

CONNECTION

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Oliver D., 3, sits in the rumble seat of this 1928 Model A Sport Coupe, with dad Chris beside him.

9/11 Ceremonies
Around the County

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Middle-School Teen
Mourned

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‘Heartache of This Devastating Loss’

Fairfax community grieves middle-schooler’s death.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Out of respect for his family’s privacy, City of Fairfax police haven’t released the name of the Frost Middle School student struck and killed by a truck last week while he was bicycling along Pickett Road. But even without knowing the name of the 13-year-old, area residents are in mourning for a young student whose life was taken too soon.

The tragedy occurred last Wednesday, Sept. 9, shortly after Frost had dismissed its students for the day. City of Fairfax police responded at 2:32 p.m. to the 3900 Block of Pickett Road for a motor-vehicle crash involving the teen and a vehicle. It’s a busy, high-traffic area, with both Fair City Mall and the Turnpike Shopping Center across the street from both Frost and Woodson High. And it’s not been revealed for certain if the truck driver even saw the boy before colliding with him.

According to police, “The juvenile sustained life-threatening injuries and was pronounced deceased at the scene. Preliminary information is [that a] large truck was observed to be leaving the shopping center when it struck the juvenile riding on a bicycle. A vehicle of interest and driver were located nearby.”

In addition, in an online, “Incident Alert,” police immediately let the community know that there was a “heavy police presence” on Pickett Road, which leads from Main Street in front of Frost to the shopping areas. They wrote, “Officers are on scene for a fatal, pedestrian-related motor vehicle crash. Southbound Pickett Road is shut down in the area.”

As news of the accident spread, a heartfelt outpouring of stunned grief, sadness and condolences followed. Several Frost employees and parents said they and their children were in shock. Other people wrote on the police department’s Facebook page how horrific and devastating it was to learn what had happened. And others, like Diana Gibson, simply wrote, “Oh no no no no no. This is just awful.”

Epitomizing the community’s feelings, Karen Dowler-Ponciano wrote, “My heart breaks for all involved,” and Katherine Boush Morgan added, “God bless that child and the family. This is tragic.”

Fairfax County School Board



A memorial to the boy killed while bike riding has sprung up between Peet’s Coffee and Pickett Road.



Friday-afternoon traffic on busy Pickett Road passes by the makeshift memorial.

member Melanie Meren also posted online, saying, “May we pause to reflect on the life of a child who, on Wednesday, died in a crash while bike riding home from school. I am sending my deepest condolences to all who knew and loved this child. For those of us who did not, we feel the heartache of this devastating loss, too. I hope all involved in or witnessing this tragedy can find peace. May we as a community do more to keep our children safe.”

Frost is a Fairfax County public school, and the shopping centers are in Fairfax City, so both City police officers and the county police

Crash Reconstruction Unit are jointly investigating the circumstances surrounding the crash. (They also noted that state law prohibits Virginia law-enforcement agencies from directly or indirectly identifying deceased juvenile victims.)

In light of the fatality, Frost was closed the next day. This incident remains an active investigation, and police say additional details will be released “as appropriate.” Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact Det. Thornton at 703-385-7924.

SADLY, the teen – a Frost eighth-grader who was wearing a

helmet – was one of three students involved in accidents with vehicles that day while riding a bike or scooter. Afterward, FCPS Superintendent Michelle Reid issued a letter about these incidents – especially the fatality – and the need for drivers to be particularly vigilant and mindful about students traveling to and from their schools.

“I’m reaching out to our entire division today with a heavy heart and an important reminder about ... keeping our students safe as they travel to and from school,” she wrote. “My heart is with the student’s family, friends, classmates, teachers, and the entire

school community as we confront this heartbreaking loss.

“I’m asking our entire community to pause this evening and think about the ways we can each help keep our students – and each other – safe every day. Whether we’re behind the wheel, walking, biking, riding a scooter, waiting for a bus, or simply moving through a busy school parking lot, each of us has an important role to play in keeping our community safe.”

Reid then asked drivers to slow down, not speed, stay alert for students at crosswalks, sidewalks and bus stops, and put away phones and other distractions. She urged students walking to school to use sidewalks and designated crosswalks whenever possible, look carefully before crossing and make sure drivers see them before entering the roadway.

For those biking or riding scooters, Reid told them to wear properly fitted helmets, follow traffic signs and signals, use bike lanes or designated paths when available, and stay alert for vehicles, pedestrians and other riders. She then beseeched everyone to be especially attentive around schools, intersections, crosswalks, bus stops and parking lots, where different forms of transportation come together.

“I encourage families to take time tonight to talk with your children about how they travel to and from school and review these important safety practices together,” added Reid. “And tomorrow, please slow down, stay alert and look out for one another. A few extra moments of care can make an enormous difference.”

The next day, another student was struck by a vehicle. Added to the boy whose foot was injured by a car on the first day of the school year, that brought the total number of students hit by vehicles to five since school began Aug. 24.

Meanwhile, a memorial to the Frost student who died has sprung up at the edge of the Turnpike Shopping Center between Peet’s Coffee and Pickett Road. There’s a wooden cross and a growing mound of colorful flowers, a star-shaped white balloon and a message telling him, “Fly high. Forever loved.”

Friday afternoon, two female school-bus drivers came and added their own bouquets of flowers to the pile. Declining to give their names, they said they didn’t know the boy who’d been killed, but they felt sad and wanted to pay their respects.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Honors the Fallen at 25th Anniversary 9/11 Ceremony

Observance recognizes 2001 victims and those lost decades later to 9/11-related illnesses.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For many in public safety, 9/11 did not end in 2001; it continues to claim lives through fatal cancers and chronic diseases contracted during post-attack operations.

The 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters began at 10:10 a.m. on Friday—marking the moment the Pentagon’s fire-damaged wall collapsed after hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 struck the building. The program centered on personal 9/11 recollections shared by elected officials and public safety leadership under a brilliant blue sky reminiscent of the morning terror struck 25 years ago. The ceremony brought together first responders and residents to remember the 2,977 people killed in the four attacks, including at the Pentagon, while officially recognizing, for the first time, local public safety personnel who later succumbed to 9/11-related illnesses.

For Fairfax County crews who responded directly to Flight 77’s impact, the burning Pentagon was a local disaster scene, and the ceremony served as a solemn promise to pass that memory down to new generations.

“The horrific acts of violence and terrorism happened here on our soil at the Pentagon in Arlington,” said Virginia Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi. “At 9:37 that morning, American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, taking 184 precious lives and forever changing Virginia and our nation.”

In Fairfax County, the impact was immediate. County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay recalled sitting in a meeting with then-Supervisor Jerry Hyland at Sherwood Hall Library when news shattered normalcy. “Quickly we realized how those little things weren’t that important,” McKay said.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Chief John S. Butler tied that sudden shift to the enduring demands of public service, invoking the 343 FDNY firefighters and paramedics who died at the World Trade Center. “They kept climbing... they were tired. They kept going up,” Butler said. “Service to others—that’s our fuel, that’s our wealth, that’s what we



Deputy Fire Chief Bill Betz speaks at the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters on Friday, September 11, 2026.



Fairfax County Firefighter Kevin Huheey performs the national anthem.

embrace.”

For local responders, the call to duty was abrupt. Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid recalled resting at home after a midnight shift. “I was awakened by a call from a supervisor. The words on the other end of the phone were unthinkable,” Kincaid said. “A plane had struck the Pentagon, and staff needed to report back immediately to work.”

In Chantilly that morning, then-firefighter Bill Betz, now Deputy Fire Chief, prepared for a routine simulated plane-crash drill. Instead, crews watched the crisis unfold on television before being ordered back to their station as the county entered lockdown and air traffic at Dulles International Airport ground to a halt. When Betz deployed to the scene, the scale proved overwhelming.

Speaking shortly after 10:15

a.m., Betz recounted the transition from observer to responder. “We got down there, and I think the first thing I recognized was the sheer magnitude of the incident,” Betz recalled, contrasting TV images with reality. For Betz, sharing those memories with newer personnel remains an essential duty.

The attacks also altered municipal law enforcement. Police Chief Kevin Davis emphasized how 9/11 expanded department responsibilities. “Before 9/11, the military and federal law enforcement fought terrorism. After 9/11, and still true today, we all fight terrorism,” Davis said. “Let us now strengthen that resolve.”

In the chaotic days that followed, Fairfax County responders answered without hesitation. Kincaid noted that while deputies deployed to the Pentagon, oth-



From left, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay and Fire and Rescue Chief John S. Butler pause for a moment of silence.



Members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department leadership render a salute during the national anthem at the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Public Safety Headquarters.

ers traveled to New York to support law enforcement colleagues. Across Northern Virginia, residents lined up to donate blood and hung flags from overpasses, transforming highways into corridors of solidarity. “This country came together,” Kincaid said, “refusing to allow our differences to divide us.”

Yet 9/11 has not ended. Betz recalled asking Fairfax County Firefighter Kevin Huheey, who would be singing the national anthem, where he had been on 9/11, only to hear, “Well, I wasn’t born yet”—a reminder of the duty to pass that day’s story on to a new generation.

“Before we conclude today’s ceremony, we would like a moment to honor the members of our own public safety family who have passed away from illnesses related to their service following Sept. 11, 2001,” Betz said.

Department leadership read the names of those lost: Fairfax County Police Department Master Police Officer Donald “Donnie” A. Lillard Jr., March 1, 2023, and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Battalion Chief Michael “Mike” Tameyer, Dec. 28, 2023.

Recognition of their deaths framed the closing observance at Public Safety Headquarters, serving as a reminder that honoring the fallen means remembering both those lost in 2001 and those who succumb decades later.

Following the ceremony, Betz invited attendees inside to view museum artifacts: “On behalf of Fairfax County and the Fairfax County public safety community, thank you for being here and for helping us to ensure the lives and sacrifices we remember today are never forgotten.”

PHOTOS SCREEN GRAB VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE 16

Fairfax City Holds 9/11 Remembrance Event

First responders recall people uniting together afterward.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City held its 9/11 remembrance ceremony Sept. 10 so its first responders planning to attend similar regional events on Sept. 11 – including at the Pentagon – could do so. But the City’s commemoration, held outdoors in its Veterans Amphitheatre, was no less heartfelt and meaningful.

Fire Station 3’s tower truck held in place a large, American flag over the proceedings. And part of a steel beam from the World Trade Center (normally displayed at Fire Station 33) was near the podium.

City Police Capt. Shawn Bennett, the emcee, welcomed everyone, acknowledging Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read and the City Council members present. “We gather to remember and honor the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and to recognize the courage and sacrifice of those who answered the call to serve,” said Bennett. “Thank you all for sharing in this important remembrance.”

Speaking first was Read. “This is a solemn occasion,” she said. “Twenty-five years went by so fast, but all of us probably remember where we were that day and the thoughts we had when we understood what was happening. And then the plane flew into the Pentagon – which is so close to Fairfax City, where I was that day and where my children were in school.

“We all remember thinking about the inconceivable idea that firefighters and police officers were rushing toward burning buildings [the North and South towers of the World Trade Center in New York City] that were collapsing. Our first responders who came forward during one of the most tragic incidents in our country’s history continued to work, trying to recover [bodies], clear the area and, ultimately, build a memorial to the people who lost their lives that day – both those who were in the towers and those who tried valiantly to save them.

“It was a moment when the world stood with this country in our loss, and that day had an impact on our lives forever after. It’s



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City police and firefighters who attended the 9/11 remembrance. (In front is a steel-beam section from the World Trade Center).

important to teach the next generation the significance of what happened to our country, how it responded, and how the world responded to the most unimaginable tragedy in our history.

“So it’s important to have these ceremonies, say the names [of those who died], and continue supporting our first responders and safety officers as they rush toward crises that, today, we can’t even imagine will happen in the future. So let’s all hold in our hearts, thoughts and prayers the people who lost their lives and those who suffer from the service they gave that day and in the aftermath.”

Calling 25 years a “generation,” City Manager Dan Alexander said, “For many of us, Sept. 11 remains a vivid, personal memory. For others, especially younger community members, it’s a chapter of history. That makes our responsibility to remember even more important. We remember the lives that were lost, families impacted forever and all those who carry the burden today.

“But we should also remember Sept. 12. In the aftermath of tragedy, things that divided us seemed much smaller. We were neighbors, communities, Americans, first responders continuing their service amid extraordinary circumstances, public servants answering the call sustaining the institutions we’ve come to depend on, neighbors



Listening to the mayor speak are (from left) Dan Alexander, Raúl Pedroso, Shawn Dunstan and Shawn Bennett.

helping neighbors, and people across the country finding strength in what we shared.

“Over my career in public service, I’ve learned our greatest strength is found in one another and in our willingness to stand together, look beyond our differences and serve something larger than ourselves. For those entrusted

with serving this community today, that remains part of the legacy of Sept. 11. May we remember those we lost, remember what brought us together, and honor both – not only in what we say today, but in how we serve tomorrow.”

Then came City Police Chief Raúl Pedroso. “On Sept. 11, 2001, an act of terror shook our nation and

forever changed us,” he said. “At the World Trade Center, 343 firefighters and 72 law-enforcement officers lost their lives, making the ultimate sacrifice. Since then, hundreds more have fallen ill and died as a result of the aftermath and sickness coming from the work

SEE FAIRFAX CITY HOLDS, PAGE 7

9/11 at the Connection, as I Remember it

BY MIKE SALMON, REPORTER
THE CONNECTION

The morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001 started out to be a warm late summer day and as a reporter for the Connection Newspapers, it was a deadline day. The newspaper had a full staff and we put out weekly newspapers for several communities across Fairfax County as well as Alexandria, Arlington and Potomac, MD. Our office was out in Tysons Corner, which it was known as back then, in a one-story building on land that is now Tysons II. As always, I had to hit Starbucks before jumping on I-495 to head out to the office.

I was in line behind three or four people when I heard about an airplane hitting the World Trade Center in New York City, so in my mind I pictured that famous shot of a B-25 hitting the Empire State Building back in the 1940's or 1950's, a picture I remembered seeing in a book somewhere before. An airplane hitting the World Trade Center? That's a little weird, I thought.

I got my coffee, and there seemed to be a lot of chatter in the café, so I headed out to my car and off to work. I turned on the radio to my show, the Howard Stern Show, 106.7 FM. Now Howard Stern and his sidekick Robin Quivers broadcast from downtown New York City and when I pulled out of my parking spot in front of Starbucks, everyone at the station was watching the plane crashes unfold, and they reported on it to some extent, while the show producer Gary Dell'Abate freaked out and ran out of the studio. Stern would later give him a hard time for that.

I got to the newsroom and all was buzzing, particularly one woman that was barking out commands. By that time, the Pentagon had been hit too, so my orders were to go back to the Springfield Metro Station and see what I could find. Surely people would be panicking, heading home to their loved ones and I had to get the story. Once back on I-495, there seemed to be less traffic



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE 16

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel operating hose lines and ground monitors amidst heavy smoke and debris on the grounds of the Pentagon on 9/11.

so getting to the Metro station was easy. I parked in a temporary spot and immediately saw this woman panicking in the parking garage. "Where's my car? Where's my car?" she said deliriously as she wandered around in confusion.

I went down to the bus lanes and heard people saying the buses were cancelled, or the buses were only going away from the city, or something else, but I could tell they didn't know anything for fact. I talked to whoever I could, including this one hippie woman who was sitting on the curb, holding some sign, possibly her destination sign so I started asking her questions and she started

saying something to the affect that the United States deserved it, and had a few half-cocked reasons they asked for it.

After noting my observations and interviewing anyone I could, I headed back to the office only to be met by another reporter who was compiling all the information for our lead story.

He hated my first version of the Springfield story, so I rewrote it and somehow got out of there while still contributing what I could. As a newsroom, we were happy to get out the local version of 9/11 in time for the printers, and all was turned down to a low simmer.

For the next few weeks we wrote about the impacts on a local level, but after doing this for about 10 stories, I was sick of it. I said to my direct editor, Stephen Mauren, "can we just go back to our regular stories of community events, school football teams, Boy Scout achievements, bla bla bla." He laughed at the ridiculousness of my request, with a feeling like nothing was ever going to be the same in this country.

Maybe not, I thought, but sure enough, when the Springfield Days festival went on the next spring, I was right there interviewing Miss Springfield like I had before, and life went on.

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 Dis-

tribution 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.

Fairfax City Holds 9/11 Remembrance Event

FROM PAGE 5

they did in responding to the scene, and in the hours, weeks and months that followed.

“These numbers are more than statistics; they represent individual stories of courage and duty. Every badge symbolized a commitment to run toward danger, protect others and stand with their brothers and sisters, [despite] clear and present risk to their own safety. These were firefighters, police officers, EMS personnel, united by a shared purpose and mission and a profound commitment to service.

“We cannot forget their sacrifice; they were the first defenders of our way of life, that day. They represented our nation, everything good about it and the best of who we are. As police chief, I vow that our department will continue to uphold their legacy. We’ll stand vigilant, serve with heart and remain united – focused on our training, preparation and resolve. We’re always ready, whatever the call.”

Next, Acting City Fire Chief Shawn Dunstan said, “We remember that morning – the uncertainty, fear and realization that our country had been attacked. For those in the fire service, Sept. 11 changed our profession, country and countless lives forever. Today we remember the 2,977 people who never came home – firefighters, police officers, military personnel and civilians – and the courage of those who responded in New York and in our own region.

“City of Fairfax firefighters responded to the Pentagon, while many others staffed and back-filled Arlington fire stations, all while maintaining emergency response here in the City. Our members answered the call in different ways, but our mission was the same – support our neighbors, regional partners and make sure the communities we serve had the resources they needed. Sept. 11 reminded us why that matters.

“We were united then; people cared for one another, strangers helped strangers, communities came together. We were simply Americans looking out for one another. That spirit was especially evident in the fire service. That day also taught us the importance of training, communication, leadership, accountability and preparedness. It’s our responsibility to tell young firefighters about who was lost on Sept. 11, the courage demonstrated and the sacrifices that followed. May we never forget.”

Then came the tolling of a large bell. “For generations, the bell called firefighters to duty and signaled their return from an emergency,” explained Dunstan. “Today we sound the bell in remembrance of those who answered their final alarm, on and after Sept. 11, 2001. As the bell is tolled, please join me in a moment of quiet reflection and gratitude for their sacrifice.”

Afterward, a bagpiper played while a wreath was laid in the City’s memorial grove dedicated to those who died while trying to rescue others on Sept. 11.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The newly laid wreath joins the flag and plaque in the memorial grove dedicated to the 9/11 rescuers.

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Crossing Guards Are on Everyone's Radar

Chairman McKay announces restored funding for crossing guards in wake of multiple incidents.

By Mike Salmon
Connection Newspapers

With all the budget commotion involving crossing guards at high schools in Fairfax County and then a teen fatality in the City of Fairfax, some parents took matters into their own hands and got crossing flags for some pedestrian crossing paths in the name of safety.

The flags are posted near some crosswalks for students to carry as they cross the road. "It enhances the safety," said Tamara O'Neil, a parent that has two children in the county school system - one at West Springfield High School and



The crossing flags at a Springfield crossing.

PHOTOS BY TAMARA O'NEIL

the other at Sangster Elementary School.

The Student Government Association assisted with setting up and using the flags recently at Centreville High School which can help draw attention whether there is a

crossing guard or not.

The crossing guard issue is a concern of the Fairfax County Police Department and the public school system, but it's not off the FCPS radar. They issued a statement:

"Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) appreciates that the County temporarily returned crossing guards to our historically staffed high schools last week. Despite FCPS concerns, as part of last year's County budgeting process,

high school crossing guards were eliminated starting this school year.

"We appreciate the vital role crossing guards play in ensuring our students arrive and depart school safely each day. We remain optimistic that this important safety measure will become permanent once again following next week's Board of Supervisors' meeting. We encourage students, families and drivers to use extra caution when traveling to and from school, follow all traffic laws, and remain alert for pedestrians and other vehicles. The welfare of our students, staff, and community remains a top priority," FCPS said in a statement.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 15, the board heard from parents and students; they found funding for the crossing guards. Chairman Jeff McKay wasted no time to get the new information out in his newsletter

"Today, the Board of Supervisors approved \$707,908 as part of the FY2026 Carryover Budget Package to restore crossing guards at Annandale, Centreville, Chantilly, Edison, McLean, Oakton, South County, South Lakes, West Springfield, and West Potomac high schools for the remainder of the school year. Coverage will be provided through a combination of contracted crossing guards and uniformed police officers," McKay said.



Flags are an option with the crossing guard issue.



Suicide Prevention and the Workplace

September is suicide prevention and awareness month.

BY JOSEPH GETCH,
CEO HOPELINK
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

Stress, burnout, financial pressures, caregiving responsibilities and mental health challenges do not disappear when people arrive at work. This September, HopeLink Behavioral Health, a nonprofit behavioral health and crisis services provider in Virginia, is asking employers, coworkers, families and community members to become more comfortable recognizing when someone may be struggling and understanding what to do next.

As part of Suicide Prevention

and Awareness Month, HopeLink has launched its 12th annual #CallTextLive Campaign, a month-long effort focused on making conversations about suicide and mental health more open, practical and connected to help. A centerpiece of this year's campaign is a free Mental Health in the Workplace Lunch & Learn on September 15 from noon-1 p.m. HopeLink's Crisis Services professionals will share practical strategies for managing workplace stress and burnout; recognizing signs that someone may need support; starting conversations and connecting people to appropriate resources. The webinar is free and open to the public. Employers, supervisors, HR professionals and employees are encouraged to participate. Registration is available at [HopeLinkBH.org/calltextlive](https://hopelinkbh.org/calltextlive).

HopeLink operates 988 Suicide



Joseph Getch is the CEO of HopeLink Behavioral Health.

& Crisis Lifeline services across Virginia and nationally, giving its crisis professionals a first-hand view of the challenges bringing people to crisis and the difference that early support, human connection and access to the right resources can make.

Suicide remains a significant public health concern in the United States. More than 47,000 people died by suicide in 2024, and an estimated 1.6 million adults attempted suicide. Behind those numbers are individuals, families, workplaces and commu-

nities. HopeLink's #CallTextLive Campaign is designed to move beyond awareness alone by helping people understand how to recognize distress, talk openly about suicide and emotional pain, and connect someone to support before a crisis escalates.

Throughout September, HopeLink will share suicide prevention information, practical resources, community activities and opportunities to learn more about mental health and crisis support. Campaign information, activities and resources are available at [HopeLinkBH.org/calltextlive](https://hopelinkbh.org/calltextlive) and through HopeLink's social media channels.

Suicide prevention is not some-

thing that belongs only to mental health professionals. Most of us will encounter someone who is struggling—in our workplace, our family or our community. We want people to feel more confident recognizing those moments, having the conversation and helping someone connect to support. Anyone experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts or a mental health or substance use crisis can call or text 988 or chat through 988lifeline.org. HopeLink's trained crisis workers li-

sten, assess safety, help de-escalate crises when possible and connect people with local services and resources based on their individual needs.

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Public Meetings Fall Transportation Meetings

You are invited to participate in public meetings held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The public will have an opportunity to learn and share feedback regarding the top transportation priorities and the vision for transportation in the commonwealth along with information related to various other initiatives. Representatives from the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, Virginia Department of Transportation, and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will be in attendance to highlight their transportation programs and to discuss your ideas and concerns on Virginia's transportation network. The meetings will consist of remarks from key officials followed by a town hall session where the public may engage in discussion and ask questions about the various initiatives. Meeting materials will be available at <https://ctb.virginia.gov/planning-funding/2026-fall-transportation-meetings/>

Public meetings begin at 2 p.m. in each of the locations:

Friday, September 25 Lynchburg District Lynchburg Business Alliance 300 Lucado Place Lynchburg, VA 24504	Wednesday, September 30 Richmond District VDOT Richmond District Hawthorne Auditorium 2430 Pine Forest Drive Colonial Heights, VA 23834	Thursday, October 8 Northern Virginia District VDOT Northern Virginia District Potomac Conference Room 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, VA 22030
Tuesday, October 20 Salem District Salem Civic Center 1001 Roanoke Boulevard Salem, VA 24153	Thursday, October 22 Staunton District Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Center for Continuing Education One College Lane Weyers Cave, VA 24486	Tuesday, October 27 Hampton Roads District VDOT Hampton Roads District Auditorium 7511 Burbage Drive Suffolk, VA 23435
Thursday, November 5 Bristol District Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Room 240 One Partnership Circle Abingdon, VA 24210	Tuesday, November 10 Culpeper District VDOT Culpeper District Auditorium 1601 Orange Road Culpeper, VA 22701	Thursday, November 12 Fredericksburg District VDOT Fredericksburg District Auditorium 86 Deacon Road Fredericksburg, VA 22405

You can also submit your comments via email or mail by November 30, 2026.

- For roads and highways: Six-YearProgram@vdot.virginia.gov or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation, 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219.
- For transit and rail: drptpr@drpt.virginia.gov or Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

The commonwealth is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on these policies or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-2730 or the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-4440 (TTY users call 711).



Deniz Polat walks the trail with Watson.



Tam Tran, of Springfield, and Kenan Mozaffar of Fort Belvoir, newly discovered the trail for their exercise routine.



Native plant nursery co-founder, Lisa Bright (left) and staff member, Shogofa Ayubi visit the trail to check prominence of invasive non-native plants.

Favorite Trail Reopens in Lorton

Sewer pipe upgrade also brings trail improvements.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Have you heard that the closed portion of Pohick Stream Valley Trail has reopened? That's right. After more than a year, the trail is open again. And while those users who have discovered the reopening are quick to tell you it has been a long wait, they also are quick to add how delighted they are with the trail resurfacing and beautiful landscaping.

The trail runs along Pohick creek in a well shaded, heavily forested area and is a favorite trail of walkers, runners, dog walkers, road bikers, and families with strollers. With the recent rains, the creek is running fuller than most August/September months, with delightful rills and small waterfalls; and fall wildflowers are in bloom along the creek and in adjacent small meadows.

Pohick Creek starts in Burke and empties into Pohick Bay, after running through Springfield, Newington and Lorton for about seven miles, providing a bit of escape into nature from suburban activity for many surrounding communities. Part of the southern portion of the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail was closed in March 2025, for safety and equipment movement during the Pohick Interceptor Rehabilitation Project, under the management of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES). The sewer system renewal project addressed 6,500 feet of 20-to-54-inch diameter sewer pipe which runs along the creek to allow gravity to move the sewage toward



Lead engineer, Sara Ferrance (left) inspects completed work site with contractor representatives from Dewberry and Pleasants Construction.

the treatment plant. The \$7.3 million dollar project was meant to address the aging infrastructure and prevent costly emergency repairs. DPWES indicates that landscaping was roughly 6% of the total project cost.

The use of an upgrade method called Cured-in-Place-Piping (CIPP), allowed for inserting and setting a resin liner inside the existing pipe, without need for digging up the old or creating open earth trenches.

Large diameter pipe was surface-laid to create a temporary bypass pumping line during the upgrade work. The liner resin material can then be installed in the existing pipe and set with a UV light train. The process uses intense UV light to trigger a rapid chemical reaction in the resin, causing it to harden almost instantly. Closed circuit TV cameras let the operator check that air pressure has properly aligned the resin liner with the old

pipe before beginning the setting process.

According to Pleasant Construction employees on site, the UV light method reduces styrene emissions compared to traditional hot water or steam curing; nearly eliminating an odor similar to model airplane glue. Engineering and construction were handled by area companies Dewberry and Pleasants Construction.

SEE FAVORITE TRAIL, PAGE 11

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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION
Vilma Castro and Lola walk with friend Alva Barco, who is visiting from Colombia South America.

Favorite Trail Reopens in Lorton

FROM PAGE 10

The CIPP method also allowed for less impact to existing trees and for avoiding disturbance of wildflowers. Several trees did need to be removed to accommodate the large temporary sewer bypass line as well as a few trees in the sewer easement. DPWES advises, “We do not allow for trees to be planted in our sewer easements as roots can penetrate our pipes causing blockages that can potentially lead to sanitary sewer overflows as well as groundwater infiltration.” DPWES then followed FCPA planting requirements: for every 6-inch diameter or greater tree removed outside of the easement, a 2:1 inch-diameter replacement was made.

Most trail users are oblivious to the modern processes that went on under the ground. They are instead taking note and delighting in the beauty and availability of the trail. The resurfacing has eliminated mudding spots where water often stood near the Wadebrook Terrace trailhead entrance. New native trees and shrubs, planted at forestry level quantities, beautify

the trail verges. Vilma Castro, of Lorton, says, “It’s beautiful. I walk here every day. It was horrible to wait; I was waiting and waiting. Now it’s good to see it so beautiful.”

Deniz Polat, of Lorton, agreed, “It’s nice. It took a long time to get done, but, especially near the beginning, it won’t flood now.”

New users of the trail, Tam Tran, and Kenan Mozaffar, of Springfield and Fort Belvoir, only discovered the trail recently and did not know that it had been closed. They praised how well it fit for their use as they are “training up our cardiovascular health with run/walk exercise.” Tran, who studied environmental science, called it “gorgeous,” said she “is loving finding a close nature trail, that is so nice.” Mozaffar commented on the “beautiful scenery, with the stream nearby; really a sublime thing to look at.”

Another exercise user, Laura Haberkorn, of Lorton, is walking the trail as part of her walking challenge to reach her 26-mile goal by the end of the year, adding a mile per week. “I love the trail.

As soon as you walk here you leave the hustle and bustle of I-95. It all goes away as the quiet of the trail puts you in a Zen place; and you get to meet your neighbors here.”

Bryan Rourke, of Springfield, dropped onto the main trail from a connecting social trail, coffee mug in hand. He said, “I like it for the soothing water, and big natural rocks, and it’s very shady and secluded. A bit of nature though surrounded by suburban development.”

Many only appreciate the nature vibe. Others who know something about trees, praise the variety of new plantings. Springfield native plant nursery Earth Sangha co-founder Lisa Bright, was on site with staff member, Shogofa Aruba, checking the occurrence of invasive plants in the stream valley, and noted the increased variety. The tree species list selected for new plantings was suggested by Dewberry staff and reviewed by FCPA Natural Resources Branch staff. Some needed to be replaced based on summer plant availability. Several were types that were not previously found in this section of woodland. Added were



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Laura Haberkorn, of Lorton, loves using the trail as part of her walking distance challenge.

buttonbush, hornbeam, hophornbeam or Ironwood, sweet leaf, and witch-hazel, among others.

Rachel Jackson-Roth, an ecologist with the group shares, “We always want to highlight native plants being used for restoration, and diversity of species, to ensure the forest can survive when new pests, diseases and the pressures of invasive non-native species occur.” The County has included extended

watering care in the project contract for a year; after which care of the trees falls under FCPA.

Many of the newly planted specimens have been caged for protection from wildlife predation while they get established and continue their growth. Apparently for good reason, as White Tail deer already were observed showing the new plantings a welcome in their own way.

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SCAN TO
LEARN MORE

Cool Cars Draw Huge Crowd on Labor Day

The 27 th annual Labor Day Car Show in Fairfax City was a big success, raising more than \$55,000 for the charities it sup-

ports. Put on jointly by the City of Fairfax and the Clifton Lions Club, it featured more than 425 vehicles and drew 12,600 attendees – the most ever for this show.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Roosevelt Martin III and son Ayden, 13, looking at a 1955 Ford Thunderbird.



Admiring a 2017 Chevrolet Corvette is Michelle Pridmore.



J.C. Holmes poses proudly beside his 1984 Chevy S-10 truck with snazzy flames.



Gianna Muñoz, 3, rides in style in her 1959 Chevy Impala replica.



Bryan Maben is the owner of this 1990 Ford Mustang LX.



Oliver D., 3, sits in the rumble seat of this 1928 Model A Sport Coupe, with dad Chris beside him.



Posing with a glitzy Harley Davidson motorcycle are (from left) the Rosenlund siblings, Hazel, 5, and Stephen Jr., 9, with dad Stephen Sr.



Standing by this 1957 Mercury Montclair is Jay Lerch.



Daniel Torabi, 10, and sister Joanna, 15, check out this 2018 Dodge Challenger.



Adam Alami looking at this creative Mack "rat" rod made from a 1954 Mack truck, with a Dodge chassis, 1932 Ford front end and a 1990 diesel engine.



Geovannie Garcia checks out a 1932 Ford three-window Coupe.



Michelle Zentz looks at a 2008 Dodge Viper SRT.

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!

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



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



Fall Fest returns to Reston Farm Garden Market from Sept. 26 to Oct. 31, 2026.

Center
Free. Ages 55+
Sept. 23: Reminders of Him

NOW THRU SEPT. 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.

NOW THRU 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.

SEPT. 12 TO NOV. 7

Transformations: Documenting the Pilot Substance Abuse Program at Lorton Reformatory, 1989-1991. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. More than 35 years after photographer Lloyd Wolf was given rare behind-the-scenes access inside Lorton Reformatory, his powerful photographs documenting incarcerated men participating in a groundbreaking sub-

stance abuse treatment program are returning to the very grounds where they were taken. A reception will be held Saturday, Oct. 3 from 3-5 p.m.

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://mc-leancenter.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 Hustling, 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 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.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

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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

ENTERTAINMENT



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

FROM PAGE 13

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
4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival. 1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. At Solace Outpost, 444 West Broad Street, Falls Church. The Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) is thrilled to have been selected as the benefitting organization of the 4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival. Reason to Rock Music Festival was founded in 2023 by four local dad band members, Scott Schreiber, Dru Fearing, Gregg Shively and Greg Hamilton. Now in its fourth year, Reason to Rock has hosted more than 1,000 people and raised nearly \$40,000 for charity. Each year, attendees enjoy a selection of local bands, brews, and the opportunity to learn about the organization their presence is supporting. Tickets for the 4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival are on-sale now for just \$20 per ticket, with children under 18 allowed to enter for free and of course, dogs welcome. Tickets are available for purchase through www.awla.org/event/reason-to-rock-music-festival/.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19
Fall Plant Sale. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. The sale offers a variety of native plants including flowering perennials, shrubs, and small trees available for purchase. During the sale, attendees are invited to enter a free drawing to win a native tree and to take advantage of the Vienna Farmers Market, located in the Vienna Community Center parking lot. The CSC plant sale is held each spring and fall and features seasonal plants that are native to the region. All plants are raised and sold by Hill House Farm and Nursery.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19
Kinship Wine & Wares Grand Opening. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 1635-B Washington Plaza North on Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Featuring wine tastings, music, snacks, children's crafts and plenty of opportunities to explore the shop's collection

of wines, retro housewares and vintage finds.

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

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 14

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.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 23

Centreville Immigration Forum Dinner. 6 p.m. At 5944 Centreville Crest Lane, Centreville. An evening Honoring Legacy, Defending Our Future, celebrating the immigrants, workers, community members, volunteers, partners, and supporters who have built CIF and continue to make the work possible. This dinner is a chance to be in community with one another, not only around the challenges we face, but around our joy, our resilience, our victories, and the future we are building together.

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. On September 24, audiences around the country can watch “Hip, Hip, Hooray,” live on Zoom, starting at 8 p.m. Visit <https://betersaidthandone.org/events/>

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

SATURDAY/SEPT. 26

Fall Yard Sale. At Reston Association, 12001 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 26

Harvest Happenings. 10 a.m. – Noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Celebrate the magic of autumn with your family right here at MCC! Harvest Happenings is a festive indoor-outdoor fall celebration filled with seasonal fun for all ages. Enjoy live entertainment, hands-on crafts, interactive games, and visits with friendly animals in the petting zoo. Pick out the perfect pumpkin to decorate and take home. With family-friendly activities and entertainment, and plenty of fall spirit, Harvest Happenings is the perfect way to make warm autumn memories together.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 26

Bug Fest. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Designed for ages 4 and older, Bug Fest invites families to explore the important role insects play in healthy ecosystems, while getting an up-close look at some of the tiny creatures that share our world.

Here’s what’s buzzing at this year’s event:
Insect Safari Hikes — Head outdoors to search for insects in their natural habitats.

Live Insect Encounters — Meet fascinating insects up close.

Bug Crafts and Games — Get creative with hands-on activities inspired by the insect world.

Bug-Themed Stories — Enjoy stories celebrating some of nature’s smallest creatures.

Buggy Maze — Navigate your way through a bug-inspired challenge.

Spiderweb Slackline Course — Test your balance on a web-worthy adventure.

Admission is \$10 per person in advance and \$12 at the door. All children must be accompanied by a registered adult.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 26

Mason Artist-in-Residence: Music From The Sole. 7:30 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. A pre-performance discussion with



A Fall Plant Sale will take place on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 at the Vienna Community Center.



Ballet Hispanico New York’s Mujeres: Women in Motion can be seen Friday, Oct. 2, 2026 at The Alden at McLean Community Center.

George Mason University School of Dance Professor Christopher d’Amboise begins one hour prior to the performance. Music From The Sole is a tap dance and live music company that celebrates tap’s Afro-diasporic roots, particularly its connections to Afro-Brazilian dance and music, and its lineage to forms like house dance and passinho (Brazilian funk).

SEPT. 26 TO OCT. 31

Fall Fest Returns to Reston Farm Garden Market. At 10800 Baron Cameron Avenue, Reston. The farm marks its 50th fall in Reston with five and a half weekends of moon bounces, train rides, and hand-feeding friendly farm animals — built for kids ages 2 to 12. Weekends 10 a.m.–5 p.m., plus Monday, October 12 (Columbus Day). Fall Fest pairs a full afternoon of kid-sized activities with the pumpkins, mums and fresh-pressed cider that make the season. Parents get a safe, contained, easy-to-navigate site; kids get the run of it.

Includes three main attractions:
Moon Bounces — jump, bounce, and burn off the afternoon

Feed the Farm Animals — hands-on time at the feeding fence with our friendly goats, pigs, and chickens.

The Reston Farm Express Train — the ride kids line up for twice
DJ Chi Dr. Productions keeps the music going all day, and face painter Carolina Tabares Sierra is on site each festival day, along with balloon art — face painting and balloon art for an additional fee.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 27

The Cold War Museum Conversation Presentation Series Lecture. 5 p.m. Shadow Flyer: The Life of Bob Ericson. CIA and NASA U-2 Pilot Chris Pocock will talk about his new book, Shadow Flyer, about Bob Ericson, one of the select group of pilots recruited in 1956 by the CIA to fly the U-2 over the Soviet Union. He subsequently flew this extraordinary spy plane for 31 years, 16 years with the Agency followed by another 15 years with NASA. This book tells the story of how a small-town boy grew up to serve his country with distinction, how he survived a crash in this most difficult-to-fly airplane, and how he was nearly shot down over the USSR. It also describes Bob’s flight over Cuba in 1962 that set off the Cuban Missile Crisis; his missions over Tibet, China and North Vietnam; and his remarkable save of a crippled U-2 for NASA. Bob Ericson’s sons, Arne and Myles, will join the program for the Q&A.

Don’t “Boss” Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We buy a lot of fast/medium-food take out, and not just Chinese either. In fact, since Covid, the food business has become very accommodating to take out/pick up requests. Moreover, as many of you regular eaters know, there are also services that will deliver to you all sorts of food. And in so receiving, recipients can minimize their interactions with the food serving/delivering public. Moreover, there’s no parking and walking to the establishment, no standing and waiting in line once you’re inside, and no mixing with the hoi polloi; just sitting and waiting from the comfort and convenience of your home. But for those of us who are resistant to the advantages of food delivery, interactions with the general public and the fast/medium-food staff await - or shall I say: persists.

I’ve written recently of my feelings about being called “sir” by the same general public I’m referring to here: the restaurant/fast/medium-food establishments. And as you regular readers know, yours truly (as opposed to my wife) will almost exclusively be the one going to pick up and pay for the food, thereby interacting with a store employee. Hardly an awkward/unfamiliar exchange, especially given the post-Covid world where food delivery/pick up is almost di regur. As a result, people’s eating routines have changed where now fewer meals are prepared at home and more are brought in ready to eat. It’s become more acceptable, preferred almost, as a work-around to the miscellaneous toxins in the air that we all breathe, and of course the time and effort it takes to buy, prepare, cook and serve that food at home. But people’s habits have changed. Covid has had repercussions that we’re still feeling/experiencing. In fact, all these years later, I still see people wearing masks, sometimes even in their cars.

Now that I’ve established the context, let me finally address the particular situation that has led to this column being written: the employees greeting and thanking me after I order, receive and then pay. “Sir” in this interaction, I can tolerate. However, when an employee calls me “Boss;” that I don’t tolerate nearly as well. “Sir” connotes respect, sort of. I don’t like it, but it doesn’t feel as if the employee is subliminally seething with contempt of our generational divide. It’s not merely disrespectful, it’s downright rude and snarky almost. I’m not the employees’ boss so don’t pretend to treat me as one. I’m your customer, not your supervisor. I place the order. You deliver the order. Though I’m not on the same side of the register as you, we are, in effect, two sides of the same request. We’re practically equal. I’m happy being your customer. Let’s not conflate your providing me a service with your working for me. If anything, we’re working together. Calling me “Boss” raises my stature and presumes a relationship we’ve never actually consummated.

I don’t want - or quite frankly deserve, any special dispensation, either in how my meal is prepared and/or how said meal is handed to me and what is said to me during that handoff. All I require is courtesy and gratitude. Anything more is unnecessary and likely not in your job description.

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

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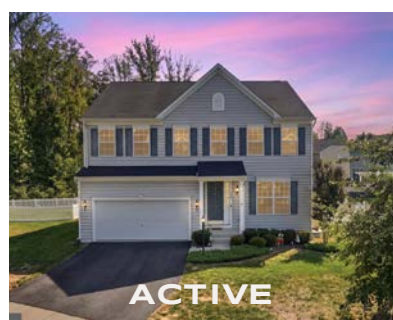
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