

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

Far right, Lisa Maurer, an Apgar Place resident since 1992, joins Rachel Roberts, Henry Hanchulak, John Hanchulak, and Supervisor James Bierman at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new bridges and shared-use path provide a direct route to the Innovation Center Metro station for nearby residents.



SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 2 ❖ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16 ❖ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 18

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Students Seeking Peace
PAGE 3

Remembering Mike Frey
PAGE 8, 9, 13, 14, 15

Impossibly Hard
PAGE 11

Shortest
Distance
PAGE 10

**Soapstone Connector
Fairfax County**

Location & Design Public Hearing

**Monday, April 13, 2026
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

Presentation begins at 7 p.m.

Langston Hughes Middle School
(use Door #1 to access the cafeteria)
11401 Ridge Heights Road
Reston, VA 20191

Find out about plans to extend Soapstone Drive (Route 4720) north by approximately half a mile from Sunrise Valley Drive (Route 5320) to Sunset Hills Road (Route 675) via a new bridge over the Dulles Toll Road (Route 267), Dulles International Airport Access Highway, and Metrorail Silver Line. The new roadway will include two lanes (one in each direction), a painted median, shared-use path on the east side, and a two-way cycle track and sidewalk on the west side. The new roadway will have capacity for four lanes (two in each direction) without a median but will open to traffic with two lanes and a painted median. The project also includes upgrading the traffic signal at Sunrise Valley Drive and Soapstone Drive and, if deemed warranted, installing a new traffic signal at the new road's intersection at Sunset Hills Road and a potential shared-use path along the north side of Sunset Hills Road between the existing bus stops.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 23 CFR 771 and 23 CFR 774, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved a Revised Environmental Assessment (REA)/Final Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation prepared for this project and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on November 13, 2023. These environmental documents and other supporting studies are available through the project webpage listed below.

Stop by between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. to view displays and learn about the project. A presentation will begin at 7 p.m. Project staff will be available to answer your questions.

Review project information and public hearing details on the project webpage (<https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/Soapstone>) or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2768 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the hearing, or by **May 4, 2026**, via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Mr. Khalil Minhas, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Soapstone Connector" 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.

State Project: 4720-029-349, B649, C501, D611, P101, R201
UPC: 112479
Federal: STP-5A01(916)



Sign up for

**FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION
to all of our papers**



www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

SENIOR LIVING

**Lunar New Year Celebration Fills
Sunrise at Hunter Mill in Oakton**

Residents learn about the 2026 Year of the Horse.



Residents of Sunrise at Hunter Mill in Oakton enjoy activities celebrating the Lunar New Year on Saturday, Feb. 28. The celebration began with a performance by the Xuejuan Dance Ensemble in the Bistro, as seen here. The Lunar New Year is celebrated by billions of people across various cultures, including Vietnam (Tết), Korea (Seollal) and Tibet (Losar). For the 2026 cycle, the celebration began on Tuesday, Feb. 17, and will conclude with the Lantern Festival on March 3.



The daily activity board at Sunrise at Hunter Mill details an afternoon of Lunar New Year activities on Saturday, Feb. 28. The schedule includes a dance performance by the Xuejuan Dance Ensemble at 1 p.m., followed by lantern making at 2 p.m. and a screening of "The Joy Luck Club" at 2:30 p.m. The board also commemorates 2026 as the Year of the Horse.

— MERCIA HOBSON

PHOTOS BY
MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Peace as Means and End At 2026 Student Peace Awards

Powerful community recognition reaches beyond sports and academic achievements.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Amidst a backdrop of significant international tension, Fairfax County honored 28 recipients of the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County during a reception held at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 1, at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax. Now in its 20th year, the program is presented by a coalition of 15 secular and religious organizations, led by the founding Herndon Friends Meeting and the George Mason University Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Margaret Fisher, an organizer and member of Friends, opened the reception saying that in the past year, there have been eight major wars and 28 other armed conflicts worldwide. Despite this, Fisher said the ceremony highlights a localized reality of peace-building where students “shine their lights” to show that peace is possible.

Ryan McElveen, Fairfax County School Board member at-large, added during speaker remarks that the students are honored because they “chose courage over cynicism, compassion over indifference and service over self-interest.”

“They did not begin their projects seeking recognition,” McElveen said. “They acted because they saw a need.”

The ceremony highlighted the “intentional peacemaking” of students who treat harmony as an active practice rather than a passive goal. Fisher cited a conservative estimate of 240,000 people killed in 2025, with many more maimed, traumatized, starved and displaced. She acknowledges that recent events have added to the suffering and that it’s easy to feel futility that “lulls one into inaction.”

“Why keep struggling when the destructive elements of human nature are so ascendant in human culture?” Fisher asked.

Speaker U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11, addressed the temptation to withdraw or accept defeat in the movement toward peace during his remarks. “We cannot afford to do that,” Walkinshaw said. He connects his optimism to the students and to history, noting

SEE PEACE AS MEANS, PAGE 12
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The 2026 Student Peace Awards recipients of Fairfax County gather for a group photo during a reception honoring their achievements at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1.



Sheba Ahmadzai, a Centreville High School senior who coordinated more than 50 volunteers to deliver supplies to 15,000 people in Afghanistan, is joined by her father, Shirshah Ahmadzai at the 2026 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County.



Damika Ravi, a Fairfax High School senior, codveloped a presentation to school officials to influence local policy and foster a welcoming school environment.



Savanne Clark, center, a Mount Vernon High School senior who created a template for schools to display mental health resources, is joined by Mallory Whitehouse, left, her college and career specialist, and her mother, Michelle Willis.



U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11, says young people have repeatedly led the nation “out of the darkness and toward progress.”



Margaret Fisher of the Herndon Friends Meeting speaks during the 2026 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County ceremony.



School Board member Ryan McElveen praises honorees who “did not begin their projects seeking recognition” but “acted because they saw a need.”

Redistricting Special Election April 21?

Special election preparations begin amid conflicting court rulings.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

An April vote on Virginia congressional redistricting? Maybe; or maybe not. Fairfax County's Office of Elections, reached for comment on Feb. 23, indicated the office was preparing to conduct a Special Election on April 21 and early voting could begin at three sites on March 6.

The office would make "no comment" on pending appeals in the court systems related to the Special Election. With much time and work needed to prepare, the Office of Elections can not wait for a final decision to begin its preparations.

The final decision on holding voting will be made by the courts. But which court? On Feb. 13, the Virginia Supreme Court overruled a Tazewell County District Court stay on the special election. The Supreme Court ruled that the April 21 referendum could proceed in advance of its April 23 scheduled hearing of briefs from the parties. Just six days later, the Republican National Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee and Virginia Republican Representatives Ben Cline and Morgan Griffith sued the Virginia Department of Elections, in the Tazewell County District Court. That court imposed an emergency injunction blocking the special election for 90 days. Virginia Attorney General Jay Jones has petitioned the court to allow him to submit briefs challenging the injunction, saying the matter is already properly before the Virginia Supreme Court.

So Virginian voters might have an opportunity to weigh in on whether to allow an out-of-cycle redrawing of Congressional Districts. The final outcome depends upon the results of those countering appeals made to the courts. Even if the stay is removed and the Special Election vote is held, the Virginia Supreme Court could ultimately decide if the resulting vote can be considered.

Redistricting Background

Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution establishes that the Representatives of each State will be apportioned based on the population. Forming the voting districts which elect those representatives is left up to the states. Traditionally, after each ten year census, the number of each state's representatives is adjusted as necessary to

align with any population growth or shifts between states. There are now eleven Congressional Districts in Virginia.

It is also typical to adjust voting districts within the states after a census; done in a manner determined by each state. Those districts have often been set to favor the political party in power. In 2020, in what was considered a reform action, Virginia passed a constitutional amendment to stipulate use of a non-partisan, 16 member commission to draw congressional and state legislative district lines. In that first 2020 census cycle, the commission failed to pass a plan, so the state supreme court took over, in accordance with the statute. The seven justices are selected by majority vote of both houses of the General Assembly for a period of 12 years.

Recent Redistricting Action

On Jan. 16, 2026, the General Assembly passed a proposed constitutional amendment (HJ 4) which would allow the legislature to redraw congressional districts, temporarily, mid-decade, if approved by voters. The amendment stipulated that the off-cycle redistricting could only be adopted if any other state adopted a redistricting outside of the 10 year cycle. It further stipulated that use of the out-of-cycle partisan method would be temporary. The method used would again return to the non-partisan commission led effort following the 2030 census.

The redistricting amendment, sponsored by Del. Rodney Willett (D-58), was moved forward through the General Assembly by its Democratic majority, with voting along party lines, and was signed by Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D). The special session and redrawing proposal was in response to the White House calling for heavily Republican states to engage in redistricting to increase the number of GOP seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The latest round, in a long history of gerrymandering efforts to gain broader political control, was begun by Texas in July 2025, at the request of President Donald Trump. California voters approved a November 2025 ballot question on redistricting, to offset the Texas action. Missouri's state house voted for a change likely to add one additional GOP seat, but faces an appeal and voter approval. Some states, including Indiana, Maine,



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Virginians might be able to vote as early as next week on whether to go forward with a redistricting plan.

New Hampshire, and Washington indicated they do not intend to pursue redistricting. Maryland began an attempt but it has not moved forward in the legislature. New York's redistricting, with the potential of four to five Democratic seats, is in the court system. Florida is expected to hold a special session in April with the potential to add four or five Republican seats.

Voting Yes

The group Virginians For Fair Elections, urges voters to vote "yes" by April 21. They argue, "Across the country, Trump and MAGA-controlled legislatures, like Texas, Ohio, and Florida, are taking unprecedented steps to redraw congressional maps, without voter approval; to rig upcoming elections, putting fair representation at risk and threatening to dilute Virginians' voices in Washington." They say that by putting this temporary safeguard in place, the referendum helps restore balance and ensure fairness. The group is affiliated with the Democratic Party.

For more information on this side of the argument, see www.Virginiansforfairelections.com.

Senator Louise Lucas (D-18), the Commonwealth's most senior senator has stated, "The plan is for us to go back to the nonpartisan commission because that's what Virginians voted for," Lucas said. "The only reason we're in this place right now is because of the power grab that started with Trump."

Voting No

The group Virginia Fair Elections, welcomed the Tazewell County Circuit Court decision that the redistricting cannot proceed due to procedural irregularities. The group's chair, Lynn Taylor, said, "Gerrymandered maps are not fair maps. They would push hundreds of thousands more Virginians into seats where their views will be unrepresented by their representatives. This whole amendment screams of political game-playing and a blatant disregard for the principle of self-determination. Whether in the legis-

lature, the courts, or at the ballot box, Virginians must reject this revenge gerrymandering." The group is affiliated with the Republican Party. For more information on this side of the argument, see www.vafairelections.org.

Under Attack

Whether holding the "yes" or "no" vote position, there is agreement between the groups that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy — and right now, they're under attack.

All Representatives seats in Congress are up for reelection this November 2026, and every two years, including those Districts currently serving Fairfax County, held by: Donald Beyer Jr. - 8th District; Suhas Subramanyam - 10th District; and James Walkinshaw - 11th District.

The date for Primary Elections has been changed for 2026, from the typical date of June 16, to Aug. 4. This change will allow additional time for court decisions candidate preparations.



FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Video shows burglary suspects from Jan. 12 incident on Holly Berry Court, Annandale.

Eight Burglaries; Police Recommend Enhancing Home Security

Video from neighbors house may be a clue.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Detectives from FCPD Criminal Investigations Division are investigating eight residential burglaries targeting Asian American victims, most of whom are local business owners. In each case, suspects forced entry into the home and stole items including safes, cash, jewelry, designer handbags, and clothing, FCPD said.

Over the last two months, detectives have investigated the burglaries across the area in Woodlawn, Jefferson Manor, Fair Oaks, McLean and smaller communities in between. Police are still determining if the cases are connected, but there are similarities. In most cases, the suspects target master bedrooms, remove safes, and in some cases disconnect Wi-Fi or other electronics to avoid detection, police said. Detectives believe the suspects conduct pre-surveillance to determine their targets and police are asking for community members to call when suspicious people or vehicles are seen in their community.

“Cases like this, we’re often relying on our communities,” said FCPD Major Jim Curry in the Criminal Investigation Bureau. Curry called these crimes “organized burglaries.” Many of the victims are small business owners and may have cash at home, Curry said. Somehow the burglary suspects found out about this, he added.

On Jan. 12, at 5:03 p.m., officers responded to the 3200 block of Holly Berry Court in Annandale for a report on burglary. When the victim returned home, she noticed her jewelry was missing. There were no signs of forced entry. Surveillance footage was located nearby prior to the burglary occurring.

On the video, three people are seen wandering through the yard. They appear to be three women. Curry said police are relying on these types of videos and recommended that other neighbors with outside video surveillance to contact police. The burglaries included:

- ❖ On Jan. 15, at 9:07 p.m., officers responded to the 3800 block of Roxbury Court in Woodlawn for a burglary report. The rear back door was broken and the home was ransacked. The victim reported jewelry,

handbags, a safe, and \$7,000 in cash were stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 6, at 6:41 p.m., officers responded to the 2700 block of School Street in Jefferson Manor for a burglary report. A rear window was shattered, the home was ransacked, and a safe along with \$40,000 worth of jewelry was stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 12, at 6:36 p.m., officers responded to the 2600 block of Fort Drive in Fair Haven in Mount Vernon for a burglary report. The suspects entered the home by forcing entry on the second-floor balcony door. A safe containing \$7,500 worth of jewelry and \$6,000 in cash were taken.

- ❖ On Feb. 17, at 7:31 p.m., officers responded to the 2900 block of Graham Road in the Falls Church neighborhood of Woodley North for a burglary. The suspects entered the home by breaking the rear glass door. Handbags, \$80,000 worth of jewelry, and \$100,000 in cash were stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 19, at 9:30 p.m., officers responded to the 4200 block of Kerrigan Lane in Fair Oaks for a burglary report. The rear back door was broken and the home was ransacked. Jewelry, handbags, and cash valued at over \$10,000 were stolen from her home.

- ❖ On Feb. 20, at 10:40 p.m., officers responded to the 7200 block of Evans Mill Road in McLean for a burglary report. Suspects entered the home by breaking the rear glass door. The victims reported jewelry, cash, gold bars, and clothing valuing \$100,000 were stolen from the home.

- ❖ On Feb. 21, at 9:56 a.m., officers responded to the 1300 block of Northwyck Court in McLean for a burglary report. The victims returned from vacation and found their home rummaged through and jewelry valued at \$50,000 missing. The suspects entered the home by forcing entry to the basement door.

FCPD provided a few burglary prevention tips that include security cameras, exterior lighting, reinforcing doors and community awareness.

Report suspicious activity immediately. Call 703-691-2131 to report non-emergency concerns or 911 in an emergency. Timely reporting allows officers to respond quickly and identify patterns, the police said.

State Farm Insurance

G. STEPHEN DULANEY

IN GREAT FALLS



AUTO • HOME • LIFE
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Like A Good Neighbor, State Farm Is There.®

Open Saturdays

Complementary Insurance and Financial Review

Visit www.gstephendulaney.com



703-759-4155

731-C WALKER RD. • GREAT FALLS, VA

State Farm Insurance Companies
Home Office Bloomington, Illinois

Proud Supporter of Military Appreciation Mondays

Let us know about an upcoming event
www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION

Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette

Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.



For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or
Email sales@connectionnewspapers.com



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Results of Fairfax County Purple Can Glass Recycling.

Recycling in Fairfax County, a Mixed Bag

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Those blue recycling bins that people rumble out to the curb on trash collection day seem ubiquitous around Fairfax County, but recycling rates vary greatly and in some cases are declining, according to the recent report from the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC).

The Board of Supervisors committed to increase waste reuse and recycling. In the 2021 Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan, they set a target of 90 percent waste reduction by 2040. The Joint Environmental Task Force set a goal of 90 percent by 2030.

At-large EQAC member Eric Goplerud, author of the chapter on waste, said, “We need consistency in what can be recycled and accountability for actually recycling.”

“Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown

Coming Up

In an upcoming edition, we will publish an article on how people can recycle to benefit good causes.

away as trash and turning them into new products,” states the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Fairfax County, for example, collects glass containers which get new lives as new bottles or as construction materials. Paper and cardboard become new paper products.

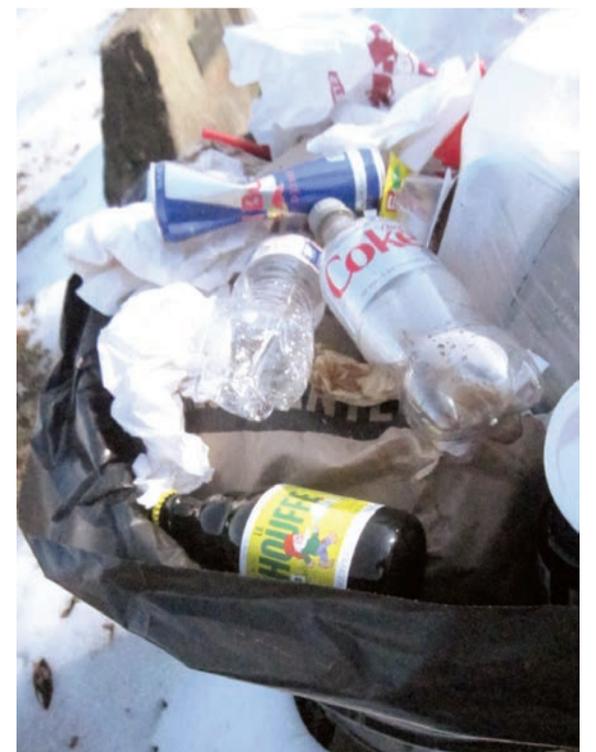
Recycling Rates

In 2024, the overall recycling rate of all waste collected of 44.7 percent was four percent lower than the average of the last 10 years, 48.7 percent. Recycled materials as a percent of overall waste fell by six percent. Paper and cardboard declined

SEE RECYCLING IN FAIRFAX, PAGE 13
4-17, 2026



Fairfax County provides residents with recycling bins for curbside pickup.



Many items like bottles and cans can be recycled.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Sully District's First Supervisor Michael Frey Dies at 69

Celebration of Frey's life will be held in April.

Fairfax County lost a legend in local government, Feb. 16, when former Sully District Supervisor Michael Robert Frey died at age 69. Leaving a distinguished legacy of leadership, vision and community dedication, he served 37 years in the county – including 24 years as Sully District supervisor.

A celebration of his life will be held Saturday, April 11, from 2-4 p.m., in the Fairfax County Government Center auditorium. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter at <https://ffcas.org/donate/>.

Born in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., he moved to Northern Virginia in 1978 to pursue his interest in politics. An internship with then county Board of Supervisors Chairman Jack Herrity led to Frey's first experience on a political campaign. He then held various staff positions for both Herrity and former Springfield District Supervisor Elaine McConnell. And after the Sully District was created in 1991, Frey became its first supervisor in January 1992.

He served six consecutive terms until his retirement at the end of 2015. Becoming one of the most influential voices in Fairfax County government, he guided its western portion through decades of explosive population growth and transformative development and helped shape the community's identity. Frey's career achievements reflected his deep commitment to thoughtful development, public safety, youth services and quality of life.

Some of the major projects accomplished during his tenure as Sully's leader included construction of the modern-day Centreville and Chantilly regional libraries, Sully District Police Station and Governmental Center, West Centreville Fire Station 38, Cub Run Rec Center, Routes 28/29 Interchange, and the Centreville Labor Resource Center, enabling local immigrants to obtain jobs in a safe environment. He also promoted the creation of a dog park in Centreville, plus preservation of the historic buildings in Centreville's Historic District.

In addition, Frey played an instrumental role in securing the National Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center for the Sully District, championed improvements to key transportation corridors including Route 28 and the I-66 interchange, strongly supported Fairfax County's successful bid to host the 2015 World Police and Fire Games, and was instrumental in efforts to bring baseball to



Former Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey at his desk in January 2015.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia. And he helped expand parkland and recreational opportunities, including major land-preservation efforts and youth athletic initiatives.

Known for his steady judgment and bipartisan approach, Frey was widely admired for his ability to work collaboratively with residents, community groups and officials at every level of government. He approached public service with fairness, humility and a genuine desire to make life better for the people he represented.

He was also known for his warmth, humor, love of local history and passion for community sports. He was a regular at Westfield High football games and GMU basketball games and was an ardent Philadelphia Phillies fan.

Frey was passionate about animals, particularly those needing rescue. When not in the office or at a community event, he could often be found walking one of his beloved German shepherds – first Mosby, and later, Marley and Boomer – in the stream valley. His love for strays resulted in numerous pet adoptions, including cats, dogs, guinea pigs and a chinchilla.



Michael Frey in August 2014.

He also “adopted” stray people and their causes. If a cause mattered to someone who mattered to Frey, it became his cause. He de-

voted countless hours to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Southwest Youth Association, pediatric-cancer fundraiser, and the Centreville Immigration Forum.

Frey also served on various task forces and was always willing to lend a hand or his thoughts on the issues. He chaired the Board of Supervisors' Development Process Committee beginning in 1992, guiding land-use policies during a period of rapid expansion.

A well-respected regional leader, he represented Fairfax County on the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Committee on Noise Abatement at National and Dulles Airports, and the Council of Governments' Development Policy Committee. He also served on the Executive Committee of the Dulles Area Transportation Association and held roles supporting youth and community organizations, including the Fairfax Partnership for Youth and local sports associations.

Frey lived in Centreville's London Commons community. He's survived by his sister, Alana Remley, plus nephews and 12 grandnieces and nephews.

'We've Lost a Cornerstone of Our Community'

Fairfax County mourns the loss of Michael Frey.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Michael Frey loved his family, animals and the Philadelphia Phillies. He also loved the Centreville-Chantilly community and proudly served as the Sully District's first supervisor for 24 years. It was his fulltime job, and he devoted himself to doing it, so it's no wonder that so many people are mourning his death. Below are some of their remembrances, edited for length:

❖ Mike Coyle, Frey's longtime chief of staff: "When you look up public servant in the dictionary, there's a picture of Michael Frey. He was the ultimate public servant, and I witnessed that firsthand during the 15-1/2 years I was on his staff. He was a wonderful person who did so much for so many people. He always worked to improve the lives of his constituents and enhance the community."

Countless times during conversations with Sully residents, they'd say they were a Democrat and Michael was the only Republican they'd vote for. When he faced difficult issues, he made the decisions best for the community – even if it lost him support or votes. His genuineness, relatability, compassion, sense of humor and problem-solving skills are what endeared him to folks.



Michael Frey at his desk in March 2011.

After retiring, he continued staying active in the community, serving on the Fairfax County Friends of the Animal Shelter Board, Historic Centreville Society and Sully Foundation Board and assisting SYA on phase two of its sports park. When people asked me how he was doing, I jokingly replied he was doing all the same stuff – he just wasn't getting paid for it any longer. That was Michael, and we've lost a cornerstone of our community. What I'll miss most is getting to talk with him about his Phillies, Eagles and Penn State football."

❖ Susan Culin: I had the honor of working with Michael Frey when I was commander of the Sully District Police Station. From the day we met, he was welcoming and supportive. He made himself accessible, was quick to lend support to any initiative or event and worked diligently to help officers obtain anything they needed to



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Michael Frey and his dog Boomer in December 2015 with a picture of his pets done by Mary O'Malley with Friends of the Animal Shelter.

make their jobs better or safer.

He cared about the officers like he cared about the community and believed that to support one was to support both. This support went beyond the professional. Michael cared about the officers and

their families on a personal level and enjoyed getting to know them. This was never more evident than following the horrific events of May 8, 2006, when a mentally ill young man entered the back parking lot of the police station and



Michael Frey on Sept. 18, 2015, with his Phillies cap and jersey from the CIF, honoring his favorite team and 24 years as Sully supervisor.

opened fire on two officers.

Tragically, Det. Vicky Armel and MPO Michael Garbarino did not survive. I'll always remember that Michael Frey – while heartbroken along with the police family – did everything in his power to assist station personnel and provide for their needs. He provided valuable assistance, bringing the community together for a candlelight vigil honoring the officers and speaking at it with love and remembrance, trying to bring comfort to everyone and calling them one community.

He was also asked to speak at MPO Garbarino's funeral. This was all part of Michael's nature as a compassionate supervisor. He

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 9



Michael Frey with his staff members in 2017. From left are Kathy Buckley, Frey, Mike Coyle and Virginia Eller.



Ready to cut the ribbon celebrating the labor center's first anniversary, in December 2011, are (from left) Alice Foltz, Alejandro Santiago, Miki Carrillo, Michael Frey and A.J. Dvoskin.

Frey's Sister Shares Fond Memories of Him

They enjoyed traveling the globe together.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Michael Frey's sister, Alana Remley of Connecticut, doesn't have many memories of her brother growing up. Since she's 11 years older, she was married and gone when he was just 10 and still in elementary school.

As he grew into a young man, they kept in touch from time to time. And in the early 1970s, when she was living in Rhode Island, he and a friend hitchhiked from his home in Pennsylvania to visit her and then hitchhiked back.

However, both siblings were busy with their own lives, so it wasn't until many years later that

they truly reconnected and began taking several trips together. Their first one was in 2005 when they traveled to Montana to visit one of Remley's four sons and his family.

Frey loved to travel the world and explore and preferred having adventures over simple vacations. He was happy to go by himself or with others, and his travels took him to places including Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, France, Israel and Ireland. He even went on two safaris in Africa.

"We went to Ireland together in 2015," said Remley. "He'd been there before and wanted me to see it, too. We went to out-of-the-way places on the western coast, and local people told us about the area's history."

"We're both animal lovers and, when we were in Ireland, the dogs followed him all over," she continued. "I was a little hurt that they liked him better than me. But then I found out it was because he carried meat on him. Whatever he



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Michael Frey and his sister, Alana Remley, at his animal shelter renaming reception in March 2017.

had left over from lunch or dinner, he stuffed in his pockets."

They also took two trips to

Alaska, including a big adventure in 2017 to Katmai National Park, tracking grizzly bears to photo-

graph. And in 2018, Frey and Remley journeyed to Ecuador and the Galapagos.

"His last trip was to Patagonia, at the bottom of South America," she said. "He went there last year to learn about wildlife preservation there."

And several people have told me he was planning a surprise trip for me to see the polar bears in Canada because he knew how badly I wanted to see them."

Besides being eager to do more traveling, Remley said her brother – a lifelong Philadelphia Phillies fan – was also looking forward to baseball season, as always. So his death came out of the blue.

Describing Frey as "a wonderful, caring, sharing, giving person," Remley said he died "suddenly and unexpectedly" of complications of the Type 1 diabetes he'd had since his 20s. "He was always careful about his diet," she said. "This has been so surprising and shocking, it hasn't really sunk in, yet."

Fairfax County Mourns the Loss of Michael Frey

FROM PAGE 8

was a true public servant, providing valuable leadership to Fairfax County. His dedication to service and camaraderie will never be forgotten."

❖ Ed O'Carroll "Having proudly served as commander of the Sully District Police Station from 2013-15, I saw firsthand how Mike championed the needs of our officers and the community we served. He was thoughtful, accessible and always willing to listen. When we needed support, he was there. He loved his community and cared so much for public safety – before, during and after the May 8, 2006, tragedy.

I was saddened to learn of his unexpected passing. His death prompted an outpouring of tributes from local officials, community members and civic leaders. He'll be remembered for his caring approach to public service, deep civic involvement, steadfast support of law enforcement, and passionate advocacy for animal welfare. The county's main animal shelter fittingly bears his name – a lasting tribute.

I remember all our conversations in my office or his. I always carried my lint roller for all the dog hair. Fairfax County has lost a true public servant. Mike's legacy of service and dedication won't be forgotten. Rest easy, my friend."

❖ Pete Kirby, former fire chief, Centreville Station 17: "Michael

Frey was the genuine article – the sort of person and politician you wanted to know and work with and knew you could count on when needed. He performed his duties only considering what was right and always asked, 'How can I help?' He attended every community event to which he was invited, happy to be there.

Michael strived to make Centreville feel like a single community despite being physically divided by barriers like I-66 and the Routes 28/29 Interchange. He helped community groups get through red tape to accomplish things. You could meet and easily become friends with him, and many did. Our community is a better place for who Michael was and what he did."

❖ Samantha Zaboli, Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF) executive director:

"Michael Frey was our board treasurer and, as he often shared, one of his proudest moments was the opening of our labor center. He exemplified what's possible when residents, faith communities, nonprofits, government and the business sector come together to create solutions.

He was deeply committed to all of his community and lived it through his [actions] as a public servant and a private citizen. Michael was guided by unity, mutuality and problem solving built on courage and trust. In his honor, I

invite others to continue building community and security based on trust that provides opportunity and acceptance for all. We have much more in common than what separates us."

❖ Former CIF Executive Director Terry Angelotti: "Michael Frey was the model of a public servant with ethics and moral confidence. I'm proud to have known him."

❖ Meg Lawless Crossett, Centreville resident: "Very few can match Michael Frey's years of dedication to the community. Back in the day, we loved watching him walk his dog in the Centreville Day parade. He was also a wonderful friend to the Crossett family.

Michael supported us when our young daughter Rachel was sick, visiting us and bringing us love. He supported our fundraising for Pediatric Cancer Research through the St. Baldrick's Foundation and even shaved his head to help raise money. Michael will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him, including our family. I hope all his sweet pets are waiting at the Rainbow Bridge for him."

❖ Leili Mosadegh, a land use and development legislative aide to Frey: "Walking into his office for the first time, I was greeted by his German shepherd's enthusiasm and Michael's extended hand. He was approachable, grounded, quietly confident and guided by a deep affection for people. He welcomed me with warmth that be-

came a lasting friendship.

Michael deeply understood land use, zoning and the history of every corner of the Sully District. He didn't just represent it; he knew and cared about it. His staff was kind, collaborative and trusted. Residents were treated with dignity, even when conversations were difficult.

Attentive and patient, Michael had unmistakable affection for his district. He found joy in the everyday mechanics of local government. Zoning cases weren't abstract to him; they were about neighbors, schools, trees, sidewalks, traffic patterns and futures. [He taught me] that public service at its best transcends labels and that steady leadership, intellectual curiosity, kindness and love for one's community aren't partisan traits but human ones.

He listened more than he spoke. And when speaking, his preparation and thoughtfulness reflected decades of commitment to the district. I saw him two weeks before he died, and he was so full of life. The county and Sully were fortunate to have him – those of us who worked alongside him, even more so."

❖ Virginia Eller, staff assistant: "I worked for Michael for almost 12 years and was the staff newbie for probably 10 of them because he was an amazing boss and had low staff turnover. I remember the afternoon of May 8, 2006, when

a coworker and I were inside the police station as shots were being fired at police right outside.

Sitting in the police captain's office, we watched the news on a small TV and saw Michael pacing and on his cell phone. He was concerned about his staff inside and came immediately, as close to the station as he could get. He was calling people, worried his staff was inside. This showed his character and caring about people. I saw Michael right before the Jan. 24 snow, and he seemed fine. Hearing he passed away was shocking and heartbreaking."

❖ Kathy Buckley, administrative aide: Michael was more than a boss to us, he was a good friend. He was kind, understanding and fair. If you asked him for help, he was there. If you can laugh together, solve problems together and lean on each other, what else can you ask for? Even after retirement, we all kept in touch with him. He was one of those rare friends who you knew were there for you. All you had to do was ask."

❖ John Litzenberger, former Sully planning commissioner: "We're all devastated by Mike's passing. I first met him in March 1982 when I was waiting to speak at the Massey Building, and we ended up watching the NCAA basketball tournament together. Mike was genuinely dedicated to helping people, no matter their political leanings. He

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 11

Past and Present Supervisors Remember Frey

Share stories about their former colleague.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Some past and present members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors – including two former chairmen – share their thoughts following the death of former Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey.

❖ Sharon Bulova, former Board of Supervisors chairman: “Mike Frey was a wonderful friend and colleague on the Board and a huge animal lover. Whenever police came before the Board to be recognized for their contributions, their entourage often included a police dog. The dog always gravitated to Michael – actually, Michael’s pockets – where dog biscuits and treats could be found.

As chairman, during budget season I visited each of my colleagues to discuss the mark-up package. At the Sully District office, I was always greeted by a large German Shepherd, first Marley and later Boomer, who’d sit on my feet while I went over proposed amendments to the advertised budget with Michael.

Before I left, he usually led me on a tour to see his other rescue critters – guinea pigs, ferrets, etc. And when it snowed and county facilities were closed, he undertook heroic efforts to get through snow-covered roads and parking lots to care for the pets in his office.

Michael was the best kind of Republican. Sometimes in the mi-



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Kate Hanley and Michael Frey share a laugh at his retirement dinner in September 2015.

nority, sometimes in the majority on the BOS, he could always be counted on to know his stuff and support fiscal decisions best serving the community. He was a common-sense, caring, elected official. The county and his constituents were fortunate to be represented by him. And he was so sweet – just the nicest person. Michael was special, and I sure will miss him.”

❖ Kate Hanley, former Board of Supervisors chairman: “I sat next to Mike Frey when he first joined the Board and I was Providence Supervisor. He was always attentive to the issues citizens brought us. I really appreciated his gentle, but wicked, wit during sometimes long, sometimes contentious, meetings.

Later, while I was chairman, we had an extremely cooperative bipartisan relationship to get things

done in Sully – particularly the first iteration of the Route 28/29 Interchange. As the first supervisor of the newest district in Fairfax County, he had lots to do. Mike understood what it meant to be a public servant and served his constituents and the county admirably.

He also knew I wasn’t particularly fond of dogs then. When our VA Task Force 1 members returned from deployment, we always recognized them and their wonderful canines in the Board auditorium. But I could never figure out why these dogs were so fond of me. Then one day, walking behind Mike to go down to the floor for a photo, I caught him slipping dog treats into my jacket pocket. Apparently, he’d enjoyed the results several times previously – as did I from then on.”

❖ Hunter Mill District Super-



Sharon Bulova gives Michael Frey a hand-drawn sketch of the Board of Supervisors as a retirement gift.

visor Walter Alcorn: “I first met Mike Frey as a 20-year-old intern in 1987. He was chief of staff to Springfield Supervisor Elaine McConnell, and what struck me then was his kindness. It was a busy and politically charged time, and we worked for people who weren’t on the same side politically, yet he’d still talk with me and make me feel welcome.

A couple years ago, I spoke with

him at an event, and we talked about the elderly cat one of our children had adopted and was somehow now ours. Mike was well known for adopting pets no one else wanted, and we spoke about how to care for elderly cats and dogs, the extra work required and less time together – but also how important it was for someone to step up and care.

SEE FREY, PAGE 11

Supervisor Michael Frey: Lifelong Animal Advocate

County’s animal shelter was renamed in his honor.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

If a dog is man’s best friend, then Michael Frey was one of the best friends of dogs, cats and other animals. In fact, he advocated for them so much that, on March 4, 2017, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter was renamed and dedicated in his honor.

A sign was unveiled declaring that building the Michael R. Frey Animal Shelter, and local dignitaries gave speeches. Sharon Bulova, then Board of Supervisors chairman, called Frey a leader and a community inspiration for bringing about many positive



Michael Frey and his rescue German Shepherd, Boomer, share a tender moment in Frey’s office in December 2015 before he retired.



Michael Frey holding his newest dog, Sunny, in December 2025. After Frey’s death, Sunny was re-adopted.

changes for animals here.

“When Michael first joined county government, he noted there was little thought about the humane treatment of animals,” she said. “This bothered Michael a great deal.” The shelter was later renovated, and Frey always acknowledged that many hard-working and dedicated people fought for better conditions for the animals.

But Frey, too, campaigned for the animals and, said Bulova, “Today we recognize the importance of Michael’s contributions to these monumental changes. Whether it was for dog parks in the community, dog runs for the shelter, recognition of other people’s work for animals, support for improvements in our animal facility or changes to animal ordinances and laws, Michael was always at the forefront on our Board to champion these important causes.”

SEE SUPERVISOR MICHAEL FREY, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Supervisor Michael Frey: Lifelong Animal Advocate

FROM PAGE 10

Fast forward to Dec. 17, 2025, and a Facebook post the animal shelter made congratulating him on his most recent animal adoption, a deaf and blind dog named Sunny:

“Michael has adopted several animals from us, starting in 2009. Over the years, he’s welcomed four senior cats, three senior dogs and five guinea pigs into his home. Today marks his 13th adoption. Each time, he asked us one thing, ‘Who’s in need of the most love?’ With that one simple question, he’s brought immeasurable joy and companionship to over a dozen pets. We’re continuously amazed by the compassion and devotion he shows every day to animals in need.”

After Frey’s death, the shelter again posted, saying, “As Sully District Supervisor, he worked tirelessly to ensure our shelter received the funding and support needed to care for the animals entrusted to us – from the biggest dog to the smallest mouse, and everything in between.”

“Michael championed the renovation of the shelter on West Ox Road and also supported the bond and construction of the Lorton Shelter. Before his passing, he told a staff member how proud he was of the strides the shelter’s made in animal care over the years and how honored he was to be part of that process. Michael brought joy to both his human and animal companions, and we’re honored to have called him our friend. Thank



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County officials and employees pose outside the animal shelter named in Michael Frey’s honor. Center, middle row are (from left) Sharon Bulova, Frey and Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity.

you, Michael, for all you’ve done.”

Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter – its nonprofit fundraiser – also wrote a tribute to Frey on its website, expressing its “profound sadness” about his death. “He was a devoted member of [our] board since 2015, serving as vice president for the past several years. Michael was a lifelong advocate for animals and wildlife and left an enduring mark on our community.”

“He was widely recognized for his kindness and compassion, often welcoming several pets – especially guinea pigs – into his office. Michael’s love for animals extended beyond his professional responsibilities. He had a special affection for German Shepherds and, later in life, opened his home

to the most vulnerable senior pets from the shelter, providing them with love and safety in their final years.

“His warmth, friendship and unwavering commitment to animal welfare touched the lives of many. He’ll be deeply missed by all who knew him. His legacy and good works will continue to inspire and benefit our community for years to come.”

“The dogs in heaven must be so happy to have him back with them,” said Gina Lynch, of the Animal Services Advisory Commission. “He loved the neediest animals and was a friend to them all. The world lost a shining star with his passing, but heaven now has so many dogs and cats running to greet him.”

Frey

FROM PAGE 10

One of his last adoptees was a dog both deaf and blind – a combination requiring Mike to carry him around. But to those of us who knew him, that wasn’t terribly remarkable, that was just Mike. There’s a special place in heaven for Mike Frey.”

❖ Pat Herrity, Springfield District supervisor: “Michael was a good friend and was my mentor when I joined the Board. He got his start in local politics working for my dad when he was Board of Supervisors chairman in 1978. Michael had a passion for animals; his advocacy was second to none and continued until he passed. I was happy to ask the Board to name the animal shelter after him. He’ll be sorely missed by Fairfax County residents and by me.”

❖ Jeff McKay, current Board of Supervisors chairman: “Michael Frey combined deep expertise with genuine kindness. Whether working through complex land-use issues, talking baseball or listening to a concerned resident, he treated everyone with respect, patience and good humor. He believed deeply in public service, working thoughtfully and leaving his community better than he found it. That generosity of spirit defined both his leadership and his life, and I was honored to have him as both a colleague and a good friend.”

❖ Kathy Smith, current Sully District supervisor: “It’s difficult to put into words the impact Michael Frey had on our community. As Sully’s first supervisor, he helped lay the foundation for the vibrant and thriving community we know today. I was fortunate to work alongside him when he was supervisor and I was on the School Board.

His commitment to transportation, parks, youth services, animal welfare and the people he served set a high standard that continues to guide our work. All of us in Sully have benefited from Michael’s dedication, and he’ll be remembered as a leader who truly loved the community he served.”

Fairfax County Mourns the Loss of Michael Frey

FROM PAGE 9

routinely appointed both Democrats and Republicans to various positions representing Sully based on their competence to do the best job possible.

Over the years we attended many sporting events together. He also coached youth basketball for SYA. As a GMU graduate, he truly enjoyed Mason going to the Final Four in 2006. However, his number one sports passion was

the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team.

We went to many ball games between the Phillies and the Washington Nationals over the last 20 years. We once even took my grandson to Philadelphia on Amtrak to watch the Phillies play the New York Mets.

And many times in February, he’d head to the Phillies’ preseason training camp in Florida. Mike will be truly missed.”

❖ Jim Hart, former at-large planning commissioner: “Michael was a political moderate, maybe one of the last of his kind. He was much more of a pragmatist than an ideologue.

He tried to work with colleagues and citizens in both political parties and make bridges over difficult political divisions. Michael recognized that some folks may disagree with him, but he tried to get the facts and fairly considered both

sides of an argument.

He also respected the efforts of the citizen land-use committees to reach consensus on future development and only rarely would go against their recommendations. And he was responsive to local, pothole-type concerns from the community.”

❖ Lauren Kirby: FACETS board member: “One day, the FACETS president and I had a business meeting in Michael’s office. Much

to our surprise, his German shepherd came in and encircled our legs under the table as his pet chinchilla rambled nearby. We shared a laugh while walking to the parking lot brushing hair off our pants’ legs. This was classic Michael – serious about causes and his animals.”

❖ Jeff Parnes: Sully District Council president: “Michael was a good man, a great politician and the person who made Sully what it is today.”

Peace as Means and End At 2026 Student Peace Awards

FROM PAGE 3

that for almost 250 years, young people have led the country out of darkness and toward progress.

Walkinshaw cited John Lewis, a teenager from a sharecropping family in rural Alabama who listened to a radio program about the Birmingham bus boycott. Hearing that young people were organizing and fighting for equality and freedom “changed his life completely,” Walkinshaw said. Shortly after hearing that radio program, Lewis joined the boycott, launching a lifetime of advocacy that helped free all of us in many ways.

Attendees included the families and friends of the awardees, as well as Walkinshaw and Fairfax County School Board members Robyn Lady, Dranesville District; Marcia St. John-Cummings, Franconia District; and Ilryong Moon, At-Large.

While there are many awards for academics and athletics, the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County occupies a niche because of its grassroots origin. Peace is defined by the students themselves. The award consists of a monetary gift for each recipient and a matching donation for a peace-focused charity of their choice, Fisher said.

Sheba Ahmadzai is a senior at Centreville High School. As part of the award, she is gifted \$100 to give to a charity of her choice. Ahmadzai explained that the Afghan

Student Association should receive the donation to help refugees with mentorship and tutoring.

“Our goal is to bring the Afghan community at school together, especially (new) students who came from Afghanistan, refugees who are struggling ... We help them,” Ahmadzai said.

Damika Ravi, a senior at Fairfax High School, said she wants to leave a legacy of networking for change. Her peace work centers on raising awareness of microaggressions and school safety. Ravi explained that the key is making sure research is given to the right people so they can “really get it out there and spread the information and actually create change,” Ravi said.

Savanne Clark, a senior at Mount Vernon High School, said working for peace has changed how she interacts with friends and family.

“I’m learning a lot more about taking bits and pieces of each person’s perspective and then really working on putting them together, possibly to find a solution, and then sometimes not finding a solution, really just creating more understanding,” Clark said. “And I found that understanding is just as impactful as finding a solution.”

Among the many other recipients are Caleb Crawford, a junior at Cedar Lane High School. Crawford assists students who are anx-

ious or have difficulty with peer interactions.

Members of the Verdict school newspaper at Justice High School seek to inform students about current news with recent articles on sports betting, students’ interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and teen pregnancy.

Alden Walcott, a junior at South Lakes High School, writes about her Indian Nation and produced “How Indigenous Teens Stay Connected with Their Heritage” for PBS.

The award stands apart because 28 schools chose a recipient, including three groups, for the 2025-26 award. Unlike programs managed by government agencies, these are entirely volunteer-run and grassroots-funded. A single Quaker group, Herndon Friends Meeting, started the program in 2006. It has since grown into a coalition of 15 to 20 local organizations. Presented by the Herndon Friends Meeting and the Langley Hill Friends Meeting, the prize structure encourages students to research and engage with the larger world of advocacy.

Closing out the reception, McElveen said peace is not a passive state but a series of choices made every day.

“May your work continue to make Fairfax County and the world a much more peaceful place,” McElveen said.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Anwar Kiyar, a junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, chats with (center) Fairfax County school board representatives, Marcia St. John-Cummings and (right) Robyn Lady. Kiyar led a two-week computer programming course for children 9-to-12 years old and initiated a weekly math club.



Awardees of the 2026 Student Peace Awards and their families fill the seats at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1, waiting for the reception honoring the recipients to begin. Standing (far left) is U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11.



Special guests at the 2026 Student Peace Awards include (from left) U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11; and Fairfax County School Board members Ryan McElveen, At-Large; Ricardy Anderson, Mason District; Robyn Lady, Dranesville District; Marcia St. John-Cummings, Franconia District; and Ilryong Moon, At-Large. They listen to the opening remarks at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1.

Recycling in Fairfax County, a Mixed Bag

FROM PAGE 6

by 26 percent.

“While Fairfax already recovers [recycles] significant amounts of yard waste (64 percent), construction debris (78 percent) and metals (over 50 percent), other major waste streams remain under-recycled,” reports EQAC. “Food waste is recovered at just five percent, paper at 25 percent, glass at 27 percent and waste wood at 31 percent. These materials make up a large portion of what is still burned and landfilled.”

There were “notable increases” in glass, food wastes, construction waste and metals. Though 27 percent of glass is recycled, “We’re still missing three quarters of the glass,” Gopelrud notes. Yard waste rates remained steady.

Recycling advocates boast that from 2022 to 2023 plastic bag use dropped 2.5 percent, and five percent from 2023 to 2024. Many attribute this to the Board of Supervisors’ creation of a .05 per plastic bag tax that retail outlets began collecting in 2022 and generated \$7.7 million between January 2022 and mid-2025.

By December 2024, even though over 3.4 million fewer bags were used, “That leaves a lot of bags, more than 32 million in 2024, still in circulation, still littering Fairfax streets, trees and waterways,” EQAC pointed out.

Many Northern Virginia groceries collect plastic bags which are used to make composite decking and other materials by companies like the Winchester-based firm, Trex.

The Waste Management Hierarchy

EPA’s website has a non-hazardous waste management hierarchy that ranks strategies from most to least environmentally preferred and emphasizes reducing, reusing, recycling and composting as “key to sustainable materials management.”

Reducing waste at the source is the most environmentally preferred strategy. This includes reusing or donating items, buying in bulk, reducing packaging, redesigning products and reducing toxicity.

Next is recycling which includes collecting used, reused or unused items that would otherwise be considered waste; sorting and processing the recyclable products into raw materials; and remanufacturing the recycled raw materials into new products.

Energy recovery is next, converting non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity or fuel, often called waste-to-energy. Lorton’s Reworld facility, for example, processes over 1,120,000 tons of waste and produces 93 megawatts of electricity around the clock, enough to power 67,000 homes for a year.

The least environmentally-preferred strategy is treatment and disposal. Treatment, like shredding and incineration, can help reduce waste’s volume and toxicity. Landfilling is the most common disposal method.

Fairfax County has two facilities: the I-66 Transfer Station and the I-95 Landfill Complex.

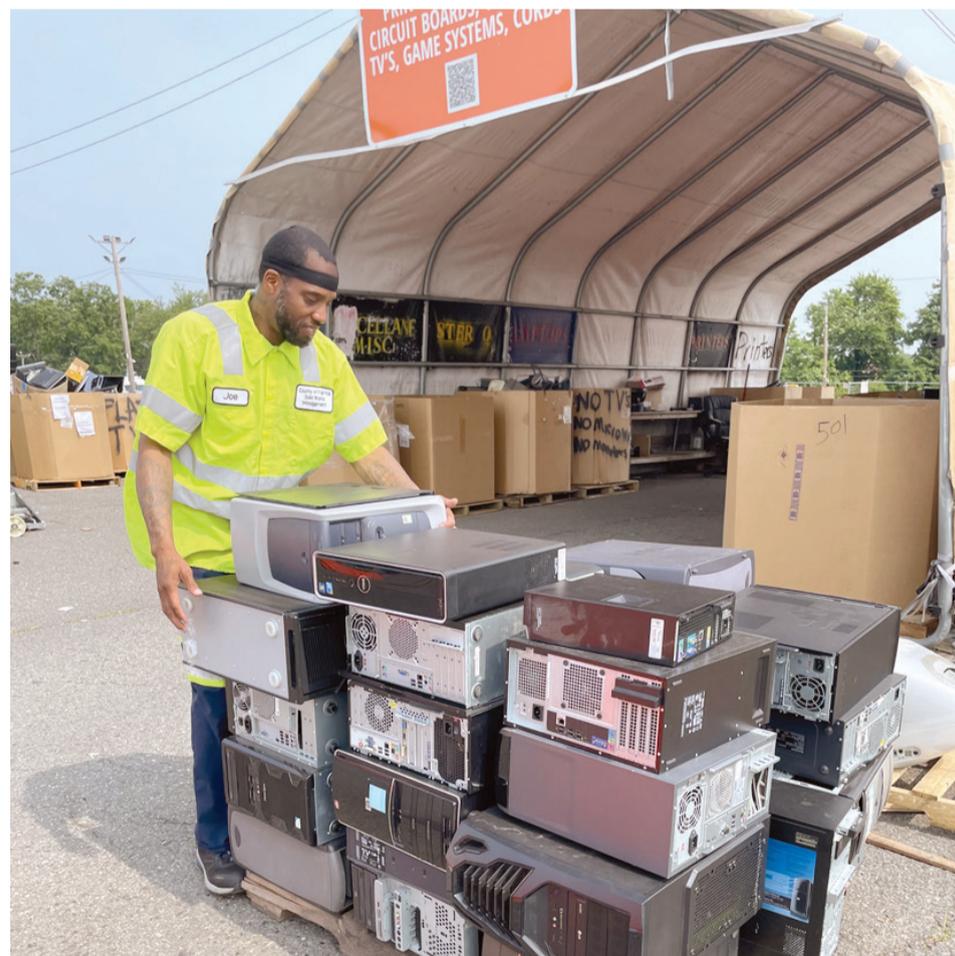
How to Boost Recycling

EQAC made several recommendations, including state legislation to allow localities to require haulers to collect organic waste and

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Fairfax County provides many ways to recycle, including e-cycling at the I-66 transfer station.



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
E-cycling at I-66 Transfer Station.

Information

EQAC Report, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/environmental-quality-advisory-council>

What Goes Where, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/residential-materials>

to authorize local jurisdictions to mandate organic waste collection. Del. Kathy Tran and Sen. Scott Surovell have introduced bills to encourage composting.

EQAC also calls for state legislation to authorize counties and towns to ban disposable plastic bags.

For more solutions, Gopelrud points to jurisdictions that require trash haulers to monitor bins for proper recycling and to reject non-compliant containers. The county “could impose pay-to-throw,” he suggests, charge a fee for waste by weight or size. “The more mixed trash you throw in the bin the more you pay,” he explains. “We need to create incentives for people to do the right thing.”

Virginia does not have a “bottle bill” that requires a refundable deposit on some drink containers.

Some people promote extended producer responsibility, an approach that makes producers responsible for the end-of-life management of products. EQAC’s report is silent on this strategy.

“The biggest impediment to increasing the county’s recycling rate is insufficient and inconsistent participation from waste generators,” Matt Adams, a county waste management director, said. “Overcoming this requires a comprehensive approach that engages and supports all sectors. To make a meaningful difference, residents and businesses across the county need to do their part by actively diverting organics, recyclables, construction and demolition debris and hard-to-recycle materials.”

Jen Cole of Clean Fairfax, a litter prevention group, commends the county. “We don’t know why recycling rates dipped in certain categories, but it is heartening to see the glass and food waste rate skyrocket because of the creative endeavors of the County and the commitment to the environment by the residents. More of that please!” she said.

Ribbon Cut for Innovation Station North Neighborhood Access Project

New path and bridges link Herndon neighbors to Innovation Metro.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Feb. 28 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Innovation Station North Neighborhood Access project's illuminated 10-foot-wide asphalt path and two 14-foot-wide bridges marks the end of a hard-won battle by local residents. The project — part of the Herndon Metrorail Stations Access Management Study — dramatically improves connectivity, reducing trip lengths for many from nearly 3 miles to just a half-mile. For commuters, this cuts a 45- to 60-minute walk or bus trip down to a 5- to 10-minute walk or shorter bike ride. The shared-use path and bridges connect the station's north-side kiss-and-ride to Farougi Court, Apgar Place, and the Reflection Homes community.

"Not only does this create a better connection for people who live in the Dulles Green apartments, but it allows residents in Reflection Homes and off of Parcher Avenue to have a direct connection where they do not need to get into a car and drive all the way around," said James Bierman, Fairfax County Board Supervisor for the Dranesville District. "It opens up the Metro to a ton of folks who now have an opportunity for car-less living."

For over a decade, residents fought to prove that the Innovation Center Metro station they could see from their windows should be accessible on foot. The project faced significant hurdles, including land negotiations involving six properties and legal complexities that required the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to authorize the use of eminent domain to stay on schedule. Environmental protection was also paramount; the design had to strictly minimize its footprint on the wooded valley and the Horsepen Creek watershed before it could finally link neighborhoods to the Silver Line.

For Herndon resident and advisory group member Mike Olson, the opening is the culmination of years of anticipation. Supervisor John Foust appointed Olson to the station access study in 2014, and he served alongside county staff and community representatives while living adjacent to the site. "I watched the construction from the groundbreaking," Olson said.

The new path has already transformed commutes for longtime residents John Hanchulak and his wife, Rachel Roberts. Hanchulak noted, "The path has changed my wife's life. She used to commute to D.C. and had to drive about 15 minutes just to get to Wiehle station."

Roberts recalled that the drive to the Wiehle-Reston East station was the worst part of her day. "This would have been such a better way to start my morning," she said, looking at the paved, lit path that now links her family to the Metro in under three minutes. The couple even let their toddler son, Henry, try out the asphalt on his tricycle. They now plan to use the bridges for Metrorail family trips to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park.

The project delivers a shared-use path and two pedestrian bridges, including the county's longest at 367 feet, said Sonia Shahnaj, a project manager with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. The path and bridges provide a direct route that bypasses miles of road travel.

From 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, on the streets closest to the new pedestrian bridges — including Farougi Court, Apgar Place, and parts of Parcher Avenue — parking is restricted to permit holders. The restriction, established by the Board of Supervisors in 2022, ensures that while residents can walk to the Metro in minutes, commuters cannot use residential streets as a free parking lot.

Sonia Shahnaj added, "Transportation is the heartbeat of progress, propelling communities forward and opening doors to new opportunities."

Key speakers, including Chairman Jeff McKay and Director of Transportation Greg Silverson, highlighted the project's role in addressing housing and economic challenges. McKay joked that he arrived late because he had been on the other side of the station trying to figure out how to get to the event, illustrating the exact problem the path solves. He framed the project as key to affordable housing and the environment. Silverson emphasized that such complex projects succeed only because of extensive collaboration among county agencies, consultants, contractors, and the community.



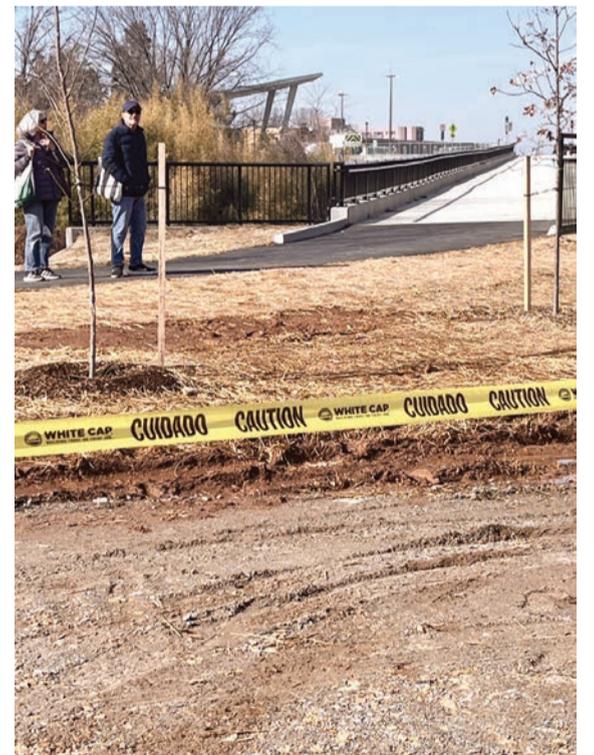
Sonia Shahnaj, a project manager with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, speaks during the ceremony. "Transportation is the heartbeat of progress, propelling communities forward and opening doors to new opportunities," Shahnaj says.



Chairman Jeff McKay of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors jokes that he arrived late because he was on the other side of the Metro station trying to figure out how to get to the event, illustrating the exact problem the path solves.



Far right, Liisa Maurer, an Apgar Place resident since 1992, joins Rachel Roberts, Henry Hanchulak, John Hanchulak, and Supervisor James Bierman at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new bridges and shared-use path provide a direct route to the Innovation Center Metro station for nearby residents.



A view of one of the two 14-foot-wide bridges over Horsepen Creek. The spans provide residents of Dulles Green, Reflection Homes, and Parcher Avenue a direct connection to the Innovation Center Metro station from the Herndon side of the Dulles Toll Road.

In a fitting moment during the celebration, a pair of hawks circled high above the treetops, tracing

the air over the deep wooded valley that the record-breaking bridge now traverses. Because the bridge design preserved the high canopy,

the hawks' hunting grounds and the stream habitat of the Horsepen Creek watershed remain undisturbed.

Is Tech a Stable, Lifelong Career Path?

Local author of ‘Impossibly Hard: What’s Driving High Turnover in Tech?’ says there are risks.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Shallon Elizabeth Brown, who holds a doctorate in information systems engineering, is the author of “Impossibly Hard: What’s Driving High Turnover in Tech?” The Reston resident’s book, released Feb. 22, examines the systemic forces behind industry job losses and their hidden costs.

In a Feb. 20 interview with The Connection, Brown said she never envisioned that her “career insurance” — including 22 years of experience and a Ph.D. — wouldn’t prevent her from cycling through jobs and depleting her savings. She said that a “lucrative” career in IT promises great salaries, prestige and independence, but there are real risks.

Brown, a former chief technology officer at North Studio and consultant to the IRS, Johns Hopkins University and the U.S. Department of Education, said she wishes someone told her 20 years ago that tech isn’t a stable, lifelong career path. The reality of constant churn is something she clearly didn’t anticipate when she entered the field. She didn’t know about the financial precarity despite high salaries, the mental health strain and burnout, the unequal impact on women and minorities, the opaque, AI-driven hiring wall and the constant skill pressure.

“I live alone with the dog. I lose my job in a contract, unemployment doesn’t cover 50% of it. I’m bankrupt and go back to live with my parents. I’m 42 years old,” Brown said.

Brown once assumed tech would be like other highly skilled fields — a long-term, stable career without mass layoffs. She expected the Reston-Fairfax region, the “Silicon Valley of the East,” especially

the Dulles technology corridor, to be the place where her tech career would finally be secure.

“What attracted me to this area was the tech and all that comes with that ... and I don’t see a sustainable future here, because of the affordability crisis and because of the high turnover in tech,” Brown said. “And this ‘despite doing everything right.’”

Brown rattled off her data points: The job turnover rate among software engineers stands at 69%. “They will leave the current job they’re in within two years or less,” she said. As for the likelihood of unemployment, “As a result of that, one out of every two of us will find ourselves on unemployment in any given year.”

She connected points about women and minorities, especially Black workers leaving the tech field. “Seven out of 10 women now that get into tech will not stay there more than 10 years. They will switch fields because it is so intense,” Brown said.

She spoke about her own career volatility. “I’ve worked at 54 web companies ... over the course of my 22 years,” Brown said.

She contrasted Black representation in the population with that in tech. “Tech right now, on average ... African Americans... we are 13.3% of the population. We are less than 3.7% of the technology field, and that includes here in Reston and Fairfax. And I find that appalling ...”

Brown stressed heavily that it is not a talent problem but an opportunity problem. Instability falls hardest on women and Black workers. Women are often pushed out within a decade, she said, and Black workers are both severely underrepresented and more likely to be laid off or left behind because they may lack the informal networks that can protect others.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
SHALLON BROWN

Shallon Elizabeth Brown, Ph.D., of Reston, is the author of “Impossibly Hard: What’s Driving High Turnover in Tech?” The book examines systemic forces behind job losses in the technology industry.

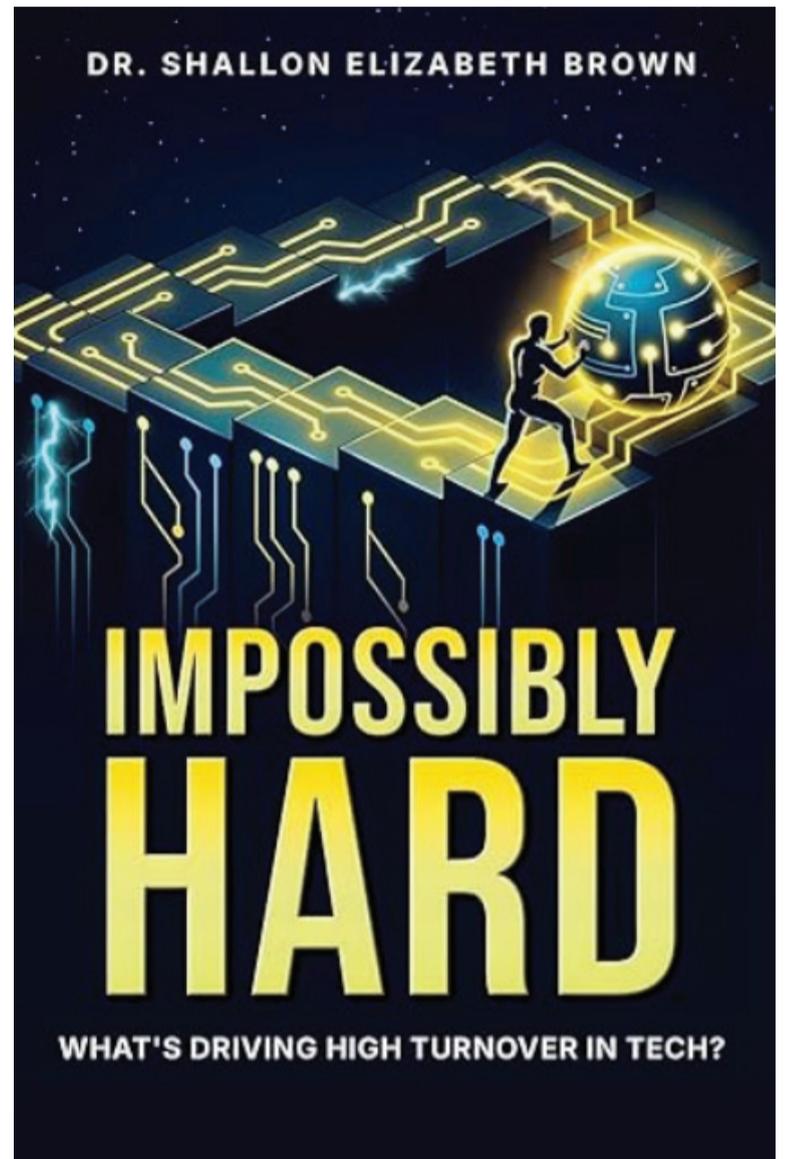
Tenures are tied to the “buddy system.”

“If you’ve been in an underserved community, you don’t have... a lot of those bindings. You weren’t on the golf course ... with the director ... so you don’t have those entrapments to keep you glued, or ... to quickly find something else comparable,” Brown said.

Brown believes the general public and even elected officials’ unawareness of tech’s instability is the issue. She believes the first step is to make both insiders and outsiders understand how extreme turnover and instability in tech jobs have become, and how they affect mental health, families and communities.

Second, she says, there must be policy and safety-net changes. She argues that unemployment no longer covers basic living costs in places like Fairfax County and says the system must be strengthened to keep pace with today’s churn. “I really think we need to strengthen the unemployment system and make it a priority, because if you don’t, then success is going to be a fleeting memory for a lot of us here,” Brown said.

Third, Brown calls for reforms around contracting, hiring and AI. There is an overreliance on short-



Released Feb. 20, “Impossibly Hard: What’s Driving High Turnover in Tech?” is data-driven and draws on 22 years of industry experience and serves as a survival guide for the modern tech professional.

term contracting or gig-style work that bakes in instability, she says. The use of AI in hiring can block qualified people — especially recent grads — from even getting through online filters. Implicitly, she argues for more humane, less automated and more equitable hiring and employment practices with real, not “fluff,” DEI and opportunity-building. Most importantly, Brown wants to equip students entering tech with realistic knowledge.

Brown called her book a “survival guide.” She said job instability

is not a personal failure; it is built into the system. Tech employees absolutely must learn to collect references early, prepare for frequent job changes and protect themselves, financially and mentally. According to Brown, “We’ve got some of the highest rates of mental health crises, we’ve got some of the highest suicide rates. We’ve got some of the highest burnout factor rates.”

Brown said she is scheduling events and book signings. “Impossibly Hard” is available on Amazon.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email calendar@connectionnewspapers.com.

FREE ST. PATRICK’S DAY LYFT RIDES
Preparing to combat that time of the year when, according to the National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration figures, more than one-third (34%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area on St. Patrick’s Day.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2026 St. Patrick’s Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March

17th (St. Patrick’s Day) and operate until 4:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period. During this 12-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app’s ‘Payment’ tab (under the ‘Add Lyft Pass’ option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP’s 2026 St. Pat-

rick’s Day SoberRide code will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th on www.SoberRide.com.

This opportunity focuses on increasing tree cover in economically disadvantaged communities, which typically do not benefit from moderate to high tree cover. How to Apply: Fairfax County Tree Distribution to Community Organizations | Public Works and Environmental Services

ENTERTAINMENT

AARP FOUNDATION TAX-AIDE PROGRAM

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program is returning for the 2026 tax season, offering free federal (and many state) tax preparation and e-filing by IRS-certified volunteers. Services began the first week of February at multiple locations. Eleven centers across Northern Virginia also prepare Virginia returns, and some sites assist with Maryland and DC filings.

Who can participate? Tax-Aide serves taxpayers of all ages, with a focus on low- and middle-income residents and seniors. Counselors handle nearly all types of income and work to ensure clients claim all deductions and credits for which they qualify.

Taxpayers should bring:

- ❖ Photo ID
- ❖ Social Security cards for themselves and dependents
- ❖ Copy of last year's tax return
- ❖ All current-year tax documents (W-2s, 1099s, 1098-T, brokerage statements, pension/IRA statements, etc.)
- ❖ Records for itemized deductions, education credits, and residential energy credits
- ❖ Bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit or debit

For more information and to find a site near you, visit: AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Information <https://www.novataxaide.org/>

FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SCHEDULE

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) continues its 2025 - 2026 season with an exciting slate of performances still ahead. Featuring world-renowned guest artists, cinematic favorites performed live, and orchestral masterworks, the upcoming concerts offer something for every music lover.

March 5 - Patti LuPone 25th Anniversary Tour of *Matters of the Heart*: Three-time Tony Award winner Patti LuPone returns in her acclaimed theatrical concert celebrating love, heartbreak, and the power of song.

March 7 - Mozart, Leshnoff, Mendelssohn with Demarre McGill, flute: Featuring the World Premiere of Jonathan Leshnoff's Flute Concerto No. 2, alongside Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 2 and Mendelssohn's exuberant Italian Symphony.

March 14 - *How to Train Your Dragon In Concert*: The beloved DreamWorks film comes alive as the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra performs John Powell's score live to film at Capital One Hall.

March 29 - Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey: Travel icon Rick Steves joins the FSO on stage for a musical tour across Europe, blending storytelling, stunning visuals, and orchestral favorites.

May 31 - Prokofiev with Claire Huangci, piano: The season concludes with a powerful program featuring pianist Claire Huangci, Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3, and Symphony No. 5.

Performances take place at premier venues including the Harris Theatre and Center for the Arts at George Mason University, and Capital One Hall. More information and tickets available at FairfaxSymphony.org

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Monthly Model Trains Showcase. 1-4 p.m.
At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Rd, Fairfax Station. Visit the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum for its Monthly Model Trains Showcase, a delightful gathering for model train enthusiasts and families alike! Every 3rd Sunday, from February through November, they invite hobbyists and curious visitors to explore the fascinating world of model trains, featuring either N or T scale model trains. The March model train



"HERO: The Boy from Troy, A New Musical about Young John Lewis" can be seen on Friday, March 6, 2026 at the McLean Community Center.



The 2026 Mason School of Dance Gala Concert Performances will take place March 27-28 at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

show is Sunday, March 15, 2026, from 1-4 p.m. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. Military/First Responders/Teachers (with ID) \$5. Seniors (65+), \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org. 703-425-9225. www.facebook.com/ffxsr.

FIVE-PART BETTER ARGUMENTS WORKSHOP SERIES.

The Better Arguments Project, developed by the Aspen Institute, is part of William & Mary's broader Democracy Initiative, which advances civil discourse, civic engagement, and the skills needed to live and lead in a pluralistic society. William & Mary is a national leader in bringing this work into classrooms, campuses, and communities. The series is free and open to the public, and participants are welcome to attend any individual session - there is no expectation to attend all five.

This free series is hosted by Radhika Murari (W&M '95), a member of the William & Mary Washington Campus Advisory Board in the spirit of William & Mary's commitment to democratic engagement. Each workshop centers on one core Better Arguments tenet:

- ❖ Workshop 2: Prioritize Relationships and

Listen Passionately; Mar 10, 2026; 6-8 pm; Reston, VA Focus on building honest connections. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/WMMarch10>

- ❖ Workshop 3: Pay Attention to Context; Apr 14, 2026; 6-8 pm; Reston, VA Acknowledge the many factors that may influence beliefs. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/WMApril14>
- ❖ Workshop 4: Embrace Vulnerability; May 12, 2026; 6-8 pm; Reston, VA Consider the benefits of opening up. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/BetterMay12>
- ❖ Workshop 5: Make Room to Transform; June 9, 2026; 6-8 pm; Reston, VA Be open to new and varied perspectives. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/WMJune9>

REPAIR CAFE

Fairfax County Repair Cafe is a team of volunteer "fixers" with a variety of skills. They diagnose, repair and recommend. Bring your items or questions and join them.

Examples include sewing repairs, small appliance fixes, jewelry repair, computer help, knife sharpening, community fun. Upcoming dates:

- ❖ Saturday, March 14, 2026, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. @ Thomas Jefferson Library 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church.

NOW THRU MARCH 8

Fairfax City Restaurant Week. Fairfax City Restaurant Week features 20+ restaurants and is a 10-day event invites local diners to explore and support the diverse restaurants that define the city's vibrant food Culture. Participating restaurants will offer specially curated set-price menus, making it easy for residents and visitors to experience quality dining at a range of set price points. Website: <https://www.fairfaxcityrestaurantweek.com/>

NOW THRU MARCH 8

"Between Riverside and Crazy." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. A play by Stephen Adly Guirgis, directed by José Carrasquillo. When: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

NOW THRU MARCH 15

Between Riverside and Crazy, by Stephen Adly Guirgis, directed by José Carrasquillo. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road Tysons. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

FEB. 27 TO MARCH 8

Vienna Restaurant Week. At participating restaurants in Vienna. The annual, 10-day celebration highlights Vienna's diverse culinary scene with specially priced prix fixe menus, exclusive specials, and limited-time dining experiences at local favorites across town. The initial lineup showcases a wide range of cuisines and concepts, everything from cozy cafés and bakeries to global flavors and neighborhood taverns offering something for every palate.

Participating restaurants include: Amma Vegetarian Kitchen, Bear Branch Tavern, Ben & Jerry's, Big Buns, Caboose Tavern, Cafe Renaissance, Caffe Amouri, Charlies Bowl, Chef Tan, Chick-fil-A Vienna, Cocoa Vienna, Crumbly, Cuco's Peruvian, Evelyn Rose, FRAME Coffee Roasters, Foster's Grille, Ledo Pizza Vienna, Lily's Chocolate and Coffee, Maple Ave Restaurant, Oh My Dak, Peking Express of Vienna, Plaka Grill, Pure Green Vienna, Qamaria Yemeni Coffee, Rita's Italian Ice & Frozen Custard (Rita's of Vienna), Roberto's Ristorante Italiano, Royal Nepal Bistro, Seray, Shilla Bakery, Smoothie King, Social Burger, Sunflowers Vegetarian Restaurant, Sushi Koji, Sushi Yama, Tango Pastry Café, TeaDM, The Red Bird Hot Chicken & Fries, Viet Aroma, Vienna Thai and Bar, and Vivi Bubble Tea.

MARCH 4-29

McLean Art Society's "Hints of Green" Exhibition and March Members Show. At McLean Art Society, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Winter Show Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-6 p.m. During March, the McLean Art Gallery is pleased to feature "Hints of Green," a new seasonal exhibition from the local nonprofit McLean Art Society. Members of the public are invited to enjoy 170 new works from more than 40 local artists. Included are paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor and mixed media; drawings; photography; sculpture; and works in wood, glass, ceramics and jewelry. Opening Reception on Friday, March 6 from 5-7pm. Meet the artists and enjoy live music, wine and light refreshments. The Gallery is located in the Chesterbrook Shopping Center (near Starbucks) with plenty of free parking. Visit mcleanartsociety.org

MARCH 5-8

Tysons Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Huge selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Proceeds benefit the Tysons-Pimmit Regional

ENTERTAINMENT

Library and related activities. Donations of books and media appreciated.
 Thursday, 5 March, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Friday, 6 March, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Saturday, 7 March, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Sunday, 8 March, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Matters of the Heart. 7:30 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The FSO presents Patti LuPone's critically acclaimed theatrical concert *Matters of the Heart*. The show is based on the CD recording of the same name which was released in 1999 and named one of the best recordings of the year by both *The Times of London* and *Time Out/NY*. For tickets, visit FairfaxSymphony.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

"HERO: The Boy from Troy, A New Musical about Young John Lewis". 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Jayden is stuck in detention with a book about Congressman John Lewis, but he thinks that history has nothing to teach him. Together, we go on a musical journey through the decades that shows how the heroes of the Civil Rights movement inspired young John Lewis to protest injustice and get into "good trouble." From preaching to his family's flock of chickens (true story!) to becoming an American hero, Lewis' life story is inspiring.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Appraisal Roadshow. 10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Reston Association Headquarters, Reston. This event offers a treasure hunt experience in a fun, educational, and rewarding setting. Bring one personal item—such as jewelry, coins, a timepiece, artwork, or other heirlooms—and an appraisal expert will provide insights on its value and what you can do with your treasure, while also educating the group.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

10th Annual Teen Job and Opportunity Fair. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Chantilly High School, Chantilly. Sponsored by Supervisor Pat Herry's office. These fairs focus on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. Students of all ages are encouraged to attend, but most opportunities will be geared toward students ages 16-18.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Ashburn Volunteer Fire & Rescue's Chilly Days Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser. At Lost Rhino Brewing Company, 21730 Red Rum Drive, Ashburn. Warm up with AVFRD at the annual chili fundraiser, featuring unlimited tastings of some of the best chili in Ashburn, proudly served by your favorite local restaurants. The cost to attend is a donation to AVFRD at the door.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Comicworx. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Featuring celebrity guest John Swasey who is the voice actor for *Attack on Titan* to *Fullmetal Alchemist*, *My Hero Academia*, and *One Piece*. Secure your tickets and your chance to meet the one and only John Swasey at workhousearts.org/comicworx.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Appraisal Roadshow. 10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Reston Association Headquarters. This event offers a treasure hunt experience in a fun, educational, and rewarding setting. Bring one personal item—such as jewelry, coins, a timepiece, artwork, or other heirlooms—and an appraisal expert will provide insights on its value and what you can do with your treasure, while also educating the group.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser. At Lost Rhino Brewing Company, 21730 Red Rum Drive, www.connectionnewspapers.com



The Fiesta del Sol takes place on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at the McLean Community Center.

A Children's Consignment Sale takes place on Saturday, March 14, 2026 at Christ Church in Fairfax Station.

Ashburn. Ashburn Volunteer Fire & Rescue is hosting a Chilly Days Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser! Warm up with AVFRD at the annual chili fundraiser, featuring unlimited tastings of some of the best chili in Ashburn, proudly served by your favorite local restaurants! Every dollar raised directly supports the Ashburn Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department and the services they provide to our community. The cost to attend = a donation to AVFRD at the door. This is a family-friendly event. Kids can get an up-close look at a fire truck and experience the Seat Belt Convincer while learning about safety in a fun, hands-on way.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Train-Themed Game Day. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax

Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Rd, Fairfax Station. All aboard for a day of fun and games at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum! Join them on Sunday, March 8, 2026, from 1-4 p.m. for the Train-Themed Game Day, where families and train enthusiasts can come together to enjoy a variety of engaging and interactive games, all centered around the theme of trains. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. Military/First Responders/Teachers (with ID) \$5. Seniors (65+), \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org. 703-425-9225. www.facebook.com/ffxsrr.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Author Event/Reading. At Reston Used Books,

Reston. Arlington author and small business owner Jen Dary will debut her new book, "I Believe in Everything: A Memoir of Illness, Motherhood, and Magic." In addition to being an author, Jen is a small business owner and the founder of the Arlington-based leadership coaching firm, Plucky, where she's coached professionals from over 200 companies including Facebook, Google, New York Times and many more.

TUESDAY/MARCH 10

Wellness for Cancer Prevention. 6-7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. There is an abundant amount

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 19

Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.

FREE TOILET + \$1,500 OFF*

For your FREE information
kit and our Senior Discounts,
Call Today Toll-Free

1-877-591-9950



*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13VH11096000

Be prepared before the next power outage.



It's not just a generator. It's a power move.™

Receive a free 5-year warranty
with qualifying purchase*
- valued at \$535.

Call 844-947-1479
to schedule your free quote!

*Terms and Conditions apply.

WHERE
THEY FELL

WHAT
THEY CLAIMED



Their lies come out of your wallet. Insurance fraud costs everyone in Virginia \$1,000 per year. Learn how to spot it and report it at TheCostOfFraud.com

**STAMP OUT
FRAUD**
VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
INSURANCE FRAUD PROGRAM

CLASSIFIED

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411



Let us know
about an
upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Employment

Asst. Superintendent, McLean, VA & 100% at project sites YTBD in greater Washington D.C. vicinity. Oversee & coordinate field ops of lg-scale constr. projects. Ensure work completed on schedule & budget; maintain workplace safety; adherence to regulations. \$95,000. Apply online w/Clark Construction Group, LLC at <https://www.clarkconstruction.com/build-your-career>.

Employment

Employment

Professionals for VA based IT Services Firm : "Sr. Software Engineer to Plan, dsgr, dvlp, test & modify computer s/w applications & specialized utility programs on different O/S using latest tools & technologies. **IT Project Manager** to Dvlp, update & manage project plans for IT including information such as project objectives, technologies, systems, information specifications, schedules, funding, and staffing. Dvlp & direct s/w system testing & validation procedures, programming & documentation to ensure specifications are met. Analyze information to determine, recommend, and plan computer specifications, layouts & peripheral equipment modifications. **Sr. Software Developer** to Plan, dsgr, dvlp, test, enhance, customize & co-ordinate activities to implement advance s/w module components in complex computer environments on different O/S using latest tools & technologies. **Sr. Network Engineer** to Plan, dsgr, dvlp & deploy computer and information networks including LAN, WAN, Intranet, Internet & other data communications systems. Install, upgrade, configure & monitor network devices routers, switches, etc. by managing VLAN, routing, port-securities, troubleshooting network & computer security issues. **Sr. Data Engineer** to Gather, arrange, process & model data. Dsgr, dvlp, create, test, enhance, customize & implement advance s/w module components in complex computer environments. Analyze large volume of data & present it graphs, charts and tables. **Sr. Computer Programmer** to Dsgr, dvlp, test, modify & integrate computer s/w applications on different O/S using latest tools & technologies. Analyze business requirements & dvlp s/w solutions. **Software Developer** to dsgr, dvlp, test & modify s/w applications & specialized utility programs. Analyze user needs & dvlp s/w solutions. Travel and/or relocate to various unanticipated worksite locations with frequency dependent on Project and/or Client requirement throughout the U.S. may be required." Apply w/2 copies of resume to HR, Intigno Inc., 1640 Boro Place, Floor 4, McLean, VA 22102.

The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted
IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY



\$1,500 OFF*

PLUS

ZERO Interest, ZERO Payments
financing for 12 Months**

OFFER EXPIRES 3/30/2026



CALL NOW (844) 945-1631

*Includes labor and product; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 3/30/26. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify/Participating dealers only. See your dealer for details. ©2026 Bath Concepts Industries.

Past issues of

THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

back to 2008
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

McLean ♦ Vienna ♦ Oakton ♦ Great Falls
Reston ♦ Herndon ♦ Oak Hill
Chantilly ♦ CENTREVIEW

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Twitter @followfairfax

An independent, locally owned weekly
newspaper delivered to
homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to
your email box. Go to
connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT
fairfax@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter
703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
miksalmon6922@gmail.com

ADVERTISING
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

In Memoriam
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic

Production Manager
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 17

of information surrounding how to prevent chronic disease, specifically cancer. There are genetic and biological factors, but what are the steps we can take in our lifestyle to help us decrease our risk? This seminar provides clarity on how to implement healthy habits with direct correlation of decreasing our risk. Instructor: INOVA

THURSDAY/MARCH 12

Red Cross Blood Drive. 1-6 p.m. At Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Christ the King is having a Red Cross blood drive. Register today at www.redcrossblood.org. Questions? Contact Melody Starya Mobley at 571-276-7356.

THURSDAY/MARCH 12

“Six by Sondheim” 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Directed by Tony Award-winner and frequent Sondheim collaborator James Lapine, “Six by Sondheim” is part biography, part music-appreciation lesson and part performance piece. Told primarily in Sondheim’s own words, this feature-length documentary weaves together dozens of interviews with the composer, rarely seen archival material spanning more than half a century (including newly discovered footage of Ethel Merman performing “Gypsy”) and re-stagings of three songs produced especially for the film.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

“How to Train Your Dragon.” 7 p.m. The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra will present DreamWorks’ How To Train Your Dragon – In Concert, a thrilling live-to-film experience for all ages, at Capital One Hall in Tysons. Audiences will experience the beloved animated adventure in HD, with composer John Powell’s Academy Award-nominated score performed live to the film by the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. For tickets and further information, visit FairfaxSymphony.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Children’s Consignment Sale. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Christ Church, 7600 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Large, seasonal consignment sale offering everything you need for newborns to teens - all at bargain prices, all in one place! Over 60,000 items from 250+ families. No entrance fee. Quality items. Organized in categories. Awesome deals. Affordable for all.

SUNDAY/MARCH 15

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel: Mozart and Friends—Beethoven, Haydn, and Hummel. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Siegel closes out his season of Keyboard Conversations with the enchanting works of Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart’s extraordinarily talented and favorite pupil, Hummel. The program features Mozart’s Fantasy in D Minor, K. 397; Haydn’s Gypsy Rondo, XV 15; Hummel’s Rondo in E-flat major, Op. 11; and Beethoven’s Variations on God Save the King.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

SIA and Shamrocks St. Patty’s Party- hosted by Seniors in Action. 6-8 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with a little Irish flair at our St. Patty’s Party, hosted by SIA! Join us on March 18 from 6-8 p.m. in Community Hall for music, festive fun, and a delicious mashed potato bar. Don’t miss a lively Irish dance performance by Phoenix Irish Dance Academy at 6:30 p.m. Bring your friends and family – everyone’s welcome for this shamrock-filled evening of community celebration!

MARCH 19-22

2026 Women’s Storytelling Festival. At Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. The festival features 20 storytellers from around the country, across the ocean, and right in Northern Virginia sharing a range of stories - from personal to folk to fantastic - intended for a mature audience.

Ticket holders can attend in-person, watch the livestream, or watch the videos for one month after the festival concludes. As well as stories of lived experience, folktales, and mythology, the WSF will include stories celebrating 250 years of American history. Storyteller Denise Page will share her solo show, “Legacy of a Wealthy Slave,” a deep dive into the 2024 discovery by Yale University archivists of her ancestors and their places in history. Additionally, the showcase History through Women’s Stories will be presented at 2 pm on March 21, 2026. In this special showcase, emceed by 1A host Jenn White, we will hear: Lona Bartlett telling the story of Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), an influential Native American activist integral to the fight for U.S. citizenship; Kristin Pedemonti performing as Marie Jenney Howe, suffragist and founder of Heterodoxy, an influential feminist debate society; and Megan Wells appearing as Elizabeth Hamilton.

Visit:

<https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/>

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

Danú. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. One of today’s leading traditional Irish ensembles, Danú takes audiences on a musical journey to the group’s native Ireland through stirring ancient music and vibrant new repertoire. For over two decades, Danú’s virtuosic players on flute, tin whistle, fiddle, button accordion, bouzouki, and vocals have delighted audiences worldwide, including stops at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles and Symphony Space in New York City.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Fiesta del Sol. 5-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Get ready because Fiesta del Sol is back! Savor sumptuous cuisine, listen to Latin American and Caribbean music with renowned live bands, see quality artisan exhibitors and enjoy alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Learn how to dance a variety of Latin dance steps from professional dance instructors throughout the evening. Drink and food tickets are sold onsite and proceeds go to Friends of MCC. Patrons must be 21 years old or older to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

10th Annual Teen Job and Opportunity Fair. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At West Springfield High School. Sponsored by Supervisor Pat Herrity’s office. These fairs focus on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. Students of all ages are encouraged to attend, but most opportunities will be geared toward students ages 16-18.

MARCH 21-22

The Alden’s Youth Production of “The Wizard of Oz”. 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. When Dorothy drops into the Land of Oz, only one thing is certain: she’s got to find a way back to Kansas. A funny and fast-paced journey down the yellow brick road ensues, as Dorothy and her new friends travel to the fabled Emerald City to meet the Great Oz. When Oz demands a steep price for sending her home, a perilous new adventure begins. This imaginative Alden Youth Production adaptation captures the heart of L. Frank Baum’s classic tale.

SUNDAY/MARCH 22

Silkroad Ensemble with Rhiannon Giddens – Sanctuary: The Power of Resonance and Ritual. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Joined by Artistic Director and Pulitzer Prize-winning multi-instrumentalist Rhiannon Giddens, the GRAMMY Award-winning Mason Artist-in-Residence Silkroad Ensemble returns to the Center for the Arts with its latest project, Sanctuary: The Power of Resonance and Ritual. The idea of trance—leading to a deep peace that is hard to find in modern society—is deeply tied to the communal mak-

ing of music in many different cultures.

SUNDAY/MARCH 22

An Afternoon with Mozart. 4 p.m. At Providence Presbyterian Church, 9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. The Fairfax Choral Society presents An Afternoon with Mozart. Mozart: Requiem - The Symphonic Chorus and Orchestra, Patrick Vaughn, conductor. Mozart: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (d-minor) K.466 - Mark Irchai, pianist.

MARCH 25

Senior Movie Day. 10 a.m. At Movie theater at Reston Town Center. Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day, sponsored by Friends of Reston. Join them on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie.

March 25: Downton Abbey: Grand Finale

THURSDAY/MARCH 26

Genevive. 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. In this musical romance, Genevive (a beautiful young Frenchwoman who works at a small-town boutique selling umbrellas) falls for dashing mechanic Guy. Their brief romance is interrupted when Guy is drafted to serve in the Algerian War. Though pregnant by Guy, Genevive marries an older businessman, Roland, and begins to move on with her life.

MARCH 27-28

2026 Mason School of Dance Gala Concert Performances. Friday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday at 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. George Mason University School of Dance presents the 2026 Mason School of Dance Gala Concert performances, which celebrate a rich array of diverse choreographic voices. This year’s program showcases George Mason School of Dance majors in five dynamic works: Branndi Lewis’s Many Brims, Victor Quijada’s Enter Woven, Medhi Walerski’s Romeo + Juliet (Balcony Scene), an excerpt from Alejandro Cerrudo’s It Starts Now, and Andrea Miller’s Sama.

MARCH 28-29

SPRINGPEX Stamp Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday (March 28), and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday (March 29). At John R. Lewis High School cafeteria, 6540 Franconia Road, Springfield. Presented by Springfield Stamp Club. SPRINGPEX is the Washington D.C. area’s largest club-sponsored stamp show. It features interesting philatelic exhibits, 20+ dealers, U.S. Postal Service booth, 3rd annual Postcrossing meet-up, and free materials for young, beginning, and returning collectors. Free admission and parking. For details, visit springfieldstampclub.org/springpex

SUNDAY/MARCH 29

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. NOVA Parks Historian Paul McCray will speak on the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad, sharing some of the thousands of photographs he’s collected. Email: burkehistoricalsociety@hotmail.com

SUNDAY/MARCH 29

Solomon Eichner, Piano. 2-3:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Baltimore native Solomon Eichner is a product of some of the best conservatories in the country and winner of numerous international competitions. He debuted at Carnegie Hall in 2016 after winning the “Golden Key Debut” International Competition and has performed in England, Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland and throughout the U.S. His playing is praised for its virtuosity and his ability to make music sing and come alive.

Welcome to the Club, Joan



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(And I say that with all sincerity.) The ‘club’ to which I refer to is the cancer club (and neither am I talking about astrological signs). Unfortunately, you may not have a choice but to join - whether you like it or not. To invoke the legendary Groucho Marx: he wouldn’t want to belong to a club that would have him as a member. He wasn’t talking about cancer (it was a snooty country club that would have him as a member), but the sentiment is certainly similar. Cancer - the disease, would have you as a member - so to speak, regardless of your race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whether you’re a democrat or a republican. If you live and breathe, you could be diagnosed with cancer. It is an equal opportunity life impactor.

For those of us worldwide millions who have already been diagnosed, cancer becomes unrelenting baggage - just so you know. And depending upon your attitude - about your new diagnosis, you will be either pleasant to be around or not (not that any of this is easy). Maintaining an emotional balance about this life-affecting circumstance can, anecdotally speaking, enhance your life, what there is of it (to quote the late Larry Fine from the 1938 Three Stooges short, “Healthy, Wealthy and Dumb”). You can be positive and exude hope, or you can be negative, and suffer the consequences. It’s always my intention when I talk to a newly diagnosed cancer patient to listen attentively to their answers and their understanding of how their life will be changing. Cancer will become the first thing they think of when they get up in the morning, the last thing they think about when they try (‘try’ being the operative word) to go to sleep in the evening, and pretty much most of what will preoccupy their life during the day. How they anticipate and work this reality into their lives is what I’m most interested in learning.

Being diagnosed with cancer is as large an obstacle and impediment to realizing your hopes and dreams as one could possibly imagine/realize. How you deal with it matters. If you deal with your diagnosis with confidence and a can-do approach; I want you on my team. And I want you on my team (part of the club) because I gain your strength and wherewithal from your attitude. We all live with uncertainty and when you express a willingness to walk the walk/talk the talk, it helps me to endure my cancer-related/caused demons. The best help I can get is from my fellow cancer patients. When they’re still seeing the world/circumstances as a glass half full - figuratively speaking, I want them in my life. Being selfish now; I can feed off their attitude and that will help me to endure the “slings and arrows” that cancer shoots every day and especially in bed at night when they’re alone with their thoughts. To update an old Bette Davis quote: cancer ain’t for cissies.

Joan is at the beginning of her cancer experience/indoctrination (into this not-exclusive club) and so far, she’s exhibiting all the signs of being a welcome addition. When I talk to her, I come away feeling empowered by her spirit and willingness to face facts and proactively live forward in spite of this potentially devastating predicament. Managing the many appointments, labs, scans, medical appointments, treatment, et cetera, is not easy. In fact, the profession has created a new position: nurse navigator, to help patients stay on track for the best possible outcome as they deal with this treacherous and demanding road, unlike any road they’ve ever been on, driving or not.

Having been there and done that is never more meaningful than when talking with a new member. Compassion, empathy - and understanding are most helpful when talking to a recent “diagnosee.” And more often than not, when talking with Joan, I come away feeling so much better than when it began. Diagnosis to date, she’s been a great addition. I look forward to speaking to her again. It will be my pleasure. I only hope she feels the same.

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



PHOTOS BY CAREN HOEHNER

Musicians with the Great Falls Philharmonic, an orchestra featuring performers from across the Washington metropolitan area, perform during a concert on Aug. 23, 2025.

Soprano Erin Ridge performs Samuel Barber's "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" with the Great Falls Philharmonic on Aug. 23, 2025.

Great Falls Philharmonic To Present Collaborative Choral-Orchestral Masterworks with Voce Chamber Singers

Philharmonic's conductor hones skills in unlikely place.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following its 2023 debut at a church festival in Great Falls and nearly another dozen performances, the all-volunteer Great Falls Philharmonic is branching out across Northern Fairfax County, just outside the beltway, with its most ambitious project yet. Under the baton of Derek Maseloff, conductor and artistic director, more than 100 musicians of the next generation will join the Voce Chamber Singers of Vienna and director David Mann for a performance at 3 p.m., May 9, at Heritage Fellowship Church, 2501 Fox Mill Road, Reston.

The two-hour concert with intermission represents a massive leap for the young orchestra.

"It's an expression of our organizational capability," Maseloff said in an interview with The Connection on Feb. 21. "We basically are a three-person organization — myself and two board members — all donating our time to build this thing. We're putting on a season analogous to those of orchestras established for 60 years. We're punching way above our weight," Maseloff said, describing the power of the orchestra.

The drive to create a cultural in-

stitution, as Maseloff seeks, requires the ability to get people on the same page and to inspire a crowd. These are skills Maseloff is currently honing in an unlikely place: infantry officer training at Fort Moore (formerly Fort Benning), Ga.

"Even though I'm a conductor in the U.S. Army Band (2025), they still send the musicians to the same training as everyone else," Maseloff said. He noted that there are more astronauts in the Army than its 20 band conductors.

"Once I make it through this training gauntlet, my day job will be conducting a U.S. Army Band. There is a clear line between being an Army officer and being a conductor. It is about getting people on the same page, giving clear instructions, inspiring people and being fundamentally about communication."

That leadership will be on full display on May 9 as Maseloff and David Mann, artistic director of Voce, present a program featuring two extraordinary choral masterworks: Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, culminating in the iconic "Ode to Joy."

"Voce Chamber Singers is honored to be joining forces with the outstanding Great Falls Philharmonic musicians to present these



Bows and applause as the Great Falls Philharmonic finishes the concert on Aug. 23, 2025.



Derek Maseloff is the artistic director and conductor of the Great Falls Philharmonic, the region's newest professional orchestra. A multi-instrumentalist, Maseloff also performs as a horn player, organist and composer.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WWW.GFPHIL.ORG

David Mann is the artistic director of Voce Chamber Singers, a group dedicated to evolving the choral art form through community performances. Mann will lead the singers in a joint performance with the Great Falls Philharmonic on May 9.

joyful and thrilling masterworks," Mann said. He currently serves as the Director of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington.

Heritage Fellowship Church, site of the May 9 concert, is located at 2501 Fox Mill Rd, Reston. With ample parking, handicapped access and family-friendly ticket options, organizers hope the concert will draw both longtime classical fans and first-time orchestra-goers from across northern Fairfax County and beyond.

Tickets are available now: \$40 for adults; \$10 for children. Visit the Great Falls Philharmonic website at <https://www.gfphil.org/>.

Donations for the Great Falls Philharmonic, a 501(c)(3) Public Charity EIN99-2312855, are accepted at gfl.org/give.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM