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Twin sisters (from left) Ellie and Emily Kim cosplaying video-game characters, respectively, Sunday from "Honkai Star Rail" and Rubuska from "Reverse 1999." The sixth annual Asian Festival on Main in the City of Fairfax was May 17.



ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 18

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

'Tireless' City Councilmember, 27, Honored with 40 under 40

PAGE 6

6th Asian Festival On Main

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Spanberger Signs 25-Bill Package

Fairfax lawmakers drive key reforms on data center costs, gun safety, and healthcare caps.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed 25 bills into law on May 13. While the broader package includes legislation from across the commonwealth, members of the Fairfax County legislative delegation heavily influenced the outcome. Local representatives spearheaded six landmark bills in the package, advancing measures to adjust regional public safety policies, utility infrastructure costs, health insurance coverage standards and more.

Three ‘Kitchen-Table’ Bills

These laws alter regulations governing household expenses, healthcare cost structures and insurance standards for families across Northern Virginia.

The \$35 Insulin Cap (HB 1214), patroned by Del. Karrie Delaney, D-Chantilly, concerns health insurance cost-sharing payments for insulin and diabetes equipment and supplies. “As the mother of a T1D child, I am all too familiar with just how costly equipment like CGMs or insulin pumps can be. I’m proud of this legislation, passed unanimously, that will bring real change to Virginians’ lives,” Delaney said.

“We are taking action to bring down healthcare costs,” Spanberger said.

❖ Data Center Cost Protection (HB 1191), patroned by Del. Irene Shin, D-Herndon, requires high-energy-use facilities to undergo local reviews to protect residential utility



PHOTO SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

Del. Karrie Delaney, third from left, applauds as Gov. Abigail Spanberger signs HB 1214 to lower healthcare costs by capping the price of insulin, supplies and equipment used to manage diabetes at \$35 a month, May 13, 2026. Delaney is the chief patron.

customers from infrastructure cost shifts.

❖ Essential Health Benefits Expansion (HB 328), patroned by Del. Rip Sullivan, D-McLean, directs the state’s Bureau of Insurance to select a new benchmark plan, expanding required baseline coverage to include treatments such as hearing aids, infertility treatments and doula care. “HB 328 will ensure those who need health coverage for things

like fertility treatment, doula care, hearing aids, donor breast milk, and more will have it,” Sullivan said. “It’s a major step in ensuring health care in the Commonwealth covers what Virginians need affordably.”

Three ‘Public Safety and Justice’ Bills

These state statutes outline adjustments

to Virginia’s criminal code and firearm regulations led by Fairfax County representatives.

❖ The Assault Weapons and Magazine Ban (HB 217 and SB 749), patroned by Del. Dan Helmer, D-Clifton and Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, D-Vienna, prohibits the future sale, manufacture, importation or transfer of defined semi-automatic assault firearms and restricts ammunition magazines holding more than 15 rounds. Salim said, “When I ran for State Senate against an incumbent who voted against prior versions of an assault weapons ban, the people who believed in this vision stood with me to make the impossible possible.”

❖ Weapons Ban in Healthcare Facilities (HB 229), co-sponsored by Del. Laura Jane Cohen, D-Springfield, and Del. Holly Seibold, D-Vienna, restricts firearms in hospitals and psychiatric facilities to reduce workplace security incidents.

❖ Marijuana Conviction Resentencing (HB 26 and SB 62), co-sponsored by Shin and Salim, establishes a court hearing process to review sentences for marijuana offenses legalized or decriminalized under the 2021 updates.

Gov. Spanberger said, “For decades, marijuana enforcement disproportionately impacted minority communities and communities of color, contributing to inequities in the criminal justice system that Virginia must no longer ignore.”

The full list of signed bills is available here. <https://lis.virginia.gov/>

Gov. Spanberger Vetoes Collective Bargaining Bill

Unions say the veto violated campaign promises

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A legislative push for labor rights in Virginia ended Thursday, May 14, when Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) vetoed collective bargaining bill HB 1263, which aimed “to establish a system for public sector collective bargaining.” Unions said the veto violated campaign promises.

HB 1263, sponsored by Del. Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) with an identical bill, SB 378, by Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax), would have extended bargaining rights to over 500,000 Virginia public employees — including firefighters, teachers and state and local workers — seeking wages, benefits, and working conditions by overturning bans on collective bargaining.

SEE UNIONS SAY, PAGE 4



PHOTO VIA X

Virginia gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger speaks at a union rally in Henrico County on April 8, 2025, about the positive impact of labor unions on her family.

Campaigns Suspended After U.S. Supreme Court Order

Local former 7th district contenders re-evaluate next steps.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following the 18-word U.S. Supreme Court’s May 15 order denying an emergency request to stay in Scott v. McDougle, Virginia’s congressional boundaries reverted to 2021 Virginia court-ordered maps.

The U.S. Supreme Court gave no explanation, nor did justices dissent, and the docket did not disclose the vote. The order left in place a Virginia state supreme court ruling that reversed a lower circuit court decision and invalidated a temporary congressional redistricting map approved by 51.69% of voters in the April 21 special election, upending as many as 12 campaigns in the invalidated “new” 7th Congressional District.

There was outrage at both supreme courts invalidating an election.

Gov. Abigail Spanberger posted, “What do we do with our outrage? We WIN in November. Volunteer, donate, vote, WIN.”

Virginia Senate Republican Leader Ryan McDougle said, “The Supreme Court of the United States has affirmed what we always knew: you cannot violate the Constitution to change the Constitution.”

Whether it’s a stunning betrayal or procedural sanctity depends entirely on which side of the 2021 map one is standing on.

If Virginia wants to change its maps or its court, it will have to win the 2027 state elections and restart the amendment clock.

But it will be too late to counter out-of-turn redistricting in GOP states trying to stem possible GOP losses in November’s election for U.S. House.

Northern Virginia candidates quickly shifted focus to their home districts. U.S. Rep. Suhas Subramanyam, continuing his reelection campaign in western Fairfax County, stated the court “decided to let the

SEE CAMPAIGNS SUSPENDED, PAGE 4

Fairfax City Adopts its Budget for FY 27

Taxes on meals, real estate, hotel rooms rise.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In February, Fairfax City Manager Dan Alexander recommended the City raise its residential real-estate tax rate 2.5 cents, from its current rate of \$1.055 per \$100 assessed valuation to \$1.08. But City Council later advertised an even higher rate of \$1.095.

So when it adopted its FY 27 budget May 5 – including a \$1.0725 real-estate tax rate – that number was lower than both the proposed rates. But it's still a 1.75-cent increase over the previous year and will result in the average City homeowner paying an additional \$462.50 annually in real-estate taxes. Of that total, \$335 is due to higher home assess-

ments and \$127.50 is because of the tax hike.

Fairfax also raised its meals tax – for the first time in 22 years – from 4 to 4.5 percent. This means diners here will pay an estimated 25 cents more for a \$50 meal. CFO J.C. Martinez told Council this increase “reduces the financial burden on residents, as it can offset the need for higher real-estate taxes due to visitors and non-residents paying this tax. The additional half-percent would generate approximately \$1.3 million in meals-tax revenue.”

Noting that people's costs of living are rising in many areas, Councilmember Rachel McQuillen said she didn't like the meals tax increase. But she said she'd



Dan Alexander



J.C. Martinez

support it because this budget focused on “fiscal responsibility and long-term stability while protecting the level of

service this community expects.” The steepest hike, though, was in the City's transient-occupancy tax rate, which will rise from 4 percent to a whopping 10.5 percent on hotel room rentals. Targeting visitors, it applies to short-term stays of less than 30 consecutive days. Martinez said this 6.5-percent jump is expected to increase revenue from this source by some \$812,500.

“I would have preferred it to be under 10 percent, but I get it,” said Councilmember Anthony Amos. “I only ask that we monitor its impact on hotels – and if

it's proving to be significant, have a plan to provide support when necessary.”

The entire approved budget for all Fairfax City funds – including General, Capital Projects, Transportation, Stormwater, Wastewater, Transit and Debt Service – totals \$299.6 million, representing a 3.2-percent increase over FY 26. The General Fund budget alone is \$207.9 million – a 4.6-percent increase from the previous fiscal year.

“This budget reflects a collaborative effort by Council to maintain stability while making strategic investments and reallocations that strengthen services, support our workforce, and position the City well for the future,” said Alexander. “The adopted budget protects core services, advances key community priorities and does so in a fiscally responsible way.”

At the same time, Council approved the City's FY 2027-31 Cap-

ital Improvement Program (CIP), focusing on maintaining strong public services, investing in community infrastructure, supporting employees and preserving long-term financial stability.

Among the most significant investments included in the budget are continued funding for the Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center – a joint Fairfax County/City project – plus ongoing school renovation and modernization efforts. Money was earmarked for utility-infrastructure improvements, as well as enhancements to community services, parks and recreation, and public safety – for example, funds toward an eventual new Fire Station 3.

Some \$23.8 million was also allocated for transportation-infrastructure investments. And the budget fully funds the City's school tuition contract at \$76.4

SEE TAXES ON MEALS, PAGE 17

Unions Say the Veto Violated Campaign Promises

FROM PAGE 3

In April, Spanberger proposed a Governor's Substitute to delay collective bargaining for local employees without an agreement until 2030. The General Assembly rejected the delay on April 22, returning the version unaltered.

In her veto statement, Spanberger said: “While preserving the enrolled bill's focus on allowing public employees to achieve collective bargaining, my amendments would have also provided flexibility for public employers. ... However,

the General Assembly rejected these amendments.”

Labor leaders pointed to her April 8, 2025, messaging that she would “look forward to working with members of our General Assembly to make sure more Virginians can negotiate for the benefits and fair treatment that they earn.”

Union heads said that the promise was broken. “Collective bargaining is not a privilege – it is a right,” leaders from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) said in a statement. “Govern-

nor Spanberger met with our members, stated her support, and made a promise. Today, she broke it.”

IAFF General President Edward Kelly stated: “This veto is a step against every worker who put their faith in Abigail Spanberger to deliver,” Kelly said. “Firefighters keep their word every day on the job. The Governor did not do the same.” (Read the statement via the IAFF News Portal).

Teamsters General President Sean M. O'Brien added: “Gov. Spanberger's actions in Virginia

are a reminder that unions must demand more of elected officials,” O'Brien said. (Read the press release at the Teamsters Official Website.)

At a May 6 Fairfax rally, LaNoral Thomas, president of SEIU Virginia 512, said: “Making Virginia affordable means making sure the public servants who keep this state running can [afford to] live here.”

Fairfax County Supervisor Dalia Palchick (D-Providence) said: “We know that when unions are active, our economy is stable.” She said

that without labor protections, workers are vulnerable.

Thomas noted the bans were rooted in the 1970s: “When collective bargaining was banned in Virginia over 45 years ago, it was banned because a group of Black women at UVA stated that they wanted the right to collectively bargain,” Thomas said.

With the veto, the 2021 law remains the status quo, leaving collective bargaining optional for individual municipalities to adopt via local ordinance.

Campaigns Suspended After U.S. Supreme Court Order

FROM PAGE 3

partisan Virginia Supreme Court overturn the will of millions of Virginia voters.”

Del. Dan Helmer returned to his 2027 state delegate campaign in Centreville, noting that while the decision ended his congressional bid, “one court ruling won't change that.”

State Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim remains in office through 2027, representing Fairfax and Falls Church, posting, “The movement we built does not end here.”

Other regional Democratic contenders suspended their campaigns with online statements. Former Virginia first lady Dorothy McAuliffe stated she would “keep working for my neighbors.”

Del. Adele McClure called the

moment “beyond disappointing. ... it is dangerous,” urging supporters to protect democracy.

Former federal prosecutor J.P. Cooney noted, “While my congressional campaign is ending, our movement to take on corruption and lawlessness is just beginning.” Alexandria national security expert Olivia Troye affirmed her commitment to “standing up to Trump's and MAGA extremism.”

Conversely, the map reversal altered the race for four Republican contenders running outside Northern Virginia: State Sen. Tara Durant, John Gray, Douglas Ollivant, and Waverly Washington, all also ended their campaigns.

Fairfax County GOP posted, “Democrats tried to change the rules illegally. Spent millions.”

(ORDER LIST: 608 U.S.)

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026

ORDER IN PENDING CASE

25A1240 SCOTT, DON, ET AL. V. McDOUGLE, RYAN T., ET AL.

The application for stay presented to The Chief Justice and by him referred to the Court is denied.

SCREENSHOT SUPREMECOURT.GOV

The U.S. Supreme Court order issued Friday, May 15, denies an emergency request by Virginia Democrats to use a new, Democratic-leaning congressional map for the 2026 elections. The 18-word order denies an emergency application for a stay in the case Scott, Don, et al. v. McDougle, Ryan T., et al. (Docket 25A1240). The application, filed by House Speaker Don Scott, Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell, Senate President Pro Tempore Louise Lucas, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, requested the high court to pause lower court proceedings.

NEWS

Fairfax and Woodson Nominated for Cappies

The local high schools have a long reputation for excellence in theater, and Fairfax and Woodson have just received a total of eight Cappies nominations. Fairfax High's six nods were for its musical, "Something Rotten!" and Woodson High's two were for its play, "Tartuffe."

The Cappies Gala will be Sunday, June 7, at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., at which time the winners will be revealed. Fairfax and Woodson students are competing for these awards against students from many other schools in the National Capital Area.

Fairfax's Nominations

Supporting Actor in a Male Role in a Musical – Tristan Farmer

Dancer in a Male Role – Nate Smith

Featured Actor in a Male Role in a Musical – Mauro Manganello
Choreography – Nate Smith, Naomi Bautista, Libby Hansen
Marketing & Publicity – "Something Rotten!" Publicity Team
Graduating Critic – Naomi Bautista

Woodson's Nominations

Lead Actor in a Male Role in a Play – Silas Blocker

Supporting Actor in a Male Role in a Play – Aiden Brennan

See all the nominations at <https://www.cappiesnca.com/nominations-awards>

– BONNIE HOBBS

NEWS BRIEFS

Rock the Block this Friday in Fairfax City

Fairfax City's popular outdoor music series, Rock the Block, kicks off this Friday, May 22, from 6:30-9:30 p.m., at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. Performing will be The Reflex, specializing in hits from the '80s. The live music is free, and food and beer will be available for purchase. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and folding chairs on which to sit.

Weather permitting, Rock the Block is on the fourth Friday of the month, May through October. The rest of this year's schedule is: June 26, Perfekt Blend; July 24, U.S. Army Downrange Band; Aug. 28, My Chemical Bromance; Sept. 25, One Hot Mess; and Oct. 23, Groovalicious.

Help Local Families, Receive Raffle Tickets

Now through May 31, nonprofit Britepaths is connecting specific products for its clients in need, and people may drop them off at Patriots Pub & Grill, 10560 Main St. in Fairfax. For every donation made, people will receive a raffle ticket for prizes including gift certificates to eat at Patriots.

Especially needed are feminine-hygiene products, soap, shampoo and conditioner, oral-hygiene products, diapers and wipes. For more information or to make large donations, contact Dawn Sykes at 703-273-8829 or info@britepaths.org.

Fairfax City Pride Event is Set for June 6

Fairfax City will kick off Pride Month on Saturday, June 6, with a free and family-friendly Pride event. It'll be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax. The festivities will include community vendors from throughout Northern Virginia and the GMU campus, children's activities such as face painting and caricatures, and musical entertainment.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
CUMBERLAND	5734	613	SPORTS LAKE ROAD	RANDOLPH CREEK	4/30/2026
CHARLOTTE	4963	693	TERRELL ROAD	BRANCH OF TURNIP CREEK	4/28/2026
PRINCE EDWARD	13995	666N	DOUGLAS CHURCH ROAD	BUFFALO CREEK	4/28/2026
WYTHE	19731	663N	BISHOP THOMAS LANE	PINE RUN	4/23/2026
APPOMATTOX	1582	602	MT. PLEASANT ROAD	CABIN BRANCH	4/15/2026
AMHERST	1441	622E	STAPLETON ROAD	CHRISTIAN MILL CREEK	4/11/2026
CARROLL	4609	100	SYLVATUS HGWY/101	ROCK CREEK	4/3/2026

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Travel and traffic/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.

Anthony Amos Feted as Northern Va. 40 under 40 Honoree

Recognized for professional and personal achievements.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Not only is Fairfax City Councilmember Anthony Amos making his mark in local government, but he also gives up much of his free time to volunteer and make a positive difference in people's lives. So it's no wonder that this energetic and seemingly tireless 27-year-old is getting noticed.

In 2025, Amos was one of the George Mason University Black Alumni Chapter's 40 under 40 honorees. And this year, he received the same honor for Northern Virginia's 40 Under 40 program from The Leadership Center of Arlington and Leadership Fairfax.

The two entities partner to recognize young leaders under 40 years old who are making an im-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARENA AMOS
Anthony Amos with his 40 under 40 award.

act in Northern Virginia. Honorees demonstrate that through their professional and personal achievements, civic engagement and personal story.

"We are pleased to recognize this year's group of exceptional honorees," said Kia Cole-Hines, president and CEO of Leadership Fairfax. "Their leadership and civic engagement stand out as stellar examples of inspirational leaders working to build thriving communities."

Amos found out about his latest



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

In March, Councilmember Anthony Amos participated in a celebration for Bond's Entertainment Center's 10th anniversary. Front row, from left, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read, co-founders Egor and Anna Bond, and Amos.

honor in March, and he and the 39 other young leaders were celebrated, April 14, at a reception at Caboose Commons in Merrifield. They each received letters from Sen. Mark Warner and a clear statuette.

"In a quickly evolving world, this year's honorees shine a light on the

values of curiosity, innovation, empathy and service," said Lisa Fikes, president and CEO of the Leadership Center of Arlington. "Through both their professional and personal lives, they are meeting the moment and making a positive impact in our region."

Amos obtained a Bachelor's in

Sociology and Political Science from the University of Hawaii-West Oahu, plus a Master's in Public Policy from GMU. And he's been an active member of the Fairfax community since moving here six years ago.

A member of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, he's chaired both its Government Affairs Committee and its Young Professionals Leadership Team's Philanthropy Committee. He helped formulate the Chamber's policy positions on issues including affordable housing and transportation. Amos also worked to create a program honoring law-enforcement personnel and first responders. It's now the Chamber's "Fairfax's Finest Valor Awards" which takes place each October.

And since joining City Council in January 2025, he's proven to be a level-headed steadying presence on the dais. Just ask Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read.

"Councilmember Amos has demonstrated an ability to listen thoughtfully, ask good questions and build relationships," she said. "These are necessary skills

SEE ANTHONY AMOS, PAGE 15

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Col. Richard W. Stewart with convoy to Kuwait 1991.

Stewart Shares History in the Making

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Richard W. Stewart, retired Colonel, has newly released a book, “Combat Historian” (Collecting and Writing American Special Operations History from Desert Storm to Afghanistan 1991-2002). His book answers the question, “Why did I become a historian at all, let alone a combat historian.” That’s all he ever wanted to be (except briefly when he flirted with being a veterinarian or an astronaut as so many children did in the 60s).

Stewart wanted to “understand why the human race does what it does and how it has gotten to where it is today.”

Stewart studied history and worked toward a reserve commission and wasn’t sure how he could combine the two professional inclinations. After continuing with graduate education and facing a poor job market at the time he noticed a position for a civilian historian serving in the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL).

Stewart’s book traces the evolving role of combat historians from World War II through 1990. The book takes the reader through the challenges of translating experience and lessons learned into the training and doctrinal base of the Army. He found the compilation of a historical record often took a back seat to other priorities such as press releases, quick turnaround lessons and other more immediate priorities rather than lessons learned for the future.

Stewart explains, “The value of history is self-evident to historians but less to many command and staff officers.” But he explains the penalty may be down range, like the impact of a chemical agent. We need to know where the units were and on what day. A combat historian embedded in a unit can do a great deal of good capturing what really happened.”

“In many cases the officers had never met a historian and didn’t know why we were there and tried to let facts fall where they may.” He adds some were surprised but were quite willing to talk as long as they knew it was legitimate. Almost all of the support persons were very interested in talking about what they did and how they helped

the battle go successfully.

Record keeping was another issue. He says many didn’t understand the importance of accurate data; it was at the bottom of their priority list. There was no requirement to keep data and no penalty for failing to do it. Stewart explains computers would seem to make it easy to keep records but it might seem too much work to do, and they thought they had other things more important.

And as he learned, truth can have its costs and risks in an organization where commanders sometimes sought the road of protecting their units versus welcoming the information gleaned by the combat historians. Sometimes he says he wasn’t allowed to provide the specific proof of facts behind the observations because it could lead to hurt feelings. “Personality and prejudice overrode regulations and perhaps reason.”

He faced reluctant officers who tried to avoid having the observations of the historian reflect negatively on their units. There were the complications of the new joint command as well as the challenge of getting the new historian program institutionalized into the Army so that units would cooperate in providing information. In addition, at a time when resources were tight, “and the fight for positions and resources was cutthroat” a historian position was viewed as expendable. But what really happened should be number one priority to figure out if there is a better way to do things.”

Stewart, the long-time Chief Historian for the U.S. Army, has been working on his book for four years.

“I had to figure a way to get my memories in order. It took two years to write it and get the pictures in order and another two years for the final draft.”

“I truly felt that I was a ‘servant of forever,’ since my historical interviews, document collections, and written insights had captured data that other historians could use for decades to come. I captured personal stories as well as official facts and documents. I hope that I helped put a human face on stories of special operations planning and combat.”

<https://blog.stetson.edu/faculty-engagement/2012/01/>

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Christian Inguillo with animé prints and Filipino-themed stickers he designed and drew.



Tyrone P and mother-in-law Pam Sullivan enjoying chicken and pork bao buns.



The sixth annual Asian Festival on Main was May 17.

PHOTOS BY
BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Twin sisters (from left) Ellie and Emily Kim cosplaying video-game characters, respectively, Sunday from “Honkai Star Rail” and Rubuska from “Reverse 1999.”



Holding cookies from bit bakery are (from left) Michelle Tu (cheddar cheese) and Sora Lee (matcha macadamia).



Ghassen Wardi of PhoWheels making Vietnamese Bò-Khirria tacos.



From Sō Korean Barbeque – (back row, from left) David Kim, Sekyu Song, Ethan Kim and David Han and (front row, from left) Shawn Kim and Sylvia Cho – offer (clockwise from bottom left) marinated ribeye, soy-garlic short ribs, spicy pork and marinated chicken.



Roddy Wenner and Cher Thompson enjoying their Chicken Satay and Buko Pandan drink.

NEWS



AFOSE members play the angklung, a traditional Indonesian bamboo instrument.



Performing a number with scarves are members of the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe.



Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe members carry a paper dragon down Main Street.



Doing an Indonesian dance are (from left) Judith Teguh and Julia Clifford of Bali Jegeg.

Celebration of Asian Culture, Heritage and Tradition

PHOTOS BY
BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A Choy Wun Lion poses after dancing on Main Street.



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Artists, Makers, Musicians, Technology in Fairfax City

As the closing event of Fairfax City's 2026 Spotlight on the Arts Festival, a Spotlight Community Day was held May 3 in Old Town. It celebrated art, music, makers and technology while offering children's activities and a Main Street market.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Archa Malhotra displays her hand-painted jewelry and original, acrylic paintings on wood.



Ava Stezin with her vibrant oil portraits.



Hatmaker and fashion photographer/designer Yasmine Weir creates extravagant, over-the-top styles.



Jose Quinonez with his acrylic paintings in neo-cubism style.



Mirette Bedrous displays her handmade fabric purses, pencil-and-charcoal drawings, and art prints.



Nuttha Chai of Private Nail Salon selling crocheted tote bags, hats and bandanas.



Fairfax High Music & Computer Technology students perform in Old Town Square.



Allyson Cowels shows her polymer clay and resin jewelry.



Fairfax Academy senior Emily Bublitz, who plays bass and sings, received a \$1,000 scholarship from Spotlight on the Arts. She'll attend Belmont University in Nashville to major in audio-engineering technology.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Artist Erin Keele poses with her abstract oil paintings on collaged canvas for a textured base.

Caroline Trimmer holds her acrylic painting of a luna moth.

Newsha Biabani displays her handmade pottery bowls.



Vicki and Glenn Corcoran with a 1982 Delorean. Glenn built several of the 3D-printed parts in its “time machine” and “nuclear reactor” sections.

Khoah Nguyen feeds sugar cane into a machine to make sugar-cane drinks with lemon and ginger.

Army veteran Miguel Hobbs does abstract artwork for therapy.



The nonprofit TSJ Foundation promotes STEAM in schools, inspires creativity and provides career-growth information. Posing with the Star Wars stormtroopers are (from left) Eloisa Dadalt, Hiury Marques, Troy Sweatman (as the Mandalorian with Grogu), Vicki and Glenn Corcoran, and TSJ co-founder Eric Jacobs.

Cheryl Newway of local shop Perfect Mistakes, with a handmade Red Riding Hood costume to slay the wolf.



Lucy Loves owner Sharon Buttram with some clothing from her store.

Behind the Garden Gates

Fairfax County's Historic Garden Week Blooms with Beauty, Hospitality, and Hidden Surprises.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

By the time Fairfax County's Historic Garden Week tour opened its private gates this spring, Andrea Hickman had already been holding her breath for months.

Like so many grand events that appear effortless to the public, this one had been anything but. There had been nearly a year of planning, homeowner coordination, photography, volunteer recruitment, sponsorship outreach, logistics, and storytelling preparation. Then, just hours before tour day, came one final threat: a late freeze.

"We were a nervous wreck," Hickman said, recalling the night before visitors arrived. Homeowners and volunteers scrambled to protect vulnerable blooms, covering what they could and hoping for the best with what they couldn't. "But we really lucked out," she said.

By morning, the cold had broken. The sun emerged. Temperatures softened. And Fairfax County's gardens, those carefully tend-

Historic Garden Week, at its best, is as much about hospitality as horticulture.

ed, deeply personal spaces, were ready.

"It was such a good day," Hickman said. "It was sunny and the temperature was pleasant. It was such a great day to be outside."

For one spring day, Historic Garden Week in Virginia transformed Fairfax County into something rare: a place where private beauty became public generosity.

As chair of the 2026 Fairfax County tour, Hickman helped orchestrate one of 29 state-wide tours presented by the Garden Club of Virginia. But in Fairfax, what unfolded was more than a showcase of architecture and azaleas. It was an invitation into hidden worlds, homes and gardens that revealed not only design sensibilities, but personality, philosophy, and place.

"We had three very different garden styles," Hickman said, each property offering its own interpretation of landscape and home. Some leaned formal, others more romantic, but one in particular surprised visi-



Delicate violet blooms rise above fern-like foliage along a shaded garden path featured on the Fairfax County Historic Garden Week tour.



Sunlight filters through a pergola as a vibrant floral display greets visitors exploring the outdoor spaces featured in Fairfax County's Historic Garden Week.



Fresh florals and a creative citrus-lined vase add a cheerful note to the kitchen welcoming guests for Historic Garden Week.



Carefully layered flowers and fruit create an artful staircase display, one of the many handcrafted details showcased during Fairfax County's Historic Garden Week.

SEE BEHIND THE GARDEN, PAGE 13

Sun Season Is Here and So Is Melanoma

Melanoma Monday was May 4 followed by National Safe Sun Week starting Monday, May 18.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Each spring when May rolls around, everyone is ready to stretch out on the lounge chair by the pool but that has its drawbacks in the form of sun cancer, so early in the month is “Melanoma Monday” to raise awareness.

Melanoma is the most invasive skin cancer and can be fatal. It can start as an innocent looking mole or just normal skin with little signs that can become life threatening in just six weeks.

To kick off the sunny season, MedStar Health is actively spreading the word about Melanoma Monday, and recommends seeing a dermatologist every year for a skin check.

Sunscreen, hats and shirts are the best protection they said.

The whole month of May has been dubbed “skin cancer awareness month,” and the American Academy of Dermatology Associ-

ation notes that every day, about 9,500 people in the United States are diagnosed with skin cancer. But there are precautions to take, and that includes protecting skin from the sun and avoiding tanning beds. When using sun screen lotion, go for 30 SPF or higher, they said.

Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer but if caught early, melanoma is highly treatable, AAD said. They point out the ABCDE’s of skin cancer which hones down the self-examinations to pinpoint causes and places that skin cancer might be. “Early detection is the key,” said Darrell Rigel, MD. The doctor who invented the ABCDE’s of melanoma:

A for “asymmetry,” meaning one half of the spot is unlike the other half.

B is for “border,” where the spot has an irregular border.

C is for “color,” the spot has varying colors.

D is for “diameter” of the spot which is usually greater than six mm, or the size of a pencil eraser.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

The beach is all about soaking up sun but don’t forget the sunscreen and umbrella.

E is for “evolving,” and this is when the spot changes in size, shape or color.

Treating Melanoma starts with a self-exam, and this includes a full-length mirror and hand mirror to

check all the spots. Following it up with a dermatologist visit is always a good idea.

Behind the Garden Gates

FROM PAGE 12

tors most.

From the street, the house appeared contemporary, clean, updated, polished. Visitors expected modern restraint. What they found instead was something far more layered: an overflowing, almost transportive garden with Asian-inspired influence, lush softness, and unexpected abundance.

“From the exterior, you would not have expected that overflowing garden,” Hickman said. “You would have expected straight lines and clean edges.”

That tension between appearance and revelation became part of the tour’s charm.

And yet, while gardens dazzled, Hickman said one refrain echoed throughout the day even more than praise for flowers or furnishings: “Your people are so nice.”

For Hickman, that was one of the greatest compliments of all.

Historic Garden Week, at its best, is as much about hospitality as horticulture. Visitors certainly came for inspiration, garden ideas, interior details, preservation stories, but what they encountered was warmth.

More than 45 volunteers, including Garden Club members, Master Gardeners, local supporters, friends, and even student volunteers, helped shape the day into something deeply personal.

“It’s an all-hands-on-deck event,” Hick-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREA HICKMAN

Fresh blooms and layered textures bring spring indoors in this dining room.

man said.

Docents were not simply stationed in rooms; they were storytellers, trained months in advance with detailed notes on everything from architectural details to garden philosophy to the provenance of specific

objects. Visitors, Hickman noted, tended to fall into two camps: those who simply wanted to take it all in, and those who wanted to know everything.

“Why did the homeowner do this? Where did this come from?” Hickman said, describing the curious guests who wanted every story behind every bloom and every room.

That appetite for narrative is what distinguishes Historic Garden Week from a simple home tour. These are private homes, often inaccessible to the public, opened not just for viewing but for educating.

“There’s no other opportunity like this,” Hickman said.

This year’s Fairfax tour also reflected a broader shift in the gardening world, one that balances beauty with stewardship. Across properties, Hickman noted recurring trends that went beyond aesthetics: intentional environmental choices.

“Native plants are huge. Pollinators are huge,” she said. “We really do need to be intentional about respecting our environment.”

In that sense, Fairfax County’s gardens were not only beautiful; they were increasingly purposeful.

Attendance remained strong despite one logistical hurdle: Fairfax’s tour fell on a Tuesday, a difficult day for some working visitors. Even so, there was “never a lull,” Hickman said. Guests arrived steadily throughout the

day, including bus tours from well beyond Virginia - one group traveled from Minnesota.

Perhaps that is because Historic Garden Week offers something increasingly rare in modern life: the chance to slow down, step through a gate, and see how others cultivate beauty, not just in landscapes, but in how they welcome strangers.

For Hickman, who has run her own interior design business since 2002 and understands the complexity of making large endeavors look seamless, the event’s success rested in countless unseen details. Homes are selected not merely because they are beautiful, but because they can host the public safely and meaningfully. Parking, walkability, interior quality, garden interest and geographic flow all matter.

“It’s so much more than just a pretty house or garden,” she said.

And maybe that is the true spirit of Fairfax County’s Historic Garden Week.

Behind every flowering border and elegant entryway lies something larger: preservation, volunteerism, environmental care, and a distinct sense that opening one’s garden can also open conversation, connection, and community.

“By the time people arrive, they’re seeing the result of months and months of preparation—but what we hope they really remember is how special it felt to be there.”

2026 NCA Cappies Nominations

Winners will be announced at the 2026 Cappies Gala will be held at DAR Constitution Hall on Sunday, June 7 at 7 p.m.

Find the winners at <https://www.cappiesnca.com/nominations-awards>

Andy Mays Rising Critic (9th-10th Grade)

Julian Hassi, McLean High School
Wyatt Collis, Oakton High School
Abby Marroquin, West Springfield High School
Caroline Wright, Westfield High School
Janine Khandker, Westfield High School

Maryland Theater Guide

Returning Critic (11th Grade)
Erin Allen, Bishop Ireton High School
Gigi Okey-Eboh, Centreville High School
Noah Kirkland, Quince Orchard High School
Alden Walcott, South Lakes High School
Iris Cooper, Westfield High School

Bill and Jane Strauss

Graduating Critic (12th Grade)
Madelyn Regan, Centreville High School
Naomi Bautista, Fairfax High School
Hayden Schweikert, McLean High School
Micah Chlan, McLean High School
Mary Campbell, Westfield High School

Marketing and Publicity

Lucy Baboyian, Angela Fuentes-Quinteros, Marcello Canniff, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Annandale High School
The A Monster Calls Public Relations & Marketing Team, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
Megan Sawyer and the Riverside Grease Team, Grease: School Version, Riverside High School
Lena Fleschner, Ella McAllister, and the In the Heights Publicity Team, In the Heights, Albert Einstein High School
The Something Rotten Publicity Team, Something Rotten!, Fairfax High School

Special Effects and or Technology

Emilie Fiske, Eamon O'Leary, Isabelle Philippe, and the A Monster Calls Special Effects Crew, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
Lillian Grace "LG" Branco, Between the Lines, Osbourn Park High School
Emy Fase, Clue: On Stage, Justice High School
Rebecca Drobnis, Bella Bean, and the Magical Special Effects Crew, Macbeth, West Springfield High School
Jonah Johnson and the SFX Team, Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at Certain School of Magic and Magic Young Wizard Edition, Westfield High School

Hair and Make-up

Lauren Lewin, Amadeus, Meridian High School
Kieran McCartney, Julia Sturgell, Ashley Rivera, Marie Scott, Arsenic and Old Lace, Herndon High School
LJ Rex, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Vivi Parsons, Peyton Olsen, Julia Zaiets, Disney's The Little Mermaid, Yorktown High School
Lily Fitzgibbons, and the JMHS Hair and Makeup Team, Zombie Prom, James Madison High School

Sound

Liliana Torres, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Annandale High School
Brooklyn Whyte and the A Monster Calls

Sound Crew, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School

Dylan Bryan, Kristen Pokryfka, Amadeus, Meridian High School
Danielle Vasiliev, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Chase Chapman, Leo Deangelo, Jared Marquez, Caitlin McCourt, The Phantom of the Opera, Colgan High School

Props

Avy Aubouin, Ian Wright, Rubina Dhungel, Joelle Dykstra, Arsenic and Old Lace, Herndon High School
Ava Check, Hunter Bombaci, Natalie Gilmore, Disney's The Little Mermaid, Yorktown High School
Margaret Hughes, Liv Rosenfeld, Katherine Hager, Men on Boats, McLean High School
Iris Cooper, Orin Kelly, Arushi Dasgupta, Natalie Talberg, Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at Certain School of Magic and Magic Young Wizard Edition, Westfield High School
Gauri Pillai, Charlotte Gould, Gray Czarnacki, The Play That Goes Wrong, Langley High School

Lighting

Alexandra Farrell, Eamon O'Leary, Sebastian Harman, and the A Monster Calls Lighting Crew, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
Sage Esarey, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Jude Buber, Matthew Tercero, and the GCTC Lighting Team, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
William Waugh, Kareena Kasperowski, Natalie Mitchell, It's a Wonderful Life, South County High School
Susie Hoopes, Conrad Hirsch, and the Whitman Lights Team, The Mystery Of Edwin Drood, Walt Whitman High School

Costumes

Audrey Ihde, Kara Duple, and the Costume Team, Anything Goes, Oakton High School
Lila Halleran, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Vivi Parsons, Peyton Olsen, Josie Hedges, Disney's The Little Mermaid, Yorktown High School
CW Johnston, Nancy McDougal, Keira Shearon, and the BITA Costuming Team, Jane Austen's Emma, Bishop Ireton High School
Charlie Dyer, and the Costuming Crew, Zombie Prom, James Madison High School

Sets

Maya Sanchez, Sam Reksulak, Ida Selandier, and the Set Team, Anything Goes, Oakton High School
Carson Brownlee, Mubeen Ahmad, Trevor Freeman, Serena Indrisano, Arsenic and Old Lace, Herndon High School
ITPA Scenic Design Team, Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812, Independence High School
Rami Aboud, Emma Zheng, Shyla Rhodes, Arlo Kouzoukas, The Play That Goes Wrong, Langley High School
Sophie Sehring, The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition), Wakefield School

Orchestra

The Bow Blowers, Anything Goes, Oakton High School
The Kit Kat Club Orchestra, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Quince Orchard Theatre Pit Orchestra, Catch Me If You Can, Quince Orchard High School

The Whitman Pit Orchestra, The Mystery Of Edwin Drood, Walt Whitman High School

Colgan Pit Orchestra, The Phantom of the Opera, Colgan High School

Choreography

Nate Kauffman, Karolina Kellogg, Sophie Levine, Catch Me If You Can, Quince Orchard High School
Lily Knoll, Lindsay Brody, Alexa Gilligan, Makena Smith, Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812, Independence High School
Nate Smith, Naomi Bautista, Libby Hansen, Something Rotten!, Fairfax High School
Charlotte Elliott, The Phantom of the Opera, Colgan High School
Katie Johnson, Lexi Stattel, Zombie Prom, James Madison High School

Creativity

Taylor Clawson, Emilie Fiske, & Isabelle Phillippe, Animations & Video Editing, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
Will Albaugh, Musicality, Amadeus, Meridian High School
Augie Russo, Director, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School
Abeni Smith, Thomas Gay, and the TJTA Dramaturgy Team, Anastasia: The Musical, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Jason Ye, Composition, Zombie Prom, James Madison High School

Stage Management

Christine Dang, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Chloe Bernasconi, Tobey Phinney, Clue: On Stage, Justice High School
Mimi Wise, Veronica Zadecky, and the GCTC Stage Management Team, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
Katherine Dailey, Men on Boats, McLean High School
Caroline Mayer, Vincent Struthers, Mia Nash, Stella Scannell, The Play That Goes Wrong, Langley High School

Stage Crew

Mia "Star" Halsey, Cooper Zissman, Samara Belinsky, and the Anastasia Crew, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School
The Kit Kat Club Stage Crew, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Sivani Vemuri, Madz Cramer, Zoe Tabor, Gauri Pillai, The Play That Goes Wrong, Langley High School
Lena Thepvongsa, Callaghan Crofton, Amelia Loht, The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition), Centreville High School
Euni Kim, Miles Wilder, Ryan Franck, The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition), Wakefield School

Ensemble in a Play

The Core Ensemble, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
The Witches, Macbeth, West Springfield High School
Men on Boats, Men on Boats, McLean High School
The Puffs, Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at Certain School of Magic and Magic Young Wizard Edition, Westfield High School
The Ancestors, The Cherry Orchard, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Ensemble in a Musical

The Kit Kat Club, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Agents, Catch Me If You Can, Quince Orchard High School

The T-Birds, Grease: School Version, Riverside High School

The Washington Heights Community, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School

Evil Trio, Disney's The Little Mermaid, Yorktown High School
Featured Actor in a Female Role in a Play
Lua Songer-Johnson, A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School
Aubrey Marrow, Amadeus, Meridian High School
Sasha Guerra, Jane Austen's Emma, Bishop Ireton High School
Peyton Shuler, Peter and the Starcatcher, Robinson Secondary School
Jahzira Watkins, The Cherry Orchard, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Featured Actor in a Male Role in a Play

Cohen France, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Annandale High School
Elijah T. Williams, It's a Wonderful Life, South County High School
Porter Friedl, Lend Me a Soprano, The New School of Northern VA
Noelle Brosnan, Peter and the Starcatcher, Robinson Secondary School
Aayden Dickens, The Cherry Orchard, Duke Ellington School of the Arts
Featured Actor in a Female Role in a Musical

Hannah Moline, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School
Sofia Terpak, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Penelope Baker, Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812, Independence High School
Addison Lim, Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical, Lightridge High School
Mia Templeton, The Addams Family Musical: School Edition, Loudoun Valley High School

Featured Actor in a Male Role in a Musical

Xavier Walker, Alice By Heart, Bullis School
Ailinn Colarulli, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School
Ricky Matos Hernandez, In the Heights, Albert Einstein High School
Adrian Patiag, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
Mauro Manganello, Something Rotten!, Fairfax High School

Dancer in a Female Role

Georgia Anderson, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School
Holland Hasle, Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School
Marley Williams, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
Charlotte Ouimet, Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812, Independence High School
Charlotte Elliott, The Phantom of the Opera, Colgan High School

Dancer in a Male Role

John Poncy, Anything Goes, Oakton High School
Shepherd Moe, Chicago: Teen Edition, Potomac Falls High School
Jojo Smothers, Grease: School Version, Riverside High School
Carter Sotoye, In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
Nate Wheeler Smith, Something Rotten!, Fairfax High School

SEE CAPPIES, PAGE 19

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Original Rockers in a Town Full of Tribute Bands

In fact, it's a real "drag" says one of Bitter Luck's songs.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

While the life on the rock and roll world was moving along for Mojo Aces singer Ean Eschenburg and the drummer Eric Levy, they wanted more like other rockers along the path to stardom, so they formed a new band called Bitter Luck, and turned up the volume. It took a little bit of luck as they released their new single "Drag" that rants and raves about the drags in the rock world, particularly the drag it is to play the same cover tunes over and over like many local bands do.

With all the tribute bands and others that play covers of the big-name rock groups, making it with a sound that's unique to one band is part of Bitter Luck's goal as a rock band with roots in Arlington, Burke and surrounding communities.

In mid-May, they released their first song called "Drag," because things out in the real world were getting to be a drag. Meeting new love interests, expectations that don't come through and just general apathy can all be a real drag, according to singer and

lyricist Ean Eschenburg. Even the name Bitter Luck may have some of these connotations.

"Show Your Hand," is another hit they wrote, and this one has poker connotations. "Tell me, what's it gonna be?" Eschenburg sings.

Eschenburg and drummer Eric Levy were in Mojo Aces that was called the Summer of George, before that, and they hooked up with guitarist Andrei Wells and Bass player Will Gies to form Bitter Luck. Wells was ready to hit it big out in California but the wildfires out west delayed his trip, and the rest of the band talked him into staying. During the week, Eschenburg has a job as the Community Television Coordinator at Greenspring Village in Springfield, and the others have daytime jobs too.

Being a tribute band or strictly playing cover tunes makes sense for this area since people know those songs, said Eschenburg "but definitely makes it tougher for acts like us and many others to have venues take a chance on original rock n' roll music." At the same time, the guitarist has the Jimmy Page look going on with red scarf and white, snakeskin boots and long, black hair and folks on social media pointed out the look they'd all seen before.

Next Show:

Friday, May 22, 7 p.m., Bitter Luck is playing at Songbyrd Music House, 540 Penn St NE, Washington, DC 20002, with Chay, ViciousVelvet, and Divide.

<https://bitterluck.com/>



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Singer Ean Eschenburg with guitarist Andrei Wells, Bass player Will Gies and drummer Eric Levy.



Bitter Luck's original songs are a big part of the show.

Anthony Amos Feted as Northern Va. 40 under 40 Honoree

FROM PAGE 6

for success in any endeavor and have been a real asset to this City Council, where he was one of five, brand-new Council members elected in 2024.

I've enjoyed getting to know him and appreciate what he brings to our local government, his day job in affordable housing, and his many volunteer commitments."

Proud to be on the Council, Amos is currently working on a plan to establish a Kindergarten to College Fund. "I've been talking to the Invest529 Plan [managers] at the state level about how to create local savings accounts for students in Fairfax City," he said. "And the unique thing about it is that it would have a public-match option.

"You could do various incentives. For example, if a student did 1,000 hours of volunteer service, the Council could give something to that student's fund. Or if a student maintains a certain GPA – or the parents take a financial-literacy program or do volunteer work, for instance, in a City park – the City could help contribute to their child's fund."

Amos said Council will have www.connectionnewspapers.com

a work session on this idea this summer and invite a state representative from Invest529 to "provide some clarity" about it. "Now, there's no local 529 program – or one with these kinds of incentives – so this would be the first one of its kind in Virginia," he said. "I researched it while I was at Mason as a student, from 2022-24, and again when I first ran for Council in 2024."

Amos co-chairs Council's Move Fairfax City steering committee, focused on Old Town traffic circulation and pedestrian safety across the City. "One idea I've been working on is to create a pedestrian plaza on Main Street from Royal Gas Station [on Route 123] to Blenheim Boulevard," he said. "It wouldn't be permanent, just on weekends, to be more pedestrian-friendly, create economic-development incentives and increase foot traffic."

This plaza could be used for things such as a farmers market, small festival or shopping event for the local stores. "We're still discussing its frequency in committee, but it looks like it's going forward," said Amos. "We could

possibly hold some Chocolate Lovers Festival programs there or add City events between January and February."

He's also Council's representative to the Air and Water Quality committees of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Virginia Municipal League. And he was appointed to Virginia's Charitable Gaming Board, which sets rules and policies for churches, fire stations and other such organizations that hold charitable fundraisers.

As a Councilmember, it was Amos's idea for the recent Homecoming City Crawl – a partnership between the City and GMU to encourage the university's students to explore the City while celebrating the 20th anniversary of GMU's participation in the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship final four.

He also came up with the idea for the Hire a Lion fair, in mid-April, at Fairfax High. Like Fairfax County's job fair, it connected students with employers for potential summer jobs. Amos also organized an April 27 poetry night at Old Firestation 3 in conjunction with

the City's Spotlight on the Arts Festival. City and County Poet Laureate Angelique Palmer performed, as did various residents.

He considers Council one of his two, full-time jobs. The other is as an affordable-housing developer with The Michaels Organization. Said Amos, "I put together proposals for potential development of affordable housing in the Mid-Atlantic region and help find funding for them."

But that's not all he does. He's volunteered with the nonprofit Arc of Northern Virginia, which supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And he's on the Fairfax NAACP's leadership team.

Amos is a member of the Fairfax Rotary Club and volunteers with groups such as the League of Women Voters and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. And he's also worked with Bridge at Mason which, he explained, "helps people bridge the gap to have political discourse in a civil way."

He's volunteered at The Lamb Center, a daytime shelter, serving coffee and doing laundry and also with FACET's hypothermia-preven-

tion program at his place of worship, Fairfax Circle Church. Also at his church, he's packed food with Feed My Starving Children, which sends food to various countries dealing with food insecurity, especially among children.

"I love volunteering and just like helping people," explained Amos. "There's a lot going on in the world, and I want to know that I've helped more people than not." He's also running for re-election to Council because "there are projects I still want to see through and more work to be done.

"I love people and want to take care of everyone. By being on Council, I hope to be a force for good and be part of the change I want to see in the world – bringing empathy back into politics and our daily lives."

As for his 40 under 40 recognition, Amos said, "I think all the honorees are wonderful people who do amazing things in every industry. I'm grateful to be among them and thankful for Leadership Fairfax and Arlington, my wife Marena and everyone who's contributed to my being in this position."

ENTERTAINMENT

FAIRFAX COUNTY

FARMERS MARKETS RETURN

Operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, these popular markets connect residents with local farmers and food producers at 10 convenient locations. Shop seasonal fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, baked goods and artisanal products, while enjoying a vibrant, open-air market experience.

WEDNESDAYS

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon: April 22-Nov. 25, 8 a.m. - noon. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane
Oakmont: May 6-Oct. 28, 8 a.m.-noon. Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road
Wakefield: May 6-Oct. 28, 2-6 p.m. Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road

THURSDAYS

Annandale: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike
Herndon: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn Street by the Red Caboose

FRIDAYS

McLean: May 1-Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-noon. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road
Kingstowne: May 1-Oct. 23, 3-7 p.m. In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

SATURDAYS

Burke: Apr. 18-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway
Reston: Apr. 25-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza

SUNDAYS

Lorton: May 3-Nov. 22, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd.

NOW THRU MAY 31

"Down the Shore" Exhibit. At Reston Art Gallery, Reston. Reston Art Gallery (RAGS) is pleased to announce its May exhibition, "Down the Shore" featuring acrylic paintings by RAGS Director/artist Pat Macintyre. The exhibit captures the beauty and atmosphere of the Eastern Shore, Isle of Wight Bay, and Ocean City. Coastal scenes, images of nearby rural villages reflect the artist's appreciation for the area. Parsonsburg's quaint restaurant's canvas comes with its recipe for muskrat dinner. Several other works include large shells which float on canvases washed with pale colors. A reception will be held on Sunday May 10 from 2-4pm. Guests may meet the artist, enjoy refreshments and experience the collection in the beautiful lakeside gallery.

MAY 1-31

"Wild Life" Exhibition and May Gallery Show. At McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. During May, the McLean Art Gallery is pleased to feature "Wild Life," a new seasonal exhibition from the local nonprofit McLean Art Society. The public is invited to enjoy 200 new works from 45 local artists. Included are paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor and mixed media; drawings; photography; sculpture; and works in wood, glass, ceramics and jewelry.

NOW THRU JUNE 6

Syrian Artist Abdulrahman Naanseh. At Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) in Reston. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents a solo-exhibition by Fairfax, VA-based artist Abdulrahman Naanseh, on view at the Tephra ICA at Signature gallery through June 6, 2026, featuring recent work created during his 2026 residency at Tephra ICA. Naanseh's work reimagines Arabic calligraphy as a deeply personal and contemporary visual language.

NOW THROUGH JUNE 14

SpongeBob Musical. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Theater (Building W3), Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center invites audiences to experience The SpongeBob Musical this spring, a high-energy stage production inspired by the beloved Nickel-



Vienna's Public Works Open House will be held Thursday, May 21, 2026 in Vienna.



A book sale will be held May 27-31, 2026 at Richard Byrd Library in Springfield.

odeon series created by Stephen Hillenburg. Showtimes: Fridays & Saturdays at 8:00 p.m.; Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Tickets: \$40 General Admission; discounts available for seniors, military, and students.

WEDNESDAYS, MAY 20, 27

OFC Open Game Nights. 6:30-9 p.m. At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Drop in for open game time at The Old Firehouse Center to enjoy relaxed, friendly ping pong or Mah Jongg while connecting with others.

THURSDAY/MAY 21

Vienna's Public Works Open House. 2-6 p.m. At Northside Property Yard, 600 Mill Street, NE, Vienna. The annual open house features a chance for the young and young at heart to climb aboard and explore some of the Town's big trucks and get an up-close look at the heavy machines, vehicles and equipment used for everything from trash removal to public safety. The event also includes public safety displays, a drawing for kids, children's

activities, giveaways, snacks and facility tours giving attendees a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to keep Vienna operating smoothly. During the event, Mayor Linda Colbert will host a special "Meet the Mayor" booth where visitors can stop by and chat with her about all things Vienna from 2-3:30 p.m. Visit www.viennava.gov/publicworks.

SUNDAY/MAY 24

West Point Alumni Glee Club Performs. 9:30 a.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Join in a worship service crafted for Memorial Day weekend and the festival of Pentecost, featuring songs that remember and honor those who gave their lives in service. All are welcome. Refreshments will be served following the service. The public is invited.

MAY 27 TO 31

Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street, Springfield. Wide variety of high-quality used books, CDs,



The SpongeBob Musical can be seen now through June 14, 2026 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

and DVDs. Revenue supports library programming. Contact the Friends at rbfriends@gmail.com. Preview sale, Wed, May 27, 2 - 5 p.m. Entry fee \$10. General sale, Thu - Sat, May 28 - 30, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Free. Bag sale, Sun, May 31, 12 - 2p.m. \$5/bag

THURSDAY/MAY 28

Lunch N' Life. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Road, Springfield. Shepherd's Center of Annandale Springfield Lunch N' Life with musician Tom Saputo performing hits from the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Shepherd's Pie, salad, rolls and butter, dessert, tea and coffee. Visit <https://shepherd-center-annandale.org/lunch-n-life/>

MAY 28-31

Tyson's Library Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Thursday, May 28, 10 am - 5 pm
Friday, May 29, 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, May 30, 10 am - 5 pm
Sunday, May 31, 10 am - 5 pm: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less
Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Visit <https://www.tysonslibraryfriends.org/>

SATURDAY/MAY 30

Classic American Band Concert. 4 p.m. At Veterans Amphitheater on the grounds of Fairfax City Hall, Fairfax. The Fairfax Choral Society and City of Fairfax Band celebrate AMERICA250 with timeless music—from early American roots to contemporary favorites. Free - no tickets required.

SATURDAY/MAY 30

Fairfax Choral Society's Celebrating America's 250th Birthday: Let Freedom Ring. 4 p.m. At Veterans Amphitheater, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax
From the birth of a nation to today, experience almost 250 years of American music live, performed by community musicians.

SATURDAY/MAY 30

Clifton 5K Run. 6-9 p.m. At the Town of Clifton, 7139 Main Street, Clifton. A family-friendly race with 5k and one-mile options. Live music, refreshments and an awards ceremony follow at the Red Barn near Clifton's Main Street area. Cost: 5K:\$30 per person; 1-Mile Fun Run:\$20 per person. Contact: Clifton Betterment Association email info@clifton-virginia.org or (703) 968-0740. Website: <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Clifton/CliftonCaboose>. Online registration will remain open until 5:30 p.m. on Race Day. Packet pick-up will be at the Red Barn (7139 Main St., Clifton, VA 20124) on Friday, May 29, from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. and on Saturday, May 30, from 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. To register online, please go to <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Clifton/CliftonCaboose> or the 5k's Facebook page.

SATURDAY/MAY 30

ENTERTAINMENT



Jenny Lin will perform Piano “Melody’s Mostly Musical Day” on Sunday, May 31, 2026 at the McLean Community Center.



The Clifton Caboose 5K Run will be held Saturday, May 30, 2026 in the Town of Clifton.

Let Freedom Ring. 4 p.m. At Veterans Amphitheater beside Fairfax City Town Hall, City of Fairfax. Presented by the Fairfax Choral Society and the City of Fairfax Band Association. Experience the sound of a nation’s story. Free - no tickets required. Just come and enjoy

MAY 30-31

LEGO Model Train Event. Saturday 12-4 p.m.; Sunday, 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum is hosting a weekend LEGO Model Train Event! We invite everyone to explore the fascinating world of LEGO Trains. Highlights of the Event: Interactive Displays: Enjoy viewing Lego model trains crafted by skilled brick masters. Most trains were hand designed and built. Running Trains: Watch as trains zip along beautifully designed tracks, it is sure to inspire both young and old. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. Military, First Responders, and Teachers \$5; Seniors, 65+, \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/MAY 31

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Mary Lipsey will share several stories of women who fought for America’s Independence.

SUNDAY/MAY 31

Jenny Lin, Piano “Melody’s Mostly Musical Day”. 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Ticket price includes one copy of “Melody’s Mostly Musical Day,” a storytelling concert where pianist Jenny Lin leads children through Melody’s day of discovery with 26 short classical pieces- from Tchaikovsky and Mozart to Grieg and Mussorgsky- encouraging young listeners to find joy and playfulness in music (one book per order; three tickets required).

JUNE 4-21

1st Stage Presents “Indecent.” At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. From Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, a deeply moving play inspired by the true events surrounding the controversial 1923 Broadway debut of Sholem Asch’s “God of Vengeance”—a play seen by some as a seminal work of Jewish culture, and by others as an act of traitorous libel. Show times: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

JUNE 6-7 AND 13-14

Bounce Houses. At Bull Run Special Events Center, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville.

Featuring more than 50,000 square feet of inflatable, themed attractions, the Big Bounce America will transform Bull Run Special Events Center into a fully immersive playground filled with live music, laughter, and unforgettable fun for ALL ages, featuring dedicated sessions for younger children, bigger kids, and adults on up to seven massive inflatable attractions with food, and live entertainment available.

BOUNCE HOUSES & ATTRACTIONS:

The World’s Largest Bounce House: Covering over 24,000 square feet and standing 32 feet tall, this record-breaking inflatable is a full-blown party zone with a live DJ keeping the energy high with music, games, and competitions tailored to each age group.

The Giant: At over 900 feet long, this epic obstacle course is built for thrill-seekers of all skill levels.

Sport Slam: A high-energy, action-packed arena where bouncing meets friendly competition. Packed with hoops, goals, climbing challenges, and fast-paced games, this inflatable playground lets you dunk, kick, race, and battle your way to bragging rights.

airSPACE: Featuring a towering inflatable alien, multi-lane slides, and endless ball pits, airSPACE delivers an out-of-this-world experience for explorers of all ages.

Other on-site activities: Additional on-site attractions include food trucks, shaded rest areas, and family-friendly entertainment. Guests can

bring their own food and drinks or purchase from on-site vendors.

TICKETS: All-Access tickets are available now and include a three-hour pass to the event, featuring a timed session in The World’s Largest Bounce House plus unlimited access to all other attractions. Advanced purchase is strongly encouraged, as sessions frequently sell out. Tickets start at \$35. Buy tickets at <https://TheBigBounceAmerica.com/Tour-Dates/>

DAYS/TIMES: Saturday, June 6: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, June 7: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, June 13: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, June 14: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

JUNE 12-14

Spring Book Sale. Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germaine Drive, Centreville.

Friday, June 12, 1-5 p.m.

Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, June 14, 12-5 p.m.

Bag sale on Sunday. Fill a grocery bag with books and DVDs for \$10.

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

Community Blood Drive. 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Drive, Fairfax. Lord of Life in partnership with Inova Blood Services are hosting a community blood drive on Sunday June 14th at Lord of Life in Fairfax. Join us for a free breakfast and give the gift of life to someone in need. Visit the website: www.lordoflifeva.org

Taxes on Meals, Real Estate, Hotel Rooms Rise

FROM PAGE 4

million – an increase of 7 percent, or about \$5 million – over the previous year.

Other budget highlights include:

❖ A \$115,000 tax grant for Beacon Landing. A project of The Lamb Center and Wesley Housing, it’ll provide 54 units of permanent supportive housing in a five-story building currently under construction near Fairfax Circle. The grant money will fund supportive services for the elderly, disabled and particularly vulnerable and formerly homeless people who’ll live there.

❖ \$150,000 to continue Fairfax City’s Neighborhood Renaissance Program. For 24 years, the nonprofit Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corp. and Fairfax City-based MainStreet Bank have partnered to provide home-improvement loans to City residents.

As a result, homes and neighborhoods

are upgraded and the City receives more tax revenue due to these homes’ increased assessed values.

The adopted budget also prioritizes employee recruitment, retention and organizational stability via compensation and workforce investments, including cost-of-living adjustments for employees, an additional pay increase for public-safety personnel, enhanced Advanced Life Support pay for eligible fire personnel, restored funding for training and professional development, and a Citywide classification and compensation study.

Specifically, Council adopted a 2-percent market-rate adjustment to general pay scales; a 1-percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for general employees;

a 2-percent COLA for public-safety employees; a 3-percent salary adjustment

increase effective Jan. 1, 2027, for eligible general-scale employees; and the programmed, annual step increase for public-safety employees.

Pleased, Amos said, “This budget takes care of our exceptional City staff through salary adjustments and helps close the pay gap for public-safety employees between us and neighboring jurisdictions.”

Overall, said Councilmember Stacy Hall, “This budget reflects months of careful work, collaboration and tough choices.” And Councilmember Billy Bates thanked City staff for everything it did to get the document into a workable blueprint for the City to follow.

“None of us like the idea of raising taxes and understand the difficulties that can pose,” he explained. “But this budget takes an important step in the direction of making sure our staff are taken care of and

[funds a salary study].”

Councilmember Tom Peterson said the budget reflects thoughtful decision-making and a clear focus on both the City’s present and long-term needs. “This is the first budget built with a full, five-year, financial forecast, which will help ensure stability and avoid disruptive swings in the future,” he said. “And this year’s process has been more transparent, collaborative and responsive to our residents.

“The depth of insight and detail in budget questions and comments by citizens this year reflects this. We should continue to strive for this kind of outcome – protecting affordability, strengthening our community, acting as good stewards, and planning responsibly for the future.”

Council approved the new budget, CIP tax and fee increases unanimously. It officially takes effect on July 1.

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE
PROPOSED STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM
AT JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) hereby gives Notice of the Availability (NOA) for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for the Strategic Engagement Platform at Fort Myer. The Proposed Action involves the demolition of the current Patton Hall (Building 214), except for the original guard house, which will remain in place. The Proposed Action also involves the construction and operation of the Strategic Engagement Platform facility within the Limits of Work (LOW). In addition, there may be several related actions that occur within the LOW, including the realignment of Custer Road; grading and resurfacing of Buffalo Soldier Avenue and Johnson Lane; replacement of the sidewalk in front of the current Patton Hall; utility tie-in work; and stormwater management as required by applicable law.

The existing Patton Hall facility is in a state of deterioration after years of continuous use, and is experiencing failing systems, mold, pest infestations, water damage, and structural issues. The new Strategic Engagement Platform facility would provide a newly constructed, safe, modern, and appropriately sized conference center that meets the needs of the military community in the National Capital Region while maintaining the unique historical character of this location. The EA has been prepared to identify, evaluate, and consider the environmental consequences of the proposed partial demolition of the existing Patton Hall facility, the construction of the new Strategic Engagement Platform facility, and the related actions within the LOW.

The Draft EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 4321 et seq., DoD NEPA Implementing Procedures (30 June 2025), and Army Regulation 200-1, Environmental Protection and Enhancement.

The Draft EA is available to view in printed form at the Arlington Central Public Library and the D.C. Southwest Neighborhood Library. It can be viewed/downloaded electronically at <https://home.army.mil/jbmhh/teamJBMHH/about/Base/environmental-management-division> website. Comments or questions on the Draft EA/FNSI may be directed in writing to: Directorate of Public Works - Environmental Division, 111 Stewart Road, Building 321, Fort Myer, VA 22211 or by email to: JBMHH_NEPA@usace.army.mil. Comments must be received no later than 30 days after publication of this NOA.

NEWS

JOIN US For Fun in the Sun at the 2nd Annual Summer Palooza

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

Get ready to kick off summer at the 2nd Annual Mount Vernon District Summer Palooza on Saturday, June 6, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane! This FREE, family-friendly celebration is the perfect way to welcome the summer season with a day full of fun in the sun for all ages.

Enjoy live music from local band Highway Legends while exploring a variety of exhibitors featuring information on dogs and animals, environmental resources, County programs and services, local small businesses, and much more. Be sure to stop by the 250th Experience table hosted by the Fairfax County 250th Commission to learn more about the County's Semiquincentennial celebrations (America's 250th anniversary). Animal lovers also won't want to miss the petting zoo, featuring furry friends from Fryling Pan Farm Park.

This year's event also features a "Taste of Mount Vernon," with free food samples from local favorite restaurants including Dishes of India, Honeygrow, Haymi BBQ & International Grocery and more, giving attendees a chance to experience some of the delicious flavors our community has to offer or find a new favorite restaurant!

Kids will have plenty to enjoy in the Kids Zone, hosted by the Mount

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck's
SUMMER PALOOZA
Saturday, June 6
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Mount Vernon Governmental Center
2511 Parkers Lane
FREE!
Petting Zoo Dog Friendly Exhibitors
Live Music Kids Zone Made in Fairfax
Environment Fun Food Bounce House
Touch-A-Truck

Vernon District Arts Advisory Council (MVDAAC) and the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC), featuring interactive arts activities, bounce houses, lawn games, and exciting touch-a-truck opportunities where they can get up close to their favorite big trucks.

Parking for the event will be located across the street at Whitman Middle School and Sherwood Library with Fairfax County Police assisting with road crossing.

Summer Palooza is quickly becoming a beloved Mount Vernon tradition and a wonderful opportunity to connect with neighbors, celebrate our community, and make lasting summer memories. Bring your family, invite your friends, and join us for an unforgettable day of fun as we kick off the season together! <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/mount-vernon-district-summer-palooza>

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.

FAIRFAX COUNTY OFFERS FREE TREES

Community-based organizations in Fairfax County can apply to receive free trees for planting on private properties, through a program by Fairfax County's Urban and Community Forestry Division (UCFD) of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. The program, offered in partnership with Casey Trees, is designed to help community organizations in Fairfax County - such as volunteer groups, civic associations and faith-based organizations - obtain high-quality, professionally grown trees suitable for planting. Purchasing top-quality trees can be a challenge for these organizations. 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 UCFD will prioritize applications for tree-planting sites within or adjacent to Fairfax County-designated highly vulnerable communities, as defined by the county's One Fairfax policy and its associated Vulnerability Index. While planting in highly vulnerable communities will be prioritized, all community organizations are encouraged to apply for tree delivery, regardless of where tree planting is proposed. The costs of the trees and delivery are covered by the county's Tree Preservation and Planting Fund and will be offered at no cost to participating organizations.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help

older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Would you like to help a neighbor feel less lonely? Will you help someone get much-needed groceries? Form new connections and make a meaningful difference. Older adults in the Annandale, Falls Church, and Alexandria regions are waiting for volunteer social visitors and grocery shoppers. If you can give the gift of your time, consider providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

200% OF BUSINESSES
using commuter benefits
to save money say it's a good idea

If this stat is surprising, just see what else free commuter support can do for your team!

ConnectingVA.org

connectingVA
BY DRPT

11 out of 10 BOSSES
agree that commuter benefits
help attract new talent

This math may not add up, but offering your employees commuter benefits makes perfect sense.

ConnectingVA.org

connectingVA
BY DRPT

2026 NCA Cappies Nominations

FROM PAGE I4

Vocalist in a Female Role

Page Vogel, *Anastasia: the Musical*, Alexandria City High School

Elsa Harlor, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Alexa Gilligan, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*, Independence High School

Juliet Pascoe, *Once Upon A Mattress*, Mount Vernon High School

Nicoletta Theodora Pelekasis, *Chicago: Teen Edition*, Thomas A. Edison High School

Elizabeth Marshall, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, Yorktown High School

Vocalist in a Male Role

Jackson Byrd, *Chicago: Teen Edition*, Thomas A. Edison High School

Krishnan Patel, *Grease: School Version*, Riverside High School

Abraham Perdomo Pacheco, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Woodgrove High School

Colin Lee, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, Yorktown High School

Ryan Sawyer Robbins, *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood*, Walt Whitman High School

Comic Actor in a Female Role in a Play

Kathleen Tran, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Annandale High School

Cara Ethington, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Herndon High School

Daphne Lunn, *As You Like It*, Chantilly High School

Sophie Grzadzinski, *Lend Me a Soprano*, The New School of Northern VA

Sophia Christiano, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, Langley High School

Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Play

Anderson Wexler, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School

Ben Harper, *Macbeth*, West Springfield High School

Zion Belmar-Francois, *The Cherry Orchard*, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Yann Lam, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, Langley High School

Patrick Reidway, *The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition)*, Wakefield School

Comic Actor in a

Female Role in a Musical

Savannah Day, *Anything Goes*, Oakton High School

Savin Criddle, *High School Musical*, Clarksburg High School

Emma Edwards, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Woodgrove High School

Maya Vilchik, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Colgan High School

Allie Blanchet, *Zombie Prom*, James Madison High School

Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Musical

Adrian Lawlor, *Anastasia: the Musical*, Alexandria City High School

Timo Silberman, *Catch Me If You Can*, Quince Orchard High School

Cameron Best, *Something Rotten!*, St. Andrew's Episcopal School

Abby Landes, *The Addams Family Musical: School Edition*, Loudoun Valley High School

Jeremiah Gates, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Colgan High School

Supporting Actor in a

Female Role in a Play

Lucy Baboyian, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Annandale High School

Arminé Heard, *Lend Me a Soprano*, The New School of Northern Virginia

Kira Gilligan, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Robinson Secondary School

Juliah Perdue, *The Cherry Orchard*, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Avery Messick, *The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition)*, Wakefield School

Supporting Actor in a Male Role in a Play

Pascual Aguilar-Rodriguez, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Annandale High School

Will Albaugh, *Amadeus*, Meridian High School

Aashna Kapur, *Men on Boats*, McLean High School

Lukas Simcox, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Robinson Secondary School

Aiden Brennan, *Tartuffe: The Rhinestone Hypocrite: a world premiere of a very self-important play*, Woodson High School

Supporting Actor in a

Female Role in a Musical

Katie Musick, *Catch Me If You Can*, Quince Orchard High School

Janiyah Jackson, *In the Heights*, Albert Einstein High School

Aspen Johnson, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Laura Mlaker, *Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical*, Lightridge High School

Marney Shattuck, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, Yorktown High School

Supporting Actor in a

Male Role in a Musical

Prajeet Chitty, *Anastasia: The Musical*, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Romain Dairay, *Anything Goes*, Oakton High School

Kamdi Aghazu, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Jack Vosburgh, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Woodgrove High School

Tristan Farmer, *Something Rotten!*, Fairfax High School

Supporting Actor in a

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Maya Vilchik, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Colgan High School

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Prajeet Chitty, *Anastasia: The Musical*, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Romain Dairay, *Anything Goes*, Oakton High School

Kamdi Aghazu, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Jack Vosburgh, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Woodgrove High School

Tristan Farmer, *Something Rotten!*, Fairfax High School

Supporting Actor in a

Female Role in a Musical

Savannah Day, *Anything Goes*, Oakton High School

Savin Criddle, *High School Musical*, Clarksburg High School

Emma Edwards, *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Woodgrove High School

Maya Vilchik, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Colgan High School

Allie Blanchet, *Zombie Prom*, James Madison High School

(High School Edition), Wakefield School

Lead Actor in a Female Role in a Musical

Gabby Licayan, *Anastasia: The Musical*, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Meera Ayyar, *Anything Goes*, Oakton High School

Murphy Finnegan, *Cabaret (1998 Version)*, Lake Braddock Secondary School

Elsa Harlor, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Erin Rigby, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Colgan High School

Lead Actor in a Male Role in a Musical

Aaron Guerrero, *Green Day's American Idiot*, Hayfield Secondary School

Nathan Lee, *Cabaret (1998 Version)*, Lake Braddock Secondary School

Myles Rathke, *Catch Me If You Can*, Quince Orchard High School

Elijah Flores, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*, Independence High School

Zayn Gruyters, *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood*, Walt Whitman High School

Song

Stay, I Pray You, *Anastasia: The Musical*, Alexandria City High School

I Don't Care Much, *Cabaret (1998 Version)*, Lake Braddock Secondary School

Fly, Fly Away, *Catch Me If You Can*, Quince Orchard High School

Paciencia y Fe, *In the Heights*, Albert Einstein High School

96000, *In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School*

Critic Team

Centreville High School

McLean High School

Quince Orchard High School

West Springfield High School

Westfield High School

Play

A Monster Calls, South Lakes High School

Amadeus, Meridian High School

Men on Boats, McLean High School

The Cherry Orchard, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

The Play That Goes Wrong, Langley High School

The Play That Goes Wrong (High School Edition), Wakefield School

Musical

Anything Goes, Oakton High School

Cabaret (1998 Version), Lake Braddock Secondary School

Catch Me If You Can, Quince Orchard High School

In the Heights, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School

Disney's The Little Mermaid, Yorktown High School

The Mystery Of Edwin Drood, Walt Whitman High School

The Mystery Of Edwin Drood, Walt Whitman High School

Having a Ball, Almost Literally



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A few weekends ago, I had the opportunity of a lifetime (I exaggerate), when my wife Dina went away for the for a few days and I was left unsupervised. Not that I can't fend for myself, it's more so with Dina away, that's all, other the dog and four cats, I had to tend for. (If we had a fenced-in yard, I wouldn't have had to fend for the dog, but as of now, that's wishful thinking. As it happens now daily, I'm up early and out late - with three additional outings/"walkings" in-between making for four total, between me getting up and me going down.

Though I am referring to the weekend, it's primarily Saturday during the day/early evening that I'll be writing about. Since the Red Sox were not televised where I could watch, the Bruins had been eliminated from the Stanley Cup playoffs the night before, and the Celtics weren't on television until 8 pm, I had some time to fill you might say. So, with remote in hand and my rear end on the couch - and no one's preference to consider, I turned on the television and began "flipping the cable" as my late brother Richard used to call it and see if I could find anything worth watching. Boy did I! And not the usual fare either. As it was found, most of it was programming reminiscent of my formative years growing up in Newton Centre, Ma and sport if you could call it that, that I had never seen on television. The first bit of familiarity was of a dodge ball match/tournament. It wasn't exactly six grade, as adults were competing, but it could have been. There were sides, mostly men but each side included a woman, a line in the center of the gym keeping them apart and balls flying from side to side, some caught and others wayward while still others hitting their opponents with boinks heard all over leading to immediate disqualification. I loved playing dodgeball, but until this afternoon, I had never seen it on television. Watching it brought back memories of my occasional misspent youth.

Soon I became bored watching the competition and "flipped the cable." I couldn't believe what sport I came upon next: kickball. Just like I played on the playground at Bowen Elementary School in the mid 1960s. Men, women on a baseball diamond with a pitcher rolling the ball to the opponent in the former "batter's box" which I now call the "kicker's" box. Other than the swerve the pitcher put on the ball as he rolled toward the kicker, it was just like I used to play 60 odd years ago. But I never saw adults playing kickball on television before. Just like I had never seen dodgeball on television before. After watching the kickball game for a few minutes, I likewise grew bored and "flipped the cable."

I couldn't believe what I happened onto next. Yet another sport, if you even call it, that I spent countless hours playing, mostly in my backyard against Freddie Klashman, our downstairs neighbor, and son of the family who owned the two-family house I grew up in on Athelstane Road.

Whiffle Ball: Can you believe it? In succession. It's as if the television was programming me down memory lane. Taking advantage of my eyes/feelings being the only ones to consider. None of this would have interested Dina, well, certainly not back-to-back-back like I had just "happened." It was surreal almost. One memory after another, and all are great memories - for me anyway.

The next few "flips" were not as productive. I saw more conventional sports: women's college softball, women's beach volleyball, some men's and women's professional basketball, some PGA golf, (no LPGA women's golf however), a bit of Ping Pong, some NHL playoffs but no bowling.

After watching all these sports, I still had not had my fill as I was waiting to watch the Celtics later that night. Unfortunately, the Celtics lost and were eliminated from the NBA playoffs, a totally non-fitting end to what otherwise had been an amazing day.

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

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