

# CONNECTION

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OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The Lamb Center Executive Director Tara Ruskowski points out where the second-floor balcony will be at Beacon Landing in Fairfax City, soon to include 54 apartments that will house people now experiencing homelessness.

## Solving Homelessness with Housing

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JUNE 18 - JULY 1, 2026

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## BULLETIN

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email [calendar@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto: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 Vulnera-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

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# 'You're Loved, You're Safe, We're Here for You'

Beacon Landing – a real home for unhoused disabled people through The Lamb Center.



From left are Kamilah McAfee, Chuck Leftridge and Tara Ruskowski.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Posing together are personnel from The Lamb Center, Wesley Housing and the construction team, plus invited guests.



Wendy Baird speaks to tour participants in the kitchen area.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**earing hard hats, bright neon vests and protective goggles, board members of The Lamb Center and invited guests toured the first two floors of Beacon Landing in Fairfax City. They saw its wooden framework of apartments, offices and community kitchen under construction.

But TLC Development Director Wendy Baird got right to the heart of the matter. Pointing at one of the apartments, she proudly told the visitors, "This is going to be somebody's home."

And that's what it's all about. A project of TLC and Wesley Housing, Beacon Landing will be a five-story apartment building providing 54 homeless people with a place to live. It'll serve those most vulnerable, marginalized and at-risk, especially the elderly and those with disabilities.

The tour happened Wednesday, June 10, in coordination with a topping-off celebration at the site. In construction, this event signifies the milestone when the final beam,

or topmost structural element, is placed at the highest point of a building. And in this case, it also marked the imminent installation of Beacon Landing's roof.

At the outset, TLC Executive Director Tara Ruskowski told attendees and construction workers alike, "The Lamb Center started this project, but we never would have gotten it off the ground without some incredible people who are here right now. We brought this building all the way up to the topping-off, and that's an important benchmark in this whole journey."

"This is also a huge thank-you to the onsite construction team that's bringing this project to life. It's going to be transformational for our community. But none of this would have happened without Chuck Leftridge. He's the lead superintendent with Harkins Builders and the conductor of this whole 'orchestra.'"

Ruskowski also acknowledged Kamilah McAfee, president and CEO of Wesley Housing, telling her, "We could not be more grateful. Wesley brought this together; you're the most incredible devel-



Some of the construction workers who are making this building a reality for The Lamb Center.

oper/partner we could have ever asked for, and you brought Harkins in as the construction team."

And while pleased to be building this structure, Leftridge admitted that the harsh winter had caused his workers some serious problems. "It's been a struggle," he said. "We had one of the toughest winters in quite a while, but we're here. We're working on the roof now so, in a few short months,

we'll be walking the units and getting things turned over."

Praising the hard work of his project manager and design team, Leftridge said, "These guys gave us what we needed to get things done, and they continue working with us, every single day, to answer questions and figure things out. And we couldn't do half of what we've done without the communication we have with [The

Lamb Center]. It's all greatly appreciated."

McAfee acknowledged her team members, as well. She then said, "We give all credit to The Lamb Center and its vision for bringing this beacon of hope into its community. We wanted the right team so we could get this done in the right timeframe."

SEE 'YOU'RE LOVED'. PAGE 10



Seventeen seniors from local high schools were awarded Education Partnership Scholarships from the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce, reflecting a long-standing commitment to education, workforce development and the future of the community.

## Chamber Awards 17 Scholarships to Local Students

Seventeen scholarships were awarded to local high school students by the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce to recognize outstanding achievement by graduating seniors planning to continue their education and pursue careers in business and related fields.

At a reception hosted by the Army Historical Foundation and GEN Burt Thompson (Retired), Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Franconia District, encouraged the scholarship recipients to be open to new opportunities giving examples from his life of how an unexpected invitation or opportunity made a big difference.

The Chamber's 2026 Business Scholars are: Ethan Santos and Kate Hood, Mount Vernon High School; Nicole Cousins and James Song, South County High School;

Andrew Binetti, Lucy Little, Nathan Roeschlein, and Mason Brown, Thomas A. Edison High School; Gavin Clarke and Manas Puri, Lake Braddock Secondary School; Melina Teklu, Christian Sadek, and Aadi Mathur, West Springfield High School; Brooklynn Jones and Preston Simpson, Hayfield Secondary School; Henry Lang, West Potomac High School; Landon Koch, Bishop Ireton High School.

Scholarships were made possible through the generous support of local businesses and organizations, including Andrews Federal Credit Union, AHEAD Technology Consulting, Cisco, Nutanix, Ourisman Automotive Group, Reworld Fairfax, and Star City Grain Storage, as well as funds raised through the annual Chamber Golf Classic.

The Chamber established the

Mount Vernon Springfield Education Partnership, a 501(c)(3) organization, to support local students pursuing higher education. Members of the Education Partnership Board of Directors are Roberta Tinch, Inova Health Systems; Michael Bennett, Ourisman; George Ksenics, Andrews Federal Credit Union; Karen Corbett Sanders; Mike Murphy, Knights of Columbus; Marissa Eyon, FASTSIGNS Springfield; Kathleen Lugarich, Army Historical Foundation; Mark Viani, Bean, Kinney & Korman PC.

Since 1998, the Chamber and Education Partnership have awarded more than \$402,500 in scholarships, reflecting a longstanding commitment to education, workforce development, and the future of the Mount Vernon and Springfield communities.



Supervisor Lusk and Robert MV-2026 Scholarships V2.jpg present a scholarship to Mason Brown. Lusk encouraged scholarship recipients to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

## E-Bikes Are Here E-bikes are popular, can be dangerous.

BY MIKE SALMON  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Bicyclists do face a number of challenges on the Fairfax County bike trail network but when an e-bike comes flying by at relatively high speeds the danger elevates. In late May, the Fairfax County Police Department was on the scene of a crash involving a vehicle and an e-bike at Cedar Lane and Electric Avenue in Dunn Loring. The adult male cyclist was taken to a local hospital in life-threatening con-



At Strictly E-Bikes in Old Town, the mental benefits of riding e-bikes is stressed.

dition.

Fairfax County is aware that the speedy e-bikes are out there and

recently posted a set of rules and recommendations titled "E-Bikes Gain Speed — Here's What to Know

Sharing the Road." There are more e-bikes out on the roads and trails these days, so the rules focus on

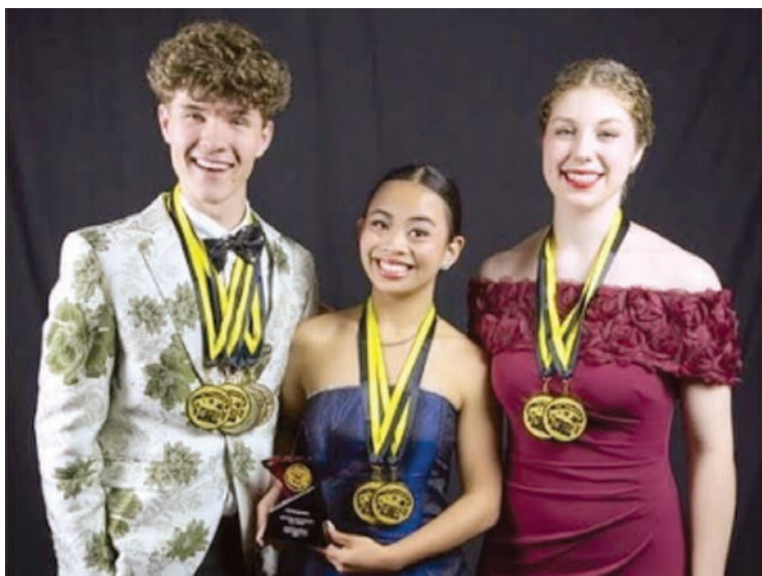
speeds, yielding and sharing the spaces.

In Virginia, there are three classes of e-bike and for Class 3, the pedal assisted e-bike that goes up to 28 miles per hour, the rider must be at least 14 years old and must wear a helmet.

The county says that e-bikes are generally allowed anywhere traditional bikes are permitted unless signs say otherwise. In most areas, that includes sidewalks.

The Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling recently published  
SEE E-BIKES, PAGE 6

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CAPPIES

Fairfax High wins award for Choreography – (from left) Nate Smith, Naomi Bautista and Libby Hansen.

## Fairfax High Wins Two Cappies Awards

**C**ongratulations to Fairfax High and Theater Director Chris Whitney for winning two Cappies awards for their musical, “Something Rotten!” Nate Smith was honored as Dancer in

a Male Role, and he plus Naomi Bautista and Libby Hansen won for Choreography. The Cappies Gala was held June 7 at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Fairfax High wins award for Dancer in a Male Role – Nate Smith.

### BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

bility 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](mailto:contact@scmafc.org).

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**VDOT** Virginia Department of Transportation

### 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
Loudoun	11235	663	DOWNEY MILL ROAD	TRIB. CATOCTIN CREEK	5/27/2026
Smyth	17619	639N	SULPHUR SPRINGS ROAD	BRANCH	5/13/2026
Grayson	8733	58	HIGHLANDS PARKWAY	CABIN CREEK	5/6/2026

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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov).*

# Fairfax County Voters Head Back to Ballot Box

Early voting begins Thursday, June 18; quick guide to the Aug. 4 dual primary election.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Department of Elections has requested a primary election to nominate Democratic and Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and local offices. Because Virginia holds open primaries, voters may choose either a Democratic or a Republican ballot, but not both.

Early in-person voting for the Aug. 4 dual primary begins Thursday, June 18, a day earlier than the standard 45-day window because state offices are closed Friday, June 19, in observance of Juneteenth.

Depending on where they live, Fairfax County voters are split among Virginia's 8th, 10th and 11th Congressional Districts.

## Key Dates, Locations and Deadlines

Early in-person voting runs from June 18 through Aug. 1. Any registered Fairfax County voter may vote early at any county early voting location. Locations and hours vary throughout the voting period. Voters must present a Virginia driver's license, U.S. passport, or another acceptable form of identification, or be prepared to sign an ID confirmation statement.

### Locations Opening June 18:

- ❖ Fairfax County Government Center (12000 Government Center Pkwy.): Open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

A multilingual early voting sign marks the start of in-person early voting for the Aug. 4 dual primary election on Thursday, June 18.

- ❖ Mount Vernon Governmental Center (2511 Parkers Lane) & North County Governmental Center (1801 Cameron Glen Drive): Open weekdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- ❖ Weekend Hours (All three sites): Open Saturdays, July 25 and Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sundays.

- ❖ Holiday Closures: All locations will be closed June 19 and

July 3.

### Locations Opening July 22:

Thirteen additional satellite locations (including regional libraries such as Burke Centre, Centreville, Great Falls, Herndon Fortnightly and Tysons-Pimmit) will open for voting. These sites operate on weekdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturdays, July 25 and Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The deadline to register to vote or request a mail ballot is July 24 at 5 p.m. Same-day provisional registration is available after this date.

Location on Election Day, Aug. 4: Voters must vote at their assigned precinct polling place, which will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### What Is on the Ballot?

Only offices with more than one qualified candidate will appear on a primary ballot. Voters can verify their specific congressional district, registration status and assigned Election Day polling place online at [elections.virginia.gov](https://elections.virginia.gov).

### Democratic Primary Ballots:

- ❖ 8th Congressional District: Features a five-way primary race among Mo Seifeldein, Michael Christian Duffin, incumbent Donald S. Beyer Jr., Adam M. Dunigan and Lorena Thorne Bruner.

- ❖ 10th and 11th Congressional Districts: No Democratic primary elections are being held.

### Republican Primary Ballots:

- ❖ 8th Congressional District:

Features a three-way statewide primary race for the U.S. Senate among Bert Mizusawa, Kim Farington and David E. Williams. There is no House primary.

- ❖ 10th Congressional District: Features a primary race for both the U.S. Senate (Mizusawa, Farington, Williams) and a four-way race for the U.S. House of Representatives among Dave Beckwith, Julie Perry, Anthony Suttles and Sam Wong.

- ❖ 11th Congressional District: Features a three-way statewide primary race for the U.S. Senate among Bert Mizusawa, Kim Farington and David E. Williams. There is no House primary.

### Voting by Mail

Any registered voter can request a mail ballot without an excuse, but the application must specify which party ballot for processing. The deadline to request a mail ballot for the Aug. 4 primary is 5 p.m. July 24.

Mail returns must be post-marked by Aug. 4 and received by noon on Aug. 7. Secure drop boxes are available 24 hours a day outside the Fairfax County Government Center, at any early voting site during voting hours, or at polling places on Election Day before 7 p.m.

Voters can learn more about how to request a mail ballot, track its status, or view a full list of community drop boxes by visiting the county's official website at [Fairfax County Elections](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/). <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>

## E-bikes Are Popular, Can Be Dangerous

FROM PAGE 4

a blog post "Safe Trails for All: Responsible E-Bike Use Matters," that is full of safety recommendations for all. Their focus reports of reckless operation of high-speed e-bikes on local trails and shared-use paths.

Although FABB credits e-bikes for replacing car trips for some riders and enabling a wider range of people to ride that may be limited on a regular bike because of age or physical limitations, they also point out that e-bikes are linked to an increase in injuries too. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeon Brian R. Waterman, MD, "the risk of fractures, dislocations and head trauma increases as e-bike usage becomes more popular. The best protection starts with awareness,

proper protection and responsible riding."

On the trails and streets of Alexandria, e-bikes have a prominent place. Handy Bikes in Alexandria sells e-bikes as well as regular bicycles, but they do have a page on safety that includes a section on e-bike safety. One part focuses on traffic and pedestrians, while the "Take Care With Speed," section reminds riders of the new speeds associated with e-bikes. "Caution is key," it says.

Russell Cestone at Handy Bikes knows the speeds of e-bikes are an issue and when the cyclists aren't following the rules, it can "give a bad name to e-bikes he said.

In Alexandria, Handy Bikes sees all kinds of riders opting for the e-bike.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

In Alexandria, Handy Bikes sees all kinds of riders opting for the e-bike.

# NEWS

## George D. Thomas To Head FCEDA

The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Commission named George D. Thomas as its next President and Chief Executive Officer.

Thomas brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across economic development, technology, infrastructure, investment attraction, workforce development, and public-private partnerships. His appointment comes at a pivotal moment.

“George Thomas represents the next generation of economic development leadership,” said FCEDA Commission Chair James Quigley.

Thomas’s selection reflects Fairfax County’s commitment to leading the industries expected to drive future economic growth, including artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, national defense, advanced computing and space commercialization.

As President and CEO of Connected DMV,



George D. Thomas

Thomas built a globally recognized innovation organization, growing it from a volunteer coalition into a multi-million-dollar enterprise building next generation industry clusters to advance global competitiveness.

Before leading Connected DMV, Thomas served as a Partner at IBM and held senior roles at leading global firms, directing transformative initiatives in technology commercialization, smart cities, infrastructure modernization, economic development and industry cluster formation.

“Fairfax County stands at the center of extraordinary economic and technological change,” Thomas said. “Advances in artificial intelligence, quantum, energy, aerospace, defense, national security, and other key industries are creating new opportunities for innovation, investment, and growth.”

Thomas will begin his tenure in August. He succeeds FCEDA President and CEO Victor Hoskins, who departs after nearly seven years.

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Residents learn about options for Lake Accotink at a June 6 meeting.

# What Will Become of Lake Accotink?

BY PAUL GILBERT

One of Fairfax County's most beloved parks is at a crossroads — and the County wants your input.

Lake Accotink draws 250,000 visitors a year. Along with Burke Lake and Lake Fairfax, it is one of three lakefront parks that serve as the anchor attractions of the Fairfax County Park Authority system. Think of them as the anchor stores in a shopping mall — the big draws that are central to the system.

The lake has been slowly filling with silt (dirt) from upstream runoff for decades. It was dredged in 1967, 1985 and 2008. It needs dredging again.

That is not a crisis — maintenance is the cost of ownership. In 2018 there was a proposal by the County to get rid of the lake to save money. That sparked the creation of Save Lake Accotink, a local advocacy group.

## How the Costs Spiraled

In 2019, dredging was estimated at \$30.5 million. By 2023, that figure had ballooned to \$95 million. The 2023 estimate had a \$395 million price tag for 25 years. The \$395 million is based on dredging every five years, which is not a great assumption considering in the past it has needed this about every 20 years. Two things drove up the costs of the current need.

First, the volume of sediment to be removed grew from 350,000 to 500,000 cubic yards — a 43% jump.

The higher number simply gives



Paul Gilbert receives the Pugsley Medal for parkland conservation in 2025.



Paul Gilbert at age 12 getting ready to go to Lake Accotink.

you a deeper lake, which is not the primary need. Second, and more damaging, Dominion Power refused to allow the County to use the Wakefield Park power line easement to dry the dredged material before trucking it away. That had been the cornerstone of the affordable plan. Dominion refused to be inconvenienced, and that is costing you and me.

## Where Things Stand

Rather than give up, James Walkinshaw (then Braddock Supervisor) convened a task force that produced a workable path forward: preserve a smaller lake

— 40, 30, or 20 acres. Hundreds of residents turned out this month to a June 6th open house to learn about the options, joined by Supervisors Heizer and Lusk, and Congressman Walkinshaw.

My view: hold out for 40 acres. The smaller options cost less but give up too much. A 20-acre lake is not Lake Accotink — it is a pond. We need to take the long view, and realize that having lake parks is one of the great assets of Fairfax County.

I grew up in Springfield. I biked around that lake as a kid and sailed it in a boat I bought with lawn-mowing money. Lake Ac-

cotink is part of who we are. Tell your County leaders you want a 40-acre lake similar to the one we have enjoyed for decades.

Paul Gilbert served as Executive Director of NOVA Parks for 20 years and received the nation's highest conservation award in 2025. He lives blocks from Lake Accotink, and recreated at the lake since he was a child.

For more information: [engage.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://engage.fairfaxcounty.gov)

Information on Save Lake Accotink: [savelakeaccotink.org](http://savelakeaccotink.org)

# Bamford Receives Hometown Hero Award

**“We have sextortion victims all through Northern Virginia regardless of class.”**

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION

**A**rlington County Police Department Detective John Bamford received a Hometown Hero Award from the U.S. Department of Justice on May 22 for his recent efforts resulting in the identification and takedown of a notorious cybercriminal forum in South Africa. Its administrators, who were arrested, sold thousands of illicit images in the United States and elsewhere. The investigation recovered approximately 10 million images of sexually explicit material depicting minors from electronic devices.

The Hometown Hero Award is sponsored by the Department of Justice in honor of the United States of America’s 250th year of celebrating its independence.

“This award recognizes one of the law enforcement officers who best embodies the spirit upon which our Nation was founded and reflects a steadfast commitment to the enduring ideals of liberty, service and civic responsibility.” Detective Bamford’s efforts have resulted in the identification and rescue of hundreds of child and adult victims of illicit images.

Bamford says the best part of the day was when his three kids got to see it. “To see their pride means everything. They think I do something important and I’m not just a guy talking on the phone.”

Bamford now works as an ACPD detective and is concurrently serving as an FBI Task Force officer with the Washington D.C. Field Office.

“The most difficult thing about the Task Force work is the difference between my job on the ACPD with a lot of day to day interaction and the FBI work which is mostly

on the phone. “Jumping over to the Federal side, it doesn’t exist in the same way. Since a lot of my work is on the phone, I am rarely face to face so I have to keep myself grounded to keep the victim first and the bad guy second and protect the community.”

Bamford says he always knew he wanted to be in law enforcement. “My grandmother was one of three female cops in the history of Lowell, Massachusetts.” In addition, his father is in the FBI, and his two little brothers are a Boston cop and FBI.

“I was in law school in 2006 waiting tables and attending school at night. One day in 2008 I was talking to mom, and she saw that the ACPD was advertising for police. So I took the test, and they hired me and I worked for ACPD in 2008-2010 while I was finishing law school.”

## Different in Northern Virginia?

“I do think we live in a cocoon in Northern Virginia. This results in some blinding. We have sextortion victims all through Northern Virginia regardless of class. It is not a geographically based problem. Every middle school and high school has these issues. Blackmail of non-consensual images or sextortion is so common because we all have cellular phones.

It doesn’t matter who you are. It’s so easy to find a message platform where there is no visibility to catch these guys.

“My kids are the same age as these victims.” Bamford says he knows it’s important for your kids to know they can come to you. “Sextortion can be psychologically and emotionally damaging.” Bamford says he gives every victim his cell phone and tells them they can call him day or night. “Sometimes they just call to tell me they got a



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Keim, Assistant U.S. Attorney April Russo, Detective John Bamford, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Frank Bradsher, and Criminal Chief Seth Schlessinger.

pizza last night. It’s not important; they just need to know they have a contact.

“The perpetrators do this all day and have perfected the craft of manipulation. They prey on the insecurity of kids and the desire to be complimented. It can start very benign. ‘Young lady, would you be interested in modeling? I could pay you for it.’

“It goes on. ‘Would you like to model in a swimming suit?’ Then ‘in your underwear?’ As it progresses, some victims say ‘This is too far.’ But the victim couldn’t have

understood what was happening and needed help to get out.”

But then Bamford says the blackmail begins to keep the girls, or sometimes boys, providing the pictures. “We will send the pictures to your family or your boyfriend.” Bamford says the perpetrator’s threats to release the photos causes the victims to do anything in the moment. “They are afraid this will ruin their lives.”

Bamford says the motives of the suspect can range from keeping the pictures for personal pleasure, using them to trade with others for

similar content of different victims or to further victimize through subsequent extortions.

Ashley Savage, ACPD Communications Manager, says the Arlington statistics on Extortion/Blackmail which includes Sextortion have been climbing in recent years. But the number for 2025 decreased.

## Extortion/Blackmail

Number of Cases	
2023	95
2024	159
2024	84

# Fall for the Book in Spring and Summer Too

**Authors, audience engage in 20 minute Story Sprint.**

BY EDEN BROWN  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**F**all for the Book isn’t just for the Fall. Its Spring events, like “Story Sprint!” are fun, and this week’s on-line events hit home in a time when nothing is sure. It’s also Kate Quinn, an exciting author who was the Spring

Headliner for the Fall for the Book festival on April 30, 2026, in Fairfax. Quinn writes compelling historical fiction like “The Rose Code” and The Diamond Eye. She dis-

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN  
**One of the books by Megan Howell, “Softie,” promised to be a great read.**



cussed her writing, including her first into magical realism in her new novel, “The Astral Library and her other new novels. This prolific author holds attention and combines great historical detail.

Story Sprint is fun because three authors are given the first and last lines of a story they have twenty minutes to write. The audience has picked the first and last lines, submitting extremely random suggestions on-line and in person, completely unrelated things, like, “the minute she saw the house

she started running,” or “I knew I should have made a blueberry pie.”

The Story Sprint on March 26 featured emcee and author Zach Powers who pulled the two audience-suggested sentences from a hat and cheered on his three authors to write impromptu tales. Featured sprinters Hannah Grieco, author of “First Kicking,” Then Not, Megan Howell, author of

SEE FALL FOR THE BOOK, PAGE 15



From left, Tara Ruskowski speaks with Lamb Center friend Cyndi Hoffman in the telehealth area.



The Lamb Center Development Manager Debbi Tinkham stands in the reception area.

# ‘You’re Loved, You’re Safe, We’re Here for You’

FROM PAGE 3

All those attending, including the construction workers, then enjoyed a barbecue meal together. Several people also took guided tours of the building to see its progress.

Showing where the expansion of TLC’s workforce-development program will be, Ruskowski said, “This is something we really feel called to do for our community.” Via this program, Lamb Center guests have been able to learn specialized skills and earn some money working for both Fairfax City’s Parks and Rec and Public Works departments. Indeed, it’s proven so successful that some of them also do similar work for Fairfax County.

To increase opportunities for TLC’s guests, Ruskowski said they could work in, for example, food services, lawn care and various trades, including those in the construction field. “We’re starting to have those conversations right

now to figure out where is that intersection between employer interest and skills appropriate for our community to do,” she explained.

“So that’s what’s next – to really pour our energy, time and creativity into that and to bring in the correct partnerships. It’ll be challenging, but it’s important to find employer partners that really want to invest in human services, as well, and not just churn through lower-skilled workers. We want to create sustainable opportunities so our folks can step up and move forward.”

Ruskowski then took the visitors to the second floor and pointed out the reception area and offices for the Beacon Landing residents’ case management. And just down the hall will be a telehealth suite so case managers may easily obtain their healthcare information.

Ruskowski called it “an exciting part of the case management here. When our folks move in – just to

qualify to live in this community – they must have a disability and have also been experiencing chronic homelessness. The people moving in here are really going to be super vulnerable, and the way to ensure their health and success is to provide lots of care. And so we’ll have 24-hour care in the building; at all times, there’ll always be at least two staff members on site.”

Besides TLC staff, volunteers from The Lamb Center’s faith-community partners will also come to Beacon Landing to provide fun and interesting opportunities for the residents. “They’re planning cooking classes, pizza nights and game nights,” said Ruskowski. She then showed the visitors the community space being created for activities such as these.

She said bookshelves could be added for a small library and reading nook, and people could also sit there and have quiet conversations

with each other. There’s also a balcony off that room that’ll have a 6-foot-high screen providing privacy for both the residents and their neighbors, while enabling them to spend a little time outside. “We designed it to be elevated because we wanted them to have outdoor space without milling around on the street,” said Ruskowski. “That was important to our neighbors.”

Next, she showed everyone the demonstration kitchen. Although each unit will have its own kitchen, she explained that “When you’re coming in off the street, you might not know how to cook or even use utensils properly.” She then shared a story of a formerly unhoused person who finally moved into a home and was excited to cook in his own kitchen. But when he tried cooking meat in a pan, he burned both it and the pan because he didn’t know he was supposed to add oil to prevent sticking.

So in the demonstration kitchen,

the residents will learn some basic cooking skills. “Some of these things that we take for granted might be new for our guests,” said Ruskowski. “It’s one thing to house people and put a roof over their heads, but then there’s dealing with the trauma they’ve experienced and [figuring out] what do they need to know to acclimate into the community to live in a healthy way.

“When people first start moving in, we’ll be doing lots of social gatherings. And first of all, we’ll say, ‘Welcome; you’re loved, you’re safe, we’re here for you, and this is your home.’ So we hope that having this community kitchen where they can take classes together and enjoy themselves will make them feel like they’re OK.”

Wendy Baird then let the tour participants see the apartments being built. “When you have 54 people who’ve been living in the woods for a year, they have a lot to learn,” she said. “So a big part



Wendy Baird discussing the windows in this future one-bedroom apartment.



Tara Ruskowski points out where the second-floor balcony will be.

# 'You're Loved, You're Safe, We're Here for You'



From left Tara Ruszkowski speaks to Lamb Center friends Cyndi and Thomas Hoffman in the future kitchen.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

FROM PAGE 10

of making this project work is hiring capable case managers able to build trusting relationships and guide people through what it means to live in housing.

"One of our former guests who's been recently housed said, 'You just live with this fear that somebody's going to come knock on your door and say, get out. But when you move into [permanent] housing, your body lets go and you start sleeping.' So we're mindful of all the supports we need to provide to help folks transition."

Baird said each apartment will have its own bathroom, kitchen, closet and small workspace, and each resident will be given a twin bed, dresser, desk and chair, love-seat and TV. "The units aren't large – just 450 square feet," she said. "But it's home and it'll be theirs."

"The light from the windows is beautiful, and people can get their own fresh air. It's not a shelter, but permanent supportive housing. For rent, residents will pay either 30 percent of their disability income or \$50 a month. Construction began in October, and it's fun to see it all take shape."

Leftridge, of Harkins Builders, said about 100 people daily are on site working, including workers with Belfast Concrete, G.T. Electric, Madison Mechanical, Penguin Mechanical, Washington Sprinkler, J&F Contracting and Triple One Contracting.

"Winter slowed us down and stopped us, on occasion, with frost and snow," said Leftridge. "You can't pour concrete in freezing temperatures." Now, though, he's looking forward to the project's completion. "This is why we build – to put roofs over people's heads,"

he said. "We do a lot of lower-income housing, and that always feels good."

"We have a dream team working on this building," added Ruszkowski. "Harkins has been an exceptional partner, every step of the process, as have all the people working on this site every day. Harkins is determined to deliver this beautiful building on time, and maybe even ahead of schedule, so we can welcome people home for the holidays."

"We're over the moon about this project, and we're grateful for the community that's come around and supported us. The right people have been involved at the right time to make this all possible."



Beacon Landing is on Campbell Drive, a block from TLC's daytime, drop-in shelter for the homeless. The project developer, Wesley Housing, will manage the



Tara Ruszkowski approaches the case-management offices.

property. There'll be 42 efficiency units (350 square feet each); 10, one-bedroom; and two, two-bedroom for residents needing caregivers. And 15 percent will be ADA-compliant.

The supportive services residents will receive services that will

help them stay in and maintain their homes, find employment/income, and address their physical- and behavioral-health needs. When finished, this \$33.1 million development will be the largest permanent supportive housing facility in Northern Virginia.



Artist's rendition of the completed Lamb Center Beacon Landing in Fairfax City.

# 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.

## 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.

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.

### JUNE 18-AUGUST 27

**Summer Concert Series. 7-8 p.m.** At National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle. The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation invites the public to enjoy the 2026 Summer Concert Series at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. From June through August, audiences can experience six free, family-friendly evenings featuring premier U.S. military ensembles representing the Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Air Force. Concerts are held on the Museum's entry plaza. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or picnic blankets. Admission and parking are free and open to the public. The Museum, Tun Tavern, and Museum Store will remain open until 6:45 p.m. on concert evenings. Visit the website: <https://www.marineheritage.org/ConcertSchedule>:

- ❖ June 18, 7 p.m. – U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters
- ❖ July 2, 7 p.m. – U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps & U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps
- ❖ July 30, 7 p.m. – U.S. Air Force Band Airmen of Note
- ❖ August 20, 7 p.m. – U.S. Navy Concert Band
- ❖ August 27, 7 p.m. – “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band

### 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

Juneteenth Celebration at Sully Historic Site

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



**A Summer Concert Series takes place at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle starting June 18 to August 27.**



**Remembering the Revolution can be seen on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at the National Museum of the U.S. Army in Fort Belvoir.**

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



**Connections That Bind, Art & Friendship can be seen June 22 to July 19, 2026 at JoAnn Rose Gallery in Reston.**

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

# ENTERTAINMENT

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, 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.

## JUNE 4-28

**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: Tickets: \$25-\$55 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at [www.1ststage.org](http://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 17: Vienna Moms Inc. presents Rocknocerous - 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](http://www.viennava.gov/summeronthegreen).

## 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.

## JUNE 13 TO JULY 5

**Revelations Art Exhibition.** At [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)



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

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.

## JUNE 13 - JULY 13

**Vienna Liberty Amendments Month.** Town of Vienna's 6th Liberty Amendments Month festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2026, with the 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. See full month's calendar here: [https://www.viennava.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/parks-and-rec/pdfs/lam/2026-vienna-lam-bro-](https://www.viennava.gov/files/assets/town/v/1/parks-and-rec/pdfs/lam/2026-vienna-lam-brochure.pdf)

chure.pdf

## 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: Kaziville (hot dogs), Ned's New England Deck and Bruster's of Alexandria



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

## WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 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 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

## FRIDAY/JUNE 19

**Aquapoolooza (pool party). 3-6 p.m.** At Lake Newport Pool, Reston, Free/RA Members & RecPass holders. \$25/Non RecPass holders (free for kids under 3). All are asked to pre-register as space is limited.

## 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](http://www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXS-RR.703-425-9225](http://www.facebook.com/FFXS-RR.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 to enjoy relaxed, friendly ping pong or 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.

## JUNE 22 TO JULY 19

**Connections That Bind, Art & Friendship.** At JoAnn Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza North, Reston. Receptions: June 28, 2-4 p.m. & closing reception July 19, 2-4 p.m. Sandra Dovberg is a longtime member of Reston Art Gallery and Studios. She is downsizing and offering a rare opportunity to acquire original work to grace your walls at reduced prices of 50% off label prices. Her paintings include a variety of mediums & collage materials emphasizing her constant awareness of color, line, shape, texture, memory and academic training. There will be seven other artists displaying: Pat Macintyre, Marthe McGrath, Cindy Grisdela, Jenn Duncan, Julia Malakoff, Rosemarie Forsythe and Doug Fuller.

## WEDNESDAY/JUNE 24

**Senior Movie Day. 10 a.m.** At the movie theater in Reston Town Center, Reston. Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day, sponsored by Friends of Reston. Join us on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie. June 24: Now You See Me, Now you

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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**NEWS**

# Free Event to Meet GMU's Sports Coaches

The public is invited to a free event celebrating George Mason University's coaches. It's called the Northern Virginia's Team Tour Coaches Caravan and will be held Saturday, June 27, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. in Fairfax.

This special evening brings together Mason Athletics coaches, staff, alumni, fans, donors, families and community members to enjoy a fun and interactive time for all ages. RSVP is required at [https://gomason.com/sb\\_output.aspx?form=296](https://gomason.com/sb_output.aspx?form=296).

Attendees will be able to meet and greet the Mason coaches and athletics leadership, and there'll be a coaches panel and question-and-answer session featuring updates, insights and stories from the university's athletics program.

Also slated are prizes, giveaways and Mason swag, plus interactive activities, as well as networking opportunities with fellow Patriots, community partners and local businesses.

Whether a longtime supporter, alumnus, season-ticket holder, parent, prospective student, or a fan simply looking to connect with the Mason community, this is the community's chance to engage with Northern Virginia's Team in a unique and exciting setting.

— BONNIE HOBBS Event poster.

**GEORGE MASON ATHLETICS** **OTFBA** **GEORGE MASON PATRIOT CLUB**

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S TEAM TOUR COACHES CARAVAN**

**JAY HOSACK** MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

**GREG PIECZYNSKI** GOLF

**SHAWN CAMP** BASEBALL

**JUSTIN WALKER** SOFTBALL

**ANDREW GERARD** TRACK & FIELD

**VANESSA BLAIR-LEWIS** WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

**OLD TOWN SQUARE PARK // 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**FREE ADMISSION**

**JUNE 27, 2026 // FAIRFAX**



# Pickleball Tournament Raises Funds for Alzheimer's Research

The 4th Annual NOVA Amateur Pickleball Tournament was held on May 30-31, 2026, bringing together players, volunteers, sponsors, and spectators from across Northern Virginia in support of Alzheimer's awareness and research.

The tournament began Saturday morning at Rolling Valley West Park before moving to OneLife Fitness in Burke, the event's host sponsor, for the remainder of the weekend.

Participants enjoyed lunch provided by Spartan's Family Restaurant and Dunya Kabob, whose support helped make the event a success.

A total of 53 players participated in the tournament, joined by family members, friends, and spectators who filled the courts throughout the weekend. Participants also contributed breakfast items to share, creating a welcoming com-

munity atmosphere. Each player received a mini portable speaker as a thank-you gift, and additional gift certificates donated by local businesses were awarded through random drawings.

Despite some breezy conditions, the weather cooperated after weeks of rain, and the tournament was filled with enthusiasm, friendly competition, and plenty of smiles.

Competition was held in two divisions. In the Beginner Division, Michele and Kyle Fletcher captured the championship by defeating Eileen Kwak and Sean Buckley in the finals. In the Intermediate Division, Al Graziano and John Rehberger claimed the title with a victory over Lindsay Kwane and Melissa Gezgc.

In addition to the tournament, a raffle featuring donations from local businesses and generous individuals helped raise additional

funds for the cause. Combined proceeds from tournament registrations, sponsorships, and raffle sales generated more than \$2,870, all of which has been donated to support Alzheimer's-related initiatives.

Tournament organizers extend their sincere appreciation to all participants, volunteers, sponsors, donors, and spectators whose support made the event possible. Plans are already underway for next year's tournament, with hopes of continuing to grow community involvement while supporting an important cause.

For many participants, the weekend was about more than competition. It was an opportunity to come together, enjoy the rapidly growing sport of pickleball, and make a meaningful difference in the fight against Alzheimer's disease.

Submitted by Susan Gurny, JD. Youssef Zeroual also contributed.

# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Don't  
July 22: After the Hunt

## THURSDAY/JUNE 25

**Lunch N' Life. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** At The United Baptist Church, 7100 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Shepherd's Center of Annandale Springfield Lunch N' Life sing-along of old-time summer songs with Bonnie Kendrick. To register, call 703-941-1419 by Tuesday, June 23rd. Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://shepherdscenter-annandale.org/lunch-n-life/>

## JUNE 26-28

**3rd Annual FXBG Tattoo Invitational.** At Fredericksburg Convention Center. This three-day celebration will unite some of the nation's most talented tattoo artists for a dynamic weekend of live tattooing, artistry, creativity, and community connection. The 2026 Invitational features artists representing 14 states and dozens of cities across the country.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 27

**Red, White and Boom. 4 to 9:30 p.m.** At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. This unforgettable experience promises an afternoon, and evening filled with fireworks, live music, entertainment, delicious food, and a family-friendly carnival-style midway.

What to Expect:

- Explosive Fireworks: Watch the sky light up with dazzling displays that will leave you in awe.
- ❖ Live Music & Entertainment: Groove to amazing performances that will keep the energy high.
- ❖ Delicious Food & Drinks: Savor mouth-watering treats from local vendors that will tantalize your taste buds.
- ❖ Family-Friendly Fun: Enjoy a carnival-style midway packed with activities for all ages.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 27

**Lake Fairfax 250th Independence Day Celebration. Noon to 10 p.m.** At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. As part of Experience Fairfax 250, the Fairfax County Park Authority, in partnership with the Fairfax County 250th Commission and the Fairfax County Park Foundation, will debut its first-ever drone light show. Instead of traditional fireworks, hundreds of synchronized drones will light up the night sky with music, motion and patriotic images that celebrate America's 250th anniversary and Fairfax County's role in our nation's story.

Event highlights include:

- Fairfax County Park Authority's first-ever drone light show.
- Live music from Reflex, Sonic Boom and School of Rock.
- Food trucks, drinks and family activities.
- Access to park amenities, including trails, fishing, picnicking and camping.
- Guests can also visit The Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole. Admission is sold separately.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 27

**495 Express Lanes Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail**

4.95K Fun Run and Ribbon Cutting.  
7-8 a.m. Fun Run/Walk Check-In  
8 a.m. Remarks & Ribbon Cutting  
8:30 a.m. 4.95K Fun Run/Walk  
9:15 a.m. Kids Race (10 & under)  
Free food, music & kids activities until 11 a.m.  
Face painting, balloon artists, crafts, treats and

more!

Location:  
495 Express Lanes Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail  
Georgetown Pike & Balls Hill Road, McLean  
(across from Cooper Middle School)  
Free Event Parking: Holy Trinity Church  
850 Balls Hill Rd, McLean, VA

## SATURDAY/JUNE 27

**Independence Day Fireworks Celebration.**  
5-10 p.m. At Langley High School, McLean. Witness a fabulous fireworks show with jammin' music, giveaways, food trucks, special US and VA 250th anniversary activities including the VA250 Mobile Museum, and free onsite and satellite parking with shuttles. Shuttles will run from Churchill Road Elementary School, St. Luke's School & Church, and McLean Community Center.

## MONDAY/JUNE 29

**"The American Revolution", Episode 1. At 6:30 p.m.** At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join on Monday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m. for a special screening of Episode 1 of Ken Burns' "The American Revolution," featuring a primer from a Revolutionary War scholar. Free admission; registration for general admission tickets is required.

## CLIFTON CELEBRATES

### 250 YEARS OF AMERICA!

Clifton is proud to join communities across the country in celebrating America's 250th anniversary! The CBA has decided to honor this moment with 2 new events in addition to the parade and picnic.

2hours50minutes of Live Entertainment | July 3rd at Harris Park at 5pm

To mark this historic milestone, we are hosting a special showcase at Harris Town Park featuring 2hours50minutes of local talent. Sign up to participate:

<https://forms.gle/j3u4r3oKRdnXm7Xt5>

Whether you are a musician, a poet, an actor, or a storyteller, we want you to help us bring the spirit of our nation's journey to life. Your performance doesn't have to be "patriotic" in the traditional sense—we are looking for anything inspired by the themes of history, community, and the American spirit. There will be a trivia contest as part of the entertainment. KIDS are encouraged to participate!!!

Parade & Picnic | July 4th at 4pm

Begin planning your float/marching group/band now. No registration in advance. Parade begins on Dell Ave at 4pm. The parade ends at Ayre Square with the pledge of allegiance. Picnic at Harris Park to follow. CBA will provide BBQ, beer, water station (bring your bottle to refill). There will be a dunk tank and lots of activities: watermelon eating contest, tug-o-war, egg toss. Please bring a side dish to share.

Clifton's 250th Book Club | July 5th at the barn at 1pm

Clifton's book clubs are invited to come together to discuss *We the Women: The Hidden Heroes Who Shaped America*. Individuals who are not in book clubs can also attend – look for others who want to form a new book club?

## SATURDAY/JULY 4

**July 4 Reading. 1-3 p.m.** At Historic Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Hwy., Lorton. As part of the America 250th Anniversary, the community is invited on Saturday, July 4 to a free public reading of the Declaration

of Independence at Historic Pohick Church by historical re-enactor, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Costa, portraying the Rev. Mr. Lee Massey, the Rector of Pohick Church in 1776. The reading will take place at 1:00 PM, with a reception and free docent tours of the colonial church of George Washington and George Mason following the presentation. Visit the website at [www.pohick.org](http://www.pohick.org).

## SATURDAY/JULY 4

**Herndon Fourth of July Celebration.** At Bready Park, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. This year's celebration takes on special significance as the Town of Herndon joins communities across the nation in commemorating America's 250th birthday. Residents and visitors are invited to gather for an evening of live entertainment, family-friendly activities, food, and one of the region's most anticipated fireworks displays. The celebration begins at 6:30 p.m. with family games, hands-on crafts for children, live music, and a variety of food and refreshments available for purchase. The evening will conclude with a spectacular fireworks display beginning at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Event Highlights:

- ❖ Family games and activities
- ❖ Kids crafts and hands-on fun
- ❖ Live music (performer to be announced)
- ❖ Food and refreshments available for purchase
- ❖ Fireworks display at 9:30 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY/JULY 8

**Battle Marks. 12-1 p.m.** At the National Museum of the United States Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. Explore the realities of wartime life and service through the lens of Soldier graffiti. Discover how their artwork offers an unfiltered window into the realities of wartime life and reflects broader themes of identity, resistance, and remembrance. Visit <https://www.thenmusa.org/public-programs/history-talks/>

## TUESDAY/JULY 14

**Remembering the Revolution. 12-1 p.m.** At National Museum of the U.S. Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. Arlington National Cemetery, the National Army Museum, and the National Park Service will come together to explore the many legacies of the American Revolution at Arlington National Cemetery. Visit the website: <https://www.thenmusa.org/public-programs/battle-briefs/>

## SATURDAY/JULY 25

**Summer Slugfest. 12-3 p.m.** At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5000 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Ellanor C. Lawrence Park Friends is proud to present the inaugural Summer Slugfest, a charity softball game uniting alumni from two legendary local youth sports organizations for an afternoon of friendly competition, community spirit, and charitable impact. The six-inning game features alumni players (ages 21 and over) from the Chantilly Youth Association (CYA) and the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) competing for the 2026 Slugfest Cup. The free public event will feature: An alumni softball game between former CYA and SYA players Food trucks featuring gourmet hot dogs and cool summer treats, Giveaways, merchandise, and a 50/50 raffle, Family fun and community engagement, Live on-field broadcast from CYA's The Sideline podcast

## Burton Won't Be "Worsen"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three and a half years since his birth, Burton is finally learnin'. After two-plus months of misbehaven' we finally hired a dog trainer to get us and Burton back on track. Certainly, after three dogs, we knew not just the basics, but the intermediates, maybe even some of the advanced. Nevertheless, his obstinate behavior made it quite clear that Burton was in control. However, since he would "Sit," usually "Stay," sometimes "Come," once-in-a-while "Shake," non-stop with alternating front paws, and walk on a leash (but rarely "Heal,"), we thought we were in control. We weren't. He was. Although we didn't realize until it manifested in the following behaviors: he did struggle with "Down," regularly jumped and growled at moving cars and always was a "nosy parker," needing to check out everything he saw or heard in our neighborhood; it all seemed relatively normal/familiar - to us; growing pains you might say. But worst of all, and what precipitated our call/need for help; while returning home from any and all walks, Burton would stop and fall/lay down (it's called the "pancake flop" - as seen on the internet) and refuse to get up until he was good and ready. It was not good and he was never ready. Despite our coaxing and/or pulling on his leash/collar - while encouraging (I use that term loosely, yelling actually), Burton would just give me the side eye while continuing to lay on his side, barely moving a muscle. Walking our way home, Burton would flop at least a half-a-dozen times with each flop causing a 5 - 15-minute delay. And what was his absolute worst behavior, once we finally made it back to our house, Burton would refuse to go inside leading to an inevitable tug-of-war which we would lose and resulted in yet another delay. As such, walks with Burton became increasingly frustrating and terribly unpleasant. We were at a loss as to how to survive the ordeal.

As it happened, I needed to pick up some syringes at the vet's office for one of our cats, Andrew, who needs daily steroid injections. After a 10-minute or so drive, I arrived, parked my car and walked inside. As I was standing against their front counter, waiting my turn, I noticed a business card holder in plain sight to my left. I picked up one of the cards. It was for a dog trainer - "35 years' experience." That's a coincidence, I thought, we need a dog trainer, desperately, so I put a card in my wallet to take home and discuss with Dina.

Having already considered changing Burton's dog collar and leash, getting him a full exam, visiting a dog behaviorist and even consulting a pet psychic - which we did over the phone, we decided it made sense to call this dog trainer and hear what he had to say. When we spoke, he sounded very reasonable as he laid out his methodology/philosophy: "Dogs are a pack animal and need a leader." And from what dog misbehavior I was describing, Burton, he said, was "definitely disrespecting me/my authority and treating me like just another member of the pack." Not the kind of relationship I should be having with me dog, apparently. Since we agreed with most of what he was saying, we decided to hire him/give him a chance to change our pack dynamic.

It's been five weeks since the training visits began. Burton's behavior has done an about face. Our joke has been: "who stole our dog and what happened to Burton?" With the help of an "e-collar," and transmitter, Burton has not only turned the corner, he's on the straight and narrow to leash-less living. He is a completely different - and now responsive/obedient, dog. It's amazing. His behavior has evolved from recalcitrant to compliant almost. No more "pancake flops," no more stick eating, no more rock swallowing, no more grass grazing and no more battles to get him in the house. He has become an amazing and wonderful dog. And he comes running when we call his name. Unbelievable. From our perspective, he looks happy. Smiling almost. He has been transformed and per his training, so have we.

Now if I can only find an e-collar for my wife.

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

# Fall for the Book in Spring and Summer Too

FROM PAGE 9

"Softie: Stories," and Michael Don, author of "Partners and Strangers," race-wrote until they had stories with a beginning, a middle and an end.

The authors put together three interesting stories, completely different ones that reflected their own writing styles, and held the

room in thrall as they read their versions.

And the audience didn't just twiddle their thumbs while this was going on. They too had a writing exercise to accomplish, and they all agreed that the time they spent playing writing games was fun and instructive. They had so much fun, hardly anyone touched the refreshments table offering

wine, cheese, snacks and sodas - they were so busy writing.

For more about Fall for the Book, including this week's events, or to join as a friend and get VIP seating for the events, see the website:

<https://fallforthebook.org/>  
<https://fallforthebook.org/schedule/>

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**617 N. Columbus Street**  
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**5306 Stonington Drive**  
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**4900 McFarland Drive**  
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**4750 Carterwood Drive**  
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**5833 Weant Drive**  
Great Falls, VA  
\$799,500



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