, 1 p.m.

Free admission

MAY  
17

**Produced by the  
McLean Community Center**

McLean Day T.G.I.F. Carnival Rides  
Friday, May 17, 2-10 p.m.

Lewinsville Park,  
1659 Chain Bridge Rd.

MAY  
18

**Produced by the  
McLean Community Center**

McLean Day Festival  
Saturday, May 18, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

1659 Chain Bridge Rd.  
McLean, Va. 22101  
Free admission

MAY  
22

**MCC Governing Board**

Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, May 22, 6:30 p.m.

All Governing Board meetings  
are open to the public.



The McLean  
Community Center  
mcleancenter.org

Home of The Alden Theatre  
aldentheatre.org

1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101

703-790-0123, TTY: 711

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**Yard Sale**

**Community  
Yard Sale**

Sat, May 18, 2024,  
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Sterling, VA, 20164

Buyers No admission Fee.

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lot spaces for \$30.

Contact [Cristina.wyche@lcps.org](mailto:Cristina.wyche@lcps.org)

**Legals**

**City of Fairfax  
Urgent Election Notice**

The registration deadline to vote in  
the June 18, 2024 Dual Party Primary  
is Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

Applications must be postmarked by  
this date or received in-person by 5 p.m.  
You may also apply online by 11:59 p.m.  
at <https://elections.virginia.gov>.

Office hours: M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
10455 Armstrong Street, Suite 300  
Fairfax, VA 703-385-7890.

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**CALENDAR**

FROM PAGE 16

way to entertain the whole family on a budget. Tickets available at [www.hayfielddrama.com](http://www.hayfielddrama.com) and at the door before each show.

**FRIDAY/MAY 10**

**Outdoor Spring Concert.** 7-8:30

p.m. At Smith Chapel Global Methodist Church, 11321 Beach Mill Road, Great Falls. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served starting at 6 p.m. Michael O'Brien, a Christian Pop and Contemporary Worship Musician, will perform from the Church Gazebo. People attending are asked to bring a lawn chair.

**MAY 10-11**

**Academy Showcase.** 7 p.m. At

The Vault at Capital One Hall in Tysons. Metropolitan School of the Arts (MSA), a non-profit performing arts school in Alexandria, will perform its 11th Anniversary Academy Showcase. Eighteen MSA students, ages 13 to 18, will present selections from Oklahoma!, Moulin Rouge, The Burn, Something Rotten and many more. Tickets are \$30 each at [www.metropolitanarts.org/tickets](http://www.metropolitanarts.org/tickets). Tickets for seniors and children age 12 and younger are \$25.

**SATURDAY/MAY 11**

**Park 'n' Bark.** 1 p.m. At Ellanor C.

Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Come enjoy a great day in the park with your friendly best friend! Enjoy treats and snacks for dogs and humans alike! Experience dog-themed vendors, live music and adoptable dogs.

**SATURDAY/MAY 11**

**2024 Asian American and Pacific Islander Festival.** Noon to 4 p.m.

At Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Celebrate Fairfax County's rich cultural diversity at the 2024 Asian American and Pacific Islander Festival. The Fairfax County Park Authority is joining with the Asian Community Center for an afternoon of incredible performances, demonstrations, activities and mouthwatering delicacies. Enjoy an unforgettable day filled with cultural delights and community spirit during Asian American and Pacific Islander Month. Attendees will have the opportunity to savor every aspect of Asian heritage. Prepare to be mesmerized by traditional lion and dragon dances, participate in art contests and marvel at the colorful Cultural Parade weaving through the park.

**SATURDAY/MAY 11**

**Annual Eagle Festival.** 10 a.m. to 4

p.m. At Mason Neck State Park in Lorton. Park staff along with many exhibitors will be on the visitor center lawn for a full day of animal shows, hands-on activities, and outdoor recreation clinics that aim to highlight the rich natural history of Northern Virginia as well as foster stewardship of our environment. Guests will be able to see animals such as hawks and owls up close as well as learn about the majestic bald eagles, with the hopes of seeing one in flight during the event.

Parking for the event this year will be located offsite at Pohick Bay Regional Park at the Pirate's Cove

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 19

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# COMMUNITY AT GLANCE

FROM PAGE 17

land development. The council adopted the tree ordinance changes. The ordinance includes requirements and incentives for developers to conserve existing trees rather than replace them.

"Under the new ordinance, developers will continue to be required to submit a site plan to the Town that details a tree inventory, tree preservation measures, and tree replacement as necessary, as part of the construction permitting process. The ordinance changes take effect July 29, 2024," according to a town news release.

## Mt. Vernon

### Honoring FXCO Retiree Charles Smith

In January of 2024, Smith retired as Watershed Project Implementation Branch Chief. In this role, he led a team responsible for designing, constructing, and monitoring water quality improvement projects. These projects aimed to safeguard public safety, meet federal and state permits, and improve the local environment, including stream corridor restoration. Smith managed the team responsible for creating and monitoring project budgets totaling over \$50 million, annual work plans, capital funding plans, strategic plan actions, and agency plans.



PHOTO INSTAGRAM SUPDANSTORCK

At the Environment Expo in late April, Fairfax County Supervisors Dan Storck (Mount Vernon) and James Walkinshaw (Braddock) paid tribute to Charles Smith, recognizing his 26 years of service to the county and its residents as the former Branch Chief at the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 18

Waterpark. Shuttles will be provided to and from the festival at Mason Neck State Park and will run about every 15-20 minutes from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. For more event details visit [www.virginiastateparks.gov/eaglefestival](http://www.virginiastateparks.gov/eaglefestival).

### SATURDAY/MAY 11

**Indigo Girls.** At Capital One Hall in Tysons. For these special symphony shows, the iconic folk duo brought in musical arrangers Sean O'Loughlin (Chris Isaak, Feist, The Decemberists, Josh Ritter) and Stephen Barber (Rosanne Cash, John Legend) to write orchestral charts for a selection of songs spanning their career, from the 1980s on.

### SATURDAY/MAY 11

**Annual Spring Faire.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The Women's Club of Springfield Annual Spring Faire Craft and Vendor Show. Proceeds benefit the Bethany House. Visit the website: <https://womansclubofspringfield.org/spring-faire/>

### SATURDAY/MAY 11

**Pedal With Petals.** 8-11 a.m. At the Parking Lot of The Concourse, 1593 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Join in the Tysons second annual Pedal With Petals for a day of cycling fun. The main ride starts at 9 a.m. with a family-friendly loop ride at 9:30 a.m. Plus, there is something for everyone with free bike tune-ups, face painting, coffee, pastries, and a sweet ice cream treat post-ride. Register here: <https://tysonsva.org/pedal-with-petals>

### MAY 12 TO JUNE 16

**HomeAid Diaper Drive.** Being held community-wide in Northern Virginia. HomeAid National Capital Region's diaper drive is a community-wide donation drive aimed at collecting diapers and wipes for families in need. Sign-up to host a donation site, purchase diapers online, or volunteer to count, sort, and deliver diapers. May 12th - June 16th. Visit [www.homeaidncr.org](http://www.homeaidncr.org).

### TUESDAY/MAY 14

**Corporate Leadership Summit.** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At DC Prime, 20120 Lakeview Center Plaza, Ashburn. Hosted by the Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce (NVBCC). This year's summit will center on exploring a variety of alternative funding sources that are pivotal for business growth and sustainability. Attendees will be treated to a delicious lunch courtesy of DC Prime and will have the unique opportunity to hear from a distinguished panel of industry experts, including:



The McLean Day Festival takes place on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at Lewinsville Park.

## McLean Day Festival

11 a.m.-5 p.m. At Lewinsville Park, McLean. Come to McLean's biggest annual festival! Great music, gourmet food trucks, games, 100+ exhibitors, sponsors, giveaways, balloon animals, magician, petting zoo, amusements, large and small carnival rides and much more! This event draws approximately 10,000+ patrons throughout the day. Ride tickets sold onsite and in advance online.

Keynote Speaker: Joseph Benevento, President & CEO of Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation

Featured Speaker: Brandon Ferris, Business Development Manager, Loudoun County Economic Development

Keynote Panelists:

Larry G. Webb, District Director, Small Business Administration

Eric Alston, Relationship Manager, Washington Area Community Investment Fund

Verniece Love, Deputy Director, VA Small Business Supplier Diversity

Rachel Wilson, Managing Partner, The BFM Fund

Sean Mallon, VP of Commercialization, Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation

### TUESDAY/MAY 14

**NARFE Chapter Meeting.** 1 p.m. At Vienna Community Center. Guest speaker - Linda Colbert, Mayor of Vienna. Members and guests welcome. For info, call 703-205-9041.

### THURSDAY/MAY 16

**"Wagner & Me" Movie.** 1 pm. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingelside Ave., McLean. Jewish-American Heritage Month Selection. Stephen Fry's journey to reconcile his Jewish heritage with his love of Richard Wagner's

music. Programs subject to change. Not rated.

### THURSDAY/MAY 16

#### McLean Project for the Arts Spring Benefit.

7:30-9:30 p.m. McLean home of Mark Lowham and Joseph Ruzzo. Join them for an enchanted evening in the beautiful backyard of Mark Lowham and Joseph Ruzzo. Co-chaired by Cynthia Steele Vance and Mandy Mafi, this sunset party will feature an exhibition by artists Chee Keong Kung and live music by DC Martini. Delegate Kathleen Murphy will serve as this year's Guest of Honor.

### FRIDAY/MAY 17

#### Bike to Work Day 2024.

At over 100 Pit Stops Located Across the Metropolitan Washington Region. Join thousands of area commuters for the free 23rd annual event celebrating bicycling as a fun, low-cost, healthy, and environmentally friendly way to get around. Riders can find Bike to Work Day pit stops around the metropolitan region in DC, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. The first 16,000 to register and attend one of the pit stops will receive a free Bike to Work Day T-shirt. Pit Stop information is available at <https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/find-your-pit-stop>

## The Doggone Truth



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When your computer is incapacitated because your golden retriever-puppy regularly lays himself down under your desk smack dab in the middle of all the jumbled computer/cable wires and inadvertently disconnects something and you can't figure it out, it's easy to blame the puppy; after all, that's what they do. However, the owner not being able to reconnect the wires/determine the reason for the loss of power; that's operator error - meaning yours truly. And though I may sound a bit amused now after the fact, for the three days I was disconnected from the world until my neighbor Robert returned home from North Carolina (who spent less than five minutes assessing and reconnecting my computer), I was most definitely at a loss of awareness and access, a pretty uncomfortable position.

A little background: my wife, Dina, is fond of saying about Burton (the golden): "Daddy's dog." Which means Burton is, generally speaking wherever I am. The reason being that goldens usually bond with one person in the household and I am his 'one.' Even though Dina and a neighbor drove four hours-plus to Lexington, Va. to meet up with the breeder, and then once home, Dina spent the next few months sleeping on the living-room couch next to Burton (in his crate) in order to take him outside multiple times during the night, (as puppies require to house-train as quickly as possible while I slept uninterrupted upstairs) didn't have an effect on Burton. Dina's over-night walks with him were a major commitment on her part and typically, the most arduous and hands-on task of puppy-hood. Once trained however, the joys of dog ownership increase exponentially. Despite Dina's months-long effort, Burton seems to have chosen me as "the bondee."

As such, often when I am sitting at my desk working on the computer, Burton is "denning" underneath, curled up with his head resting on the floor/wires. (Although I do cover the wires with an apron to minimize his direct involvement. Still, with miscellaneous dog and owner movements, invariably the wires and all get exposed.) I wouldn't want him any other place though. It's a great comfort to me - especially as a cancer patient, to have Burton at my feet/by my side/on the couch, et. cetera, to lessen the fear, anxiety, and occasional loneliness of a "terminal" diagnosis. (My original prognosis was "13 months to two years" in late Feb. 2009.) Having another life to take care of (Burton's) is a huge distractor and super positive reinforcer. And most importantly - and effectively, the presence and responsibility of owning a dog is a tremendous decompressor in my life, especially given the emotional demands of a cancer diagnosis.

Nevertheless, a cancer diagnosis plays havoc with your emotional state and your priorities. It's been my experience, (and I think 15+ years of gives me credibility), that your life changes after a cancer diagnosis (Duh!) But it's not as simple as that is obvious. Cancer takes over your life in numerous ways, some of which are top of mind, and others which are subconscious. Decision making, prioritizing, allocating, bucket-listing (if you're so inclined), what you want to eat, what you drink, what television shows you watch, what clothes you wear, what activities you engage in, and on and on and on. Cancer takes hold and without you realizing it, something or other matters for some reason - for which you have no substantive explanation except one: the cancer made me do it.

Moreover, your reactions, your mood, your tolerance (to people, places, and/or things), your inclinations, maybe even your instincts, become like those computer/cable wires: a jumbled mess. And just as I have no interest in unjamming those wires, even with Burton's current location (at my feet, laying on the wires) endangering my connections to the world, a recurring thought I have is: "I don't care. Life is too short. I can't be bothered." When Robert suggested that he could arrange/wrap the wires and cable so that Burton is less of a threat, I shrugged my shoulders. In many instances, cancer makes you stupid. Your brain reorients your thinking/problem solving in unfamiliar ways and the outcome in some cases, is not you - or not as you remember yourself. You don't exactly get lost in your cancer-affected world, but you definitely get somewhere different than you had been your entire pre-cancer diagnosis life.

Someplace where I had been in my pre-cancer life was with our second golden, Bailey, and so it only seems fitting and helpful to be back in the dog business. If there are computer problems because of it, so be it. It's not worth the aggravation. "Life's too short" (Don't I know it!)

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

# IN LOVING MEMORY

Jan Marie Laytham

September 2, 1946 - April 19, 2024



With Great Sorrow We Announce

The Loss Of Our Dear Friend And Colleague

Jan was devoted to the Great Falls community, served her clients tirelessly and loved her family dearly. She filled the world with joy. She will be greatly missed.

Dianne Van Volkenburg & the Long and Foster Community