

THE CONNECTION

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

Solar Sparkles On Landfill

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Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik at the unveiling of 12,000 solar panels on the closed portion of the Lorton Landfill. "I only come to Lorton when there's something really cool."

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PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH/THE CONNECTION

Veto Dismay Many

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Remembering On Memorial Day

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JUNE 3-16, 2026

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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Liberty Amendments Month in Vienna includes fireworks beginning at 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 2, at Yeonas Park.

Vienna's Liberty Amendments Month Celebrates Freedom

As the nation marks its 250th anniversary and celebrates the freedoms secured through independence, this year's sixth annual Liberty Amendments Month will do the same in the Town of Vienna. Liberty Amendments Month 2026 will celebrate with events from a parade down Maple Avenue to a spectacular fireworks display.

Festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2026, with the second-ever Liberty Amendments Month parade down Maple Avenue to Nutley Street, ending at the Juneteenth festival at First Baptist Church, 450 Orchard St. NW, Vienna. The Juneteenth celebration will feature live music, food trucks, a fashion show, children's entertainment, a mobile video game truck, bounce houses, a petting zoo and voter registration until 3 p.m.

Fifteen foreign-born residents will become new U.S. citizens when they take the Oath of Allegiance during the naturalization ceremony on Saturday, June 27, at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. S, Vienna.

Family entertainment begins at 3:30 p.m. and the ceremony will start at 5 p.m. The public is invited to attend and welcome the nation's newest citizens.

Vienna's Independence Day celebration takes place from 6-10 p.m. on Thursday, July 2, at Yeonas Park. The event features live music, kids' entertainment, food trucks

and concessions and a 15-minute firework show beginning at 9:30 p.m. Onlookers can bring picnic blankets or chairs as they enjoy a summer night filled with American spirit, where all the Liberty Amendments (13th, 14th, 15th and 19th) and the nation's 250th anniversary will be celebrated.

On the traditional Independence Day, Saturday, July 4, community members will take turns reading our nation's foundational documents beginning at 11 a.m. at the Vienna Community Center. Portions of our democracy's foundational documents will be read aloud as listeners reflect on the legal framework penned by our Founding Fathers that continues to guide our nation today, 250 years later.

Several other activities and events will take place throughout the month including Kids on the Green, the Liberty and Legacy Panel and Book Talk, and the VBA Mixer and Empowering Women Panel.

Liberty Amendments Month focuses on local history and how it relates to the four Amendments that granted equal liberties to people who were previously excluded from the U.S. Constitution. This year's commemoration is especially important as the nation observes its 250th anniversary.

For more information and to see the full Liberty Amendments Month calendar, visit www.vienna-va.gov/liberty

Fatal Crash in Chantilly

Detectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating a two-vehicle crash that left one man dead in Chantilly.

Today at 8:38 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle crash in the 4300 block of Pleasant Valley Road.

Preliminarily, a 2001 Honda Accord was traveling southbound on Pleasant Valley Road when it crossed into the northbound lanes. The Honda Accord then struck a 2001 Ford F450 Super Duty truck that was traveling northbound.

The driver of the Honda Accord, Daniel Tsequi Mehari, 52 of

Chantilly, was transported to a local hospital and later pronounced deceased. The driver of the Ford F450, an adult male, was transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors. Detectives are investigating the circumstances that contributed to the crash.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

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Governor's 'Common Ground' Veto Pen Strikes Down Some Progressive Policies

From cannabis to collective bargaining, legislators must wait another year.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) issued a wave of vetoes on progressive priorities that had been sent back to her desk without the amendments she requested from the senators and delegates. A Democratic majority did not guarantee the governor's signature. Of the 31 bills vetoed by Spanberger, 29 were introduced by Democrats and 2 by Republicans. Because the General Assembly is controlled by Democrats, the majority of legislation reaching her desk came from Democrats. The governor signed 972 bills into law.

On Jan. 19, when Spanberger delivered her first address to a joint session of the legislature, her primary theme was encouraging lawmakers to find "common ground." In her official inaugural address on Jan. 17, the governor stated: "Our leaders and our fellow Virginians should join in common cause, find common ground, and pursue common purpose — this is the concept at the heart of what it means to be a Commonwealth."

Spanberger vetoed a total of 31 bills after the first General Assembly session of her term, reported Virginia Public Access Project, VPAP.org. "This includes eight bills that were vetoed directly after the session, as well as additional bills vetoed when the Governor's proposed amendments were rejected by the General Assembly during reconvened session."

Policy Vetoes: Cannabis, Healthcare, and Education

Del. Paul Krizek's (D-Mount Vernon) retail cannabis marketplace bill, HB 642 / SB 542, triggered a veto after lawmakers rejected executive amendments to delay the rollout and cap proposed stores. "The Governor's veto ignores the reality that cannabis is already being sold everyday across Virginia. The only question is whether we as leaders will finally ensure those sales occur within a legal, regulated market or continue turning a blind eye to a booming illicit market while pretending to be outraged by its existence," Senator Aird and Del. Krizek posted in a joint release.

Del. Karrie Delaney's (D-Fairfax) Prescription Drug Affordability Board bill, HB 483 / SB 271, also drew an executive veto. "They are expensive undertakings that other states have either repealed or are considering repealing due to costs and ineffectiveness," Spanberger wrote. "I offered amendments to the General Assembly that would have directed the Prescription Drug Affordability Advisory Panel to study a reference-based pricing system before the state spends millions of dollars on implementation."

Gov. Abigail Spanberger vetoed a high-

er education governance bill (SB 494/HB 1385), introduced by Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim (D-Fairfax) and Del. Lily Franklin (D-Montgomery), citing administrative concerns. The move drew quick backlash from university advocates. Criticizing the veto and the governor's failed amendments, the editorial board of The Cavalier Daily wrote that "it is no longer evident that Spanberger is aligned with these sentiments," signaling a "posture shift from the direct and decisive leader once recognized, to a hesitant and passive leader."

Legal Standards and Public Safety

The governor vetoed a mental health affirmative defense bill, HB 246 / SB 335, introduced by Del. Vivian Watts (D-Fairfax) and Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-Fairfax). It sought to allow a judge or jury to find a defendant guilty of a lesser misdemeanor instead of an enhanced class 6 felony if a mental health disorder contributed to an assault on law enforcement. "This bill would effectively create a new legal standard applicable to just one criminal charge for a specific group of people, risking increased confusion and inconsistencies in the Commonwealth's legal system," the governor's veto explanation stated.

Spanberger also blocked SB 351 and HB 650, which would have restricted federal immigration enforcement officers from making administrative arrests in sensitive public spaces. "Communicating that immigrant families are protected from immigration action in places they are not by virtue of federal law would put families at risk," the governor wrote, adding that her Executive Order 16 already directs state agencies to develop immigration protocols.

Workplace, Welfare, and Labor Shift

A workplace protection provision adding menopause as a protected health class, HB 1173 / SB 258 by Del. Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) and Sen. Stella Pekarsky (D-Fairfax), faced a veto over structural regulatory concerns. Tran and Pekarsky responded: "These bills would have strengthened protections against discrimination and ensure employees could seek reasonable accommodations without fear of retaliation." They added, "We remain committed to advancing policies that reflect the needs of workers."

Del. Delaney's child welfare interview-recording bill, HB 1222, was vetoed after the legislature rejected the executive's amendments. "I offered amendments which would ensure the ability to record all interviews, while also providing discretion within social services when such a recording is unnecessary or not to the benefit of the child," Span-



SCREENSHOT VIA X

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger signs the Employee Child Care Assistance Program bill, HB 18/SB 3, during the Virginia General Assembly session, in Richmond, Va. The law, which takes effect July 1, 2026, was part of a session where Spanberger signed 972 bills into law and vetoed 31.

SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

Virginia Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, D-Fairfax, released a statement on May 20 regarding Gov. Abigail Spanberger's veto of SB 351. The bill aimed to prohibit federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents from making warrantless civil arrests in protected areas such as courthouses, schools, and hospitals. Salim, who opposed the veto, stated, "I know the fear of being separated from our families due to the Trump administration's lawlessness."



SCREENSHOT VIA INSTAGRAM

Virginia state Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-Fairfax, speaks on March 26 in support of legislation to address pay inequity. Boysko spoke in favor of her bill, SB 215, and Del. Michelle Maldonado's HB 636, which would prohibit employers from asking job applicants for their salary history and require salary ranges in job postings. Gov. Spanberger signed the legislation.



berger said, noting her amendments were disregarded.

A fracture emerged over legislation expanding public-sector collective bargaining rights, SB 378 / HB 1263, which was vetoed after lawmakers rejected executive amendments that would have delayed implementation and altered local government provi-

sions.

"Shame. Gov. Abigail Spanberger today betrayed half a million of Virginia's public service workers by going back on her campaign promise to support collective bargaining rights for the people who keep our Commonwealth and communities running every

SEE GOVERNOR'S, PAGE 6

American Legion Kidwell Post #184 Memorial Day Observance

'We are all Americans.'

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The American Legion Wayne M. Kidwell Post 184 and the Town of Herndon honored Memorial Day at Chestnut Grove Cemetery on May 25.

During his opening remarks, Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc reminded attendees that the fallen "did not give their lives for a fractured America."

"They sacrificed for the enduring promise of a nation always striving to become a more perfect union," LeBlanc said, adding that patriotism is "about standing together

when it matters most." LeBlanc also presented a proclamation to Post 184 recognizing the contributions of those who gave their lives.

Guest speaker and former Army Capt. Barbara Glakas, who served from 1979 to 1996, emphasized that Americans remain united in a permanent debt of gratitude. Glakas, a historian for the Herndon Historical Society, shared a poignant moment from the 1865 surrender at Appomattox Court House to illustrate national unity.

When Gen. Robert E. Lee met Lt. Col. Ely Parker — Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's military secretary and a Seneca Indian — Lee remarked, "I am glad to see one real American here." Parker replied, "We are all Americans."

"And that is how I feel on Memorial Day," Glakas said. "No matter

how we feel about the righteousness of any previous conflict ... we are all Americans, and we should always honor those who lost their lives in service of our country."

Glakas also acknowledged local Blue Star families who tragically became Gold Star families.

"Their families will never be the same," she said. "And we owe these fallen service members, and their families, our freedom — a debt that will never really be able to be repaid."

The annual ceremony also featured the Herndon High School NJROTC, the Reston Chorale, and the laying of memorial wreaths.

Guest speaker and former Army Capt. Barbara Glakas



While rainy weather kept the large, cotton veteran burial flags from being raised on tall poles, American Legion Post 184 used smaller parade flags to ensure the Avenue of Flags still honored the service members interred at Herndon's Chestnut Grove Cemetery.



Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc shows the town proclamation to Post Commander Nicholas Leshock, as Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick and his family look on.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

NEWS

Reuse Efforts with Textiles Earns Herndon Company a Bronze Award

BY MIKE SALMON

This spring, three entities were honored with the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards, including a Herndon organization called Sewing Lab. Sewing Lab teaches and promotes sewing as an environmental effort to keep clothes out of the landfills. Led by Janine Inselmann, this Herndon organization that began as a modest idea to teach people how to sew has transformed into one of Fairfax County's most uplifting stories of sustainability, creativity, and Filipino-led community impact.

Sewing Lab is taking a small chunk of the 100 billion garments produced a year out of landfills by teaching reuse and recycle, while suggesting mindful choices before buying these garments. Sewing Lab focuses on keeping textiles "in use and out of landfills" by teaching residents how to sew, repair and reuse clothing and household textiles, extending the life of items that might otherwise be discarded.

In 2025, Sewing Lab diverted an estimated 5,000 pounds of textiles from disposal through swaps and classes, reusing or repurposing 7,500 garments. Approximately 70% of class materials came from donated or surplus sources. Environmental education is woven into every class, linking personal clothing choices to broader impacts such as landfill waste, water use and greenhouse gas emissions.

At the lab, participants are taught how to sew, the importance of sustainability and how they can be creative while reducing waste and their impact on the environment, according to their website. They do this with donated textiles acquired through clothing swaps using vintage treadle sewing machines, and many times members of Janine Inselmann's community donate fabrics for them to use.

Fairfax County has identified textile waste as a growing concern regionally — businesses like Sewing Lab support county and regional waste diversion goals by helping residents change habits and consumption patterns. In early 2025 Fairfax County launched the "Helpsy Textile Collection Pilot" at the West Ox Transfer Station. Six blue dumpsters in the parking lot provide space where more than 60,000 pounds of textiles were collected, so the county expanded it into the I-95 Landfill and other sites.

Why Recycle Textiles?

Textile waste is one of the fastest-growing



Inside the lab, much sewing and much learning.

waste streams in the United States, though 95% of discarded textiles can be reused or recycled. Recycling textiles helps reduce waste, save resources, and support sustainable practices in our community.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/textile>

How the Program Works

Drop off your textiles at the blue collection bins located at the I-66 Transfer Station and other sites listed below.

Reusable items: Sold to thrift partners in North America and around the world or donated to community partners.

Non-reusable items: Repurposed into new materials, such as insulation, industrial wiper rags, or other products.

Residents can donate a variety of items, even if they are stained, worn, or have broken zippers. All items must be clean, dry, odorless, and placed in a securely closed plastic bag.

Drop-Off Locations

Textiles can be dropped off at the following county facilities (by the purple glass recycling containers):

I-66 Transfer Station - 4618 West Ox Rd, Fairfax, VA 22030

I-95 Landfill Complex - 9850 Furnace Road, Lorton, VA 22079

Jim Scott (formerly Providence) Community Center - 3001 Vaden Dr., Fairfax, VA 22031

West Springfield Governmental Center - 6140 Rolling Rd, West Springfield, VA 22152

Sully District Governmental Center - 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly, VA 20151

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Keeping a Closer Watch On the Potomac this Summer

BY STATE SENATOR
SCOTT A. SUROVELL

The Potomac River is the front yard of my district, the 34th- and the lifeblood of the Washington region. The river's shoreline stretches roughly 50 miles Alexandria south through the Mount Vernon area, Fort Belvoir, Mason Neck, Pohick Bay, Occoquan, Leesylvania and on to the Chesapeake Bay. For 220,000 Virginians, the river is where we kayak, fish, sail, paddle, swim and walk. It is also a working waterway and the source of much of our region's drinking water. When something goes wrong on the Potomac, our community feels it immediately.

Earlier this year, something did go wrong. The collapse of the Potomac Interceptor sewer line upstream sent over 240 million gallons of raw sewage into the river. The University of Maryland's School of Public Health described it as one of the largest sewage spills in history. Shortly after, American Rivers ranked the Potomac as the most endangered river in America. Closer to home, we saw a fish kill in Pohick Bay. State agencies told us water quality readings were within recreational standards and attributed the dead shad to spawning stress, but residents and environmental scientists I trust kept asking a fair question: how confident can we really be in the river's health? [Is that what you mean?] and for how long?

Experts say that when sewage is deposited in large quantities, it does not simply wash away. Significant volumes can settle into river sediment and lie dormant for months, only to be churned back into the water column by storms, tides or boat traffic later in the season. That can pull dissolved

oxygen down and put aquatic life under renewed stress long after the initial spill is out of the headlines. From Memorial Day through Labor Day is exactly when our families are back on the river and exactly when we need eyes on the water.

Asking State Officials to Act

On April 27, I wrote to Michael Rolband, the Director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), with four straightforward requests. First, commit to regular, frequent water quality sampling throughout the summer at sufficient sites along the Virginia portion of the Potomac and its tributaries, including Pohick Bay. Second, confirm that DEQ has the funding and staff to respond quickly to any new fish kill or algae bloom. Third, post results publicly on a schedule that serves typical weekend river users, by Friday morning, before families decide whether to launch a boat or access the river. And fourth, coordinate with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and, where appropriate, the Maryland Department of the Environment, so the public is not left guessing which agency to call or which dataset to trust.

On May 4, Director Rolband responded and I am pleased to report that he agreed to all four requests. Beginning in mid-May, DEQ will supplement its routine monitoring with weekly bacteria sampling at nine stations in the tidal Potomac, running from the southern edge of the District of Columbia down to Potomac Creek. Pohick Bay is on the list. Sampling will target Mondays so that lab results are back from the state laboratory on Thursday and posted to the public DEQ



Scott A. Surovell

website by Friday morning. DEQ has confirmed it has the resources to mobilize its Pollution Response Program if another fish kill or algae bloom occurs, and it has committed to coordinate with VDH and Maryland counterparts. Ten weekly sampling events are planned at each station, carrying us through the heart of the recreation season.

This is real progress, and I want to thank Director Rolband, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources David Bulova and the career scientists at DEQ for taking these concerns seriously and responding promptly. I also want to thank the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, Supervisor Dan Storck and the Prince William County Board of Supervisors for their continued partnership on these issues, and the constituents who flooded my office with calls and emails after the spill. None of this happens without you.

A few honest caveats. Bacteria sampling tells us about ambient conditions on the day the sample was pulled. It is not a real-time swimming forecast and it cannot pinpoint the exact source of any contamination it detects. Local conditions on the river change quickly with storms and tides. As DEQ correctly notes, recreating in any natural waterway carries some inherent risk, and families should continue to consult the Virginia Department of Health's "Swim Healthy" guidance, avoid the water for at least 48 hours after heavy rain and steer clear of any visible discharge, foam or unusual discoloration.

Aging Infrastructure, Report Problems

The longer-term lesson is one

we cannot afford to forget. The Potomac Interceptor failure was not a freak event. It was a predictable consequence of aging regional infrastructure that has been quietly carrying 60 million gallons of wastewater for 54 miles a day for decades.

The Washington metropolitan area for generations has built on top of pipes, treatment plant and stormwater systems that we rarely think about until they break. When they fail, we pay the bill in dead fish, closed beaches, lost confidence in the water and millions of dollars in cleanup. Federal, state and local partners need a serious, sustained capital plan for bolstering our infrastructure, and Virginia needs to keep pulling its share of that load through the budget process. I will continue to push on that front in Richmond.

Here is what I ask of you. Bookmark the DEQ Potomac Interceptor page and check it before you head out to the river. If you see a fish kill, an algae bloom or anything unusual on the water, report it to DEQ's Pollution Response Program first. My staff and I are glad to help connect you. And if you have ideas about how we can do better, I want to hear them.

The Potomac belongs to all of us. Keeping our natural resources healthy, the resources on which we all depend, and keeping the public honestly informed is one of the most basic responsibilities we owe each other.

I am grateful DEQ has stepped up this summer, and I will be watching alongside all of you to make sure that DEQ officials keep the commitments they made in that May 4 letter to me.

Majority Leader & State Senator
34th District of Virginia

Governor's 'Common Ground' Veto

FROM PAGE 3

day," the Virginia Public Sector Labor Coalition said via an AFT press release. The coalition added that Virginia workers received a "crystal-clear message that they are no better off than they were under a Republican governor."

Class-Action and the Budget Standoff

Del. Marcus Simon's (D-Fairfax) consumer class-action framework

bill, HB 449 / SB 229, drew a veto. On April 19, the Virginia Poverty Law Center said, "HB 449 and SB 229 allow class action lawsuits in Virginia courts — we would then join every other state in the U.S. except Mississippi." Spanberger noted: "I offered amendments to ensure that when Virginia adopts its first-ever class action procedure, we do so in a tailored and judicious way — building on longstanding federal precedent while

providing regional circuit courts an opportunity to develop expertise."

State attention now turns to the 2026–2028 biennial budget (HB 30 / SB 30). Because the regular session adjourned without an agreement, lawmakers are operating within a special session framework. The General Assembly must pass a budget before the fiscal year begins on July 1 to prevent a state government shutdown. The House

of Delegates reconvenes its special session on June 18 and the Senate on June 22, with a dispute over data center tax exemptions looming.

Senate lawmakers want to eliminate the industry's \$1.6 billion sales tax exemption, House representatives want to tie the tax breaks to green energy, and Spanberger wants to protect existing business incentives to maintain economic stability.

Virginia Embraces One Person, One Vote Compact

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

One person, one vote. It's a principle most people in the United States deem fair and favor. It's the basis of determination of every election in the country. Except for U.S. President and Vice-President. Now, a state-based plan for electing the President by national popular vote has a chance of being in place for the 2028 general election.

For many in the United States, the current electoral college system is not well understood. The U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2, set up the system. Many believe the founding fathers also determined how the presidential electors would be selected. In fact, the Constitution leaves the method for their selection up to the states. And states have used a variety of methods to choose their official representatives to the college of electors or electoral college, and how to assign those votes. The Constitution states only that the number of electors will be equal to the number of Senate and House representatives to which the State is entitled in the Congress; and that no one holding an office of trust or profit in the U.S. may be an elector. Its use creates the pos-

sibility of electing candidates who lost the popular vote.

Winning Presidency Without Winning Popular Vote

A win under the current system requires capturing a majority of electoral college votes; not the majority of all votes cast, that is 270 electoral votes out of the 538. This has, in fact, allowed a president to take the office without winning the popular vote six times in American history: 1824, John Quincy Adams vs. Andrew Jackson; 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes vs. Samuel Jones Tilden; 1888, Benjamin Harrison vs. Stephen Grover Cleveland; 2000, George W. Bush vs. Al Gore; and 2016, Donald J. Trump vs. Hillary Clinton.

A survey by Pew Research Center conducted Aug. 26 to Sept. 2, 2024, found that "more than six-in-ten Americans (63%) would instead prefer to see the winner of the presidential election be the person who wins the most votes nationally." (<https://pewresearch.org>).

If the long and unsuccessful progression of the Constitutional amendment for equal rights (ERA) is an example, then a Constitutional amendment, to change from an electoral college to a popular vote determination, which the majority favor, seems nearly impossible.

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

Instead of a Constitutional amendment, proponents have urged State legislatures to enter into a compact, called the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. Those states within the Compact agree to elect the President by popular vote. This year, Virginia enacted language in its Code to join the Compact. Virginia Code now says, "Prior to the time set by law for the meeting and voting by the presidential electors, the chief election official of each member state shall determine the number of votes for each presidential slate ... in which votes have been cast in a statewide popular election and shall add such votes together to produce a "national popular vote total" for each presidential slate. The chief election official of each member state shall designate the presidential slate with the largest national popular vote total as the "national popular vote winner."

Compact prospects for 2028

Will the Compact be in effect for the 2028 Presidential election? Virginia Code states that use of the agreement takes effect "when states cumulatively possessing a majority of the electoral votes have enacted this agreement in substantially the same form and the enact-

ment so by such states have taken effect in each state." Virginia was the 19th to join the Compact; 18 states, plus the District Of Columbia are included to date. Virginia's vote brings the total electoral votes to 222; that is 48 votes short of the 270 electoral college votes needed to win an election. Executive director of the National Popular Vote! campaign, Christopher Pearson, says, "Virginia provided a nice momentum and has impact for us as we work in other states. What was once dismissed as "pie in the sky" has become probable." Pearson points to a block of six states where there is already a strong base of support. Where either only the governor needs to change, a couple of seats change party, or where there is already a strong base of support to join the Compact. He says, "We see a clear path where this could work and be in place for 2028."

Adding to the challenge, state legislatures convene on varying timeframes and for different lengths; making the time for action prior to the 2028 November elections with a Compact in place, shorter than it may seem. Pearson acknowledges that 2027 and the mid-terms is their window, as they wouldn't want to change the rules too close to the Presidential

election.

He adds, "It was non-partisan, but has become more partisan." Conservative Republicans are less likely to support the change, according to Pew Research, although 46 percent of all Republicans favor popular vote.

What change would Virginians see if the Compact is in play for the 2028 elections? Pearson says Virginia and other states, considered "non-swing" states in past elections, would have a more powerful voice. The National Popular Vote! campaign notes, "In the 2024 election, 94 percent of the general election campaign events took place in just seven states, while 80 percent of the country, including voters in Virginia, sat on the sidelines." Campaigns and candidates that previously concentrated only on swing states would need to contend with the block of electoral votes held by the Compact, of which Virginia would be part. While no campaigns concentrated on Virginia during the 2024 cycle, being in a block of controlling electoral votes, "it becomes about the margins everywhere for more engagement of all voters. It means every voter will matter in every state, and it will guarantee the candidate with the most votes wins." For more information on the Compact, see www.nationalpopularvote.com

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Alexa Paino Twirls Toward the World Stage in Paris

Well grounded 8th grader takes 4th in Junior Women's Rhythmic Twirl U.S. Trials.



Alexa Paino



Alexa Paino at U.S. Trials of Baton Twirling at the at USC Aiken earlier this year.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Before 12-year-old Alexa Paino took the floor for her routine at the Junior Women's Rhythmic Twirl U.S. Trials — the highest competition for a junior American twirler — she grounded herself with a powerful reminder.

"I wasn't comparing myself to the other competitors; I kept telling myself to stay focused on myself and enjoying the experience," Alexa, a rising eighth grader at St. Mark's Catholic School in Vienna, said. "Trusting my training always helps me with the pressure and get past some trouble I have with confidence."

It's a strategy that anyone, of any age, can benefit from while chasing big goals, and the mindset paid off for Alexa at the Trials in March.

Facing more scrutiny than usual, with four additional judges on the panel compared to standard competitions, Paino took fourth place, earning a ticket as an alternate to the 2026 World Freestyle and Rhythmic Twirl Competition this August. Taking place in Paris this year, the event is what the U.S. Twirling Association calls "the twirling equivalent of the Olympic Games."

Twirling combines gymnastics and dance while requiring powerful hand-eye coordination, making it very similar to the Olympic

sport of rhythmic gymnastics. After performing a captivating two-and-a-half-minute routine to the song 'Tomorrow' from the musical *Annie*, Alexa earned her spot as the youngest member of this year's Team USA.

The determined twirler is ready for international competition. She continues to train tirelessly for the world stage, when representatives from 25 countries will face off.

"I'm ready to jump in if my team needs me," she said. "I'd love the chance to compete, but either way, I'm so excited. If I'm not on the floor, I'll be in the stands cheering everyone on and spreading positive, supportive energy."

Even though Alexa has long demonstrated exceptional talent, she shocked herself with her U.S. Trials performance.

"Going into a competition against 15 girls aged 12 to 17, I didn't expect anything," Alexa said. "But I made it to the top six for finals and then I placed fourth. I was just so surprised."

This underscores Alexa's deep humility. She is a seasoned twirler, having started the sport as a toddler.

"I'm a second-generation baton twirler. My mom did it when she was younger — marching in all the parades — so she took me to my first practice when I was just two years old. By the time I was three, I was already competing. None of my friends twirl, so they all think it's really cool."

While her mom, Mandy, was the first Paino to pick up a baton, she noted that Alexa has taken the family tradition to an entirely new level.

"I was pretty competitive back in the day, but nowhere near what she's doing," Mandy said. "I retired when I was 18 and hadn't thought about twirling much. Before she was born, people on Facebook knew we were having a girl, and connecting with old twirling friends made me think that my daughter might enjoy it."

Mandy had no idea just how much Alexa would take to it.

"She is completely self-motivated," Mandy said. "We always give her the choice to step away after the season ends, but she always wants to go back. One year, she did want to quit, but she only lasted 12 days before she came to us wanting to go back."

Alexa trains 22 hours a week, primarily with the Wheaton Dance Twirl Teams in Montgomery County, Maryland. This is a top-notch program, sending two girls to Paris this summer.

Alexa manages the demanding schedule by turning commutes into study halls, completing her homework in the car while traveling from Northern Virginia to the Maryland studio three afternoons a week.

What Alexa loves most about twirling is that it fuses components of multiple disciplines.

"You get to do a little bit of ev-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MANDY PAINO

Alexa Paino, 12, excels at twirling.

everything, gymnastics and dance underneath the baton," she said. "There's also so much you can do with the baton, which is pretty light and has to be fitted to your arm length. I've even used three for some routines."

And even though it might seem that Alexa has already reached the pinnacle of the sport, she plans to keep twirling for years to come.

"I want to go to [Bishop O'Connell High School], and I'm really hoping to start a baton twirling team there," Alexa said. "I think it's a sport that is very overlooked, and it should be more available for people to try."

I love showing my friends vid-

eos of it, and they are always so supportive. I'd love to get more of them involved."

In the meantime, she's looking forward to multiple competitions this summer, including the main event in Paris. With other international experiences under her belt, she has an admirable outlook on high stakes competition.

"I get to meet so many friends from other places around the world at these events, and I love that," Alexa said. "But what I think I'm most looking forward to is spending time with my mom, maybe even at Disneyland Paris. I know things will turn out best if I stay calm and just enjoy the whole experience."

McLean's Dolina Siblings Are a Powerhouse in Powerlifting

Junior lifter, Mikayla, claims USPA National Title in Anaheim.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The Dolina siblings of McLean, Sawyer, Mikayla and Charlie, pose with their medals.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Dolina siblings of McLean represent a generation of strength and athleticism. On May 26, 19-year-old Mikayla Dolina won the Junior 67.5-kilogram division by 50.5 kilograms at the United States Powerlifting Association Ultra Nationals in Anaheim, California. She broke three International Powerlifting League Junior world records with a 423-kilogram total, beating the 2021 record by 23 kilograms. Her lifts included a 158-kilogram squat and a state record 92.5-kilogram bench press. On a fourth attempt, she deadlifted 181.5 kilograms (400 pounds), the first junior in her class to hit that milestone.

"I like to think of myself as a bit of an ambassador for the sport of powerlifting at my school and hope that when other women see me lifting heavy weights at the gym, it makes them more comfortable in the gym

environment," Mikayla said. A JMU student, she plans to establish a collegiate powerlifting team there.

Brother Sawyer, 17, placed fourth in the Men's Junior 90-kilogram class in his national debut with a 180-kilogram squat, 227.5-kilogram deadlift, and 130-kilogram bench press.

"I have met athletes ranging from 12 years old to over 80 years old, competitors with physical handicaps, a blind competitor, and even a competitor with one prosthetic leg who squatted over 300 pounds. Everyone is very supportive of each other, and it inspires me to do my best," Sawyer said.

While brother Charlie did not compete in Anaheim, he said, "I started training and competing in powerlifting while I was a wrestler, and could see the benefits of strength training. I am now more focused on volleyball, but will continue training in powerlifting as the benefits translate to all sports."



Mikayla Dolina of McLean shows her muscles at the United States Powerlifting Association Ultra Nationals in Anaheim, California. She broke three International Powerlifting League Junior world records.

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 CIRCUIT COURT AWARDED GRANT TO PRESERVE HISTORIC RECORDS
The Fairfax Circuit Court Clerk's Office has been awarded a grant from the Library of

Virginia Circuit Court Records Preservation (CCRP) program in the amount of \$18,370.40. The funds will be used to conserve loose birth registers from 1866 to 1879 and Land Tax Books from 1893, 1897, 1898, and 1899 from Fairfax County and stored at the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center.

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.



IMAGE FROM FCPS VIDEO

Fairfax County School Board meets on May 21.

School Board Directs Fiscal Guide Amid \$30M Budget Shortfall

Superintendent to consolidate FCPS financial rules into a single public-facing guide.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Facing a \$28.9 million budget shortfall, the Fairfax County School Board unanimously passed a tightened \$4.1 billion fiscal year 2027 budget on May 21. The board then voted 10–2 to approve a separate follow-on motion from At-Large Member Kyle McDaniel directing the superintendent to develop a public guide outlining the division’s financial management principles. The directive drew opposition from Hunter Mill member Melanie Meren and Mount Vernon member Mateo Dunne.



Kyle McDaniel
At-Large Member



Melanie Meren
(Hunter Mill District)



Mateo Dunn
(Mount Vernon District)



Dr. Michelle Reid
FCPS Superintendent

Compounding Fiscal Strains

The current shortfall marks a departure from the first two years of Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid’s tenure (fiscal 2024 and fiscal 2025), during which the county fully funded her budget requests. Financial strain arose due to compounding pressures.

Because no state budget has been approved yet, Virginia cannot tell local school districts exactly how much funding they will receive for the upcoming school year. Furthermore, the state’s funding formula underestimates the actual cost of competitive teacher salaries, special education and support staff, forcing counties like Fairfax with higher costs to pay more to maintain baseline standards, according to a JLARC study.

Salary hikes from the 2024 collective bargaining agreements outpaced real estate tax revenues once federal pandemic aid expired.

To balance the budget, the school board was forced to reduce staffing reserves, de-

lay digital device refreshes, reduce math materials, and defer the micro-credentialing fund. However, they successfully protected the collective bargaining agreements, middle school after-school programs, and the VIP camp.

McDaniel noted that the motion aimed to mirror the Board of Supervisors’ 1975 “10 Principles of Sound Financial Management.” The objective incorporates existing tools, such as Executive Limitation 5, or EL-5, which governs financial planning and budgeting. Under FCPS’s “Coherent Governance” model, Executive Limitations serve as operational guardrails set by the school board, defining boundaries the superintendent must not cross.

Supporters included McDaniel, Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District) and At-Large Member Ilryong Moon. McDaniel emphasized its value as a long-term public message

that would condense complex regulations into a digestible format. Anderson said that she wants to see the strategies staff “open up the curtain” on the budget process. “I want to see that homework,” she said. Once it was clarified during the discussion that the follow-on motion was intended to be an accumulation of existing practices rather than the creation of something new, Moon said, “I am supporting the motion.”

Opponents Melanie Meren (Hunter Mill District) and Mateo Dunn (Mount Vernon District) countered that FCPS already has extensive policies and an award-winning record of financial management, including Baldrige recognition.

During the discussion on financial management principles, Meren said, “This work is too important to delegate to the superintendent, and before we implement more frameworks, we must hold the superinten-

dent accountable to what’s already in place.” Meren added that she was unwilling to ask the superintendent to spend limited staff time and resources on a new review category when existing executive limitations, policies, and budget processes were already in place.

Dunn also opposed the motion, cautioning that creating a standalone document without explicit reporting mechanisms amounts to an empty gesture.

“Just to put principles out there and not live up to them ... It’s just words on the wall,” Dunn said. “I have a bias toward action and outcomes, and I don’t think this gets us to either.”

In a 10–2 majority, the school board approved the motion, directing the superintendent to bring the draft framework back for discussion at a Budget Committee of the Whole meeting by September 2026.

Town of Herndon Withdraws Casino Zoning Amendment

Governor's veto makes amendment moot.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Herndon Town Council voted 6-0, with one absence, on May 26 to withdraw a proposed zoning amendment that would have formally defined and established requirements for casinos in the town. Officials initiated the defensive zoning process earlier this year in response to Senate Bill 756, "Casino gaming; eligible host localities," introduced by Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Mount Vernon).

Mayor Keven LeBlanc noted the proposal is no longer needed due to the governor's veto of SB 756, recorded April 11. Gov. Abigail Spanberger vetoed the legislation, writing in her Governor's Veto, "local governing boards should lead on proposed casino development, as has been the prior standard and process. Senate Bill 756 would effectively change this standard and eliminate local control."

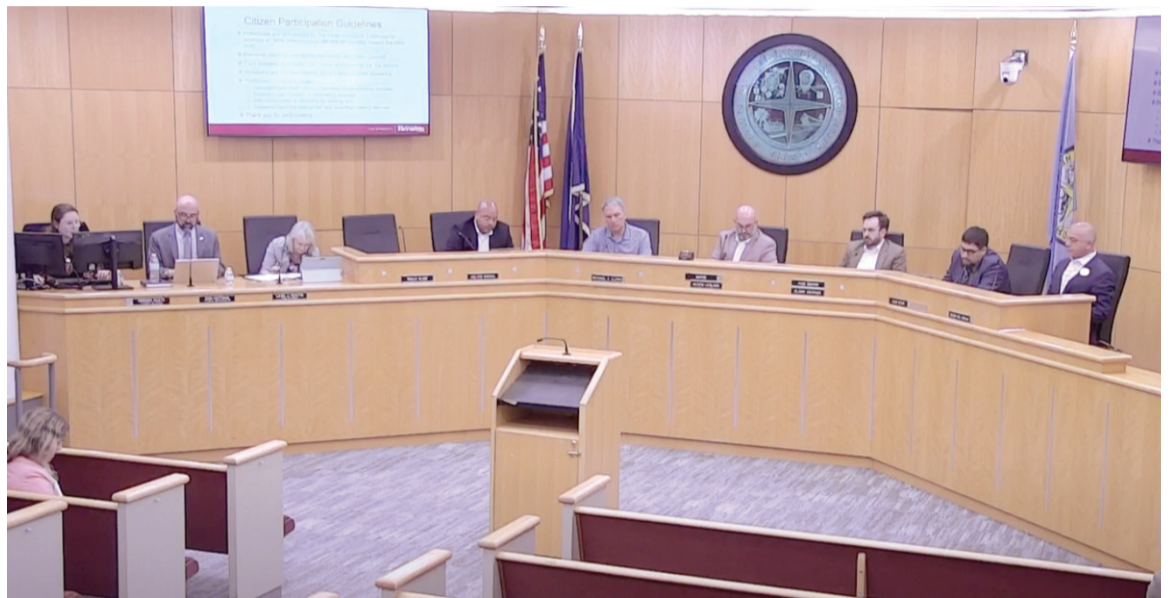
Original drafts of SB 756 targeted Tysons, but subsequent amendments stripped out location-spe-

cific language, creating anxiety across multiple Northern Virginia municipalities. The final version allowed a casino anywhere in Fairfax County meeting strict criteria also likely to mean Tysons: Located within one-quarter mile of a Silver Line Metro station, outside the Capital Beltway, within two miles of an enclosed mall of at least 1.5 million square feet, and as part of a 1.5-million-square-foot mixed-use project.

While Herndon technically lacked a qualifying mall within the required two-mile radius, local leaders viewed their legislative process as a necessary, reactionary defensive move. Because state lawmakers amended SB 756's language multiple times, town officials feared Herndon could be vulnerable to sudden state-level changes.

Herndon's zoning administrator drafted emergency zoning amendments to isolate any potential casino strictly to specific parcels south of the Herndon Parkway and near the Metro station. These regulations would insulate the town's historic downtown — located a mile and a half away and entirely outside SB 756's site requirements — from a possible casino's impacts.

Governor Spanberger's veto statement noted the bill "would strip the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors of control over the local approval process, require the county to set a referendum,



SCREENSHOT

Herndon Town Council votes 6-0 on May 26 to withdraw a proposed zoning amendment that would have formally defined and established requirements for casinos within the town.

and set a broader precedent." She warned it "could be used to bring casino referendums to other localities where the local governing boards may similarly oppose such efforts."

When asked after the meeting how the fluid nature of the state legislation forced Herndon into a defensive posture, Mayor Keven J. LeBlanc Jr. explained that town constituents overwhelmingly oppose a casino. "We moved to block casinos through preemptive code changes.

There was active push in the state legislature for a casino, and

while the suggested placement was a location in Tysons, it had previously been discussed for Reston and had statements about land size and metro proximity, which we technically also have, making us unsure what the future could hold."

LeBlanc added that while initial state discussions focused on Tysons and Reston, town leadership was "concerned that, even if the proposed Tysons casino was struck, that eyes may turn to other placement along the Silver Line Metro and our proximity to Dulles airport may make Herndon a con-

sideration."

"Herndon is not in favor of a casino for many reasons," LeBlanc said.

The withdrawn legislation may be needed in 2027. Following the governor's veto, Surovell said he will bring the casino legislation back in the upcoming session, calling Tysons proposed project a vital economic driver and a top priority for Northern Virginia labor unions. Surovell also said that the revenue from such a casino could bridge budget shortfalls for Fairfax County Public Schools without resorting to higher real estate taxes.

Dominion Energy Plants Native Trees and Shrubs Along W&OD Trail

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The positive visual signs of the February 2026 memorandum of understanding between NOVA Parks and Dominion Energy Virginia governing vegetation management activities along the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park are in bloom. In the Town of Herndon, new native trees and shrubs dot the utility easement along the trail.

"We sincerely appreciate NOVA Parks' partnership on this important effort and their dedication to preserving the W&OD Park," Joe Woomer, Dominion Energy's senior vice president of electric transmis-

sion, said in a statement on Feb. 3. "By working together, we are balancing the safety and reliability of the grid with the long-term stewardship of this cherished resource. That's a win-win for our customers and communities."

The agreement is the result of a six-month effort between Dominion Energy and NOVA Parks, developing a shared understanding of both parties' missions.

"Together, we can help ensure the W&OD Park, and its 45-mile trail, remains a vibrant and valued community resource for generations to come," NOVA Parks Executive Director Justin Wilson said.

The agreement recognizes the need for routine vegetation management and

strengthens existing communication protocols to enhance transparency and provide earlier notice of vegetation management work, minimizing disruption and building public awareness.

"Dominion will provide 30 days advance notice to NOVA Parks, neighboring jurisdiction officials and residents of nearby transmission projects and major maintenance work by mail and posted signage along the trail," the release states.

The agreement promotes the pruning of existing trees when feasible, but recognizes that tree removal will be necessary in some areas. It also promotes the planting of low-growing native trees and pollinators.



Dominion Energy Virginia manages the W&OD Trail corridor under a permanent, legal right-of-way easement. After recently clear cutting within this Herndon easement, the utility is highlighting its Integrated Vegetation Management approach to systematically clear non-native plants and create a canvas for new native beds.

The newly mulched beds feature low-growing native perennials, shrubs and small trees. Because these species stay below a certain height, they won't interfere with overhead power lines, enhancing grid reliability while maximizing biodiversity.

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 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.

SUMMER CONCERT & ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Reston Community Center (RCC) transforms Reston's plazas and parks into community gathering places with its acclaimed Summer Concert & Entertainment Series, running from just before Memorial Day through September. All are invited to enjoy free live music and family-friendly entertainment set in some of Reston's most beloved outdoor spaces as we head into the heart of summer.

Wednesdays: Midweek Music on the Lake
Sunset Concerts | Schedule
Lake Anne Plaza

Wednesdays, June 24 – August 26
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Fan favorites return to Lake Anne Plaza for Sunset Concerts on Wednesday evenings, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. so audiences can enjoy slightly cooler temperatures and golden hour views by the lake.

Thursdays: Fresh Finds at Halley Rise
Take a Break Concert Series | Schedule
Halley Rise (2025 Fulton Place, Reston)
Thursdays, June 25 – August 27
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

In its third year, Take a Break Concert Series spotlights fresh talent in one of Reston's newest neighborhoods. This laid-back, open space offers plenty of room to dance or play and a new 7:30 p.m. start time lets the heat ease off a bit.

Fridays: Two Stops, One Great Night
Happy Hour with Darden & Friends | Schedule
Reston Town Square Park
Fridays, May 22 – June 26
5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Ease into the evening with jazz at Happy Hour with Darden & Friends at Reston Town Square Park. A cornerstone of the D.C. jazz scene, vocalist and bandleader Darden Purcell curates this series, bringing her warm, swinging sensibility to a relaxed, after-work lineup of top regional talent.



The Vienna Town Summer on the Green Series begins June 5, 2026 in the Town of Vienna.



"Napoleon Dynamite" Live! A Conversation with Jon Heder, Efrén Ramirez and Jon Gries can be seen on Saturday, June 6, 2026 at the McLean Community Center.



The Pack Drumline can be seen Thursday, June 18, 2026 at the Summer Concert Series at McLean Central Park Amphitheatre.

Summerbration Fab Fridays | Schedule
Reston Station
Fridays, May 29 – September 25
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Then head to Reston Station for the always packed Summerbration Fab Fridays, now

starting at 7:30 p.m. so you can stop by Happy Hour with Darden first. These high energy cover bands turn the plaza into a dance party with favorite hits all night long.
Saturdays: Playtime in the Park
Family Fun Entertainment Series | Schedule

Reston Town Square Park
Saturdays, July 4 – August 22
10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Saturday mornings bring the Family Fun Entertainment Series to Reston Town Square Park, a summer highlight with puppetry, magic, music, juggling and more! Kids can dance, giggle and get the wiggles out, with plenty of fun for adults too.

Sundays: Classics Under the Sky

Sunday Art in the Park with Shenandoah Conservatory | Schedule

Reston Town Square Park

Sundays, June 21 – August 30

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Spend Sunday evening at Sunday Art in the Park with Shenandoah Conservatory in Reston Town Square Park, where rising classical musicians offer concert quality performances that are friendly, fun and accessible to all ages.

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 Nickelodeon 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.

JUNETEENTH EVENTS

ACROSS THE COUNTY

Celebrate Juneteenth through engaging programs and community events across Fairfax County parks that honor African American history, resilience, culture and freedom.

Featured Events

Grit and Grain – African American Millers

Colvin Run Mill, Saturday, June 13 | 11 a.m. to noon

African Americans' labor, experience and knowledge were crucial to 19th-century grist milling. Explore a historic mill as you discuss the contributions of African American millers in Fairfax County. This program links to the VA250 and Fairfax 250 commemoration. \$10 per person

Juneteenth Celebration at Sully Historic Site
Sully Historic Site, Friday, June 19 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Free Admission

Honor emancipation through storytelling, guided tours and interactive family activities. Explore the history of Sully Historic Site and reflect on the stories, resilience and contributions of African Americans in Fairfax County. Enjoy food and community celebration.

Exploring Our Historic Meeting House and Grounds

Frying Pan Farm Park, Saturday, June 20 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Free Admission

Explore the rich history of the park's Meeting House, one of the oldest religious structures in Fairfax County. Staff and volunteers will offer informal tours of the building and grounds, highlighting the history of African Americans in the area.

Family Skate and Dance Night: Juneteenth Celebration

Franconia Rec Center, Saturday, June 20 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Celebrate at this Juneteenth Celebration Family Skate and Dance Night. Wear red, black and green (yellow too) and enjoy a night skating and dancing with your friends, family and community. This event celebrates the resilience, community and possibilities of things to come. Take this opportunity to come out to this event as an early Father's Day celebration too! \$10 per person

JUNE 3-28

McLean Art Society's "Water Stories" Exhibition and June Members Show. At McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. The McLean Art Gallery is pleased to feature "Water Stories," a new seasonal exhibition from the local nonprofit McLean Art Society. Members of the public are invited to enjoy 200 new works from 45 local artists. Included are paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel,

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ENTERTAINMENT

watercolor and mixed media; drawings; photography; sculpture; and works in wood, glass, ceramics and jewelry. The Opening Reception is Friday, June 5 from 5-7 p.m. Meet the artists and enjoy live music, wine and light refreshments.

WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24

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.

JUNE 4 AND JUNE 10

Foreign Language Film: "Wings of Desire" (1987; German). Thur. June 4, 1 p.m. and Wed. June 10, 6:30 p.m. At The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. All over Berlin, there are invisible, immortal angels who listen to the thoughts of the city's human inhabitants, comforting the distressed. Even though the city is densely populated, many of the people are isolated or estranged from their loved ones. One of the angels falls in love with a beautiful, lonely trapeze artist.

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 Ven-geance"—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: Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

SUMMER ON THE GREEN SERIES

Music lovers of all ages are encouraged to grab a lawn chair or picnic blanket and head to the Vienna Town Green for free summer concerts at 6:30 p.m. beginning in June. The Vienna Town Green is located at 144 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. The Summer on the Green series features a wide range of musical genres, including rock, blues, country, reggae, jazz, and children's music performed by local and regional musical acts.

2026 Schedule

June 5: Sarah Swanner Band - Country, Folk
June 7: Vienna Community Band - Concert Band
June 17: Vienna Moms Inc. presents Rocknocer-ous - Kids Music
June 26: 2nd Sole - Classic Rock
July 10: The Cassaday Concoction - Rock, Blues, Soul, Reggae
July 24: Fat Chance - Rock
July 31: US Army Blues Swamp Romp - Jazz and Folk of Louisiana
Aug. 7: The Maiden Band - Classic Rock 70s to present
Aug. 14: US Navy Band Commodores - Jazz
For more information, visit www.viennava.gov/summeronthegreen.

JUNE 5-6

Big AI & The Jokers Concert. 5:30 p.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston. The Reston Town Center Association and BXP in partnership with the Embassy of Latvia, present the two-night, exclusive U.S. Premiere of Big AI & The Jokers. Matt Niess and the Capitol Bones are opening. Both events will offer Sip & Stroll from participating restaurants. Big AI & The Jokers are European sensations, bringing their high-energy jive and jukebox sound to sold-out concert venues across the continent.

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,



The Lake Fairfax 250th Independence Day Celebration is Saturday, June 27, 2026 at Lake Fairfax Park.

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.

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.

SATURDAY/JUNE 6

IGNITE at OFC: FIFA World Cup Tournament. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Are you the best FC26 player in McLean? Are you an athlete looking to expand how your game translates off the pitch mentally? The Old Firehouse and Mindstate Wellness Center are celebrating the beginning of the FIFA World Cup by testing your skills on the sticks and in the virtual lab. While immersing yourself in the beautiful game, enjoy some food off the grill and cold beverages.

SATURDAY/JUNE 6

"Napoleon Dynamite" Live! A Conversation with Jon Heder, Efrén Ramirez and Jon Gries. 7 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A \$60 VIP Meet and Greet begins at 5:30 p.m. (purchased separately), followed by a full screening of "Napoleon Dynamite"

and a lively, audience-participatory show with cast members Jon Heder, Jon Gries, and Efrén Ramirez.

SATURDAY/JUNE 6

Paws on the Plaza. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Dogs, treats, splash zones and tail-wagging fun are coming to Tysons Corner Center! Join us for Paws on PenFed Plaza for a free community celebration dedicated to our furry best friends, sponsored by PenFed Credit Union.

Bring your pup and enjoy:
A dog park and splash pad
A foam party for dogs
Canine caricature art
The Automatic Treat Machine (ATM)
Giveaways and special surprises
Rescue organizations with adoptable dogs
Pet-focused vendors and local businesses
Participating vendors include Bark and Boarding, Dyson, Homeward Trails, Impact Over Money Companions, Isy's Ways, Paw Mind Body, Pet Wants, Puppy Pawtique, Sassy Woof, VCA SouthPaws, Wooftrap Animal Rescue, Woofie's Mobile Grooming and more to be announced.

JUNE 6-7

Living History Weekend. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station



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

Road in Fairfax Station. Step back in time and immerse yourself in the rich history of the 1860's during our Living History Days at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum on Saturday, June 6 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 7 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This engaging event will transport you to a bygone era, showcasing the traditions, skills, and culture of the time. Join us for a day filled with captivating demonstrations, interactive experiences, and lively performances that will delight visitors of all ages.

Event Highlights:

Drilling Demonstrations: Witness the precision and discipline of historical military drill as reenactors showcase the techniques used by soldiers in the 19th century.
Fife and Drum Corps: Enjoy the stirring sounds of our live Fife and Drum Corps.
Victorian Dancing Performances and Guest Lessons: Step onto the dance floor and participate in Victorian dancing performances.
Musket Firing Demonstrations: Feel the thrill as reenactors demonstrate the firing of muskets, gunpowder only, providing insights into the weaponry used during the period. Learn about the techniques and safety measures involved in handling these historical firearms.
Scrimmages: Experience the excitement of historical combat with scrimmages that showcase military tactics.

Demonstrations:

Drilling Demonstrations: Saturday and Sunday ~ 11 to 11:30
Fife and Drum Corp: Saturday ~ 11:30 to Noon, Sunday as available
Victorian Dance Performances and Lessons: Saturday ONLY ~ Noon to 1, 2 to 3, and 4 to 5
Musket Firing (gunpowder only) Saturday 1 to 2, Sunday 12:30 to 1:30
Scrimmages: Saturday 3 to 4, Sunday 2 to 3

Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and younger, 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.

JUNE 6 TO 28

The "CoLab Collage Artists." At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W #B, Lake Anne in Reston. The "CoLab Collage Artists" – Parinaz Bahadori, Jennifer Duncan, Rosemarie Forsythe, Doug Fuller, Julia Malakoff, Molly McCracken, Marthe McGrath, Jennifer Penick, and Doug Schulte – will present works highlighting the benefits of collage as a collaborative medium. This will be the third year in a row that the group of nine DMV area artists has exhibited at RAGS. The artists each incorporate collage techniques into their diverse individual styles, utilizing a wide-ranging assortment of paints, paper, fabrics, and found and handcrafted materials.

TUESDAY/JUNE 9

Blood Drive. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

Obituary

Obituary



Yvonne E. Kauffman (nee Stallman), age 92, passed into the great beyond January 30, 2026 in Midlothian, Virginia. She was born May 11, 1933, in York, Pennsylvania to the late Kenneth G. and Ruth R. (nee Lauer) Stallman, and her dear Mother was the organist, and family attended St. Stephens United Church of Christ in York, Pa. In addition to her parents, Yvonne was preceded in death by her devoted husband, Charles F. Kauffman, her beloved, sister Phyllis F. Davis and brother Kenneth Stallman, Jr.. Yvonne is survived by her cherished brother and sister in law, Joe and Evelyn Kauffman, and her adoring children, Chang(Soo Hee) Lee, Lisa Kauffman (Bill Salapow), Christopher (Alanna) Kauffman, Heather (Peter) Donis, Melody (Nelson) Cates, and 15 Great/Grand children, and many beloved extended family members, close friends, and dear doggies. Yvonne graduated from West York high school in 1951, and married her high school sweetheart, Charlie, and also graduated from West Chester State Teachers college in 1955, and later, got her BA degree in music.

Yvonne was a founding member of the United Christian Parish of Reston, Virginia, and worked over 60 years where she enjoyed teaching and playing the organ/piano, weddings and funerals, and directing adult and also childrens choir's song, dance, and mini dramas for her beloved church. Yvonne was a performer from very young doing Shirley Temple routines, to leads in school plays, to a short stint in modeling, as well.

In addition, Yvonne had a vibrant and adventurous spirit, and pioneered mission trips to Rwanda, and was always very active as a multi-talented volunteer, including a lead in Bible school, cub scouts, fund raisers, Chief voting Officer, etc..and taught piano lessons up until, Dec.27, 2025, when she had a major stroke.

Yvonne humbly rejected official requests to compete for Pennsylvania in the Miss America contest, and is famously pictured in the Kennedy museum catching a signed book JFK is shown tossing to her. She had a love for life, God, Family, Community and Country, and was a Loving, Unique, Beautiful, Extraordinary, Elegant, and Joyous Christian. Yvonne had a fulfilled life, touched many souls, and as her Mother, joyously shared her deep love for music, and will be lovingly remembered, always.

Memorial Celebration of Yvonne will be June 7, 2026 at 12:30pm, at the United Christian Parish of Reston, Virginia @11508 North Shore Dr., Reston, Va. 20190, (703-620-3065). Donations to, 'Hope Made Real' are welcome in the name of Yvonne.

NEWS

McLean Symphony Presents American Journeys

June 6 Featuring Violinist and Violist Marcolivia.

The McLean Symphony closes its 2025-2026 season with American Journeys, an evening of vibrant orchestral music celebrating American creativity, cultural influences, and storytelling through sound. The concert will take place on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Virginia.

The McLean Symphony thanks the Fairfax250 Commission for its support. Visit fxva.com/fairfax250

to explore the celebration.

The performance will feature acclaimed violinist and violist Marcolivia in a program spanning jazz-inspired rhythms, contemporary imagination, and iconic Americana:

- ❖ George Gershwin: Cuban Overture
- ❖ Ian Brydern: Zodiac Concerto
- ❖ Aaron Copland: Rodeo (Complete Ballet)

"American Journeys reflects the diversity and imagination of Amer-

Concert Information

American Journeys
Saturday, June 6, 2026, 6:30 p.m.
Instrument Petting Zoo, 5:30 p.m.
Columbia Church, 103 W. Columbia Street, Falls Church, VA 22046

ican music," said Sebastian Grand, Music Director.

Tickets and additional information are available at The McLean Symphony.

Lift Me Up Derby Raises Over \$15,000

Great Falls Rotary Club event raises money for therapeutic riding, sees 20% growth while honoring the derby's late founder.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

One of the Rotary Club of Great Falls' signature spring events, the May 17 Lift Me Up Derby Fundraiser for the nonprofit organization, netted over \$15,000 — an increase of more than 20% from 2025. Participants, dressed in their boots, hats and derby finery, bought and named hobby horses that "raced" based on dice rolls and card draws to win prizes and raise funds for equine-assisted therapy programs.

Founded by Rotarian Sean Plunkett in 2020, the event raised \$12,000 to support Lift Me Up therapeutic horse-riding programs, with the remaining \$3,000 contributing to other charities supported by the Great Falls Rotary Foundation.

Fifty percent more horses entered the race than ever before, with prizes awarded to horses that placed first, second or third. Nearly a dozen local businesses — including LAuberge Chez Francois, The Old Brogue, and Starbucks — donated the prizes.

Plunkett's wife, Jackie, sent a text to Rotary members on race day saying the event brought back memories and that she was happy to see the Rotary Club still supporting Lift Me Up.

Held in Lift Me Up's ring, the event even drew the attention of a few live horses. Rotarian Cynthia Stinger reported that they entered



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dan Lundeen (left), chair of the GF Rotary Foundation, congratulates Paul Sawtell on winning the derby with his horse, Smokey, named after his childhood steed.

the ring to watch the hobby horses run and "one even whinnied"

when a winner crossed the finish line.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

To register, visit redcrossblood.org and enter McLeanCC to schedule an appointment, and save up to 15 minutes by completing your day-of-appointment RapidPass pre-donation materials at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass.

THURSDAY/JUNE 11

Performing Arts Movie: "Orchestra of Exiles" (2012). 1 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. "Orchestra of Exiles" is the suspenseful chronicle of how one man helped save Europe's premier Jewish musicians from obliteration by the Nazis during World War II. With commentary by Itzhak Perlman, Zubin Mehta, Pinchas Zukerman, Joshua Bell and others.

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.

JUNE 13 TO JULY 5

Revelations Art Exhibition. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Building 10, Lorton. Internationally exhibited artist Fernando Osorio invites the public to experience Revelations, a compelling exhibition of abstract paintings on view from June 13 through July 5, 2026, at the Workhouse Arts Center. The exhibition presents 12 powerful works that explore the expressive language of color, form, texture, and contrast. Through dynamic compositions and an intuitive visual vocabulary, Osorio creates spaces for reflection, emotion, and spiritual resonance. His paintings move beyond representation, inviting viewers into a contemplative encounter with abstraction and the unseen dimensions of experience. Opening Reception: June 13, 2026 from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

Washington Metropolitan Accordion Society Concert. 4-6 p.m. At Sleepy Hollow United Methodist Church, 3435 Sleepy Hollow Road, Falls Church. The Washington Metropolitan Accordion Society will hold a member concert and open mic. Free admission, all welcome.

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

Train Themed Game Day. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Families and train enthusiasts can come together to enjoy a variety of engaging and interactive games, all centered around the theme of trains.

What to Expect: Interactive Games: Participate in a range of train-themed games suitable for all ages! **Family-Friendly Activities:** Enjoy a variety of activities designed for families, including scavenger hunts within the museum, train safety, and more! **Museum Exhibition Access:** Explore our exhibits on the history of railroads, locomotives, and model trains. **Admission:** Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. First Responders, Teachers and Military, \$5; Seniors 65+, \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org, [Facebook.com/FFXSRR](https://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

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

VIENNA LIBERTY AMENDMENTS

MONTH/JUNE 13 - JULY 13

Town of Vienna's 6th Liberty Amendments Month festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2026, with the Liberty Amend-

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Bennie and the Jets: Tribute to Elton John Concert is Thursday, June 25, 2026 at McLean Central Park Amphitheatre in McLean.

ments Month parade down Maple Avenue to Nutley Street, ending at the Juneteenth festival at First Baptist Church, 450 Orchard St. NW, Vienna. The Juneteenth celebration will feature live music, food trucks, a fashion show, children's entertainment, a mobile video game truck, bounce houses, a petting zoo and voter registration until 3 p.m.

See full month's calendar here: <https://www.viennava.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/parks-and-rec/pdfs/lam/2026-vienna-lam-brochure.pdf>

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

Washington Balalaika Orchestra. 3 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons Corner. Join the Washington Balalaika Orchestra's 55-person ensemble this June for a spectacular program, from Tchaikovsky to Geršwin, and waltzes to klezmer. You will hear beautiful arrangements of "Dance Macabre," "Hungarian Rhapsody," music from "Swan Lake," and even the classic 1967 pop song "Love is Blue". We guarantee you'll emerge humming some very familiar tunes.

FREE CONCERTS IN THE PARK

At Burke Lake Park, Burke. 7 p.m. every Wednesday night from June 24 to Aug. 19 at Burke Lake Park for an incredible line-up of bands, food trucks, 2 Silos beer, and Ice Cream. The atmosphere is informal, so bring a picnic blanket, lawn chairs, and relax with friends and family.

SCHEDULE

June 24 – The Road Ducks. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Cousins Maine Lobster and Ello Gelato
July 1 – ChumpChange. Food Trucks: Ned's New England Deck, Paisanos and Bruster's of Alexandria Ice Cream
July 8 – The Magic Trio. Food Trucks: Roaming Coyote, Paisanos and Ello Gelato
July 15 – SoHo Down. Food Trucks: Kaziville (hot dogs), Cousins Maine Lobster Paisanos and Bruster's of Alexandria
July 22 – JunkFood Band. Food Trucks: Roaming Coyote, Paisanos and Ello Gelato
July 29 – The Skip Castro Band. Food Trucks: Kaziville (hot dogs), Ned's New England Deck and Bruster's of Alexandria
Aug. 5. The English Channel. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Cousins Maine Lobster and Ello Gelato
Aug. 12 – The Randy Thompson Band. Food Trucks: BABU-JI, Roaming Coyote and Bruster's of Alexandria
Aug. 19 – The Soul Shakers. Food Trucks: Kaziv-

ille (hot dogs), Ned's New England Deck and Bruster's of Alexandria

JUNE 18 TO JULY 30

Summer Concert Series. At McLean Central Park Amphitheatre. McLean Community Center's famous, free concerts are back at the McLean Central Park amphitheater! Grab your family and friends and enjoy live music every Thursday evening from June 18 to July 30 at 7 p.m. June concerts are below:

Thur. June 18, 7 p.m. - The Pack Drumline
Thur. June 25, 7 p.m. - Bennie and The Jets: Tribute to Elton John

JUNE 20-21

Two Day Father's Day Weekend Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station.

Diverse Exhibits: Marvel at meticulously crafted models, showcasing intricate details and impressive layouts in both N and T scales. **Interactive:** Experience live demonstrations on various aspects of model train operation, from basic setup to advanced techniques. **Family-Friendly:** Families are welcome! Many of our volunteer conductors provide interactive stations where children can engage ('drive') with model trains, ensuring the event is fun for all ages.

Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6. First Responders, Teachers and Military, \$5; Seniors 65+, \$5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR. 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/JUNE 21

51st Annual Sully Antique Car Show. 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, Chantilly. Explore hundreds of antique and classic cars; see judging and awards throughout the day; and enjoy restoration and specialty car displays, live music, food vendors, children's activities, a kids' tent and opportunities to explore Sully's history. New this year: Car owners can register online for faster, easier event entry. Online tickets are available through June 19: \$12 for adults ages 16-64, \$10 for seniors ages 65 and older and \$8 for children ages 15 and younger. Day-of tickets are available at the gate: \$15 for adults ages 16-64, \$12 for seniors ages 65 and older and \$10 for children ages 15 and younger.

"Are You Talking to Me?"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though there were no television and no gun, I still felt what Robert Di Niro felt when he shot out the television in the 1976 film "Taxi Driver," when my wife Dina said to me earlier today: "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues left in the closet (our back-up area)?"

Now she couldn't have been talking to me (or rather needn't have been) because, after nearly 48 years of marital bliss, if she knows anything about me, my needs, my habits and especially my nose, if tissues are not the absolute last thing she need remind me about, it's certainly in the top five. Aside from inheriting whatever my late father had, which caused him to carry a handkerchief with him at all times, I've had years of infusion chemotherapy (there are pills now, depending). And if infused chemotherapy does anything, a side effect is thinning out the membranes in your nose (which often results in nose bleeds which can be so severe in some patients, treatments have to be stopped). Or if you're lucky, you don't experience nose bleeds, you experience a runny nose that's impossible to catch. As a direct result, I have boxes of tissues in nearly every room in the house and in both of our cars. Aside from needing to know where the closest bathroom is when we travel, I'm carrying tissues with me as well. I am forever finding balled up tissues in all of my pants' pockets where one would typically find coins and such. In fact, I might say, if coerced, that tissues (my need for them, actually) is the bane of my existence. I don't leave the house without knowing/preparing my tissue/runny nose options.

To that end, I know every minute of every day exactly what my in-house tissue inventory is. Now I'm not counting the numbers of individual tissues I have remaining and calculating how longer before I'll need to replenish the stock. However, I am fully aware of how many boxes I have in reserve. And if I should have any doubt or need for assurance; I only need to open the closet door in our mudroom; that's where we keep our supply of paper products. For Dina to ask/tell me - out of the goodness of her heart, our tissue situation is almost grounds for divorce. To ask/tell me that question/comment after nearly 50 years of cohabitating, is to completely fail at the presumptive/familiarity with your husband's basic needs. I mean really! "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues in the closet?" Well intended, unselfish, considerate, but nonetheless exhibiting a level of cluelessness about your husband that I didn't think was possible. I am either blowing my nose or needing a tissue to do so or buying them at the supermarket. I'm a "tissueoholic." And Dina is my sponsor, so to speak.

It's not exactly the elephant in the room, but if you were in a room with an elephant, you'd know it. And Dina has been with me in many rooms - and cars, public conveyances, et cetera, for nearly half a century now when I've been blowing my nose, during which oddly enough I've been told that I sound like an elephant when they "trumpet."

And finally, to add insult to injury, I do all the shopping, review all the circulars, click all the appropriate digital coupons - with a particular interest in tissues, among other paper products. As such, that there's simply no way I wouldn't know or hadn't planned their purchase (so I would never run out) way before Dina might notice their dwindling supply or ever feel the need to say to me what she said to me earlier that day. "Are you talking to me?"

"Are you kidding?"

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

Solar Shines on the Lorton Landfill

These 12,000 solar panels will provide 5% of all electricity used in county facilities.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Under a bright morning sun, celebrants gathered at the I-95/Lorton landfill on May 28 to cut a green ribbon on the first solar array in Virginia built on a closed landfill, 12,000 solar panels stretching across 37 grassy acres.

After over a week of rain, the breezy, sunny day at 75 degrees prompted Congressman James Walkinshaw to dub the sun “symbolic” of the event. “The progress of our clean energy journey continues,” he told the gathering. “The project will pay dividends for decades to come.”

Saying, “You are all standing on old trash,” the county’s project manager Eric Forbes explained that this landfill section stopped taking household wastes and closed in 1995 and the solar project started in 2015 with a feasibility study. The energy produced will go to Dominion Energy and be credited back to the county, bringing at least \$12 million in county savings over 30 years, officials predict.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck credited the late Board of Supervisors Chairman and Congressman Gerry Connolly, Storck’s predecessor the late Gerry Hyland, state legislators and the South County Federation for their environmental vision. He said that the county has a goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 for all county operations and 2050 for the entire community. “Harnessing energy from the sun is a smart use of public land,” Storck said.

Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchik quipped, “I only come to Lorton when there’s something really cool,” applauding the staffers, advocates and elected officials for this “incredible project,” adding, “We want more of this.”

John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination, said the project, the fourteenth solar project on county facilities, will produce five percent of all electricity used in county facilities, excluding the schools. “There are more solar projects in the pipeline,” he reported.

The landfill project will generate enough electricity equivalent to powering around 1,000 homes a year and will reduce an estimated 136,000 metric tons of carbon emissions.

The project required approval of the Virginia General Assembly and former Delegate Mark Keam said it took three years to pass the



Congressman James Walkinshaw helped make the project a reality as the Braddock district member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik sees it as “an incredible project.”

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Officials had large “gold” scissors to cut a green ribbon: Left to right, Supervisor Dalia Palchik, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, Supervisor Dan Storck, Will Davis, the landfill’s manager.



Congressman James Walkinshaw, Supervisor Dan Storck and landfill manager Will Davis gladly cut the ribbon.



Supervisor Dan Storck inspected one of the solar panels to learn how it works.



Mike Fahey with Madison Energy Infrastructure built the solar installations on the closed portion of the landfill.

bill which he carried. “This is an example of the way government is supposed to function,” he said, “Identify a problem, come together and find a solution. The lesson is that local, state and federal governments can work together.”

Susan Stillman with the Sierra Club said she lobbied legislators in Richmond to support the bill. “This is setting an example for the rest of the state,” she contended.

“Every cell of every panel produces electricity,” Mike Fahey explained. Fahey is with Madison Energy Infrastructure (MEI), the county’s partner, which has built 155 projects in 28 states. He predicts the panels will have a 30- to 40-year useful life and in 20 years will produce even more energy because of expected advances in the technology and battery storage.

Managers will plant a native

plant meadow seed mix under the panels, Forbes said. Today there’s a mix of tall fescue and other plants around and under the panels.

Local advocates trumpeted the project. “The wheels of government turn slowly,” said Scott Peterson, “but Fairfax County is a leader in efforts to address the climate crisis and we’re very proud of the progress they have made.” Peterson chairs the Board of Directors

of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.

As cabbage white butterflies flitted about, red-winged blackbirds glided by, crows called overhead and tall fescue grasses swayed in the breeze, attendees were reminded of nature’s resiliency, even amid 12 acres of high tech solar installations on a garbage dump and a steady stream of dump trucks rumbling in depositing life’s detritus.