

THE CONNECTION

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

Defend Democracy
Indivisible members
in Northern Virginia
remind the public that
voting is a key way to
defend democracy.

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY LINDA FALKERSON/DEFEND DEMOCRACY INDIVISIBLE



Early Voting
Begins Sept. 18

PAGE 4

Danger Ahead with
Dominion Merger?

PAGE 3

2000 Mile Run
Home for Redemption

PAGE 10

SEPTEMBER 2-15, 2026

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

New Chapter for L'Auberge Chez François

The Great Falls institution continues its legacy, with Warren Thompson stepping in to carry traditions forward.

For 72 years, guests have found exceptional French dining first at Chez François in Washington, D.C., and since at L'Auberge Chez François in Great Falls, Virginia. Today, the restaurant enters a new chapter, "one dedicated entirely to preserving the warmth, tradition and cuisine that have made it a cherished destination for generations of families, first dates and lifelong regulars."

Beginning in September, Warren Thompson, President of Thompson Restaurants, a longtime guest of L'Auberge Chez François and Jacques' Brasserie, steps into a role as steward of the restaurant, committed to ensuring its traditions, hospitality and Alsatian culinary spirit continue. It's a personal commitment Thompson says, rooted in

years of being a guest of this place.

Chef François Haeringer, a native of Alsace, France, opened the restaurant as Chez François in Washington, D.C. in 1954. In 1976, that tradition found a new home in Great Falls, Virginia, as L'Auberge Chez François, a reflection of the auberges of Alsace. Across seven decades, the restaurant has remained defined by that same spirit: seasonal French cooking, a storybook setting and a sense of occasion that has quietly become part of this community's story.

"It's all about the memories people build here, one visit at a time," said Owner and Executive Chef Jacques Haeringer. "This next chapter is built around carrying that feeling forward. ... Warren has loved this restaurant as a guest for years ... which is exactly why I



Warren Thompson and Jacques Haeringer.

trust him with its future."

Thompson said: "Places like this

are rare, they become part of how a community remembers itself. My

role now is simple, to help make sure it's here, in the same spirit, for decades to come."

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Outdated State Standards Collide with SCC Review of NextEra-Dominion ‘Merger’

Herndon-Reston Indivisible holds legislative town hall.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A town hall with State Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-38, and Del. Irene Shin, D-8, at Reston’s North County Governmental Center focused on mobilizing public action over NextEra Energy’s potential \$67 billion acquisition of Dominion Energy.

Speaking to the assembled community members on Aug. 30, organizers and lawmakers urged those present to scan the on-site QR code to submit formal comments directly to the three members of the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

“This is the QR code. It’ll take you directly to the [SCC] website to submit public comment,” Shin told attendees. “Make sure that you’re doing that one way or the other, whether you’re in favor of this acquisition or not,” Shin said. “Make sure you are letting the [SCC] know how you feel as Dominion Energy customers or folks who might be impacted by this decision.”

The event opened with live virtual analysis from Josh Macey, a professor at Yale Law School and expert in energy law and utility regulation. Macey stressed the importance of regulatory oversight, followed by the lawmakers’ comments highlighting community concerns, an audience Q&A, and a closing call to action.

The Aug. 30 event was hosted by Herndon-Reston Indivisible

Expert Context on Utility Risk

Macey cautioned that utility mergers carry risks that standard corporate transactions do not. Macey explained that a combined NextEra-Dominion could shift financial risks and higher costs directly onto Virginia consumers. He noted the merged entity could enter “into above-market contracts with its own affiliates” and use the regulated utility to “guarantee the debt of a riskier venture,” leaving ratepayers exposed if those bets go bad.

Infrastructure decisions after such a merger could disproportionately favor large commercial entities over everyday residents, Macey said.

New transmission could be built so that “cheaper supply goes to data centers” while “funneling more expensive power to the customers who don’t have any choice in who their provider is,” potentially prioritizing tech hubs over residential households.

Virginia could meet its clean-energy goals more cheaply through “a competitive process” rather than relying on voluntary promises from a merged megacity, Macey said.

Macey called for “ring-fencing provisions” prohibiting cross-affiliate financial transactions and requiring independent competitive solicitations subject to comprehensive audits.



From left, State Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-38, and Del. Irene Shin, D-8, deliver remarks to community members as Josh Macey, an associate professor at Yale Law School and expert in energy law and utility regulation, listens online.



State Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-38, (left) and Del. Irene Shin, D-8, listen to community members’ comments following a town hall meeting in Reston, Virginia, Aug. 30.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

Community members take their seats before a town hall meeting hosted by Herndon-Reston Indivisible, State Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-38, and Del. Irene Shin, D-8, at the North County Governmental Center in Reston Aug. 30. The meeting focused on mobilizing public action regarding NextEra Energy’s proposed \$67 billion acquisition of Dominion Energy.

Shin Discusses Legal Framework, Commission Structure

Turning to the regulatory landscape, Shin outlined the legal framework governing the transaction. The Virginia SCC will judge the merger under the Utility Transfer Act, a narrow, 1970s-era statute that asks essentially three core questions: does the deal interrupt or disrupt service; are rates still “just and reasonable”; and can ratepayers be held “mostly harmless”?

Unlike Texas and Hawaii, which rejected NextEra acquisitions because their state laws require a broad “public’s best interest” standard, Virginia’s current statute lacks a similar public-interest requirement.

Shin explained that Texas rejected a NextEra acquisition because regulators could not show it was in the best interest of ratepayers and would not shift risk onto them. Hawaii similarly rejected NextEra under its clear public-interest mandate. Shin contrasted those outcomes with Virginia’s Utility Transfer Act, which sets a narrower bar for

utility transfers.

Shin also laid out the State Corporation Commission’s 180-day review structure, which includes an initial 60-day period plus a possible 120-day extension. She noted that because the formal application was filed in mid-July, the statutory clock will run through the November and December holidays.

Addressing ethics concerns surrounding the three-member commission, Shin spoke about SCC Chair Kelsey A. Bagot who is a former senior attorney at NextEra. Shin voiced support for keeping Bagot on the case rather than seeking recusal, explaining that if Bagot stepped aside, the SCC would be left with only two members. Those remaining two commissioners could select a temporary third member without General Assembly oversight — an outcome Shin opposes.

Litigation Outlook and Public Action

Looking ahead, Boysko reinforced that

the 180-day window will not be the end of the NextEra-Dominion Energy story, stating that there will “likely be litigation, no matter what the answer is” and that the matter will “not be solved in 180 days.”

Shin added that if the SCC’s ultimate decision is appealed, the case would bypass lower appellate courts and proceed directly to the Virginia Supreme Court.

When an audience member asked whether the General Assembly could intervene to extend the SCC’s statutory timeline, Boysko acknowledged that while some lawmakers have requested an extension, she does not believe enough legislative support currently exists to pass such a measure.

Asked if the legislature has the technical authority to change the timeline, Shin replied it would be “very unusual and extraordinary” while the case is underway.

Both legislators concluded the meeting by emphasizing that public participation remains the most effective tool for residents, as lawmakers do not vote on utility merger approvals. They reiterated the importance of filing public comments in the official SCC docket.

They advocated for local in-person public hearings so residents do not have to navigate restrictive phone-in testimony systems. Shin reminded attendees that the merger impacts 2.7 million Virginia customer accounts and predicted that the upcoming legislative session will see multiple bills introduced to revise statutory standards for future utility acquisitions.

The Virginia State Corporation Commission announced on Facebook on August 17, “If you’ve been following the news about the proposed Dominion Energy/NextEra merger, you may be curious about how the public can participate.

We’ve created the following web page to help! Keep up with important dates and other information relating to the upcoming hearing.

We’ll be updating the page as more information becomes available.”

<https://www.scc.virginia.gov/about-the-scc/dominion-nextera-merger-updates/>

Indivisible NOVA Rallies Against Federal Voting Rules



Defend Democracy Indivisible members in Northern Virginia remind the public that early voting for the upcoming general election begins in September.

Demonstration targets new citizenship verification and mail-in ballot policies.

By Mercia Hobson
Connection Newspapers

Defend Democracy Indivisible (DDI) NOVA, the local Northern Virginia chapter of the national grassroots advocacy network Indivisible, held a public demonstration on Aug. 28 titled “Support the ‘March on Washington’ with a Rally in RESTON/HERNDON For VOTING RIGHTS.”

The peaceful roadside gathering at the South Reston Park & Ride focused on voting accessibility, civil rights and voter participation, marking the anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington. Participants displayed signs along Fox Mill Road and Reston Parkway.

“Sixty-three years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous ‘I Have a Dream’ speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Many will be going downtown to commemorate that occasion, but DDI also wanted to make space for people who aren’t able to make it down there,” said Collin Ford, an organizer. “The 1963 speech was to advocate for civil rights, including the right to vote. On this 63rd anniversary of that brilliant speech, DDI and friends from as far away as Haymarket/Fauquier County are standing up to remember MLK, Jr.’s Dream, to try to move toward America’s promise, and to defend our voting rights.”

The rally comes as early voting approaches.

Federal Policy and Executive Oversight

The local demonstration reflects broader national debates surrounding federal election policy and voter verification procedures.

According to the presidential Executive Order 14399, titled “Ensuring Citizenship Verification and Integrity in Federal Elections,” proponents argue that federal oversight is necessary to ensure election security. They claim that requiring federal citizenship verification through databases maintained by agencies like the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) helps prevent noncitizens or ineligible individuals from receiving mail ballots. They also claim that requiring state election offices to submit preapproved voter lists to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and using standardized envelope designs creates better tracking mechanisms to prevent illegal vote casting or ballot tampering.

Opponents—including voting rights groups, state election officials, and legal scholars—have challenged the policy in court, citing structural and logistical concerns. According to legal scholars and constitutional resources like the U.S. Constitution Annotated, critics point to the U.S. Constitution’s Elections Clause (Article I, Section 4), arguing that state legislatures, not the federal executive branch, have primary authority to determine the time, place, and manner of elections. Civil rights groups argue that preapproved list requirements create administrative cutoffs that could block eligible citizens who register, update their address, or request an absentee ballot under normal state deadlines.



PHOTOS BY LINDA FALKERSON/DEFEND DEMOCRACY INDIVISIBLE

Demonstrators gather with Defend Democracy Indivisible NOVA, the local Northern Virginia chapter of the national grassroots advocacy network Indivisible, during a demonstration Aug. 28 to Support the ‘March on Washington’ with a Rally in RESTON/HERNDON For VOTING RIGHTS.

Voting rights analysts and organizations such as the Brennan Center for Justice and the Fair Elections Center note that federal databases like SAVE or Social Security records are not designed as comprehensive voter rolls and often contain outdated information, increasing the risk of eligible voters being mistakenly excluded.

Election Logistics and Resources

To check your voter registration status or find official election information in Virginia, consult government resources:

Statewide Guidelines: Access registration verification through the Virginia Department of Elections or through the Virginia Citizen Portal.

Local Election Administration: View county-specific updates and precinct resources on the Fairfax County Office of Elections.

Demonstrators with Defend Democracy Indivisible NOVA hold signs during an Aug. 28 voting rights rally in Northern Virginia. “Hands Off Our Vote” is a civil rights slogan used by grassroots organizations and voting rights advocates to protest policies they say restrict voting access or disenfranchise voters.





SCREENSHOT VIA YOUTUBE VIDEO

A screenshot from a video posted to YouTube by Fairfax County School Board Member Melanie Meren shows a student lying on their back after being struck by a vehicle near South Lakes High School on Tuesday.

South Lakes High Student Struck by Driver and Hospitalized

Local officials voice outcry over budget cuts that removed crossing guards.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A 16-year-old student on their way to school was hospitalized Tuesday morning after being struck by a vehicle near South Lakes High School at approximately 7:54 a.m. The incident sparked renewed outcry from local officials over recent budget cuts to high school crossing guards.

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn issued a statement addressing the incident along South Lakes Drive.

"I was very sorry to hear about the student hit by a car exiting the South Lakes High School drop-off this morning. While this is not the intersection where a school crossing guard was previously posted, this incident

SEE SOUTH LAKE HIGH, PAGE 10

Crash Traps Victim, Ambulance Hit By Telephone Pole

Firefighter injured as well.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

On August 25, at 11:31 a.m., the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department responded to a vehicle crash with entrapment at the intersection of Bracknell Drive and Baron Cameron Avenue in Reston. Upon arrival, crews located a two-vehicle crash with one car into a pole. There was one occupant trapped. Firefighters immedi-

ately began working to extricate the occupant.

While crews were operating on the scene, a passing truck caught hanging electrical wires from the pole causing the pole to collapse onto an FCFRD ambulance and medical equipment.

Despite this secondary incident firefighters remained focused, successfully extricated the occupant, and transported them to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

One firefighter was transported with non-life-threatening injuries sustained during the secondary incident.

The intersection remained closed for some time after the accident.

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GMRWC Supports Tony Sabio for Congress!

The Greater McLean Republican Women's Club recently welcomed Tony Sabio for a well-attended "Coffee and Conversation" in support of his campaign for Congress in Virginia's 8th District.

U.S. Navy veteran and former Secret Service and CIA officer.



Tony's priorities include:

- Lowering energy and living costs
- Creating jobs and supporting small businesses
- Strengthening public and national security
- Improving healthcare choice and transparency

Strong Women. Strong Communities.

Founded in 1944 and chartered in 1968, GMRWC brings together accomplished, engaged women who support our community through civic involvement, educational scholarships, and charitable outreach.

Virginia's 8th District includes Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, and portions of eastern Fairfax County, including some McLean precincts.

JOIN GMRWC - GET INVOLVED!

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‘Deer Management’ Starting Soon in Fairfax County

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

White-tailed deer are quite at home in suburbia and perhaps too much so.

From Sept. 12 to Feb. 13, Fairfax County will conduct annual “deer management” using archery, sharpshooting, “human exclusion, repellency and habitat modification.” The last three, non-lethal methods, are county recommendations to property owners, such as fencing, tree guards, repellents and plants unpalatable to deer.

Deer management is needed, officials say, because of collisions with vehicles, disease transmission and harm to forest regeneration, forest composition, ecosystem services and biodiversity. Too many deer can degrade habitat by eating seedlings, saplings and valuable native plants.

Wildlife biologist Jordan Green elaborates, “In Northern Virginia, the need stems from an ecological imbalance where too many deer on the landscape degrade native habitats to the point of making it difficult to impossible for some other native wildlife species to survive. In addition, a higher concentration of deer has implications for the greater spread of disease, such as chronic wasting disease and the higher risk of deer-vehicle collisions.” Green is with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

How Many Deer Are Too Many?

“Suburbia’s rise supercharged the whitetail’s recovery,” wrote Ben Goldfarb in his book “Crossings.” “Deer thrive in edge habitats, transitional zones where delectable meadows bump against the shelter of forests.”

Fairfax County officials have conducted deer density surveys in certain parks using cameras and drone surveys. Their goal is to “manage local deer populations to balance the varied needs and reasonable expectations of a diverse human community (cultural carrying capacity), the requirements of a biologically diverse ecosystem and the anticipated future social/ecosystem demands. Hunting is the preferred population management method, where appropriate and feasible.”

Historically, in the eastern U.S., animals like cougars, bobcats and red wolves were their primary predators. Today, few natural predators remain in Northern Virginia.

Deer Hunts

In fiscal year 2026, hunters “har-



A small buck takes a rest after foraging for acorns.



CONNECTION FILE PHOTOS

Fawns spend most of their days without their mothers.

vested” 752 deer in Fairfax County using archery and sharpshooting.

This year, hunters using bows and arrows will operate in over 100 parks from tree stands. The county will post orange “deer management” signs at park entrances and trail heads and send letters to around 27,000 property owners adjacent to the park sites. Archers and hunters must complete hunter safety education courses and have certain qualifications.

The Fairfax County police will conduct sharpshooting at night in secured parks when parks are closed and shoot at static locations over bait from elevated positions. They will donate the venison to local food banks and Hunters for the Hungry. In 2026, they donated an estimated 5,610 pounds of venison.

Vehicle Collisions

“Deer-vehicle collisions are the primary cause of deer deaths in suburban areas without other lethal control,” says the county police department’s website.

In 2025, there were approximately 120 deer-vehicle collisions in Fairfax County with the highest numbers of collisions occurring in October and November and the peak time for collisions being 6 a.m.

Native plants that are less attractive to deer, from Katherine Edwards, Fairfax County’s Wildlife Biologist:

Common wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Blue wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
Threadleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*)
Virginia or southern blueflag iris (*Iris virginica*)
Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*)
Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Green-and-gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*)
Orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)
Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*)
Pink muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)
False indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*)
Common pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) (a tree)

Virginia ranks ninth in the country for collisions. A Virginia transportation official has estimated that only ten percent of deer-vehicle collisions are captured in police records.

Feeding Deer

Some people intentionally or unintentionally feed deer, says Dr. Gino J. D’Angelo, Associate Professor of Deer Ecology and Management at the University of Georgia. Some well-meaning people put

out corn. WalMart sells millions of bags of “deer corn,” he says, and some packaged deer corn carries the aflatoxin fungus.

Deer also will knock bird seed out of feeders and eat what falls out. Grain-based food can be high in carbohydrates. “A deer’s gastro-intestinal system cannot manage a high influx of carbs and they can increase acid buildup,” D’Angelo said. Also, congregating deer can transmit disease through their saliva, feces and urine, he said.

White-tailed Deer

As they bound away, white-tailed deer flash their erect tails’ white underside.

The males, called bucks, have antlers and are larger than females, called does.

Bark scraped off a tree may have been done by deer because their antlers are initially covered with hair called “velvet” and they rub off the velvet before rutting or mating season. In Virginia, rutting season is usually from late October through November when bucks may have heightened activity as they compete for does’ attention.

Fairfax County’s program is a model, Dr. D’Angelo offered. “Many wildlife professionals view programs in Fairfax County and the D.C. area as leaders in urban deer management programs. We are learning from the way they do this work.”

Information

Fairfax County, www.fairfax-county.gov/wildlife/deer-management-program

Locations of archery and sharpshooting, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/archery-program and www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/sharpshooting.

Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline, 855-571-9003

Reston Teen Heads to Capitol Hill for Pediatric Cancer

After brother's death at 11, Darya Golesorkhi champions AI technology's life-saving potential.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Darya Golesorkhi, 15, of Reston entered South Lakes High School this week as a sophomore. While she and her peers in Fairfax County Public Schools navigate new districtwide restrictions on generative artificial intelligence in classrooms, Darya is heading to Capitol Hill on Friday, Sept. 18, to champion AI's life-saving potential.

A Personal Mission

Darya's advocacy is deeply personal. Her 11-year-old brother, Kamran "Buddy" Golesorkhi, died on Aug. 19, 2025, after a long and fierce six-year battle with osteosarcoma. Treatments for osteosarcoma have not changed significantly in more than 40 years, according to Darya in an Aug. 29 interview with The Connection. When standard protocols fail, families have few options.

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia reports, "This bone cancer affects approximately 400 children younger than age 20 every year in the United States."

Joining fellow bereaved siblings and young survivors from the nonprofit MIB (Make It Better) Agents, Darya plans to lobby lawmakers to pass the Accelerating Innovation (AI) for Kids with Cancer Act (H.R. 9632).

Harnessing AI for Oncology

Led by U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, alongside co-sponsors U.S. Rep. Ami Bera, D-Calif., and U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Pa., the bipartisan legislation establishes a dedicated federal framework to accelerate pediatric cancer research through artificial intelligence.

The legislation aims to address key hurdles by using AI to break data silos, authorizing \$100 million annually for the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative to merge fragmented hospital records, doctor notes, and genomic datasets into an accessible engine. The technology would also streamline trial design by analyzing complex biological data to identify hidden genetic subtypes and rapidly match rare-disease patients to targeted clinical trials. Additionally, predictive modeling would anticipate side effects and drug responses early, shaving years off Phase I through Phase III clinical trials.

Humanizing the Cause

Darya said her pitch to lawmakers will focus on the real-world impact behind the bill's text. Asked what she plans to say, Darya grounds her reply in the need for families' stories, not statistics, and frames the bill as something that could truly make a difference.

"I just really want them to hear different



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GOLESORKHI FAMILY

Darya Golesorkhi, of Reston, enjoys a moment with her family, including her brother Kamran "Buddy" Golesorkhi, father Hossein, mother Kate, and Buddy's chocolate lab, Coconut. Buddy died of osteosarcoma on Aug. 19, 2025.

people's stories that are real, so they can see how this bill would affect people in the real world and how much of a difference it could truly make," Darya said. "Extended research would just make things so much better."

Before meeting with lawmakers, Darya will join other teens from MIB's junior advisory board and next generation group for a training session led by Jennifer Flynn, outreach director for Kids v Cancer. Flynn and her organization previously worked on the Michaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act, another federal effort focused on childhood cancer.

Honoring Buddy's Legacy

Darya shared that the local community has helped raise nearly \$200,000 (\$193K) over the last couple of years #becauseofbuddy to help support scientific research and programs for MIB Agents. Funding includes a \$100,000 grant to Dr. Theodore Nowicki at UCLA. Darya said the family fund has also supported travel grants and other awards through MIB Agents.

Darya is learning to navigate the political side of cancer advocacy. While she has not yet contacted her local congressman, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-Va., ahead of the Sept. 18 visit, Darya quickly added, not skipping a beat, "This is definitely a possibility of something I could do."

Darya shared a link to her family fund page, <https://www.mibagents.org/family-funds/buddy>, which she says captures both Buddy's story and the practical impact of their efforts.

Darya added that she is part of the MIB Junior Advisory Board, and her mom (Kat Azima) took a full-time role on staff with MIB as Director of Scientific Programs in May 2026.

Darya explained that her mom is co-director until the end of the year and then will take over fully in January.

Darya's journey continues. It bridges the gap between grassroots philanthropy and systemic federal infrastructure. It shows that while AI in classrooms raises debates over screen time, in pediatric oncology, it could hold the power to save lives.



Buddy Golesorkhi rides his four-wheeler.



A 2026 MIB OutSmarting Osteosarcoma \$100,000 HERO Grant is awarded in memory of Buddy Golesorkhi to Dr. Theodore Scott Nowicki on June 26, 2026.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREAT FALLS ROTARY CLUB

Great Falls Rotary Makes Valued Donation to Embry Rucker Community Shelter

Bob Dinkle, left, of the Rotary Club of Great Falls, and Millie Harris, manager of volunteer and community engagement at the Embry Rucker Community Shelter in Reston, organize the club's donated household supplies for the shelter's Move-Out/Welcome Home program on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026. The club's Great Falls Oktoberfest will take place Friday, Oct. 2, at The Grange. Tickets and VIP packages are available at <https://www.rotarygreatfallsva.org/index.php>.

— MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Protecting the Right to Vote Still Requires Vigilance



Women's Equality Day, Aug. 26, attracted 315 people to Lorton's Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Legendary country music singer Dolly Parton may be an atypical woman activist, but on Aug. 26, one day after she died, she was honored at Lorton's Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.

NOVA Parks Executive Director Justin Wilson told the 315 celebrants who gathered for Women's Equality Day that Parton wrote a song titled "19th Amendment" about the U.S. Constitutional amendment, certified on Aug. 26, 1920, that gave some women in the United States the right to vote.

Wilson shared some of Parton's lyrics: "There was just so much back then we weren't allowed to do, but the first bite of that apple I guess revealed the truth. That's when Eve got smart and that's why Adam don't like fruit. ... We had to fight for women's rights."

Calling the area a "sacred site," Wilson explained that in 1917 suffragists called the Silent Sentinels peacefully picketing on the White House sidewalk for the right to vote were jailed in the Occoquan Workhouse.

Pat Wirth who led the memorial's fund raising and building reminded all, "It is a national memorial. It took millions of dollars." Its name comes from the 1917 "night of terror" when prison guards brutally treated the jailed women and word leaked out, news that nudged a recalcitrant President Woodrow Wilson to support the amendment.



Virginia Lt. Governor Ghazala Hashmi gave the keynote address for Women's Equality Day at the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.

His change of mind was a turning point in the suffrage movement.

Hashmi, a Historic First

Introducing the keynoter, Virginia's Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi, Camdyn Parker, a 13-year

cookie mom," Hashmi highlighted three key words: persistence, vigilance and engagement. She applauded two South Carolina, enslaved women, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, who in the 19th century agitated for both slavery's abolition and women's rights and challenged the notion that women should stay in the home.

"She made the radical argument that went to the very heart of democracy," Hashmi said. "How can a nation claim that it was ruled by the consent of the governed while systematically excluding half of its citizens from political power?"

Hashmi saluted other heroines, including the late African-American U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. Hashmi said, "It's a democratic philosophy that argues if one is excluded, enter. If the in-

SEE PROTECTING THE, PAGE 9

"If one is excluded, enter. If the institution was not designed with you in mind, change it. And once you have a seat, make room for someone else."

— Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi

Alexandria Girl Scout, said that Hashmi "made history" in 2026 as the first Muslim woman elected statewide in the United States, remarking, "Her election represents a more inclusive democracy."

Dubbing herself a "Girl Scout



Justin Wilson, NOVA Parks Executive Director, welcomed attendees.



Laura Greenfield, AAUW Virginia President, described her group's projects.



Patricia Wirth relayed the memorial's history.



Nancy Tate, national League of Women Voters President, said that challenges to voting still persist today.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Oriella Mejia, a Prince William Parks Commissioner, donned one of the sashes like those the suffragists wore.

Protecting the Right to Vote Still Requires Vigilance

FROM PAGE 8

stitution was not designed with you in mind, change it. And once you have a seat, make room for someone else.” She exhorted the audience to use “the power that that generations before us fought to secure.”

“Threats to voting rights are greater now than in 60 years,” Nancy Tate told attendees. “The suffragists knew that the fight for equality was never over,” she said, so some went on the found the League of Women Voters in 1920. Tate, an Arlington resident, is the League’s executive director.

Historian Shirley Marshall, author of “An Inside Story of the National Woman’s Party,” said, “The suffragists did more than hold banners and stand around.” Combining through the 1918 letters Elizabeth Kalb wrote from Washington to her mother, Marshall described

incidents, like the police arresting women “for carrying the American flag” and Kalb getting a lump from being “cracked on her head.”

“Police violence was common,” Marshall said, “But mostly out of sight.” Because Wilson initially did not support suffrage, women burned his speeches in Lafayette Square. “Kerosene was the secret, keeping the fires lit. They soaked logs in kerosene,” she snickered.

Many historical accounts portray the suffragists as white women, but suffrage was diverse, Marshall asserted. And she emphasized that even upon the 1920 passage of the amendment, women who were not white, like African Americans, Indigenous women and Chinese women, still could not vote.

Joy Galberth, president of the Fairfax County chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, recalled that the organizers of the suffragists’



The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Lorton.

1913 Washington parade insisted that African American women march at the end. “Our sorority marched with dignity even when forced to the back,” she said, adding, “Equality is not a destination but a responsibility.”

Gloria Blackwell, reinforced Hashmi’s themes. “It was a long, courageous effort,” she said. “They persisted. Democracy is not self-sustaining.” Blackwell is head of the American Association of University Women.

Kobby Hoffman, president of the Virginia chapter of the National Organization for Women, read the “Women’s Declaration of Independence” and sought petition signers urging Congress to recognize the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th amendment to the Constitution.

Marshall quoted Mary Church Terrell, a 1905 African-American civil rights leader: “There is an imperative need of meddlers today, active, insistent and fearless meddlers.” The meddlers are still at it.

“I declare to you that woman must not depend upon the protection of man, but must be taught to protect herself, and there I take my stand.”

Susan B Anthony

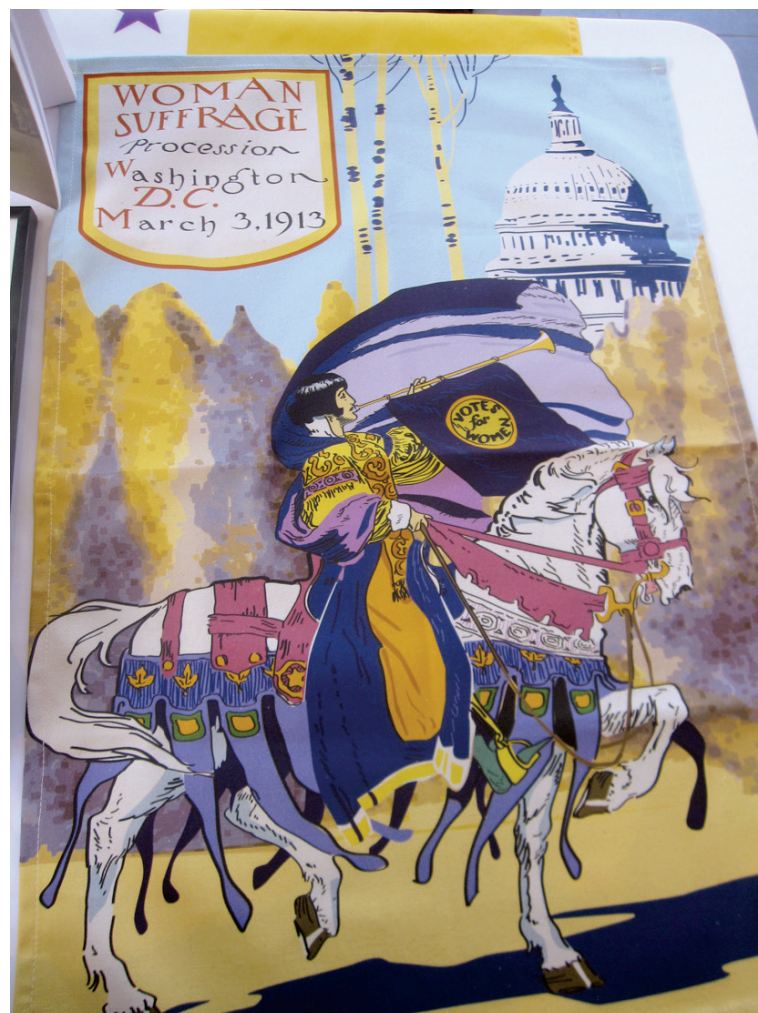
Susan B. Anthony was just one of many suffragists.



Thirteen stations tell the suffrage story.



Lynne Garvey-Hodge portrayed Mrs. Robert Walker, a suffragist.



The suffragists staged a parade in Washington, D. C., in 1913.

Running for Redemption

Banned pro triathlete Fairfax County native Collin Chartier reaches home ground in final leg of 2,000-mile run after fall from grace in 2023.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Former professional triathlete Collin Chartier, who grew up in Fairfax County, stepped off the Washington & Old Dominion Trail at Mile 20 at the Town of Herndon's iconic Red Caboose at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29. His arrival marked a major milestone in the 32-year-old Fairfax County native's 2,000-mile, 10-state cross-country run home that began June 12.

As the first municipality along the trail within Fairfax County, Herndon marked Chartier's official first steps back on home ground. Town of Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc ran alongside him a short distance and greeted Chartier as he wrapped up his second-to-last day before his final run, ending at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Sunday.

Descent from the Podium

Long before his suspension, Chartier built his athletic foundation locally. After running cross country for W.T. Woodson High School, he competed in collegiate cross country and triathlon at Marymount University in Arlington and graduated in 2017. After turning professional, he steadily climbed the global ranks, culminating in a breakout 2022 season when he won Ironman Mont-Tremblant and the prestigious PTO U.S. Open in Dallas — taking home \$100,000 and reaching a world ranking of 11th.

But that rapid ascent unraveled. Chartier's racing career collapsed when he tested positive for erythropoietin (EPO), a banned

blood-boosting drug that illegally increases red blood cell production to enhance stamina.

Chartier posted a public apology on Instagram on April 24, 2023, admitting to the ban and declaring he would not offer "bullsh*t excuses." He cited intense competitive pressure, burnout, and extreme personal isolation as driving factors behind his mistake, while announcing his permanent departure from professional triathlon. @collinchartier

Crushing Criticism

The response from the endurance world was immediate and hostile. Fellow professionals and fans rejected the statement, demanding he return prize money and name co-conspirators, while former World Champions openly mocked his claims of acting alone. Ethics analysts at the University of Texas, in a May 2023 case study published by the McCombs School of Business's Ethics Unwrapped program, noted how the high-pressure environment and fears of falling short after years of personal sacrifice drove Chartier down a "slippery slope," ultimately leaving him adrift and separated from the sport that had defined his life.

Redemption?

Chartier described his project, "Running Home," as part redemption and part bridge to an unknown next chapter. A few days earlier in a phone interview with The Connection, Chartier explained, "The arc of the story really is how your past doesn't define you. ... This is the story of my redemption." A famous phrase from J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Fellowship of the Ring," "Not

all those who wander are lost," fits Chartier's narrative.

Averaging roughly a marathon a day across 10 states on his run home, Chartier's endurance effort raised donations for mental health and addiction recovery through two nonprofit organizations, the Herren Project and Back on My Feet. As Chartier put it, he is now focused on "using sport to help empower others" instead of what he was doing three years ago, "which was racing for myself."

Arriving at the Herndon Caboose — just 22 miles from his finish line in the nation's capital — the psychological reality of his journey took center stage. Standing solidly on the land of his home county, he spoke directly to his personal integrity and accountability.

"I did do that. I did mess up. I did cheat. But there has to be a way that y

ou can move forward and make a difference, a positive impact in life, and so the negative people will try to keep you stuck because they themselves won't change," Chartier said. "But there's plenty of more positive people that I've found who've been encouraging and uplifting — like, 'You can move forward, and your story does matter.'"

Developing Self-Worth and Growth

When asked what he had learned most along the way, Chartier didn't talk first about mileage or sore muscles, but about judgment. He recalled heading into Kansas expecting "the worst place in the country to be running through in the middle of summer,"



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Keven LeBlanc, left, mayor of the Town of Herndon, joins former triathlete Collin Chartier as he runs on the W&OD heading toward Vienna, before his final day on his 2000-mile run, a marathon a day.

only to discover wide-open beauty and strangers so kind they handed him house keys and a place to sleep. "There's beauty to be found in everything," he said, adding that moving slowly on foot through small towns and back roads — rather than speeding by on highways — made him newly aware of how privileged his own Fairfax County upbringing had been. Chartier said he passes time on his daily marathons not by listening to music but by fills his head with audiobooks.

Chartier said he is trying to stop measuring his worth by other people's opinions and instead focus on whether he is willing to change and grow. He added that he wants to move into service, education, and coaching. He plans to visit the Herren Project center in Massachusetts on Sept. 4 to volunteer rather than hold a formal board or fundraising title.

Audiobooks and "One breath. We're All One."

Audiobooks, not music, kept time moving while Chartier ran

the 2,000 miles. Chartier said he leaned on "Mind Magic" by James R. Doty, a neurosurgeon's look at how to "actualize and figure out what are our desires and how do we then move toward our desires," treating manifestation as "rewriting your neurology."

Chartier had just finished "Still Together" by Manoj Dias, co-founder of the Open breathwork app, calling it "very ... relevant to our day and age" as it helps people "connect to yourself, each other, and your life."

Chartier is moving more slowly through "What to Make of a Life" by Jim Collins, about "how to make a life but what to make of the life and navigating the cliffs in life," which he linked directly to his own question of "what do we do next."

On Chartier's wrist is a customized motivational bracelet featuring the words "One breath. We're all one," his personal mantra for staying present — focusing simply on the next breath while raising awareness for mental health and addiction recovery.

South Lakes High Student Struck by Driver and Hospitalized

FROM PAGE 5

highlights that our school safety programs should not be the target of discretionary cuts," Alcorn said.

The Fairfax County Police Department reported that the student was not in a crosswalk, was hit at a location that did not have a crossing guard previously, and suffered minor injuries. The driver remained on the scene and was cited for failing to stop before entering a highway, a traffic infraction under state law.

Melanie Meren, Fairfax County School Board member for the

Hunter Mill District, posted video footage showing the teen lying near the curb beside a backpack as an adult sat on the ground next to him and sirens echoed in the background.

Six days before the collision, Meren wrote in an Aug. 26 newsletter that protecting children remains a top priority: "I also continue advocating to restore funding for high school crossing guards, whose absence this school year is painfully clear during student arrival and dismissal. As you see dangerous traffic situations

at high schools, including South Lakes, please take a moment to share this content widely."

Fairfax County supervisors eliminated 13 full-time crossing guard positions across all public high schools May 5 this year when they voted to adopt the fiscal 2027 budget, a move expected to save roughly \$1.89 million in police costs.

Alcorn urged the Board of Supervisors to restore funding for crossing guards at the school's flagpole entrance and other high-risk campuses. He noted that

during spring budget discussions, he unsuccessfully asked Chairman Jeffrey McKay to spare high school crossing guards from cuts. He recently co-sponsored a board matter seeking to restore funding at this month's budget review.

Alcorn added that while a crossing guard is needed nearby, officials must also address broader campus safety through stricter speed enforcement, technology, and infrastructure improvements.

Although speed cameras were installed on South Lakes Drive last year, Alcorn said removing cross-

ing guards "goes in the wrong direction."

"Pedestrian safety has and continues to be a top priority for me across the range of local services ... especially around our schools," Alcorn said. "Now is the time for senior leadership of Fairfax County Public Schools and Fairfax County to find solutions to the situation at South Lakes High School and at other high schools that present a higher safety risk after the Board's decision to cut high school crossing guards in this year's budget."

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Weddings/Celebrations Julia Irizarry, Justin Freeh

Julia Tonge Irizarry was married last year to Justin William Freeh at the United States Naval Academy Chapel, in Annapolis, Md. The wedding reception was held at Congressional Country Club, in Potomac, Md. The couple are excited to join the vibrant McLean and Great Falls communities, where Mr. Freeh was raised.

Mrs. Freeh, 35, runs strategic accounts for an AI hardware and solutions company, GigaIO. She has a research background in Quantitative Geoscience and has spent the past 15 years dedicated to figuring out how modern technology and data availability can help solve real world problems. She completed her undergraduate studies at Appalachian State University and earned a Master's degree from the University of Oregon.

She is the daughter of Karen Irizarry and Ferdinand Irizarry II of Fayetteville, NC. Her mother is a Social Worker and Psychotherapist serving the broader Fayetteville, NC community. Her father is the Executive Vice President of the Patriot Foundation. He retired from the United States Army as a Brigadier General, after 36 years, including service as the Deputy Commanding General for the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

Mr. Freeh, 40, is a Defense Technology Executive and Private Investor. Before his private sector career, he served as an offi-



cer in the United States Navy and deployed multiple times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom as a Navy SEAL. He completed his undergraduate studies at the United States Naval Academy and earned postgraduate degrees at Georgetown University Law Center, Cornell S.C. Johnson School of Business and the Harvard Kennedy School. Mr. Freeh is admitted to the bar in Maryland and the District of Columbia and is a Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is a Trustee of the Naval War College Foundation and The Institute of World Politics.

He is a son of Marilyn Freeh and Louis Freeh of Palm Beach, FL. His mother is a philanthropist and a passionate supporter of educational, mental health and veterans service organization non-profits. His father is the Vice Chairman of AlixPartners, a global advisory and consulting firm. Before his private sector career, he served the United States for 27 years as a U.S. Army Reservist, FBI Special Agent, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Federal District Court Judge, and the fifth Director of the FBI.

Julia Tonge Irizarry married Justin William Freeh last year at the United States Naval Academy Chapel, in Annapolis, Md. The wedding reception was held at Congressional Country Club, in Potomac, Md.

Thrillers, Poetry, History, Memoirs, Literary Fiction

Fall for the Book's 28th Annual Festival includes 'New American Voices Award.'

Fall for the Book's 28th Annual Festival is packed with more than fifty writers, including poets, historians, novelists, memoirists, children's authors, graphic novelists, and more.

Chantel Acevedo's *Cages*, Bindu Bansinath's *Men Like Ours*, and Ada Ferrer's *Keeper of My Kin*, have been named finalists for the New American Voices Award, presented in partnership with Fall for the Book and the Institute for Immigration Research. Celebrating its ninth anniversary, this post-publication award recognizes recently published works that illuminate the complexity of human experience as told by immigrants, whose work is historically under-represented in writing and publishing.

In-person and virtual events run from Oct. 6-10, at George Mason University, downtown City of Fairfax, and in Fairfax County Public Library branches.

In addition to headliners Celeste Ng, and Stephen Graham

Jones, the festival welcomes featured writers Elizabeth Rusch, presenting the Beck Environmental Lecture with her book "The Twenty-One: The True Story of the Youth Who Sued the U.S. Government Over Climate Change," and award-winning journalist and PBS NewsHour co-anchor Geoff Bennett with *Black Out Loud: The Revolutionary History of Black Comedy from Vaudeville to '90s Sitcoms*.

The full schedule is now live and can be found on www.FallfortheBook.org/schedule.

The 2026 Festival will also host many local authors including, novelists Caroline Bock, Lina Patton and Diana Rojas; poets Michele Evans and Danika P. Myers; mystery writers Melanie McCabe and Aggie Blum Thompson; historians George Oberle and Nina Willner; Maryland state delegate Lily Qi; and folklorist Brittany Warman.

The Fall for the Book Festival partners with the City of Fairfax's 50th Annual Fall Festival on Sat-

urday, Oct. 10 and offers a day of hands-on literary events to readers aged 2 to 13. For the younger kids, Chuchu Wang will launch the morning with an interactive story-time featuring her picture book and lead a drawing demonstration. Next, Marcie Flinchum Atkins will help kids make their own animal handbook followed by Korena Di Roma Howley who will guide them as they make a paper drum. The middle-grade set will get zany with *Adi Rule* and make their own cut-out ghost chicken in time for Halloween. Finally, Amanda Foody will reveal the inspirations behind her bestselling series and offer advice on creating magical worlds.

Fall for the Book will host the Ninth Annual award ceremony for immigrant writers: The Institute for Immigration Research New American Voices Award, judged by Angie Cruz, Donna Hemans, and Wei-ke Wang. The three finalists, Chantel Acevedo, Bindu Bansinath and Ada Ferrer, will appear at the festival on Oct. 8.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FAIRFAX COUNTY OFFERS FREE TREES

Community-based organizations in Fairfax County can apply to receive free trees for planting on private properties, through a program by Fairfax County's Urban and Community Forestry Division (UCFD) of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. The program, offered in partnership with Casey Trees, is designed to help community organizations in Fairfax County – such as volunteer groups, civic associations and faith-based organizations – obtain high-quality, professionally grown trees suitable for planting. Purchasing top-quality trees can be a challenge for these organizations.

This opportunity focuses on increasing tree cover in economically disadvantaged communities, which typically do not benefit from moderate to high tree cover.

How to Apply: Fairfax County Tree Distribution to Community Organizations | Public Works and Environmental Services UCFD will prioritize applications

for tree-planting sites within or adjacent to Fairfax County-designated highly vulnerable communities, as defined by the county's One Fairfax policy and its associated Vulnerability Index. While planting in highly vulnerable communities will be prioritized, all community organizations are encouraged to apply for tree delivery, regardless of where tree planting is proposed.

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

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

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

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 – Sep 25, 2026

WEDNESDAYS NIGHTS

Open Game Nights. 6:30-9 p.m. At Old Firehouse Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Come enjoy table tennis, bridge, mah-jongg, arcade games, a sensory lab and more at the Old Firehouse. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

DANCING ON THE SQUARE

Thursday evenings in Fairfax City, Old Town Square – 10415 North Street, Fairfax. 6:30 p.m. Dance Workshop; 7:30 p.m. Free Dance. Join in every Thursday in September at Old Town Square for free Dance Workshops led by local artists and studios. Each evening begins with a guided workshop at 6:30 p.m., followed by an hour of open dancing at 7:30 p.m.—perfect for all ages and skill levels. No registration required. Make a night of it: stop by Commonwealth Brewing before or after the event to enjoy their special themed drink, the Whiskey Tango!

Sept. 3 – Salsa & Bachata

Instructor: Michele Kearney, Elegant Dancing
Learn fun, easy basics that will get you moving confidently on the dance floor!

More info: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/Events-directory/Parks-and-Recreation/Cultural-Arts/Dancing-on-the-Square-93>

RESTON ASSOCIATION DOG PADDLES

Bring your dog for a dip in the pools that have



free dance workshops

thursdays in september

@ old town square

workshops @ 6:30 pm

open dance @ 7:30 pm

9/3 SALSA & BACHATA MICHELE KEARNEY, ELEGANT DANCING	9/10 BROADWAY JAZZ CHRISTOPHER D'AMBOISE, GMU, CVPA	9/17 LATIN DANCE STYLES C4 PERFORMING ARTS	9/24 JHYAURE DANCE LUNA SHRESTHA & NAVIN KC, KC DANCE CENTER
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Stop by Commonwealth Brewing before or after to enjoy their themed drink, the Whiskey Tango!

Dancing on the Square takes place on Thursdays in September in the City of Fairfax.



Take a tour of the Silas Burke House on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 in Burke.

closed for the season and bid farewell to the dog days of summer. Registration is required as space is limited. These events often sell out.

Saturday, Sept. 5: Autumnwood Pool

Saturday, Sept. 12: North Hills Pool

Sunday, Sept. 13: Dogwood Pool

NOW THRU SEPT. 6

Metropolitan Washington Summer Restaurant Week has been extended. At various restaurants in the DMV. Presented by the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington (RAMW), Restaurant Week features over 300 restaurants; diners can choose from 11 current Michelin Starred or Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurants, 5 James Beard Awardees and Nominees, 14 RAMMYS Winners or Finalists, and 30 first-time participants. The week will feature multi-course brunch and lunch selections for \$25 or \$35 per person, and multi-course dinners for \$40, \$55, and

\$65 per person for on-premise dining. For the full list of participating restaurants, visit www.rwdmv.com.

Virginia restaurants include:

Cielo Supper Club

Darvish Kitchen

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar

Locket Rosslyn

Oak Steakhouse

The Boulevard

The Simon at Reston Station

SENIOR MOVIE DAY

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

Location: LOOK Movie theater at Reston Town Center

Free. Ages 55+

Sept. 23: Reminders of Him

SEPT. 3 AND SEPT. 24

“Huzzah!”: Better Said Than Done. 7 p.m. At Jammin' Java in Vienna. Better Said Than Done has been giving people a platform to share and listen to stories in Northern Virginia and beyond, for 15 years. To celebrate, the organization is staging two storytelling shows. September 3, “Huzzah!” will be presented live at Jammin' Java in Vienna at 7 p.m. On September 24, audiences around the country can watch “Hip, Hip, Hooray,” live on Zoom, starting at 8 p.m. Visit <https://better-saidthandone.org/events/>

FRIDAY/SEPT. 4

McLean Art Society's Opening Reception for “The Sky's the Limit” Exhibition and September Members Show. 5-7 p.m. At McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. On view September 2-27, 2026, “The Sky's the Limit!” brings together original artwork inspired by the ever-changing beauty and drama of the sky, from sweeping clouds and glowing horizons to shifting light, color, weather, and atmosphere. The exhibition reflects the many ways artists look upward for inspiration and interpret the sense of openness, movement, and possibility. In addition, visitors can browse the gallery's new monthly show featuring a diverse selection of original artwork by McLean Art Society artists in a wide range of subjects and media. The gallery includes paintings in oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor, and mixed media, along with drawing, photography, sculpture, and works in wood, glass, and ceramics. Get free tickets at sky-is-the-limit.eventbrite.com

SEPT. 5-6

33rd Annual Middle Eastern Food Festival.

Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday from 12:30-5 p.m. At Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, 8501 Lewinsville Road, McLean. The Festival will showcase authentic Middle Eastern cuisine, traditional pastries, music and dancing, vendors, church tours, a silent auction, and activities for all ages. Visit the vendors, take a guided tour of the church, or engage in a game of backgammon or chess. Children also can find plenty to do in the dedicated kids' zone, which includes a petting zoo, two moon bounces, 18-foot slide, face painting and a variety of games. A highlight of the event is the Saturday night, 6:30 p.m. “Haflī” (“party” in Arabic) that will feature live music and dancing, including opportunities to join the “Dabke,” a traditional folk line dance. Call 703-734-9566 or visit www.middleeastern-foodfestival.com

SEPT. 5-27

Natural Wonders by Rosemarie Forsythe.

At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, Reston. Reception to meet the artist on September 13 from 2-4 p.m. The exhibition features elements of the natural world Rosemarie saw in her backyard in Virginia and in the far-flung places of her life living and working around the world. Leaping horses, bright parrots, leopards, and even an alligator roam through her paintings. Colorful, highly patterned fish swim through a magical, deep blue sea. Forests of lilies, ferns, and wildflowers reveal glimpses of owls, monkeys, deer, and foxes. Palm leaves sway elegantly in a Pacific breeze by moonlight. Rich landscapes range from southern sand dunes to crisp, northern winter scenes of graceful birch trees rising to the distant sun.

SEPT. 5 TO OCT. 25

Bat Boy: The Musical. At Workhouse Arts Center, Building W3, Lorton. If you remember the Weekly World News tabloid sensation about a half-bat, half-boy creature found in a West Virginia cave, they already know the vibe. This rock musical is campy, hilarious, surprisingly heartfelt, and features a killer score that will have audiences tapping their feet between laughs. Performances run Fridays/Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. in September; Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. in October at the Workhouse Arts Center's Theater in Building W3.

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ENTERTAINMENT

SUNDAY/SEPT. 6

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Brian Slawski will share research on Joseph William Dooley (1856-1934) and his family of Burke.

SEPT. 6-7

Labor Day Weekend Model Train Show. Sunday, Sept. 6 from noon to 5 p.m.; Monday, Sept. 7 from noon to 4 p.m. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Labor Day Potomac Module Crew Weekend is a celebration of model railroading that brings together enthusiasts of all ages! This year's event promises a spectacular showcase of model trains, breathtaking landscapes, and the camaraderie of fellow hobbyists.

Highlights of the Event:

Interactive Displays: Enjoy the layouts featuring beautifully crafted trains and detailed scenery.

Running Trains: Watch as HO Models move around the tracks, our trains are always on time!

A Learning Experience: Children and families will have the chance to engage with experts who will share their knowledge about the mechanics of model trains and how to operate trains!

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

SEPT. 10-13

Tyson's Library Book & Media Sale. At Tyson's Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests.

Thursday, Sept 10, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, Sept 11, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday, Sept 12, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Sept 13, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less.

Visit <https://www.tysonslibraryfriends.org/>

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

OFC Snack & Paint Night. 7 - 9 p.m. At the Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Whether you are a beginner or an expert, love snacks, or want to get your hands dirty with some paint, join the Old Firehouse Center (OFC) for our snack and paint night at the DuVal Studio at MCC! Led by a professional art teacher, you will be able to create your own masterpiece with your family while having tons of fun doing so. All materials and snacks are included in the fee.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

9/11 Film Screening: Come From Away. 7 - 9 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Filmed live on Broadway, the Tony Award-winning musical tells the remarkable true story of a small Canadian town that welcomed thousands of stranded travelers after 9/11.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

25th Anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001. 10:10 a.m. At Public Safety Headquarters, 12099 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Ceremony to let us all reflect and remember the lives lost 25 years ago on Sept. 11, 2001.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 11

25th Anniversary of Sept. 11 attacks. At National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, VA. The National Museum of the Marine Corps will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks with opportunities to remember, reflect and experience compelling artifacts connected to that day and its aftermath. The Museum will host the free, public book launch of The Legacy of 9/11: The U.S. Marine Corps and the Terror Attacks of September 2001, featuring special remarks, a panel discussion, wreath laying and book signing.

Among the Museum's Sept. 11 artifacts and

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The Old Firehouse Center Block Party will take place on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 in McLean.



Harvest Happenings will take place on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

displays are:

Marine Corps flag recovered from the Pentagon that stood just yards from the crash of American Airlines Flight 77. Despite the destruction around it, the flag survived largely untouched.

F/A-18A Hornet, BuNo 161970, which flew an armed combat air patrol over Washington, D.C., on September 12, 2001.

AH-1W Super Cobra bearing 9/11 markings honoring New York City firefighters killed at the World Trade Center, flown by Marines during deployments to Afghanistan.

Recovered pieces of the World Trade Center and Pentagon, including an I-beam and Pentagon fragment visitors can touch, along with damaged signs, melted keys and a clock stopped at the time of impact.

The New York Fire Department 9/11 Memorial in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, featuring two steel beams recovered from the World Trade Center and honoring the 17 Marines who were among the fallen FDNY firefighters.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Fall Parking Lot Sale. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join the McLean Community Center for the Fall Parking Lot Sale on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Shop a wide variety of treasures, including household items, clothing, toys, collectibles and more, from more than 60 local vendors. Admis-

sion is free; visit mcleancenter.org for more information.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Virginia Native American Festival. 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. This year's festival welcomes members of the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi and Chickahominy tribes for a day, celebrating Virginia Native culture, heritage and community. Festival programming includes Upper Mattaponi dancing and drumming, traditional storytelling and a flute performance by Patrick "Littlewolf" Brooks of Five Feathers Productions, Shinnery League and a presentation by Mattaponi cultural keeper Samuel McGowan, featuring recreated tools and artifacts that highlight Mattaponi culture past and present. Throughout the day, visitors can try archery, join guided walks exploring traditional uses of local plants, watch fire-building and dugout canoe demonstrations, meet live animals, and participate in hands-on activities.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Paws in the Pool. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At The Water Mine at Lake Fairfax, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. The Water Mine's pools, sprays, showers and water playgrounds are the ultimate way for you and your dog to end the summer season. Whether your pooch prefers

to frolic through the sprays or float in the water, Dog Daze is the perfect place to make more dog-loving friends, entertain the whole family and have a doggone good time. Entry costs \$15 per dog, and all proceeds go to benefit parks through the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

65th Washington Show. 9-5 p.m. At Hotel Belvoir Springfield, 6550 Loisdale Road, Springfield. The National Capital Model Soldier Society is holding its 65th Annual Washington Show. Miniature model exhibition. Train/Armor/Ship/Car club tables. Demonstrations. Hobby vendors. Under 18 years free with adult. Visit <https://www.ncmssclub.org/annual-show>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Clifton Barn Dance. 6-10 p.m. In the Town of Clifton. Featuring caller Janine Smith and live music by the Julius Bjornson Trio. Julius is a master fiddler and was recently invited to be an Artist in Residence at Strathmore. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the following link:

<https://C25K.redpodium.com/clifton-barn-dance-2026>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 12

Fall Native Plant Sale. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Morven Park, 17195 Southern Planter Lane, Leesburg. Native plants naturally thrive in our local climate. Shop for local flora from five native plant nurseries—Hill House Farm & Nursery, Nature By Design, Seven Bends Nursery, Watermark Woods, and Yellow House Natives. Plus, drop in for free educational talks with plant experts at this Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy event.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 13

Oktoberfest. 4 p.m. At Sleepy Hollow United Methodist Church, 3435 Sleepy Hollow Road, Falls Church. The Washington Metropolitan Accordion Society will host an Oktoberfest concert featuring five members of The Edelweiss Band, at Sleepy Hollow United Methodist Church. \$10 donation requested of nonmembers. More information: washingtonaccordions.org, peter@musicisforever.com, or 703-919-5701.

SEPT. 15-17

UTP Open Auditions. 7 - 9 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. An opportunity for teens to get paid to perform! (the) Unruly Theatre Project, The Alden's award-winning professional teen improv company, is holding open auditions for students in grades 9-12 on Tuesday-Wednesday, Sept. 15-16, from 7-9 p.m. Members are paid for performances and community programs, with opportunities to perform throughout the area; no prepared monologue is required, and the company has won first place at Northern Virginia's Improvicon in 2022, 2023 and 2025! Register at <https://mcleancenter.org/the-unruly-theatre-project/>.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

McLean Project for the Arts Fall Solo Exhibitions. 7 p.m. Opening Reception. At Berlage Center for Arts & Education, 6910 Fleetwood Road, McLean. The three featured exhibits include FOREST, featuring work by Freya Grand; Afterlight, featuring work by Ian Husting, and Hubris and the Sublime, featuring work by Sally Veach. The fall exhibitions run through November 14, 2026. In addition, a Tea & Talk presented by The Mather and lead by MPA Artistic Director Nancy Sausser is scheduled for September 30, 2026, at 11 a.m. Additionally, an Artist Talk is scheduled for October 29, 2026, at 7 p.m.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

19th Annual Erin Peterson Fund Golf Tournament. Join in a day of golf and fun. At Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Avenue, Clifton. Registration is now open. To register, visit www.erinpetersonfund.org.

AARP: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR RETIREMENT RESOURCES

At Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Gain practical retirement planning knowledge through a four-part AARP educational series. Explore income and expenses, debt and assets, financial planning, Social Security, and fraud prevention. Attend individual sessions or complete all four for the full learning experience. Register separately for each session. Attend all four and receive a \$25 gift card.

Dates:

Thursday, September 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 22 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 1 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 8 at 1:00 p.m.

Learn more and RSVP: www.aarp.org/retirementVA

FRIDAY/SEPT. 18

VolunteerFest 2026. At Northern Virginia Community College – Annandale Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Volunteer Fairfax will host VolunteerFest 2026, bringing hundreds of volunteers, businesses, nonprofit partners, and community leaders together for a high-energy day of service focused on addressing food insecurity. Participants will work side by side to pack 100,000 nutritious meals for neighbors facing hunger. Capital Area Food Bank will help distribute the meals to food pantries in greatest need throughout Northern Virginia and the Greater Washington region. Community members can support VolunteerFest in three ways: volunteer, donate, or fundraise.

First Shift

Check-In & Community Fair: 8:30–9:15 a.m.

Meal Packing Instructions: 9:15 a.m.

Meal Packing: 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Second Shift

Check-In & Community Fair: 11:00–11:45 a.m.

Meal Packing Instructions: 11:45 a.m.

Meal Packing: 12:00–1:00 p.m.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Historic House Tours. 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. At Sunrise at Silas Burke House, 9619 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Ever wonder about the 1854 house you pass on Burke Lake Road? Burke Historical Society members will be leading tours of the historic house at Sunrise at Silas Burke House.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

OFC Block Party, 1-4 p.m. At the Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Celebrate the end of the season with the OFC Block Party! This outdoor community celebration brings classic block party energy to downtown McLean with live music, games, activities, food, giveaways and fun for all ages. Gather with friends and neighbors for an afternoon filled with entertainment, laughter and the welcoming spirit that makes McLean such a special community.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Reston Multicultural Festival. 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. At Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. The Reston Multicultural Festival celebrates the richness of global communities, creating an authentic space where traditions are honored, heritage is lived and stories are shared. Each year, thousands gather for world class artistry, powerful storytelling and vibrant community connection. Performances span three stages with immersive street programming and artists of national significance including National Heritage Fellows, recipients

of the nation's highest honor in traditional arts.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Sixth Civil War & Miliaria Show & Sale. 9 a.m.

to 4 p.m. At Arlington Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Don Hakenson and Bud Mayo will be sponsoring a Sixth Civil War & Miliaria Show & Sale. Books, Relics, and Memorabilia will be sold from all wars! Admission is \$5 per person. Tables for vendors are \$75 each. Contact Don Hakenson at dhakenson@verizon.net or call at 703-971-4984 or contact Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net or call at 703-389-1505. All vendors and patrons are welcome!

SEPT. 19-20

Celebration of the Arts. At Capital One Center, 1820 Capital One Drive South, Tysons Corner. The festival invites the public to engage with hands-on workshops, immersive art activations, a local artisan market, live performances, and culinary offerings from the region's most exciting creators.

When:

September 19, 12pm-6pm

September 20, 12pm-5pm

MONDAY/SEPT. 21

OFC School Break Fun. 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Keep your 5th–8th grader active and engaged on teacher workdays and school breaks with fun activities, games and planned programming at OFC; registration required.

SEPT. 24-27

Annandale Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. At George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Browse a wide selection of high-quality used books, CDs, DVDs and more in various categories for all ages and interests. Website: georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com

The Gift in the Blood

A Northern Virginia blood shortage is putting renewed pressure on donors to help patients with sickle cell disease, cancer and traumatic injuries.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The child had received blood from strangers.

After a transfusion for sickle cell disease at Inova, the child invited some of those donors to a blood drive. When they met, the distance between the donor chair and the hospital bed briefly disappeared. The child stood face to face with people whose donations had helped sustain them, people who had given blood without knowing who would receive it.

It was a moment most donors never experience: seeing, in one young patient, where their generosity had gone.

The encounter revealed what usually remains invisible after a donor leaves the chair: the person on the other side of the transfusion.

Right now, Inova is asking more Northern Virginians to take that seat.

The American Red Cross has declared only the second national blood supply crisis in its history, and the shortage is being felt locally. Inova needs 200 donations each day and approximately 1,400 each week to maintain the supply its patients need.

“Anything that is being donated today will be distributed tomorrow,” said Nicholas Lilly, senior director of Inova Blood Donor Services.

The need is particularly pressing during the summer, when donations often decline even as trauma cases increase.

“If we don’t donate today, we won’t have enough for tomorrow,” Lilly said.

Blood is needed for patients with sickle cell disease, cancer and traumatic injuries, as well as those undergoing surgery and other medical treatment.

Every six to eight weeks, some Inova patients with sickle cell disease receive red blood cell exchange transfusions. Inova cares for about 400 patients with sickle cell disease, some of whom require regular transfusions. Finding appropriately matched blood can be difficult, making a reliable donor pool especially important.

Unlike many medical supplies, blood cannot be manufactured when supplies run low. It must come from another person.

Fewer than 7 percent of people donate blood, although approximately 60 percent are eligible. Many people who could donate never try because they assume they do not qualify.

“People assume that they don’t qualify,” Lilly said. “Think about who is on the other side, the person who will benefit. People think that they don’t need to donate because someone else is going to do it.”

Eligibility can depend on factors including medical history, travel and where a tattoo was performed. Donors should allow staff to make that determination rather than ruling themselves out.

The process begins with a health questionnaire. Staff members check blood pressure, temperature and iron levels before drawing the blood. The entire visit takes about one to one and a quarter hours, including time to rest and have a snack afterward.

Inova operates permanent donor centers in Centreville, Sterling and Annandale, and holds mobile blood drives throughout Northern Virginia and the surrounding region.

“We have locations that are open seven days a week that you can go in to donate,” Lilly said. “We take walk-ins or you can sign up.”

For Lilly, the appeal comes down to the connection between the person who gives and the person who receives.

“At some point everyone will know someone who needs blood,” he said. “It’s our duty to be a part of that.”

For most donors, the person receiving their blood will remain a stranger.

But at that blood drive, one child with sickle cell disease stood among the people whose donations had helped sustain them. The donors had expected to give blood and leave without knowing where it would go. Instead, they found themselves face to face with the child who had received it.

News With Which I Can Live



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After yet another monthly lab test, my oncologist responded with a brief electronic reply: “Cancer well controlled. Stable creatinine and liver function tests.” Why this statement matters, other than the obvious is, that my health situation exists on two simultaneous tracks which unfortunately compound the treatment of either: stage IV papillary thyroid cancer and as a direct result of its previous treatment, stage IV chronic kidney disease. Two for the price of one, you might say, as I did say to the X-Ray tech when I had both a CT scan and MRI consecutively one visit, (I use that term ‘visit’ loosely). My lab tests measured the usual choices, but as soon as damage was done/creatinine level was too high, my oncologist stopped that original papillary thyroid cancer medicine and went on to plan (B), which I still remain on. (During the time I was being treatment for papillary thyroid cancer, I went to Georgetown University’s Lombardi Cancer Center for an evaluation/second opinion. Their thyroid cancer specialist doctor confirmed my papillary thyroid cancer diagnosis and agreed that I was on the best drug available for its treatment.)

However, like many medicines, they sort of have a shelf/effective life and are prescribed until they are no longer effective and another medicine/chemotherapy is recommended. This situation (changing medicines) is not so much a matter of if as it is when. In conjunction with recurring CT scans and MRIs, the indications from your regular lab work might indicate that something might be happening in your body and so changes are made to your treatment protocol, and this routine goes on and on and on (so long as you live on and on).

And since I wasn’t promised a rose garden (much of a life/future in Feb. ‘09 when I was given a “13 month to two years” prognosis), I pretty much consider it a miracle that I’m still alive and take nothing for granted. Moreover, blips on scans and/or abnormal levels on my lab work are all just the cost of doing business, so to speak (remaining alive). As such, none of it really bothers me; it’s more that it gets my attention and focus until the situation is addressed/hopefully resolved. The problem that persists is that none of this is guaranteed and most people’s least favorite word is cancer is my most necessary word. And as you most of you should equate, cancer is the original “Big Dog,” who rarely wants to get off the porch. As much as you (the patient) want to be in control of your life, a cancer diagnosis is the ultimate topsy turvy. Upside down is only the beginning. Whatever was before will never be again. You are a victim of your circumstance. And though there are many cancer patients in the world (heck, there are probably some on your street) from whom you might gain some strength and understanding, there are still times when you’re on your own: as in receiving emails from your doctor with results of your recent lab work or scan. This moment is not for the faint of heart. And more often than not, you’re by yourself when this kind of news appears on your computer/device.

Sometimes, very often in fact, I have been rewarded with the appearance and/or sound of my most favorite word: stable. I can live with stable. Moreover, I can live with uncertainty of not knowing what happens next. In addition, I can live with the monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly and hopefully even longer intervals between medical assessments I’ll call them, to determine where me and my cancer stand in Kenny’s world.

It’s hardly an ideal existence but it’s one I never expected, and one for which I’m eternally grateful.

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

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