

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton

Dawn Hicks, left, with the Legacy of Freedom Award she was given by Amini Bonane.



Celebrating Juneteenth Together

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Votes for Women!

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What Happened in Burke?

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BULLETIN

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

FREE INDEPENDENCE DAY LYFT RIDES

WRAP, a local nonprofit organization, announced that free safe Lyft rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this weekend's Independence Day celebrations.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2026 Independence Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, July 4th (Independence Day) and operates until 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 5th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this high-risk holiday.

During this 12-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2026 Independence Day SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4th on www.SoberRide.com.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



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Burke Suffers Damaging Microburst

Significant homes and property damage displaces some.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Burke residents who lost only electrical power for about seven hours on June 22 are considering themselves lucky. Many of their neighbors experienced significant property damage as a result of a strong but small area microburst storm.

Many have damaged cars, roofs or other house structural damage. Nine houses have received red placards, signifying the damage is so severe that the homes have been deemed uninhabitable and no entry is permitted because the structures are unsafe. Beyond the resulting haphazard damage, the moments of the weather event were loud and frightening for all.

The National Weather Service indicates “a severe thunderstorm produced a strong downburst one mile northwest of Burke VA with peak winds estimated 90 MPH. While other minor scattered tree damage was noted outside of the microburst in the general area, the microburst affected the communities around Lake Royal. Significant concentrated damage began along Zion Road between the cross streets of Guinea Drive and Hillard Lake Road. Tree damage continued along Bridgewood Drive and Falmead Road before reaching Lake Royal. Through this area, many, though not all, of the trees were snapped midway, uprooted, or had large branches snapped off. Trees fell onto cars, power-lines, roads, and homes with substantial damage. Damage was unidirectionally pushed to the east northeast in the direction of storm movement. As the microburst crossed Lake Royal, the lack of trees and roughness allowed the winds to accelerate and then blast the townhomes on the east shore. Several townhomes on that row facing the lake had significant portions of their roofs lifted off. Winds were estimated to have peaked at 90 MPH.”

Damage also was suffered on the south side of the lake, where a business roof was lifted temporarily; and on the east side with similar tree damage along Lakepoint Drive west of Guinea Road. Trees and branches were again snapped onto cars and homes, and townhome fences were pushed down on many properties.”

NWS reports that “Doppler Radars displayed thunderstorm downburst signatures at the Burke location at the time, with no evidence of rotation indicating the storm being tornadic.

Severe straight line thunderstorm downburst wind gusts can sometimes produce damage equivalent to damage from EF0 and EF1 tornadoes.”

In the days following the event, VDOT and tree companies have removed trees blocking roads and downed power lines. Dominion Power reported 889 addresses without power.



Yellow placards line doors of damaged homes indicating use is limited to safe parts of the structure or for temporary clearing of belongings after county inspection.



Significant tree damage occurred widely in the impacted area.



Vehicles were damaged by falling trees and branches.



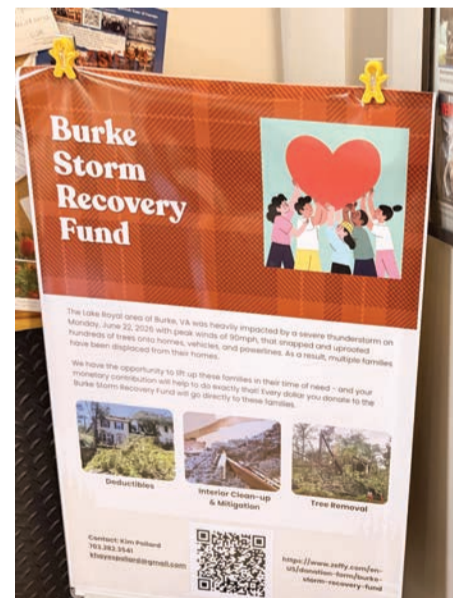
Blue tarps dot roofs to protect damaged houses.



The power of winds snapped or felled even large trees and downed branches.



Sign of encouragement at one community entrance.



Relief fund raiser held at Bunnyman Brewery and available for donations on-line

er on the day of the storm. By the following Sunday power had been restored to all but 66 residents.

The Red Cross and World Central Kitch-

en provided meals and other support. While roads are now passable, broken trees still litter the area, with large chunks lying as blown, suggesting it was a small miracle

that no deaths or injuries were reported. Travel through the area shows many blue roof tarps, and crumpled vehicles still wait-

SEE BURKE SUFFERS, PAGE 5

‘Lord, Let Us Never Forget the Cost of Freedom’

Fairfax City ceremony honors the legacy of Juneteenth.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

On June 19, 1865, a Union Army general marched into Galveston, Texas, and told enslaved people there they’d been free for two years. Juneteenth celebrates that momentous occasion and honors Black culture, achievements and contributions to the U.S. while acknowledging the work still remaining on the path toward equality.

This year’s national Juneteenth theme was “Juneteenth Brings Balance to America’s Celebration of Freedom,” and Fairfax City held its fourth annual Juneteenth event, June 19, at the Sherwood Center. Attendees included U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D-11th), Sen. Saddam Salim (D-37th), Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read and City Councilmembers Anthony Amos, Billy Bates, Stacy Hall Stacey Hardy-Chandler and Tom Peterson.

The City’s Parks and Rec Department hosted, along with GMU as its partner. Emcees were Bobby Lacy II, associate director of the university’s Green Machine band, and Dawn Hicks, former GMU Athletics spokeswoman. And the evening contained something for everyone.

Following the speeches, live performances were given by the Tobago Bay Calypso Band’s Stacy Loggins playing steel drums; Eric Kellum, spoken-word; Ni Dem-baya African Drum and Dance Ensemble; Susan Kellum, vocalist; and Bobby Lacy II, vocalist/spoken-word. And throughout the evening, Little Sweet House Bakery provided refreshments, and children enjoyed crafts activities and a balloon artist.

Speaking first was Mayor Read. “Juneteenth wasn’t always a national holiday,” she said. “It was celebrated in the Black community because they understood what it meant that Juneteenth was justice delayed for a community of enslaved people in Texas. But now we all celebrate it together because Black history is American history. And especially this year, celebrating the 250th anniversary of our country, that history includes Black people brought here against their will.

“They’re people who built this country and whose stories have not fully or adequately been told. And I think, in the future, a fuller history of the contributions of Af-

rican Americans will continue to be told. That’s important, because who we are as people today comes from how our country started and the things that have followed us, good and bad, into 2026.

“So it’s important for us to think clearly and make sure our children understand that the history of this country has some dark, dark moments. And while we can’t go back and do anything about what happened, we can certainly do something going forward. And we need to be focused on what we’re committed to doing, because we’re in a precarious time where there are people who’d like to roll back the gains that have been made in this country.

“We’re a very diverse community and City. Look around you – we are America, and it includes all of us. And we need to be truthful about telling our history.” Thanking everyone who came to Fairfax’s Juneteenth event, Read said it should be a celebration of “absolute joy, recognizing how far we have come, even as we realize how far we have to go.”

Then Walkinshaw said it’s “critical that we recognize Juneteenth as not a footnote in American history, but as central to [it]. As we approach the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding in a few weeks, I’ve been thinking about our founding documents – the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

“I think the most accurate, historical understanding of the Declaration is as an expression of our nation’s aspirations. Our aspirations that all are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, like liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Those words were written by a man [James Madison] who enslaved 600 people. So obviously, when he wrote that, there was a huge gap between aspirations and reality.

“And as we stand here today, there remains a gap between those aspirations and the reality in which we all live – especially Black Americans. But Juneteenth was one of our nation’s first and most tangible steps to close that gap. Frederick Douglass described the Declaration and the Constitution as our nation’s saving principles – the opportunity for us as a nation to meet the aspirations laid out in the Declaration.

“As the mayor said, we’re in the midst of an important moment



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

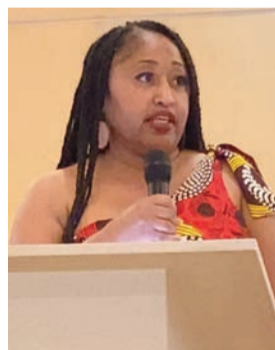
From left are Amini Bonane, Anthony Amos, Billy Bates, Tom Peterson, James Walkinshaw, Dawn Hicks, Catherine Read, Saddam Salim, Stacy Hall, Stacey Hardy-Chandler and Kahlial Smith.



From left, James Walkinshaw, Catherine Read, and Bobby and Yahnette Lacy.



From left, Dawn Hicks, Anthony Amos, Saddam Salim and Catherine Read.



Krysta Jones



Kahlial Smith



Vocalist Susan Kellum



Vocalist D.C. Washington

and a debate, unfortunately, in this country today as to whether we’re going to continue closing that gap [and] fight and strive to meet our founders’ aspirations. They’re aspirations that, for centuries, Black Americans have fought for, marched for and died for.”

Speaking next was Salim. “Today we celebrate a day of freedom, but also remember that freedom in America was delayed, denied and defended by ordinary people who refused to accept injustice as the final word,” he said. “Juneteenth

is a day to honor the resilience of Black Americans, the legacy of those who endured slavery and the generation who built, organized, marched, voted, taught, served and led in the face of discrimination and danger.

“In 2020, Juneteenth was recognized as an official, [Virginia] holiday. And today we continue that commitment by honoring this day’s meaning – not just with words, but with actions. In Fairfax, it means building a community where freedom is more than

a memory. It means protecting the right to vote, standing up for equal opportunities, investing in public schools, supporting small businesses, respecting the dignity of work and making sure that every child can grow up safe, healthy and full of promise.

“Justice isn’t just a one-day celebration; it’s a daily responsibility. America’s story is one of extraordinary ideals and extraordinary struggles, of soaring promises

Burke Suffers Damaging Microburst

FROM PAGE 3
ing to be relieved of the trees that struck them.

There also are visible signs of the community pulling together amid the destruction. A relief

fund has been established to help those who are displaced and need assistance. While most are insured, some damaged properties are rentals. Although nine homes have been deemed uninhabitable,

the owners of "yellow" houses may be asking renters to leave while repairs are accomplished, likely leaving more than the nine families displaced.

Kimberly Pollard, who had an

established charity which serves hospitalized children, Nancy's Toy Drop, has made provisions to accept donations on that platform to provide Burke storm recovery relief. Donations can be made at

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/burke-storm-recovery-fund>. Pollard can be reached at khayespollard@gmail.com for questions about the fund and to apply for fund relief.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF AN APPLICATION BY COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC. FOR AUTHORITY TO INCREASE RATES AND CHARGES AND TO REVISE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO GAS SERVICE CASE NO. PUR-2026-00014

On May 14, 2026, Columbia Gas of Virginia, Inc. ("CVA" or "Company") completed the filing of an application ("Application") with the State Corporation Commission ("Commission"), pursuant to Chapter 10 of Title 56 of the Code of Virginia ("Code") and the Commission's Rules Governing Utility Rate Applications and Annual Informational Filings of Investor-Owned Gas Utilities, 20 VAC 5-205-5 *et seq.* The Company requests authority to increase its rates and charges as part of a multi-year rate plan ("MYRP"), with the first increase effective for services rendered on or after October 4, 2026, and the second increase effective for services rendered on or after October 4, 2027. CVA additionally seeks to revise the terms and conditions applicable to gas service. The Company asserts that based on roundtable discussions with Commission Staff ("Staff") regarding the consideration and benefits of MYRPs for natural gas companies, the Company is proposing an MYRP for the first time.

In its Application, CVA states that the proposed rates and charges are designed to increase the non-gas base revenues of CVA by approximately \$64.3 million for the rate year October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027 ("Rate Year 1") and to create a further incremental revenue increase of \$14.6 million for the rate year October 1, 2027 – September 30, 2028 ("Rate Year 2") (collectively, "Rate Years"). CVA further asserts that approximately \$14.9 million of the revenue requirement for Rate Year 1 and \$14.5 million of the revenue requirement for Rate Year 2 are attributable to the recovery of costs associated with investments under the Company's Steps to Advance Virginia's Energy ("SAVE") Plan pursuant to Code § 56-603 *et seq.* (the "SAVE Act"). The Company states that, pursuant to the SAVE Act, it is proposing to include in base rates recovery of the costs associated with approximately \$116 million of net rate base SAVE investments as of September 30, 2026. The Company represents that it was last authorized to increase its rates and charges effective October 2024 in Case No. PUR-2024-00030 ("2024 Rate Case").

CVA asserts that the earnings test analysis of the Company's jurisdictional operations during the 12 months ending December 31, 2025, after limited accounting adjustments, shows a return on equity ("ROE") of 8.14%, which is below the authorized earnings test ROE of 9.75%. CVA represents that, in addition to these under-earnings, the increase in base rates proposed by CVA in this Application is driven primarily by the Company's ongoing capital investments to accommodate pipeline and facility safety and modernization, and to accommodate sustained demand for natural gas.

CVA further represents that since the 2024 Rate Case, the Company has continued to enhance pipeline safety and reliability through its safety management system approach by identifying, prioritizing, and reducing risks. The Company states that significant Distribution Integrity Management Plan ("DIMP") initiatives that are currently underway and are expected to continue in 2026 and through the Rate Years include, but are not limited to, damage prevention and both cross bore and unplanned exposure investigation and remediation. The Company requests approval of the annual amount of eligible safety activity costs of \$5.9 million that it maintains is necessary for the DIMP.

In its Application, the Company proposes an ROE of 10.95%, which it asserts falls within the proposed cost of equity range for CVA of 10.30% to 11.30%. CVA represents that its proposed rates would result in an increase to the average monthly bill of a residential customer using 5.1 dekatherms of approximately \$10.81, or 11.11%, over current rates for services rendered on or after October 4, 2026, and an increase of \$3.03, or 3.16%, per month for services rendered on or after October 4, 2027.

The Company also proposes modifications to its currently effective Rate Schedules, General Terms and Conditions, and Form of Service Agreements (collectively, "Tariff"). The Company states that the proposed modifications to the Tariff are to provide clarification and updates and correct for typographical errors. CVA requests that the Commission authorize the implementation of the rate and tariff modifications proposed in the Application, on an interim basis subject to refund, effective for services rendered on or after October 4, 2026, and the second increase effective for services rendered on or after October 4, 2027.

Interested persons are encouraged to review CVA's Application and supporting public documents in full for additional details.

TAKE NOTICE that the Commission may apportion revenues among customer classes and/or design rates in a manner differing from that shown in the Application and supporting documents and thus may adopt rates that differ from those appearing in the Company's Application and supporting documents.

The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Hearing in this proceeding that, among other things, scheduled a public hearing on CVA's Application. The Commission noted that the proposed revenue requirement, if approved, would result in an increase to customer bills. Pursuant to Code § 56-238, the Commission suspended CVA's proposed rates for a period of 150 days, the maximum allowed by law, and permitted CVA to implement the proposed rate increase and revisions to the Tariff on an interim basis, subject to refund with interest, for services rendered on or after October 11, 2026.

The Commission schedules a telephonic portion of the hearing for the receipt of testimony from public witnesses on the Application, as follows:

(a) The portion of the hearing for the receipt of testimony from public witnesses on the Application shall be convened telephonically at 10 a.m. on December 15, 2026.

(b) To promote fairness for all public witnesses, each witness will be allotted five minutes to provide testimony.

(c) On or before December 9, 2026, any person desiring to offer testimony as a public witness shall provide required contact information to the Commission. This information may be provided to the Commission: (i) by filling out a form on the Commission's website at [scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting); or (ii) by calling (804) 371-9141.

(d) This public witness hearing will be webcast at [scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/case-information/webcasting).

On December 15, 2026, at 10 a.m., or at the conclusion of the public witness portion of the hearing, whichever is later, in the Commission's second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, the Hearing Examiner will convene a hearing to receive testimony and evidence related to the Application from the Company, any respondents, and the Staff.

To promote administrative efficiency and timely service of filings upon participants, the Commission has directed the electronic filing of testimony and pleadings, unless they contain confidential information, and required electronic service on parties to this proceeding.

An electronic copy of the public version of the Company's Application may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company: Vishwa B. Link, Esq., McGuireWoods LLP, Gateway Plaza, 800 East Canal Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or vlink@mcguirewoods.com. Interested persons also may download unofficial copies of the public version of the Application and other documents filed in this case from the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/case-information](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/case-information).

On or before December 8, 2026, any interested person may submit comments on the Application by following the instructions found on the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/case-information/submit-public-comments](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/case-information/submit-public-comments). Those unable, as a practical matter, to submit comments electronically may file such comments by U.S. mail with the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. All such comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00014.

On or before September 23, 2026, any person or entity wishing to participate as a respondent in this proceeding must do so by filing a notice of participation at [scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling). Those unable, as a practical matter, to file a notice of participation electronically may file such notice by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties and their counsel. A copy of the notice of participation as a respondent also must be served electronically on counsel to the Company, any other respondents, and Staff. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. Any notice of participation filed by a person not represented by counsel shall also set forth why the filer's positions in this matter are not adequately represented by another party to this proceeding and cannot be expressed through written or oral public comments as provided for in this proceeding. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00014.

On or before October 14, 2026, each respondent may file with the Clerk of the Commission at [scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling) any testimony and exhibits by which the respondent expects to establish its case. Any respondent unable, as a practical matter, to file testimony and exhibits electronically may file such by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Each witness's testimony shall include a summary not to exceed one page. A copy of all testimony and exhibits shall be served electronically on the Company, any other respondents, and Staff. In all filings, respondents shall comply with the Commission's Rules of Practice, as modified herein, including, but not limited to: 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, and 5 VAC 5-20-240, *Prepared testimony and exhibits*. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2026-00014.

Any documents filed in paper form with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, except as modified by the Commission's Order for Notice and Hearing, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice.

The public version of the Company's Application, the Commission's Rules of Practice, the Order for Notice and Hearing, and other documents filed in this case may be viewed on the Commission's website at: [scc.virginia.gov/case-information](https://www.scc.virginia.gov/case-information).

COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC.

Workhouse Hosts ‘Suffs’ Players

Lucy Burns portrayers speak at Arts Center during show’s run at the National Theatre.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Lorton has claim to some of the most infamous events of the suffrage movement which eventually led to passage of the right to vote for women in 1919. Some have opined that the women’s treatment in Lorton hastened the long sought right to vote for women. The Workhouse Arts Center now houses a Lucy Burns Museum, dedicated to providing a glimpse into the suffragist movement in which she played a major part.

On June 18th, the Center hosted two actresses currently portraying Burns and other important historical figures in the movement, in the Broadway play, “Suffs,” Gwynne Wood, as Lucy Burns, and Gretchen Shope, who understudies for the role.

During the question and answer format, the players provided insights about the show to a large audience. Organizers were surprised by the number of participants. Many in the audience had seen the play multiple times. And many present were planning to see the show during its run in Washington DC.

The Arts Center reached out to the National Theatre, noting their shared role in educating about the suffrage movement. The cast members came to the Workhouse to do a Learning at Lunch series presentation. The Arts Center reciprocated by promoting information about “Suffs” tickets at the National Theatre on the Arts Center web site.

“Suffs” played on Broadway as a musical, with a book, music, and lyrics by Shaina Taub. It centers on the American women’s suffrage movement and the activists who fought for the vote. The show follows figures such as Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt, and their allies and rivals, as they navigate protest, organizing, and political pressure in the years leading to ratification of the 19th Amendment. The show began at The Public Theater before transferring to Broadway, where it played the Music Box Theatre. The production earned major recognition including Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score.

Selected questions and answers which represent a feel for the hour long interaction are provided here, edited for length.

Q - What resonated with you about the suffragist movement and the women?

A - Wood - We take [the women] for granted. It’s crazy that we don’t know more of their names and talk about them more.

A - Shope - Reading and watching “Suffs” for the first time, I was surprised how much disagreement there was within the movement. They had heated disagreements, but ultimately managed to work together for the same goals.

A-Wood - I resonate with Lucy Burns the most. Knowing her whole history and her interest in drama, which allowed her to be



“Suffs” portrayers of Lucy Burns, Gwynne Wood and Gretchen Shope, pose after their Learning at Lunch lecture at the Workhouse Arts Center.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Lucy Burns statue at the museum named for her on the quad at the Workhouse Arts Center.



The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial at Occoquan Regional Park in Lorton, is currently the only national monument to the suffragists.

comfortable talking to crowds. In small ways I’m like her. [Lucy Burns, with Alice Paul, founded the National American Women Suffrage Association.].

A - Shope - I resonate most with Inez [Millholland] and her use of theatrics. [Inez Millholland, a lawyer and activist, rode a white horse at the head of the 1913 suffragist pa-

rade in Washington DC].

Q- Is there an “it” scene from the cast’s perspective?

A - Wood - The scene before Alice Paul sings “Worth It.” It’s a lighter scene but it sees them as “real” women. It makes larger scenes more impressive. It shows they experienced some emotions, dealt with them,

and that we are all capable of great things.

A- Shope - “Respectfully Yours, Dudley Malone.” The audience always responds to the male empathy with the suffragist movement. In this world, there’s a tendency not to believe women. So the audience is able to receive the empathy in a different way.

SEE WORKHOUSE, PAGE 9

NEWS BRIEFS

Special, New Badges for Fairfax City Police

City of Fairfax police are now wearing special, semiquincentennial badges for the rest of this year to celebrate America's defining document. It features the Declaration of Independence, framed by the Betsy Ross flag on the left and the modern United States flag on the right. Underneath, a quill and inkwell represent the pen that authored it. And above, George Washington stands with resolve, symbolizing his leadership at the nation's founding. The police chief, captain, lieutenant and sergeant badges are gold, and the officers' badges are silver.



Fairfax City's new police badge

Anthony Amos: GMU's Graduate of the Decade

In 2024, Fairfax City Councilmember Anthony Amos obtained a master's in Public Policy from GMU, and the university recently honored him with its Graduate of the Last Decade (G.O.L.D) award. During his time at GMU, he represented the Schar School as a graduate student ambassador and was director of student outreach for Bridge at Mason. He was also inducted into multiple honor societies for his outstanding academic performance.



Anthony Amos

While still in school, Amos joined the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, was a member of Fairfax City's Independence Day Celebration Committee, and was appointed to GMU's Fairfax Campus Advisory Board.

He's only the second African American male elected to the Fairfax City Council. As such, he serves as its representative on sev-

eral state boards and committees and also helps shape the City's policies and direction. He's currently spearheading the creation of the City's first-ever affordable housing strategic plan, plus the effort to create Virginia's first kindergarten-to-college fund.

Fairfax City's 4th of July Spectacular

When it comes to Fourth of July parades, Fairfax City's 90-minute extravaganza is the largest in the commonwealth. And this year's event – its 60th annual – will also celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Set for Saturday, July 4, at 10 a.m., it travels from Chain Bridge Road, down Main Street and along University Drive to the reviewing stand on Armstrong Street.

The parade boasts a patriotic flyover, gigantic helium balloons, colorful floats, marching bands, youth sports teams, Scouts, first responders, superheroes, Disney princesses, honor guards, state and local officials, dance teams, and various community groups and entertainers.

Then, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., everyone's welcome to join the Independence Day Lawn Party at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St. The fun includes cupcakes, lemonade, activities, music and exhibits celebrating the Fourth of July and commemorating 250 years of American history.

The festivities continue that evening, from 6:30-10:30 p.m., with food vendors, live music and a spectacular fireworks show at

Fairfax High, 3501 Lion Run. Bring blankets and lawn chairs and enjoy live music, food vendors, parade awards and a spectacular fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. for bag checks (clear ones are preferred). If necessary, rain date for fireworks only is July 5, same place, at 9:30 p.m.

For parking, road closures, shuttle bus and other information, go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/Events-directory/Parks-and-Recreation/Special-Events/Independence-Day-Celebrations>.

Fairfax City's Government, School Board Candidates

The candidates for Fairfax City Council, Mayor and School Board are now set. They're listed below in the order they'll appear on the Nov. 3 ballot:

Mayor – Kirsten Lockhart and Tom Peterson. City Council - Stacy Hall, Rachel McQuillen, Anthony Amos, Sandi Slappey Brown, Kelly O'Brien, Russell Jones,

Stephen Kim, Susan Kuiler, María José Padmore, Steve Chang and Jessica Lough. School Board - Carolyn Pitches, Amit Hick-

man, Kristina Cecere, Sarah Kelsey and Lauren Bartelme.

Fairfax City to Raise Mayor, Council Salaries

The Fairfax City Council voted unanimously, June 23, to increase the annual salaries of the City's councilmembers from \$12,000 to \$22,000, with the mayor's salary rising from \$13,000 to \$24,000. Those are the maximum amounts allowed for jurisdictions of its size – populations between 20,000 and 34,999. The pay hikes won't take effect until July 1, 2027.

Before the vote, Councilmember Billy Bates, who's not running for re-election, told his colleagues, "I hope the salary increase will make it more feasible for early-career professionals, perhaps single parents, etc. – who might otherwise need to reduce their

hours worked in their daytime careers – to run for office."

He also said he hopes the next Council will take these salary increases into consideration as it looks at the results of the City's jobs-classification and pay study and "thinks about future budgets and how we're paying and taking care of our staff, as well."

Main Street Market is July 5

Fairfax City's Main Street Market is a fun, relaxed, outdoor event with a casual vibe. Held on Main Street, in the heart of Old Town Fairfax, it's when local small businesses display their wares in front of their stores to enable customers to see at a glance some of their offerings. The next market is slated for Sunday, July 5, from noon-4 p.m. There'll be food and drink vendors, too, and the local restaurants will also be open.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

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

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 15

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‘Lord, Let Us Never Forget the Cost of Freedom’

FROM PAGE 4

and painful contradictions. For too long, our nation celebrated its founding while ignoring the dark history that ran through it – slavery, segregation, exclusion and a deep injustice that followed. But America’s strength has always been to confront the truth, reckon with it and move closer to the idea we declared from the beginning. Juneteenth is part of that realization.

“Our country becomes better, not when it hides from the past, but when it faces it honestly. Juneteenth also reminds us that progress comes when people of different backgrounds move forward together – [which] matters now, more than ever. In a time when division can feel louder than common purpose, Juneteenth calls us back to the best of America – truth, courage, community and the unfinished promise of ‘liberty and justice for all.’”

Then Elder Kahlial Smith, Central Virginia Young Dems co-vice president, led a prayer. “Today we remember [those] who labored beneath the weight of bondage, whose backs were scarred by oppression, yet whose spirits remained unbroken,” he said. “[They] prayed in the darkness, sang songs of hope in the midst of suffering and believed that, beyond the long night of injustice,

SEE ‘LORD, LET US’, PAGE 15



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Children doing crafts during the program.



Playing the drums is Stacy Loggins with the Tobago Bay Calypso Band.



Marion Dobbins holds the book she wrote about lost Black communities.



Megan Leining and Sean Redmiles, with the Parks and Rec Department’s Historic Resources Division, offer free Juneteenth items.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Dawn Hicks, left, with the Legacy of Freedom Award she was given by Amini Bonane.

Dawn Hicks Receives Legacy of Freedom Award

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

At each of Fairfax City’s Juneteenth celebrations, the committee putting them on selects and honors someone worthy of receiving its Legacy of Freedom award. And this year, committee member Amini Bonane presented it to Dawn Hicks.

“Dawn’s leadership, service and dedication to community advancement have made a lasting impact on the City of Fairfax,” said Bonane. “Throughout her career, she’s worked tirelessly to create opportunities, strengthen community partnerships and foster meaningful engagement among residents, businesses, students and civic leaders.

“During her tenure as director of community relations for George Mason University Athletics, Dawn built an award-winning community-engagement program that generated more than 5,000 hours of service and connected the university with the broader Fairfax community in powerful and lasting ways. Her leadership helped bridge gaps, expand access to opportunities and bring people together in service of a stronger, more inclusive community.

“Dawn has also been a champion for mentorship, helping connect young people to internships, careers and leadership

opportunities. She’s worked to elevate cultural awareness and celebrate the contributions of the Black community through community programming, partnerships and public engagement.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Dawn has remained deeply involved in civic and community initiatives throughout Fairfax City. She’s been a dedicated member of the Fairfax Juneteenth Celebration Committee since its inception in 2023 and has played an instrumental role in the growth and success of this annual event.

Through her leadership, collaboration and commitment to honoring “Juneteenth’s significance, she’s helped create a meaningful celebration. Dawn’s life and work embody the spirit of Juneteenth – advancing freedom, opportunity, resilience and community empowerment. Through her vision, service and unwavering dedication to others, she’s helped strengthen Fairfax City’s social and civic fabric and inspired future generations to do the same.”

Accepting the award, Hicks said, “Thank you so very much. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve this community for going on 10 years now. I thank everyone for coming out tonight for this special occasion – which is far more important than this award. But I’m grateful and thank you.”

New Regional Library in Kingstowne Offers More for Readers and Students

Opening in April attracted a crowd and live band.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

When the new Franconia District Center building opened this past spring, a new regional library was part of the facility that houses the latest information technology that provides a needed asset to the residents in this southern part of Fairfax County.

This 30,000-square-foot library is Kingstowne Regional Library. The new regional branch is open seven days a week, offering 55,000 items to library visitors in the form of books, electronic facilities and county-related materials related to the surrounding community. The number of items available consists of 36,802 items from the former library and 18,500 new items, the library information said.

This library has lots of natural light, a large children's section, a separate teen area, plentiful seating with tables, bookable small study rooms, modern conference/meeting room options and a large wi-fi bar with ample power for visitors to bring their own devices. In addition to the library and senior center, the new building also houses the Franconia Police Station, the office of the Franconia District supervisor, the Franconia Museum and a new childcare center.

Upcoming activities at the new library include

- ❖ Rocknoceros Family Concert on July 2,
- ❖ Lecture by author Derek Baxter discussing his revolutionary war book;
- ❖ Baby story time on July 7.

These are just a sample of the community-friendly activities that the regional library can offer.

The former library space is about two miles from the new government center in rented retail space in Lansdowne Centre. Library officials closed that branch in February and packed everything up for the two-mile trip to the new space on Beulah Street.



PHOTOS FAIRFAX COUNTY LIBRARY

On opening day, April 11, the new library attracted quite a crowd.



Opening day did include musical entertainment.

Workhouse Hosts “Suffs” Players

FROM PAGE 6

A- Wood - Being here in Lorton and the Washington area, everyone here understands all the political elements behind the story. In Minneapolis, they were on the edge of their seats listening to Mary Church Terrell's character comment about that the police would not do anything [to protect the demonstrators]. [Mary Church Terrell was an African American activist and suffragist, who helped found the NAACP, and the Nation-

al Association of Colored Women.] There was an audible reaction from the audience and the show felt heavy in the time when we were in Minneapolis close to when Renee Nicole Goode was murdered.

Q- What about the sub themes, as the show seems to embrace segregation; it addressed that the march was segregated and pushed colored women aside, queer women in the movement, and those with immigrant status; not paying more attention to intersectional-

ity?

A-Wood - There are so many sub-themes, I feel comforted by the cyclical nature of everything. Characters aren't chastised for wanting things to change and be better. As we look back on their successes and failures, criticism and critique is a vital part of getting better.

Q- Why was the title “Suffs” chosen?

A- Wood - “Suffragist” was considered. The idea was to draw away from the use of the term

“Suffragette.” But there were other projects already in production first called “Suffragist.” They wanted a one work title and wanted to emphasize the movement, not just one person.

A-Shope - “Suffs” seems a friendlier term; more relatable; making audiences feel a part of the group.

Q- Why is it an all female cast, even the portrayal of President Wilson?

A- Wood - The cast members are all female or non-binary. It was im-

portant to add gender diverse folks to the cast. It brings older history into the present.

The goal of the show was to center on these women, but with the violence involved, didn't want it to be too graphic. All females in the roles allows women to stay central, even the President.

A- Shope - In history we give Woodrow Wilson too much credit. So being played by a woman in drag kind helps put him in his place.

Fairfax High Grad Co-Writes Acclaimed Film

'A Mosquito in the Ear' coming to Cinema Arts Theatre.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's generally believed that, when a couple adopts a child from an orphanage, the child's happy to be "rescued" and begin a new life elsewhere. But that's not always the case – certainly not in the award-winning movie, "A Mosquito in the Ear."

Based on Andrea Ferraris's fact-based graphic novel, the script was written by life partners Nico Rinciari and Emily Dillard – a 2017 Fairfax High grad. Rinciari also directed the film, and Dillard was one of its producers.

The 90-minute drama premiered in February at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, where it won the Panavision Spirit Award for Independent Cinema. Since then, it's been shown in the Miami and Brooklyn Film Festivals and will also be in one in Dallas.

But it's headed next to Fairfax for a special hometown showing on Sunday, July 12, at 4:30 p.m., at Cinema Arts Theatre in Fair City Mall. Tickets are going fast, so advance purchases are recommended at <https://www.cinemaartstheatre.com/movies/1000006878-a-mosquito-in-the-ear/?date=2026-07-12>.

Said Dillard, "We're excited about everything happening with the film and happy to bring it to Fairfax, even if just for one night."

It stars Jake Lacy and Nazanin Boniadi as the adoptive parents, and Ruhi Pal as the girl they hope to bring home from an orphanage

in India. Lacy is known for his Emmy-nominated role on "The White Lotus" and on last year's series, "All Her Fault." Boniadi starred in the first season of "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power."

In "A Mosquito in the Ear," they play American couple Andrew and Daniela, who travel to India to meet and bring home a 4-year-old girl named Sarvari. Trouble is, she doesn't want to leave with them. And to her, the foreign English language they're speaking just sounds like a mosquito buzzing near her ear.

"We read the graphic novel, and the story struck us because it was such a real take on the adoption process," said Dillard. "It had never been represented [in movies] like this before, as well as how the arrival of a new child strains a relationship. But people there told us this is a more common occurrence than people realize. Sarvari was living a fulfilling life in the orphanage and, even though it didn't have many means, she was happy and considered the people there her family."

In the film, the couple is trying to take a young child from the culture she knows to one that's entirely new. They didn't choose India, specifically, just international adoption, and were matched with Sarvari. Dillard explained that, sometimes, it's because the couple has a similar hair color with which the child can identify.

"They spend 10 days getting to know each other, and the couple tries to have Sarvari accept them as parents and understand that they're not kidnapping her," said Dillard. "The powerful thing about this film is that it's based on a real family and what they went through with their child."

She and Rinciari, whom she met when they were students at Savan-



COURTESY OF BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL

From left, Cinematographer Kai Dickson, Nazanin Boniadi, Nico Rinciari, Jake Lacy and Emily Dillard.

nah College of Art and Design, optioned the story in 2021 and then spent a year writing the script. "We had an India-based script consultant, plus camcorder footage the real family filmed of themselves, the child and the orphanage," said Dillard. "Then after the script was done, we were in India for almost three months and cast some of the other actors, such as the nuns at the orphanage, from there."

"The little girl, plus some production heads, were all local to India. So we leaned on them for their take on the story and its cultural authenticity, as well as for the makeup, costumes and production design. An Indian company, La Sutra Pictures, also did everything facilitating production on the



COURTESY OF BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL

Nico Rinciari and Emily Dillard at the Brooklyn Film Festival.



COURTESY OF EMILY DILLARD

Ruhi Pal holds her stuffed tiger in a shot from the movie.



COURTESY OF EMILY DILLARD

The movie poster for "A Mosquito in the Ear."



COURTESY OF EMILY DILLARD

Wearing Indian garb in the film are Nazanin Boniadi and Jake Lacy.

West Springfield High Grad Stars in ‘Les Misérables’



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

West Springfield High grad Tony Hillary portrays Jean Valjean.

Tony Hillary is portraying the heroic Jean Valjean.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

West Springfield High 2026 grad Tony Hillary is starring in Westfield Summer Stage’s upcoming production of “Les Misérables.” He plays Jean Valjean, the legendary hero of this iconic dramatic musical.

The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, July 10-11, at 7 p.m.; Sunday, July 12, at 2 p.m.; and Friday-Sat-

urday, July 17-18, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance at www.westfieldtheatre.com, or \$17 at the door. Performances are at Westfield High, 4700 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

There’s a cast and crew of more than 70, plus a 16-piece orchestra. And since so many of the actors are seasoned theater students, Director Christine Maxted said, “It’s been a huge treat to work with this group. The audience will be in awe of their vocal talents and professionalism. It’s hard to believe most of them are still in high school.”

Set in 19th-century France, it’s the story of Jean Valjean, who’s served 19 years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his starving family. Thanks to a compassionate bishop, he’s released from prison and reinvents himself,



PHOTO COURTESY OF LILLI MCNERNEY

Standing in front of the students’ barricade against the French soldiers are (from left) Rebecca Zanotti, Sienna Nguyen, Colin Stoffer and Tony Hillary.

becoming a wealthy businessman and mayor focused on redeeming himself and helping others.

He also adopts Cosette, an orphan whose destitute single mother, Fantine, was forced into prostitution after losing her factory job. She needs the money so she can send it to the Thénardiens, corrupt innkeepers holding her daughter captive. Meanwhile, Javert, a rigid and uncompromising police inspector, doesn’t believe Valjean has reformed and relentlessly pursues him for decades.

Later, as Cosette grows up, she falls in love with Marius, a student revolutionary who fights in the 1832 Paris Uprising. He’s severely wounded during the violent battle, and Valjean risks his life to save him.

A dramatic musical, the show’s “overarching messages are about hope, forgiveness and redemption,” said Maxted. “People will

connect with various characters and see [similarities to] their own life experiences and dreams. It’s not often done at schools because of its level of difficulty. The audience will be inspired by our well-trained and committed actors – it’s quality theater.”

As for Valjean, Hillary said, “He starts out as downtrodden, hopeless, and bitter at the government and the world. But a bishop takes him under his wing and shows him love and compassion. So he becomes driven to become a better person and turn his life around.”

“When he begins taking care of Cosette – first, as a child and then as a teen – he’s protective of her and you see his caring side. Yet, even though he becomes softer and more compassionate, he still has an edge and isn’t afraid to stand up to Javert and fight for what’s right.”

The hardest part of playing Valjean, said Hillary, is “trying to por-

tray his toughness while not being off-putting to the audience and being someone they could relate to and root for. But I like all his interactions with the other characters – not just acting, but also musically. So it’s fun to explore the different, recurring, musical themes in the show.”

Hillary’s favorite song is “Empty Chairs at Empty Tables” because “it’s character-driven and intimate. Marius expresses his most raw emotions, despair and regret. It starts softly and builds to a huge crescendo.”

He also said audiences will be able to easily follow the storyline. “Mrs. Maxted made sure we understood the story, characters and their context,” he explained. “And when the actors understand the material, it’s easier for audiences to understand what’s going on. So it informs our acting and makes our performances more believable.”

Fairfax High Grad Co-Writes Acclaimed Film

FROM PAGE 10

ground there, including finding the [shooting] locations. It was all filmed in India.”

Dillard said they had a smooth collaboration among themselves and the original writer and parents because they all had the same goal – to present the story as real and truthfully as possible. She said the parents “added some further details that enhanced the richness

and texture of the script.”

The whole process of making the movie took two years. For example, said Dillard, “We spent two weeks in Rome to record the music and mix it in. It also took time to do color corrections for the film. Right before we went to Santa Barbara for the premiere, we were both tired and excited because we’d really given it our all and had nothing left in the tank. So that

festival refilled us and came at just the right time.”

Their award there came with a \$60,000 prize to purchase Panavision merchandise they’ll use in their next film. Meanwhile, this one has received a “very warm response,” said Dillard. “It’s really resonated with people because the family struggles depicted in it are universal. It was wonderful getting the award and having the work

recognized. And it’s great seeing its deep connection with others, too.

“The seasoned actors playing the prospective parents were amazing. And the girl portraying Sarvari was 7 and had never acted before, but she was wonderful. She was old enough to understand direction, but young enough that she was still innocent and true. So when she performed, she really became that girl.”

Dillard and Rinciari are based in

Los Angeles and have been working in the film industry professionally since graduating from SCAD in 2020. He’s a previsualization artist doing 3D storyboards for Warner Brothers Pictures Animation. And she’s a senior media coordinator at Walt Disney Imagineering. Her department shoots all the live-action and animation footage for the rides at all the Disney parks in the U.S. and internationally.

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.

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



Vienna's Independence Day Celebration takes place on Thursday, July 2, 2026 at Yeonas Park in Vienna.



Be sure to catch Still Surfin' – A Tribute to the Beach Boys on Thursday, July 2, 2026 at McLean Central Park Amphitheatre in McLean.

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 Sempur 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/>

Concert Schedule:

❖ 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

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

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.

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

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

JUNE 22 TO JULY 19

Connections That Bind, Art & Friendship. At JoAnn Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza North, Reston. 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 Grisdel, Jenn Duncan, Julia Malakoff, Rosemarie Forsythe and Doug Fuller.

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?

JULY 1-31

Summer of the Arts. At City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Fairfax Street, Fair-

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

fax. Pathway Homes' 13th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit showcases the creativity of its clients who are living with a variety of mental illnesses and co-occurring disorders. From July 1-31, artwork submitted by formerly homeless individuals recovering from serious mental illnesses will be displayed at the City of Fairfax Library. Art and creativity are an integral part of recovery for Pathway Homes' residents. Pathway is a mental health non-profit. Artist Reception: July 28, 5:30-7:00 p.m. (free).

JULY 1 TO AUG. 2

"America at 250" Art Exhibit. At McLean Art Gallery, a new topical exhibition from the McLean Art Society celebrating our country's milestone birthday. Featured are 180 new works from 45 local artists, including paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor and mixed media; drawings; photography; sculpture and works in wood, glass, ceramics and jewelry. Opening Reception on Friday, July 3 from 5-7 p.m. The Gallery is located in the Chesterbrook Shopping Center, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean (near Starbucks) with plenty of free parking. Get your free tickets at [250.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Thursdays June 18 to July 30, 7 p.m. At McLean Central Park Amphitheatre. The MCC famous, free concerts are back at the McLean Central Park Amphitheatre! Grab your family and friends and enjoy live music every Thursday evening from June 18 to July 30 at 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 2, 7 p.m.

Happy 250th, America!

Still Surfin'—A Tribute to the Beach Boys

Thursday, July 9, 7 p.m.

Oh, I Love that Song!

One Hit Wonderers

Thursday, July 16, 7 p.m.

Go-Go legend!

EU (Experience Unlimited)

Thursday, July 23, 7 p.m.

"Stylin', Living it up in the city!"

Uptown

Thursday, July 30, 7 p.m.

"Beastie Boys meet Sesame Street,"

Koo Koo

SOUNDS OF SUMMER: LOCAL CONCERTS IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

Create your own summer soundtrack with the Summer Entertainment Series. Attend free, live concerts taking place at locations all around Fairfax through August. Award-winning entertainers take the stage in this series that is set to enrich the community and promote togetherness in Fairfax County. This season consists of 124 performances at 20 venues. Mark your calendar for some incredible performances including:

Wednesday, July 1, 7 p.m.: Rocksteady Project, Franconia District Park

Thursday, July 2, 5:30 p.m.: U.S. 257th Army Band, Fairfax County Government Center

Friday, July 10, 7:30 p.m.: Gayle Harrod Band, Lake Accotink Park

Wednesday, July 15, 7:00 p.m.: SoHo Down, Burke Lake Park

Saturday, July 18, 7:30 p.m.: No BS! Brass Band, Workhouse Arts Center

Friday, July 24, 7:30 p.m.: City of Falls Church Concert Band, Mason District Park

Saturday, July 25, 7:30 p.m.: Lower: The Unofficial Eras Tour, Arrowbrook Centre Park

Saturday, Aug. 8, 7:30 p.m.: Roberta Lea and the First Take Band, Arrowbrook Centre Park

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m.: Junkyard Band, Franconia District Park

Thursday, Aug. 13, 7 p.m.: Brookhouse, Frying Pan Farm Park

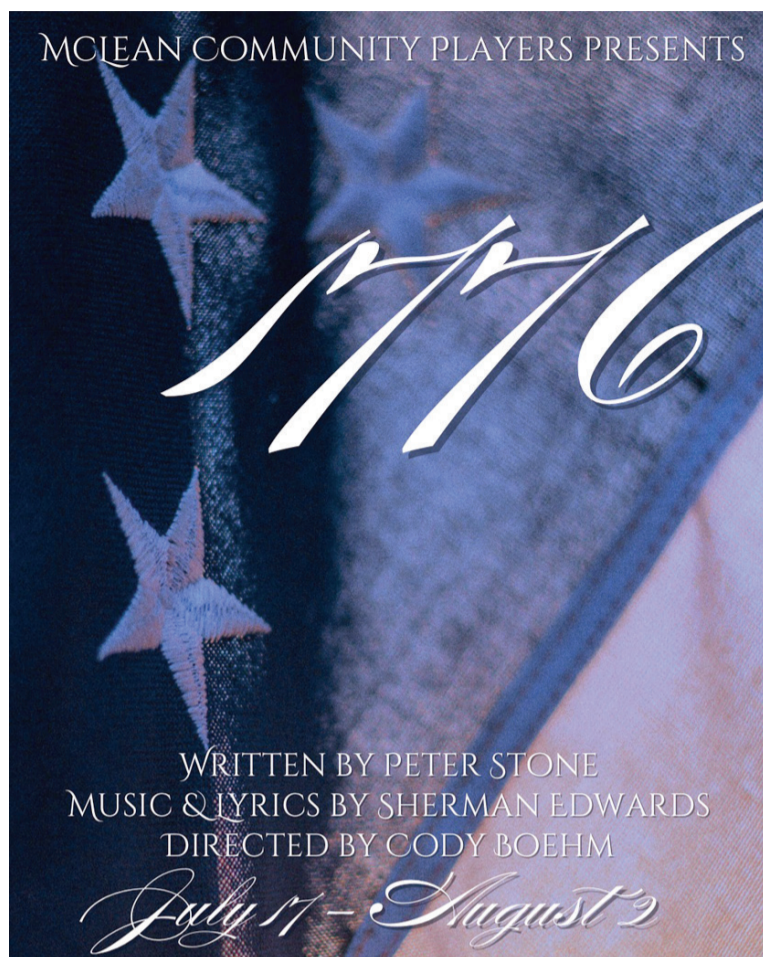
Friday, Aug. 14, 7:30 p.m.: Pat McGee, Mason District Park

Thursday, Aug. 20, 7:30 p.m.: Alexandria A Cappella Collective, Nottoway Park

THURSDAY/JULY 2

Vienna Independence Day Celebration. 6 to 10 p.m. At Yeonas Park, 1319 Ross Drive, SW,

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



McLean Community Players present "1776" from July 17 to Aug. 2, 2026 at the McLean Community Center's Alden Theater.

Vienna. Features an exciting evening of live entertainment, food trucks, and a firework display. The stage will feature a strong lineup of entertainment, including Taiko Japanese Drums for kids, a small ensemble from the Vienna Community Band, and Latin pop-rock from Ocho de Bastos. Visit www.viennava.gov/fireworks.

FRIDAY/JULY 3

Stars, Stripes, Splashes (pool party). 1 - 4 p.m. At Hunters Woods Pool, Reston.

Free for RA Members & RecPass holders; \$20 for Non RecPass holders (free for kids under 3)

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.

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/>

THURSDAY JULY 9

Angela Easterling & Brandon Turner in Concert. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Free.

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/>

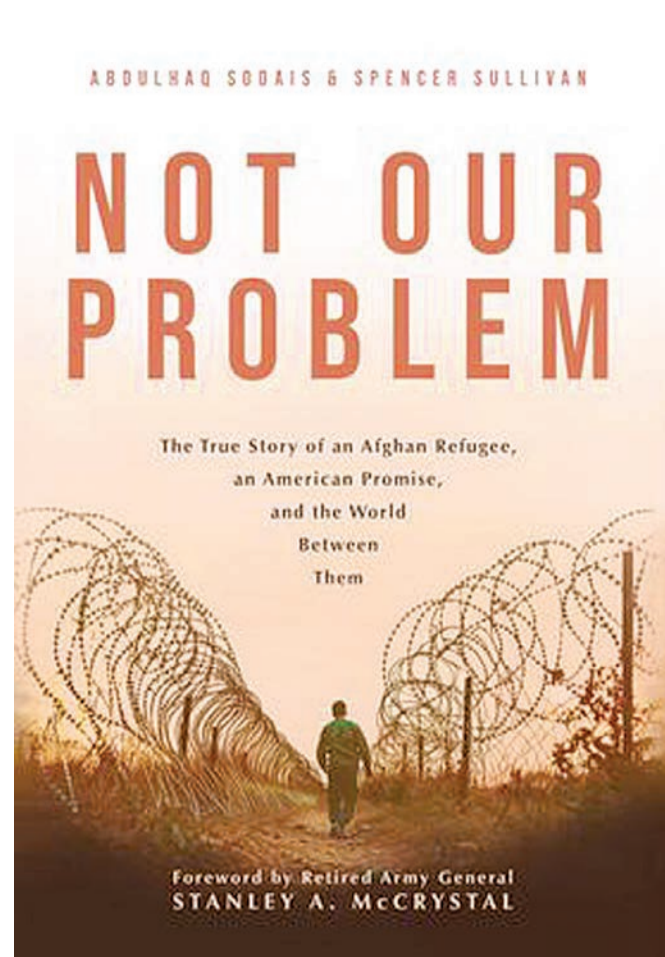
"1776" BY MCLEAN

COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Celebrate America's 250th birthday with McLean Community Players' Tony Award-winning musical "1776," a witty, inspiring and surprisingly human portrait of the passionate debates, rivalries and courage behind the founding of a nation. Weekends of July 17-August 2; Fri-Sat., 7:30 p.m.; Matinees Sun., 2 p.m. At McLean Community Center's Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$25/\$20 Seniors/\$18 McLean district residents

SUNDAY/JULY 19

Film Club. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Cinema Arts Theatre, 9650-14 Main Street, Fairfax. Film Club debuts new independent and foreign films that have screened at Cannes, Sundance, etc. The titles are secret until you



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

arrive. Tickets available at the Box Office for \$19. Film Club occurs monthly on August 16, September 20, October 4, and October 18. Website: <https://www.cinemaartstheatre.com/film-club-2026/>

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

TUESDAY/AUG. 18

Trivia Nights in Tun Tavern. 6-9 p.m. At National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle. Think you have what it takes to claim the top spot? Assemble your strongest team of up to six and join us for Trivia Nights at Tun Tavern at the National Museum of the Marine Corps! Compete in pop culture, geography, and general knowledge trivia, with a fun bonus round to keep things interesting. Event is free and open to the public. Visit the website: <https://www.marineheritage.org/eventscalendar>

SENIOR MOVIE DAY

At Reston Town Center Movie Theater. 10 a.m. 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. Free. Ages 55+
July 22: After the Hunt
Aug. 26: A Little Prayer (rated R)

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NEWS DEPARTMENT
fairfax@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
miksalmon6922@gmail.com

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

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

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

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

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

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

In Memoriam
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic

Production Manager
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

'Lord, Let Us Never Forget the Cost of Freedom'

FROM PAGE 8

morning would come.

"We thank You for ancestors who endured what they did not deserve, yet left us a legacy of faith, resilience, courage and determination. We thank You that their suffering was not the end of the story. Their tears watered the roots of a freedom whose fruit we enjoy today.

"Lord, let us never forget the cost of freedom [or] the sacrifices made on our behalf. And let us never become so comfortable that we cease striving for justice, equality and dignity for all people. Unite us in purpose, strengthen us in hope and inspire us to leave this place committed to building a more just and compassionate world."

Next, D.C. Washington sang the National Anthem, and Susan Kellum sang the Black National Anthem. Then historian and ethnographer Marion Dobbins said, "As long as I have breath in my body, I'll make sure people know the history of Juneteenth, Fairfax County and the African Americans that lived and worked here. Fairfax City was part of the county until the '60s, so I went to church in Fairfax City. I knew the struggles [Black people] went through since segregation because my mom talked about it.

"And I think those that went before us

would be so proud of what we're doing now. We're not only acknowledging the past but celebrating freedom, talking about what we need to do today and looking to the future."

After her, community member Krysta Jones spoke of her family's connection to famed boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. When she researched him, she discovered he was "deeply flawed," and that "shattered the sanitized version of history we're often fed." She said it gave her a "raw, authentic perspective" on her family, the eras it survived and "the messy reality of human legacy.

"This is exactly how I view America's story – not a flawless fairytale but a complex, beautiful and sometimes painful story. Juneteenth is a major part of our collective family story, reminding us that truth cannot remain hidden forever." Jones said not including Juneteenth and its "wealth of heritage" meant America's story was incomplete. Yet it wasn't recognized as a federal holiday until 2021.

"When we don't know the full story of our people, it degrades our self-image and obscures our contributions to the world," she said. "Reclaiming our history doesn't change where we started, but it completely alters how we see the road ahead."

For example, Jones said the mainstream narrative about the escape of enslaved peo-

ple is that it was "desperate and uncoordinated – when in reality, it was [done via] a highly sophisticated espionage and communications network [through which] they passed complicated, lifesaving intelligence ... to orchestrate their liberation. Our history is a master class in strategy and unbreakable spirit."

Then Juneteenth Committee member Amini Bonane presented the Legacy of Freedom Award to Dawn Hicks (see sidebar), and Elder Smith gave the event's benediction:

"Gracious God, thank You for the stories shared, lessons remembered and legacy honored. Remind us that Juneteenth is a testimony that darkness [and] injustice don't have the final word, and hope, faith and perseverance can move a people from bondage to blessing.

Let us [be] determined to build stronger communities, pursue justice, extend compassion and create opportunities for generations yet to come. May we remember freedom is a responsibility to be protected. God, keep us safe in the midst of this national darkness. And may the same God who carried our ancestors through trial and triumph continue to guide us toward a future marked by justice, unity and peace."

A Bloody Business



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I was reminded a few weeks ago about something in my life which I hardly need reminding about: my thyroid cancer diagnosis and my chronic kidney disease, both stage IV; two for the price of one (one of which would be plenty, two is overkill, literally). The reminder came when one of the levels in my monthly lab work was higher than (A) It needed to be and (B) higher than it has ever been. Not exactly cause for celebration (certainly not ringing a bell at any infusion centers announcing a cured patient). However, after 17+ years of this, I'm fairly well-prepared in how one reacts to such cancer-related abnormalities. However, this time, the measure generated an email from my nephrologist's dialysis coordinator acknowledging this recent elevated level. He asked me if I was experiencing any symptoms (and he listed them: fatigue, poor sleeping, disinterest in food, hiccups, et cetera) relating to my kidney disease. The complicating factor is treatment of my thyroid cancer exacerbates my kidney disease and managing my kidney disease is at cross purposes with how I treat/live with my thyroid cancer disease. The classic "damned if you do ..."

scenario. Fortunately, none of the disease-related symptoms had manifested themselves. Moreover, my levels declined enough in my special-ordered two-week later lab order (instead of the usual four) so I was sort of "off the clock," as my friend Sean would say. As a result, all the interested parties retreated from their presumptive brinks. I was advised to hydrate more and to schedule my next lab in its customary four-week slot. And so, the medical professionals will be closely monitoring my lab work to evaluate if this higher-than-normal level was an outlier or the long-awaited, probably anticipated beginning of the slide (I can't say "end"). Nevertheless, diagnosis to date, my cancer life (diagnosed late Feb. 2009) has mostly been lived on easy street, with a few unexpected turns and a couple of potholes along the way. If I was to complain I'd be an expletive deleted (although that catheter that was inserted in the hospital when I was admitted with a collapsed lung in 2015 was kind of a problem).

Still, this kind of mental anguish is what "dropping the other shoe" is all about. On the one hand, I think about my cancer situation/predicament all the time with intermittent interruptions. On the other hand, I think about my cancer situation/predicament during those intermittent interruptions. As you can read, it matters not which hand or which compartmentalized part of my brain is working, it's all working on cancer stuff. And ignoring it all is the method to my madness unless and until I get a jolt - like lab results. It is these lab results which are on the frontline of my coexistence with cancer. When something happens/dare I say, portends, it will likely be the lab work that does its indicating. And right now, and in early June when I'm back "labing" every four weeks, I will be in a heightened state of anxiety. But since there's only so much I can do to impact these future results, I have to tell myself to "act naturally" (as Buck Owens and Ringo Starr sing) and not overreact.

There's no real reason to do so now anyway. There's no advantage in being miserable and uptight in advance of my next lab work. If those results are disappointing, shall I say, then my life will become more complicated. As such, there's no reason to complicate it now. Bad news travels fast enough. I don't need to hurry it along. And anticipating it likewise serves no purpose. It will be bad enough when it's fact. Until then I can live with the fiction.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

trees suitable for planting. Purchasing top-quality trees can be a challenge for these organizations.

This opportunity focuses on increasing tree cover in economically disadvantaged communities, which typically do not benefit from moderate to high tree cover. How to Apply: Fairfax County Tree Distribution to Community Organizations | Public Works and Environmental Services UCFD will prioritize applications for tree-planting sites within or adjacent to Fairfax County-designated highly vulnerable communities, as defined by the county's One Fairfax policy and its associated Vulnerability Index. While planting in highly vulnerable communities will be prioritized, all community organizations are encouraged to apply for tree delivery, regardless of where tree planting is proposed.

The costs of the trees and delivery are covered by the county's Tree Preservation and Planting Fund and will be offered at no cost to participating organizations.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical

and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or

havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

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