

CONNECTION

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The Color Guard waves
its flags with school
spirit in Fairfax High's
Homecoming Parade
Friday, Sept. 25.

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

OCTOBER 8-21, 2026

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Renewed Signs for Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail

Joint effort brings upgraded wayfinding to the 41.5-mile parkland connector at Lake Accotink Park.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

New trail wayfinding and entrance signs were officially unveiled at Lake Accotink Park on Saturday, Sept. 26, coinciding with National Public Lands Day.

"I'm honored to have spent this morning with Fairfax County Parks and Congressman James Walkinshaw to unveil new signage along the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail, honoring Gerry's extraordinary legacy here in Fairfax County," Mason District Supervisor Andres Jimenez posted following the event. "Former Congressman Connolly's impact is woven into the fabric of our county. His story will live on for every neighbor who walks, runs, or bikes this fantastic

trail!"

Connolly played a pivotal role in establishing the 41.5-mile parkland connector during his tenure as chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, a role he held from December 2003 through January 2009.

Members of Connolly's family, including his widow, Katherine "Smitty" Connolly, and his daughter, Caitlin Connolly, attended the event and spoke alongside U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, members of the Board of Supervisors, and Fairfax County Park Authority leaders.

The new signage project was a joint effort between Walkinshaw, the Park Authority, and the Connolly family to make the 41.5-mile trail easier for the public to navigate while preserving and honoring Connolly's local legacy.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

The 41.5 mile trail championed by Congressman Gerry Connolly bears his name to honor his advocacy and service.

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Voters Reminded of Vote Early Option



Signs in Braddock message the connection between voting and basic needs.

Parties and grassroots groups urge voting in mid-term election.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

On Sept. 18, as Virginia began its first day of early in-person voting for the Nov. 3, mid-term elections, local organizations and major parties were engaged in pre-election activities.

The Fairfax GOP was anticipating its “The 250 Freedom Gala”, a sold-out Saturday night fund raiser at the Tysons Hilton. The event featured recognized party names as speakers, including Scott Bessent, Glenn Youngkin, Jason Miyares and others.

The Fairfax Democrats, through their website, offered a multitude of political action events, both local and across the state, as well as virtual events, to appeal to those interested in getting involved beyond casting their vote.

Both parties’ web sites offer guides for voters and links to county voting tools. The Democrat voting info page, fairfaxvotes.org, provides links to register to vote, or to check your registration and voting place. It recommends early voting but explains the voting options. An interesting page feature allows voters to check wait times at each voting location.

The Republican voting info page, fairfax-gop.org/voter-info, provides a link to Fairfax County’s BallotTrax to “track the status of

your mail-in-ballot, from printed to accepted.” Both sites offer similar options with party slanted recommendations on candidates.

In recent years, Democrats, state-wide, have increased their presence in State and local government. As the Fairfax GOP points out on their website: “Democrats hold every statewide office in Richmond: Gov. Abigail Spanberger, Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi, and Attorney General Jay Jones. They control both chambers of the General Assembly. In Fairfax, they hold nine of the ten seats on the Board of Supervisors, and all three of our congressional seats.” As the Fairfax GOP



PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRFAX INDIVISIBLE

Activists take to the sidewalks to remind voters of early voting.

sees it, “November 3 is the one chance Fairfax voters get this year to push back.”

On their website, Fairfax Democrats, support incumbent candidates Mark Warner, Don Beyer, Suhas Subramanyam, and James Walkinshaw’s reelections. Fairfax Democrats also urge passing the three Virginia constitutional amendments on the ballot. The site also emphasizes holding or gaining more seats in the federal Congress, to seek a change in the Republican majorities there.

On Sept. 19, the first Saturday of the early voting period, local grassroots groups were making an effort to assure all, regardless of party leanings, were aware that early voting had begun and emphasized the importance of voting. On a Braddock District corner sidewalk members of Fairfax and Falls Church Indivisible groups, and others were out with voting reminder signs.

Says participant Pam Wagner-Cox, of Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church (AUUC), “We wanted a non-partisan mes-

sage that would connect your vote to tangible things that are important and resonate with many members of our community. Few would argue with the need to vote to help lower the price of gas or food. Our messages were designed to be concise with a positive expectation. We had a reason for everyone to vote.”

As of Oct. 2, the Office of Elections reported that 42,829, 5.22 percent, of registered county voters had cast a ballot either by mail or early in person. In the last comparable election, in November 2024, a presidential election year, 72.14 percent of Fairfax County registered voters cast a ballot. In 2024, and again this year so far, early voting by mail and early in-person voting are used in similar numbers, with a slight edge to voting by mail.

Early in-person voting continues through Oct 31, 5 p.m.

Election Day is Nov. 3; polls are open from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. If you are in line by 7 p.m. you will be able to vote.



Pam Schmoll holds two reasons to vote, with Tom and Lisa Hayes.

'Legions of People Worked on This for a Long Time'

Groundbreaking held for new health and community center.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Plans for the Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center have been in the works for 13 years. So its official groundbreaking, last Wednesday, Sept. 30, was filled with joy and jubilation from everyone there who played a part in making that day a reality.

A joint venture between Fairfax City and Fairfax County, it's being built at the corner of Layton Hall Drive and Blenheim Boulevard in Fairfax City. The project entails demolition of the old Joseph Willard Health Center and construction of a new, 100,000-square-foot facility in its place.

It'll be three stories, with two levels of underground parking, and will connect to the existing, but expanded, Sherwood Center via a fully enclosed bridge. The City-operated community center and county-operated health and human services center will be used by both City and county residents.

The new health building will offer the same healthcare services it does today, while



Sharon Bulova, left, and Rachna Size-more Heizer.

of the building.

"This is such a momentous day for our City," said Fairfax City Mayor Catherine Read. "Turning this building, built in 1954, into a center that'll serve not just City residents, but county residents, has been a labor of love. Looking around, I see [former County Board of Supervisors Chair] Sharon Bulova and [former City Mayor David Meyer], and there are legions of people who've worked on this project for such a long time, who aren't here.

"The nature of government is that we're stewards for long-term projects that take so much planning and resources. And it's such an important role that elected officials play," Read said. Noting that the current City Council members "were entrusted with getting this project over the finish line and to today's groundbreaking," Read said it was people like Meyer, former Councilmember Tom Ross and others who served on previous Councils that "made this possible."

Also praising the City's "deep relationship" with Fairfax County, she said not just past and current Supervisors, but "so many people, including City and County staff, touched this project to take it from a concept to the reality that we're building something – not just for the benefit of the people who live here today – but for the future residents of this City and county who haven't even been born yet."

Likewise, County Board Chairman Jeff McKay said one of his first meetings after becoming chairman was with Bulova and Meyer about this project's importance to Fairfax City and its relationship with the county. "The City of Fairfax plays an integral role in the economic success of Northern Virginia and is a true partner with Fairfax County," said McKay. "And a project like this is evidence that those relationships matter – and that the trust between our two governments and our community is there to support the common wellbeing of our residents."

SEE 'LEGIONS OF PEOPLE', PAGE 13



Catherine Read and David Meyer pose with their shovels.

adding a childcare center, senior-citizen programs from Fairfax City's deteriorating Green Acres Center, plus a two-story gym with an upper-level track. Programs and services from the City's Parks & Recreation Department will move there, too. The Sherwood Center will continue housing recreational classes, preschool, after-school care, meetings, parties, receptions and special events.

Total project cost is \$127.5 million, with Fairfax County paying \$73.4 million (58 percent) and Fairfax City paying \$53.8 million (42 percent), based on their pro-rata share

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Doing the ceremonial groundbreaking are (from left) Chris Herrington; Susan Sigler, Neighborhood & Community Services; Dr. Parham Jaberi, Health Dept.; Stacey Sommerfield; David Meyer; James Walkinshaw; Catherine Read; Jeff McKay; Rachna Size-more Heizer; Supervisor Dalia Palchik (D-Providence); Sharon Bulova; and Health Director Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu.



Flinging shovelful of dirt are Catherine Read (in blue) with (from left) City Councilmembers Anthony Amos, Tom Peterson, Rachel McQuillen, Billy Bates and Stacy Hall.



Past and present Fairfax City officials, Councilmembers and staff.

What the Willard-Sherwood Center Will Offer

The 100,000-square-foot Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center in Fairfax City will be LEED Gold certified, with all-electric building systems and equipment. Planned are a public health center, child-care services, gymnasium, indoor track, fitness center, senior center and multi-use classrooms.

Fairfax County Health Department's public health center will provide a wide array of services, including immunizations, pregnancy testing and maternity intake, tuberculosis testing and treatment, HIV and STI testing, newcomer health screenings, and referral assistance.

It'll also issue vital records (birth, death and marriage certificates) and enroll people into the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program. The Region 5 school-health offices will be in this center, too. And there'll be meeting areas, plus places for public art, throughout the building.

Fairfax City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department will relocate its adminis-



Artist's rendition of the new Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center. This is the view from the Blenheim Boulevard/Layton Hall Drive intersection.

trative staff to the center, as well as services such as preschool and youth programs, indoor fitness programs, and the City's Young at Heart Senior Center. And the coun-

ty's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services will offer Infant & Toddler Connection and early childhood programs.

The project is expected to be

completed in fall 2029. Grimm + Parker Architects designed it, and The Christman Co. is constructing it. Fairfax County's Building Design and Construction Division, Depart-



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Work continued on the project during the groundbreaking.

ment of Public Works, is managing this project in coordination with the City's project-management team, The Blue Heron Leadership Group.

— BONNIE HOBBS

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Fairfax City, County Celebrate Road Extension

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Government Center Parkway now connects them both.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A relatively small investment can yield huge results – and that’s the case with the completion of the Government Center Parkway Extension. This project constructed the missing link of the parkway from Stevenson Street in Fairfax County to Jermantown Road in Fairfax City.

Funded by \$9 million from VDOT via the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTIA), it created a new, east-west roadway connection between the City and county. And it included sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, on-road bike lanes, new lighting and landscaping, too.

Thrilled with the results, dignitaries from these entities gathered near the Jermantown/parkway intersection, Sept. 10, to celebrate the project’s culmination. But it was a decade between the City being approved for the money and the road being finished.

So besides current City Council members Billy Bates and Tom Peterson coming to the ceremony, it was also attended by former Council members David Meyer and Janice Miller. After all, said Miller, “This was a project my Council worked on.”

She explained that, in a Council term of just two years, “It’s difficult to see a project from conception to completion. So it’s very satisfying to see this one – which started probably 10 years ago – come to completion today. And it’ll make an impact on people’s driving around the City, so I’m delighted to be here and am delighted this has happened.”

Starting off the event, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read welcomed everyone – including county Board Chairman Jeff McKay and Braddock District Supervisor Rachna Sizemore Heizer – to “this commemoration of a major project here in the City. It’s going to be so meaningful to both the City and the county. This has been a long time coming.” Read then recognized some particular people there whom she said “deserve some credit” for it.

She acknowledged both Miller and former Mayor Meyer, who was a Councilmember when this project received its funding in 2016, as well as Fairfax City’s Public Works Director David Summers, Transportation Director Wendy Sanford, Transportation Capital Projects Manager Sunny Sarna, Traffic Engineer Curt McCullough, Multimodal Transportation Planner Chloe Ritter, and Director of Community Development and Planning Brooke Hardin.

When something takes so many years to build, said Read, “It takes a lot of people focusing intently on getting the project done. And according to Amir Shahpar from VDOT [its transportation and land use director for Fairfax County], we came in under budget

SEE GOVERNMENT CENTER, PAGE 7



Everyone involved in the road extension posed together after the ceremony. (In front row, middle, from left) are Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Wendy Sanford, Catherine Read and Janice Miller; (and directly behind them, from left) are Amir Shahpar, Jeff McKay, Monica Backmon and David Meyer.



Rachna Sizemore Heizer and Jeff McKay responding to a speech.



Part of the new section of Government Center Parkway, with a raised median, turning lanes, bike lanes and crosswalks.



Catherine Read.



Amir Shahpar listens to a speaker.



Monica Backmon making a point.



A happy Wendy Sanford at the mic.

News

Government Center Parkway Now Connects them Both

FROM PAGE 6

on this. So let's hear it for Fairfax City, for a little City that punches above its weight."

Read also noted that NVTa brings monetary resources to VDOT for localities to use "so we can work together to build important, needed infrastructure. Traffic and roads can be dangerous; and even though we don't think about it every day when we get in our cars, ride our bikes or walk on the sidewalk, accidents happen and all of us need to be vigilant."

"But what this region invests in its transportation projects is an answer to what we do when we're trying to [improve safety for everyone]. We have to build infrastructure that's about moving people, not just vehicles."

"We're moving people safely in their daily lives from their homes to their offices, schools, shopping, amenities, restaurants, etc.," she continued. "And in everything we do, we have to stay people-centered and people-focused, for those who live in our communities now and for those who'll live here decades from now – who'll never remember when this road wasn't here."

Next, McKay said this project wouldn't have happened without the joint efforts of the teams from both Fairfax County and City. "Our residents don't care where the boundary line is," he said. "They just want our infrastructure to work. And NVTa is a great place for those kinds of conversations to happen."

Agreeing with Read's comments, he said work "must continue to improve our pedestrian and roadway safety. And this project does this with bike lanes, well-marked crossings, countdown signal heads – things that support multimodal transportation. It's not just about building projects, but about building safer infrastructure for our res-

idents to use."

For years now, said McKay, the county has been telling its residents to "take a moment, put your phone down, pay attention to what's around you, look before you cross the street, use the infrastructure and protect each other's lives. Today, we need to focus on how infrastructure intersects with humanity."

"This is a relatively small project in terms of money and land area, but it could have a potential huge impact on both the county and City – in potential redevelopment opportunities that come with this, improvements to access, time saved for people, and safety enhancements. And that's what we're celebrating today."

Shahpar then said how pleased he was to see this road extension finally come to fruition. "VDOT's commitment is to [fulfill] the needs of the communities we serve and help them develop their projects," he said. "We also work hand-in-hand with our local partners on both the government and private sides."

He noted, as well, that this one received SmartScale and Revenue Sharing funding from VDOT. It was approved in the first round of SmartScale funding in 2016. "I remember working on it," said Shahpar. "And I'm so happy to see it now here as a new, multimodal option for folks who travel through this area."

Introducing the last speaker, Monica Backmon, CEO of the NVTa, Read said, "What this woman does – trying to corral so many jurisdictions on a regular basis to collaborate, focus on priorities and choose projects – is hard. "She tells us how many billions of dollars of projects were requested and that the NVTa doesn't have that [much money]. So they have to decide what things get funded. The City's fortunate in that it has a track re-

cord of delivering things on time and doing smaller projects that provide critical connections."

"It really is a joy to be here today because we are about collaboration," said Backmon. "And given that this project has dedicated bike lanes, a raised median and safety features, it's critically important. NVTa's three core values are safety, equity and sustainability, and this project shows we practice what we preach. These safety components aren't add-ons; they're critical to making this project work."

Stressing that transportation here isn't one-size-fits-all, she said sometimes people walk, while other times, they bike, take transit or drive, and "we have to look out for each other's safety. I think we can get to a place where there are zero fatalities [due to] these types of infrastructure investments. This \$3.5 million in SmartScale funding [yielded] a huge benefit."

Lastly, City Transportation Director Wendy Sanford thanked everyone for coming and recognized Nick Soucy of Timmons. "He was the engineer who designed this project for us," she said. "And we're really proud of it."

After the ceremony, Sanford explained that "before this road extension, drivers had to go around the Burlington Coat Factory building or use Routes 29 and 50. This used to be a private drive to enter the shopping center. The new road is 850 linear feet long, with one lane in each direction and turn lanes on both sides, and it connects the City and County via Government Center Parkway."

"It's a human-scale roadway because it's intentionally designed for all types of users and will feel more comfortable for pedestrians and bike-riders to access the commercial areas on both sides of it. And it's also a relief valve between Routes 50 and 29."



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PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



The Color Guard waves its flags with school spirit.

Fairfax High's 2026 Homecoming Parade

Fairfax High's Homecoming Parade was Friday, Sept. 25.



The marching band parades down Blenheim Boulevard.



Some administrative staff members having fun.



Principal Georgina Aye.



Guatemala is well-represented.



Field hockey teammates ride in style.

Fairfax High's 2026 Homecoming Parade



Fairfax Lion cheerleaders.



Cheerleaders on parade.



Volleyball players tossing candy.



Theater students promote their upcoming show.



Fairfax High cross country.



Fairfax High crew team members.

Music, Food, Crafts, Children's Rides and Magic

50th annual celebration is this Saturday, Oct. 10.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Autumn is finally here, and that means it's time for colorful leaves, cooler temperatures, cozy sweaters and the Fairfax Fall Festival. This year's event, the 50th annual, is Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., in downtown Fairfax City.

The fun includes three stages of live entertainment, food, crafts, beer gardens, children's rides and activities, fire-station fun, magic shows and even a Taylor Swift cover band. Admission is free, and the festival goes on, rain or shine. (Pets are discouraged, except for service animals).

"As Fairfax City rolls out the welcome mat for our 50th annual Fall Festival, it's a great time to reflect on why this event continues to draw such huge crowds from around the region," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "Many things may have changed in the last half century, but the desire to attend a free family event, the



Shelley Star and The Galaxy rocked last year's crowd in Old Town Square.

second Saturday of October, has remained steady."

"The food, art, crafts, music and entertainment provide something for people of every age – and, for many, it's the kickoff of their holiday shopping," continued Read. "We love hosting this event every year."

More than 400 crafts booths and displays will line both sides of University Drive, Main Street and Sager Avenue. There, people may

choose from a huge assortment of items from local and regional artisans, including handmade jewelry, pottery, paintings, woodwork, textiles and seasonal creations.

And at Fire Station 3 at 4081

University Drive, the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department will host its popular Sparky's Harvest Bash. Children can take photos with Sparky the Fire Dog, and firefight-

SEE 50TH ANNUAL, PAGE 12



Jonathan Mercaldo decorated this pumpkin with Halloween stickers at last year's event.

Entertainment Schedule

❖ Main Stage,
4103 Chain Bridge Road

10 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
Northern Virginia Shag Club

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
La Unica

1 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Northern Virginia Shag Club

2 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Northern Virginia Shag Club
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Herr Metal

❖ Old Town Square Stage,
10415 North St.

10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Main Street Band

11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Fletcher Roberts Magic

12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.
Highway Legends

2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Fletcher Roberts Magic

3-5 p.m.
Keeton

❖ Children's Stage,
4020 University Drive

10 a.m.
Legacy Irish Dance Academy

10:30 a.m.
Valhalla

11 a.m.
Village EDU

noon
Dance with Cheong

12:30 p.m.
The Center for Ballet Arts

1 p.m.
Melina's Dance Company

1:30 p.m.
Fletcher Roberts Magic

2:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Cruel Summer - Sponsored by Invest529



Enjoying lunch at the 2025 festival were (from left) Valeria Vera (butter chicken) and Tiffany Duong (chicken tikka bowl).



Map of the 50th annual Fairfax Fall Festival.

Fairfax City Council Candidates Have their Say

Eleven people are vying for six seats.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Eleven people are vying for six seats on the Fairfax City Council in the Nov. 3 election. And last Wednesday, Sept. 30, they presented their cases before City residents during a candidates' forum at Katherine Johnson Middle School.

Sponsors were the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, and the Fairfax Forward Foundation. Candidate Stephen Kim didn't participate, and attempts to reach him afterward were unsuccessful.

Below is each candidate's speech, edited slightly for length, in the order in which they spoke:

Stacy Hall (incumbent)



Stacy Hall

"I'm running for re-election because I care deeply about this community and the decisions we're making about its future. Fairfax has been my home since 2011; I've served nine years of PTA leadership, have been on the School Board, and served on City Council, the past two years. I have a degree in finance and spent more than 15 years as a comptroller. I ask questions, look carefully at numbers, pay attention to details and consider the long-term consequences of every decision.

Residents deserve a transparent, fiscally responsible, accessible government that listens. I want Fairfax to remain a City with excellent schools, safe neighborhoods, strong public safety, thriving small businesses, and protected parks

and green spaces. We can support thoughtful development and economic growth while preserving the character and charm that makes Fairfax special. And I believe your voice matters.

I talk with residents, visit neighborhoods, answer questions, show up at school events and make sure your concerns are heard. I'll do my homework, continue to ask questions, listen and make independent decisions based on what's best for our City. Fairfax is our home, our community and our future, and I'd be honored to continue serving you on Council."

Rachel McQuillen (incumbent)



Rachel McQuillen

"Four votes – that's how close my City Council election was. It taught me that, in Fairfax City, a few neighbors can change what happens next. I thank my fellow candidates for stepping forward; putting your name on a ballot takes courage. Two years ago, you gave me a chance to serve. I voted no on raising the meals tax, I brought the idea of a Citywide efficiency audit to Council, won support for it and now it's moving forward.

I stood by funding our schools, better pay for public-safety workers and stronger gun-safety rules that took effect sooner. Today I helped to break ground on the Willard-Sherwood Center. I wanted that center built, but its plan left more than a million dollars a year in costs with no way to pay for them. I joined colleagues in pushing for a better plan. City staff now expects the center's income to cover those yearly costs.

"If re-elected, I'll put the audit's finding to work to get faster City services, safer streets, strong schools and a City where families can afford to stay. I own a home here and run a small business here. I'm an independent because my vote should answer to the City

residents."

Anthony Amos (incumbent)



Anthony Amos

"If you ever need a crash course in local government, run for City Council. In my first term, we onboarded a new city manager and police chief, dealt with one of the most challenging budgets in over a decade and had disputes on capital and development projects – and I loved it.

I love when you blitz me in Safe-way to talk, and I love attending our events and community meetings. And I love being on Council and making decisions, even when they're difficult. I love this City and representing you. Representation, education and discourse are what we should always be about.

Knocking on doors, I've heard our community wants the essentials – take care of our roads and figure out traffic. Pick trash up on time, maintain our parks, support our first responders and public-safety officials, promote balanced growth – not too much and not too little – take care of our people and staff, and help as many as we can within a reasonable budget.

Moving forward, I want to expand our affordable-housing trust fund, set up a land bank, create a senior home-safety tax credit program and establish a pedestrian plaza in Old Town. I'll support our future and never slack on the essentials."

Sandi Slappey Brown

"I moved to Fairfax City in 2018 [from] Fairfax County, because there's just something about this place. As a lifelong social worker, I've come to appreciate how people and their environments interact and how it all comes together



Sandi Brown

to create lives for all of us.

Taxes and City services commonly come up when I speak with voters. I'll bring a sense of pragmatism and caring into my decision-making. Nobody wants to pay more taxes, but everything is costing more – from the supplies the City has to buy to the salaries we want to pay our very worthy City employees. Figuring out how to bring in more revenue is one of our challenges.

Everyone I've talked to agrees we want more commercial, retail and business building up that tax base. I want to be a part of the Council that's working with our Economic Development Office, City staff, commissions, developers, investors, residents and business owners to figure out how we do that. I also want to explore creative financing options. [For example], the Parks Foundation can raise money to fund some things we won't have to spend our tax dollars on. I look forward to talking with you about our budget decisions or anything else."

Kelly O'Brien



Kelly O'Brien

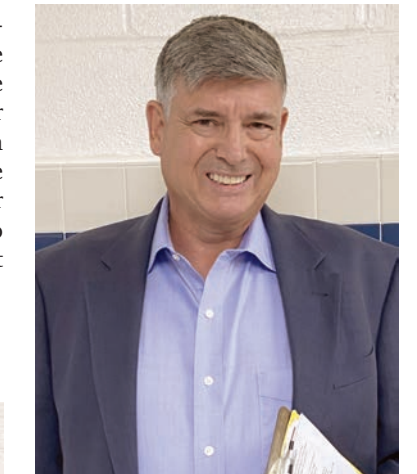
"I'm a 15-year City resident, serving the community in many ways. I'm vice-chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, I'm on the Old Town Fairfax Busi-

ness Assn. and volunteer at City events. I created Facebook group, Fairfax 411, to summarize and demystify what happens at public Council and Planning Commission meetings because I'm a government nerd at heart.

I'm deputy director of planning and zoning for the Town of Vienna, and before that, I worked for the City of Fairfax in the Community Development and Planning Department. So I understand local government well. I understand how decisions get made, are implemented and impact residents and businesses. I'm running because I love our City and see this as another way I can help our community.

I'd like to encourage development that follows the plans that we as a community have come together and said are our vision for the City. We need a balance between commercial and residential and must make sure special exceptions are "special" and not the norm. I also want to bring joy back to politics and want people to feel comfortable participating, asking questions, coming to meetings and challenging us. I listen, show up, pitch in and bring people together."

Russell Jones



Russell Jones

"I'll make this short. I didn't get into this to be a politician or as a politician. What I bring to the table is brutal honesty and the courage to say what needs to be said, regardless of what it costs. Sugar-coating the reality of our situation is no longer an option.

Twenty-plus years in government taught me how easily money gets wasted, and 20-plus years running a contracting business taught me how to fix it. My niche is simple – high-quality service at half the price of the big guys – because helping people afford what they need comes first. If I can run a business that delivers premium

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 18

Arrest Made in Teen Bike-Truck Fatality

Driver is charged with a misdemeanor.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The local community was plunged into mourning, Sept. 9, when a Frost Middle School student riding a bike was struck and killed by a large truck exiting a Fairfax City shopping center. Nothing will be able to bring him back; but on Sept. 28, City police arrested and charged the driver of the truck.

They identified him as Lawrence Onley, 46, of Fort Washington, Md. He was charged with careless driving and infliction of injury or death on vulnerable road users. It's a class one misdemeanor, punishable by as much as 12 months in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine.

The tragedy occurred 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 after reports of a crash involving a teenage boy and a vehicle. It happened near the Peet's Coffee exit to Pickett from the Turnpike Shopping Center. The victim, a 13-year-old eighth-grader wearing a helmet, sustained life-threatening injuries

and was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to police, "Investigation determined that a garbage truck was exiting the shopping center onto Pickett Road when the crash occurred. The driver stopped at the exit and was looking to the left as the juvenile – who was operating a pedal-assist e-bike on the sidewalk – entered the crosswalk. As the truck pulled forward into the roadway, it struck the juvenile."

Police said a truck matching the description of the vehicle involved was located nearby by officers, and the driver was identified. Initially, they investigated the crash as a possible hit-and-run.

However, said police, "Information developed during the investigation indicated the driver was unaware that the truck had struck the juvenile at the time of the crash. The details surrounding [this incident] were presented to both the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and the City of Fairfax prosecutor for review."

Onley voluntarily turned himself in to the authorities and was taken to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. He was later released on \$1,500 bond and will have a preliminary hearing in City of Fairfax General District Court. At press time, his court date had not yet been set.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Artist Shelley Miller sold her colorful, resin Christmas trees last year.

50th Annual Celebration

FROM PAGE 10

ers and emergency crews will welcome visitors to the station for tours of its fire trucks and ambulances. People may also explore the educational trailer to learn home fire safety and evacuation skills.

Gourmet food stands and food trucks offering a wide variety of festival favorites, global street foods, dishes from local restaurants, and sweet indulgences will be located throughout the festival. Feast on everything from Thai iced tea to tempura shrimp, fried rice, tacos, nachos, chicken, hamburgers, chocolates, cookies, ice cream and brownies.

Three beer gardens will be at the main stage, 4103 Chain Bridge Road; Old Town Square, 10415 North St.; and food court one, corner of University Drive and Sager Avenue. A trio of wineries will also be featured. Morais Vineyards and Winery will be near the Main Stage; Old Farm Winery at Hartland, in Old Town Square; and Cave Ridge Vineyard, in food court number one.

There'll be three stages of live, musical entertainment with performers for all ages to enjoy and plenty of space to dance.

The acts include Cruel Summer, a full-scale tribute to Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, and Herr Metal, performing 1980s-style arena rock. (See Entertainment Schedule for details and addresses).

The Children's Stage in the Truist Bank parking lot at 4020 University Drive will feature live music, dancing and magicians. Children's rides, moonbounces and slides will be

there, too. (Rides are weather-dependent).

A free Fall for the Book event, "Meet an Author Day," will feature five authors for young readers. It'll be held in Paradise Games & Gifts, 10385 Main St. Details are at fallforthebook.org/october10.

For history buffs, the Legato School Museum on Chain Bridge Road, adjacent to the festival, will hold an open house and tour from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., showing what student life was like there from 1870-1928. The Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House, 10386 Main St., will hold tours from noon-2 p.m. This charming brick home is the City's oldest residence in what was the original, six-block Town of Providence. It was built in three phases – in 1807, 1824 and 1927, and visitors will learn about the lives of some of its many occupants.

The Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, at 10209 Main St., will feature local history from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., plus the exhibit "Indigenous Perspectives," highlighting the voices and experiences of Virginia's tribal communities. Built in 1873, this museum is housed in the former Fairfax Elementary School – the first, two-story brick school in Fairfax County.

In addition, the Fairfax Saturday Farmers Market will be open for business that day, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at 10500 Page Ave. Parking is onsite; look for the colorful tents.

For parking, shuttle bus and further festival information, go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/Events-directory/Parks-and-Recreation/Special-Events/Fall-Festival>.

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.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 14

Transportation Meeting. 7 p.m. At Timber Lane Elementary School, 2737 West Street, Falls Church. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) will present recommended improvements to sidewalks, bike paths, transit stops and crossings located on Route 29 between I-495 and Tripps Run at the Falls Church City border, just east of South Maple Ave, at an in-person public meeting. Following the presentation at approximately 7:30 p.m., residents and commuters will have the opportunity to review exhibit boards,

ask questions and provide comments. An online survey will be available close to the meeting in October.

OCT. 3 TO NOV. 1 (WEEKENDS)

Fairfax Tree Rescue Extravaganza II. Help save a tree! Join Fairfax and Falls Church residents in a community-wide effort to rescue trees threatened by invasive vines. Learn how to identify and clip harmful vines while protecting native ones. It's fun, gratifying, makes an immediate difference and no experience is needed. With an estimated one million trees at risk, we need hundreds of neighbors to lend a hand. Pick an event. Bring a friend. Save a tree. For event locations, dates, details, and registration, visit FairfaxPRISM.org and click on the October 3–November 1 Tree Rescue Extravaganza II box.

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

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'Legions of People Worked on This for a Long Time'

FROM PAGE 4

He also stressed that many City and county residents might not even know which jurisdiction they're in, but "they want their government and services to work. They expect high-quality facilities and for us to deliver on projects like this to make sure that happens. It's also important to focus on the staff, because the dedicated people who'll work in this building to serve our community's public-health [needs] deserve to have a first-class facility.

"Three months after I was elected chairman, COVID hit; and the importance of first-rate public health took on a new meaning. This [building] isn't just something nice to have. Having a healthy community takes a concerted effort of everyone in [it], and a signature building like this is essential for everyone's wellbeing."

Next, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, (D-11th), former Braddock District supervisor, said, "We're going through a period of time in our community and country where people are losing access to their healthcare coverage and healthcare, and we're working to change that.

"When I was a supervisor, we asked low-income community members what their needs were. And I was surprised to learn that one of people's primary needs was physical access to healthcare services. This facility will close that gap a little for those really needing it."

He, too, credited Meyer with telling him the importance of this project, when Walkinshaw was a supervisor. "We had meetings and built consensus between county and City leadership around its design and services," said Walkinshaw.

He also praised past and present City and county leaders and staff for keeping those conversations and the progress going. As a result, he said, "People will have access to a world-class facility to deliver health services and community-based services and activities for many decades to come."

Supervisor Rachna Sizemore Heizer (D-Braddock) also stressed the significance of the "seamless collaboration" between City and county. "I want to see this and many other [joint] projects benefiting both [entities] through to fruition," she said. "At the end of the day, we're here to serve the people.

"And I love that, in this day and age – especially after COVID – we recognize that public health includes connection and belonging.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



This group is representing the Young at Heart Senior Center.



County supervisors and Health Department staff.



Public Works and other City and County staff members.

And it's not just physical health. An important piece of that is mental wellness – feeling that you belong in a community and have that connection. So opening a public health center for all ages, from children through seniors, is a model for the future.

"We know there's a loneliness epidemic and people feel disconnected; I think that's part of the reason our society feels more divisive. And the more we can find ways to come together in health and connection, the better we'll be."

Chris Herrington, director, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services [DPWES], spoke next. "This building is a realization of our commitment to sustainability and climate action," he said. "We'll deliver a net-zero-energy facility designed to achieve LEED Gold. It'll have stormwater treatment where none exists today and will provide electric-vehicle charging stations and more energy-efficient building systems to save our taxpayers money, into the future.

"But we wouldn't be here without our elected officials' commitment to co-locate these facilities. We're replacing a 30,000-square-foot building from 1954 with a 100,000-square-foot facility that'll combine health and wellness services.

And I want to celebrate the women and men of the [DPWES], plus architects Grimm + Parker, and The Christman Co. who'll [construct] it."

Lastly, Fairfax City Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director Stacey Sommerfield said this center is eagerly anticipated by so many. "Our entire staff will move into this facility, and we're excited to bring all our services under one roof," she said.

"Our Young at Heart Senior Center will finally get to [leave] Green Acres [built in 1961 as an elementary school].

We're just holding that building together, but this new facility will be amazing. Seniors will have an outdoor patio on the roof, and we'll also have a fitness center, a full-sized gym, walking track, classrooms, plus dedicated youth-program space with an attached playground."

Sommerfield has only been with the City for four years, so she acknowledged all the time and effort put in by everyone who came before her – including those on the City's Parks and Rec Advisory Board, Commission on the Arts, and the Senior Council – "to make sure this is a beautiful facility."

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Virginians Will Vote on Three Constitutional Amendments

Question 1 protects women's reproductive rights and more.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

This is the first of three articles focusing on each of the proposed amendments.

Three amendments to the Virginia Constitution will be on the ballot Nov. 3 including: question 1, protection of women's reproductive rights; question 2, removing the ban on same sex marriage; and question 3, automatic restoration of voting rights for convicted felons.

A Constitutional amendment follows a rigorous process in Virginia before it can be put before

the voters. The proposed language must be passed in the General Assembly. Then after an intervening election, the exact language must be passed by the General Assembly again. Finally this language goes before the voters.

The language of the first proposed Constitutional amendment reads:

"Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to protect the freedom to make personal decisions about prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion, miscarriage management and fertility care; (ii) protect doctors, nurses and patients from punishment for these decisions; and (iii) allow for restrictions on abortions during the third trimester of pregnancy except when the patient's health is at risk or the pregnancy cannot survive?"

State Senator Jennifer Boysko (Va-38), who sponsored the



Sen. Jennifer Boysko

amendment in the Senate says this is personal for her. She was diagnosed with a rare condition when she was pregnant with her second child.

"Right before 32 weeks they told me I needed a C-section or

I wouldn't have survived. It was a life and death situation for me. Imagine having your toddler sitting beside you and hearing mommy may be ready to die."

But her doctors made sure she understood the process, and working with them she was able to make the right decision.

"Politicians shouldn't be dictating what a woman or doctor can do. In Richmond they never meet the people making these decisions."

She says her interest in this issue goes back even further to when she was a college student at Hollins University, and reproductive rights was a big issue. Boysko says she helped to organize an anti and

pro-abortion debate. "This is really when I was trying to understand what the issues were."

The amendment doesn't change the current law on abortion and reproductive rights in Virginia. If the present law adequately protects women's reproductive rights, why repeat it in the constitution?

"When we see what is happening in other states doctors are afraid to treat patients," Boysko says. "We are seeing really horrific stories. We want to protect what we have in Virginia."

She adds the Dobbs decision which overturned Roe vs. Wade in 2022 could have a negative impact on Virginia and put reproductive healthcare at risk. "If another Administration comes in, we don't want them to be able to take away these rights by changing the law currently in place so we are putting these rights and responsibilities in the Constitution."

Boysko says "If we look at polling, this amendment is wildly popular for regular people to make their own decisions. They want

women to be safe and to be able to make decisions with their doctor without the politicians telling them what to do."

Boysko has been in office 11 years, and says "this has been a top priority back to when a Republican was a seat holder in the 86th district. Republicans, women and men, Democrats all would like the General Assembly to get out of our decision making. People have had enough. We are thoughtful people. We trust our doctors who are trained in the quality of care and the pledge that doctors give."

The amendment is opposed by former Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears who has announced a "Life and Marriage" tour to urge Virginians to vote no on this proposed amendment and also amendment #2 on same sex marriage. She says, "It's not what I'm against, it's what I'm for." Earle-Sears says the people will make a decision. "I'm trying to give information. That's what this is all about."

Virginians Will Vote on 3 Constitutional Amendments

'Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to remove the ban on same-sex marriage?'

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Second of a series of three articles focusing on each of the 3 proposed amendments on the ballot.

Three amendments to the Virginia Constitution will be on the ballot Nov. 3 including: 1) protection of women's reproductive rights; 2) removing the ban on same sex marriage; and 3) automatic restoration of voting rights for convicted felons as well as updating provisions on voting by persons found to be mentally incompetent.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment Question 2

A Constitutional amendment follows a rigorous process in Virginia before it can be put before the voters. The proposed

language must be passed in the General Assembly. Then after an intervening election, the exact language must be passed by the General Assembly again. Finally the language goes before the voters.

THE 2nd proposed Constitutional amendment reads:

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to (i) remove the ban on same-sex marriage; (ii) affirm that two adults may marry regardless of sex, gender, or race; and (iii) require all legally valid marriages to be treated equally under the law?



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Three Virginia Constitutional amendments are on the ballot in November

Former State Senator Adam Ebbin, the patron of proposed Constitutional amendment #2 says, "We wanted to remove the language from the Virginia Constitution that prohibits same sex couples from getting married and to make Virginia consistent with the law of the land."

Ebbin says in an effort to boost turnout for the conservative vote in 2006, a provision was put on the ballot in Virginia that

restricted marriage to one man and one woman. Ebbin says for 20 years there have been efforts to repeal it.

In 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court overrode the provision in the Virginia constitution in the Obergefell v. Hodges decision when they ruled that the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution required states to recognize lawfully licensed marriages between two people of the same sex and invalidated all re-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Adam Ebbin

maintaining state-level constitutional and statutory bans. It required every U.S. state and territory to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples and recognize lawful marriages performed in other jurisdictions.

This was a 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court, and Ebbin says in the current political climate it is possible the decision could be overturned. If this were to happen, the law would revert to the 2006 provision in the Virginia constitution prohibiting same-sex marriage. This is another reason it is important to change the Virginia Constitution, he explains.

But in addition he says the Virginia Constitution should be understandable. Currently the Virginia Constitution says one thing and the law of the land as stated by the U.S. Supreme Court says another.

"This is not a vote on whether same sex people can get married but supports equal rights for adults under the government. It's time that the Virginia Bill of Rights have status after many years and that our neighbors are our neighbors."

"We're in kind of a weird place that there is a provision but it is inoperable. The Virginia law should reflect the law of the land with no hidden backdoor obstacles."

"I think this will pass but we have to work the votes to know."

Coming to Terms with Addiction

Photographer Lloyd Wolf's behind-the-scenes views of Lorton Reformatory inmates in a treatment program.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

“People can heal and transcend their worst moments,” said Lloyd Wolf at an Oct. 3 reception for an exhibit of some of his documentary photographs. These photos depict behind-the-scenes views of Lorton Reformatory inmates in a substance abuse rehabilitation and treatment program at the prison from 1989 and 1991.

The exhibit, titled “Transformations, Documenting the Pilot Substance Abuse Program at Lorton Reformatory, 1989–1991,” will be on view until Nov. 7.

“People can heal and transcend their worst moments.”

— Lloyd Wolf

minimal privacy.

At the reception, Arralean Ellis, Fairfax City resident, who worked at the reformatory, later called the Lorton Correctional Complex, from 1973 to 2002, shared some memories. Among other duties, she had to wake up the inmates to start cooking breakfast in the kitchen, for example. One regular task was to walk down the cells passageways and count the prisoners. One day her count

came up one short. It turns out that an inmate became intimate with a prison official's wife who gave her husband's uniform to the prisoner and he walked right out the gate, Ellis recounted.

The Reformatory

The former 3,500-acre Lorton Reformatory in southeastern Fairfax County had a school, brick kiln, farm and cultivated fields. It reflected the early 1900s Progressive-era reform movement that promoted a wholesome and uplifting environment to train prisoners for employment upon their release.

That approach endured into the 1990s. Discussing the men in his photos, “They weren't behind bars,” Wolf said.

The period was the height of cocaine use in Washington, D.C., a time known as the “crack wars,” he said. Crack was a significant driver of crimes by young men in their 20s and 30s. Wolf said he connected with one at Lorton who was “a career bank robber, caught twice.” Another killed his mother's boyfriend in a drug-fueled rage.

Wolf went to the reformatory weekly with Jon Cohen, then editor of Washington's City Paper. “You get connected,” Wolf said. The pair documented 36 men who voluntarily opted into a substance abuse recovery program created by Dr. Jasper Ormond that involved education and therapy, including music therapy by jazz harpist Jeffmajors Graham. “It was an Afro-centric program,” Wolf said, “to give them a sense of culture and pride.”

Cohen led memoir writing workshops urging “raw honesty” to help them to come to terms with challenges like drugs, violence and race. We were “building on what was already there,” Cohen wrote, “exploiting each man's unique genius.” We learned that “they can transcend their worst moments,” said Wolf.

A critical requirement was that their families had to undertake counseling in hopes that when released, the men would not go home to a toxic environment, Wolf said.

The confinement at Lorton was not as strict as that in many prisons. The men lived in a dormitory-like setting and each had a bunk and desk. They had gang showers, www.connectionnewspapers.com

The Photos

Wolf's photographs capture the personal essence of each man, up close looks into their eyes and perhaps their psyches. Photos also include moments upbeat like a “town meeting” when they are sitting in a circle and their jubilant release from prison.

“Wolf's empathetic lens captured the raw human stories of recovery, vulnerability and resilience among incarcerated individuals striving for personal change within the penal system,” noted the Workhouse press release.

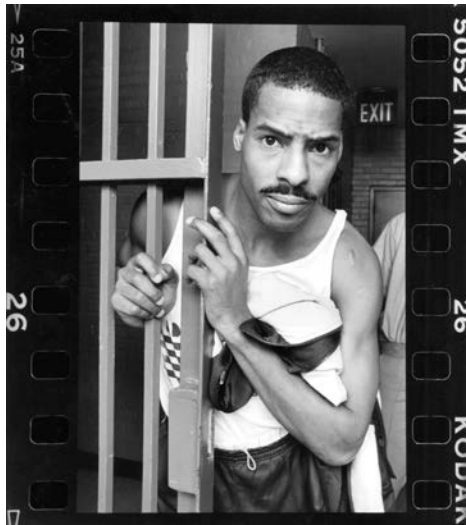
An Arlington resident, he has had many documentary projects. That includes The March of the Living, about 3,000 Jewish teenagers on a pilgrimage to Holocaust sites in Poland, followed by a visit to Israel. Another project is about African-American women and their jewelry.

“I take pictures because they help make sense of this world we're in,” Wolf says on his website, <https://lloydwolf.com/>.

The exhibit is in the McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, open Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon to 5 p.m.



An inmate and a marriage proposal.



Some of Wolf's photographs.



PHOTOS BY LLOYD WOLF



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Lloyd Wolf, photographer, and Arralean Ellis, a former employee at the Lorton Reformatory.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Visitors viewed the photos at an Oct. 3 Workhouse reception.

ENTERTAINMENT

COX FARMS FALL FESTIVAL IS IN FULL SWING!

Cox Farms is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Dino Slide and the debut of the Monster Slide, which replaced the Barn Slide that burned down in 2025. The Fall Festival is open Thursdays through Mondays (closed Tuesday and Wednesday), and the market is open daily. Admission includes all the slides, unlimited hayrides, and other attractions like the Cornundrum cornfield walk and the Imaginature Trail through the forest, apples and cider to enjoy while you're there, and a small patch pumpkin to take home! Fields of Fear is the scary nighttime event on Friday and Saturday nights (plus Sunday, October 11), recommended for ages 12+. In addition to fan favorites like kettle corn and apple cider donuts, they introduced a "dirty slushie" option along with the very popular apple cider slushies. Located at 15621 Braddock Road, at the corner of Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road, Centreville.

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!

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 substance abuse treatment program are returning to the very grounds where they were taken.

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,



Cox Farms is now open in Centreville for Fall Festival.



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



A Touch a Truck event will be held on Monday, Oct. 12, 2026 at the McLean Community Center Parking Lot in McLean.

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.

OCT. 1-31

"Fall Into Color!" At McLean Art Gallery.

"Fall into Color!" features original artwork inspired by the rich colors, changing light, and distinctive atmosphere of the season. The exhibition reflects the many ways artists find inspiration in the world around us.

"Watercolor for All Levels" with Raj KC Five

2-hour classes - \$225 Tuesdays: October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3 at 1:15-3:15pm Register now! <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/watercolor-for-all-levels-by-raj-kc-5-sessions-october-november-tickets-2002394300255?aff=erelpanelorg>

"Plein Air Painting" Free Demo Friday, Oct. 23, 11am Raj KC will present a demo on raising your game in watercolor painting. Get free tickets at: plein-air.eventbrite.com/ [http://how-to Artist demos held at McLean Community Center at 1234 Ingleside Ave in McLean.](http://how-to-Artist-demos-held-at-McLean-Community-Center-at-1234-Ingleside-Ave-in-McLean)

OCT. 3-30

The Haunt. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton.

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. This year, they've raised the stakes (and the scares) to bring you an immersive, art-infused haunted experience like nothing else in the area. Think chilling installations, unexpected twists, and a walk-through history that takes a decidedly spooky turn. It's eerie, it's creative, and yes—it's a whole lot of fun. This year's experience promises to be the most immersive yet. Tickets run \$25-\$35 depending on the night.

OCT. 6-10

Fall for the Book's 28th Festival. At George Mason University, downtown City of Fairfax, and in Fairfax County Public Library branches. Featuring over 50 writers, including esteemed poets, historians, novelists, memoirists, children's authors, graphic novelists and more. 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 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. Visit www.FallfortheBook.org/schedule.

THURSDAY/OCT. 8

Breast Cancer Fundraiser. 5 p.m. At South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. The community is invited to attend South County's Dig Pink volleyball matches against Robinson High School at South County High School. Freshman and JV play at 5:00 p.m., followed by varsity at 6:30 p.m. Fundraising and awareness activities will take place throughout the evening. Donation link: <https://giving.side-out.org/campaigns/23768>

OCT. 8-12

Washington West Film Festival. At LOOK Cinemas in Reston Town Center, Reston. Will host the East Coast premiere of *JIMMY*, Starring KJ Apa as Jimmy Stewart. *JIMMY* stars KJ Apa (Riverdale) as James Stewart and traces the most transformative chapter of the actor's life, from his Academy Award-winning performance in *The Philadelphia Story* to his enlistment as a combat pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps at the outset of World War II. Stewart flew 20 combat missions over Europe and rose to the rank of colonel before returning home changed, just as the role of George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* came calling.

OCT. 8-25

"Betrayal." At 1st Stage, Tysons. Show times as follows: **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.**, Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856. Emma, Robert and Jerry have history. As her marriage to Robert comes to an end, Emma reconnects with Jerry, her former lover—and her husband's best friend—as

ENTERTAINMENT

the action unspools backward in time in an inventive retelling by the Nobel Prize-winning playwright.

FRIDAY/OCT. 9

Pathway Homes Honors. 8:30-10:30 a.m. At Fairview Park Marriott, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church. In Honor of Sen. Warner, Kerrie Wilson and HomeAid for Support of Those in Need of Mental Health and Affordable Housing Services. The awards take place during Pathway Homes' Steps to Pathways Breakfast for their efforts to ensure vulnerable members of the community have needed services and a place to call home. The annual event raises funds and awareness about Pathways' work to prevent and end homelessness. It features speakers including Pathway clients, civic leaders, and its awardees, and brings together nearly 200 people in support of Pathways — a nonprofit providing mental health services starting with safe, stable housing to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity. To purchase tickets, visit: <https://www.pathwayhomes.org/breakfast/>.

FRIDAY/OCT. 9

Coffee & Conversation: Navigating Medicare. 9 a.m. Grab a coffee, pull up a chair and connect with AARP Virginia and Chapter, a national Medicare advisory service that provides free, unbiased Medicare plan guidance. Join us at Panera, 8365 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, for Medicare information and helpful resources. Medicare Open Enrollment runs from Oct. 15 through Dec 7. All are welcome! AARP members, non-members and anyone curious about Medicare are invited. Sign up to get a reminder email. <https://events.aarp.org/FCF100926>

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, OCT. 9-11 & OCT. 16-18

McLean Community Players' The Addams Family. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. They're creepy, they're kooky- and they're perfect for the whole family. The Addams Family, presented by McLean Community Players, is a laugh-out-loud musical comedy that celebrates love, loyalty, and embracing what makes each of us unique. When Wednesday Addams falls for a perfectly "normal" young man, chaos- and heart- ensue. With catchy songs, colorful characters, and plenty of humor for ages 8+, this delightfully offbeat show is a fun, family-friendly night at the Alden Theatre!

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

ParktoberFest. 12-5 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5235 Walney Road, Chantilly.

- ❖ 20+ local makers: More than 20 local makers, bakers and artisans will be on hand, along with fall plants and florals.
- ❖ Live local music: The Walkaways return, joined this year by singer/songwriter Jay Byrd.
- ❖ Fall food & brews: Ono Brewery will serve seasonal favorites including Pumpkin Ale and OktoberFest, while Burgorilla and Spinners Deli provide food.
- ❖ Family-friendly and FREE: ECLP staff and a local Girl Scout troop will lead crafts and activities for young visitors.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

Transportation Fair. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Minnie H, Peyton Community Center at Bailey's, 5920 Summers Lane, Falls Church. Learn about local transportation projects and different public transportation resources, programs, and services available to Mason District residents.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

McLean VFD Open House and Blood Drive. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. At 1455 Laughlin Avenue, McLean. Once a year, the fire department opens its firehouse to the public to showcase its apparatus, conduct live rescue demonstrations, provide fire safety education, and offer fun activities for the whole family. The Inova Blood Donor Services Bloodmobile will be parked in the fire station's lower parking lot. Donors will receive a specialty vampire shirt.



The McLean 5K Race will be held on Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026 at the McLean Square Shopping Center in McLean.



Treasure Island Reimagined: Jane Hawkins and the Pirate's Gold can be seen Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2026 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

Vienna Volunteer Fire Dept. Open House. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At 400 Center Street, S, Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department (VVFDD) invites the community to its Annual Open House for a fun-filled day of fire safety lessons, family activities, food, tours of the firehouse and vehicles, and kid-friendly activities. This year's Open House coincides with Fire Prevention Week and highlights the theme, "Charge Into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower!" Families will have the opportunity to meet Vienna Volunteer Fire Department firefighters and EMTs, learn valuable fire safety information, enjoy demonstrations and activities, and experience an exciting day at the firehouse. Visit www.vvfd.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

McLean 5K. 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. At McLean Square Shopping Center, 6631 Old Dominion Dr., McLean. The race, a perennial family favorite, is hosted by the McLean Community Center and the McLean Community Foundation (MCF), and proceeds support MCF, which in turn gives generous grants to numerous McLean-area organizations. The certified course through McLean is designed to appeal to runners of all ability and experience levels. Sign up October 1 through Race Day: \$50

SATURDAY/OCT. 10

The McLean 5K & OFC's IGNITE. Race at 8 a.m. and IGNITE at 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. In downtown McLean & The Old Firehouse Center. Start your Saturday with the McLean 5K, then keep the good energy going at OFC IGNITE: Relax & Recover. After crossing the finish line, head to the Old Firehouse Center

for a chance to unwind, recharge and enjoy a relaxing afternoon. It's the perfect pairing for an active day in the community!

SUNDAY/OCT. 11

October Craft Day: Paper Pumpkins. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Embrace the Fall Season with a creative twist at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum Sunday, October 11, 2026, for the festive Craft Day where guests of all ages can make adorable paper pumpkin decorations to take home and brighten their autumn decor. Craft supplies included with admission fees. Free parking and handicap accessible. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$4; ages 13 and older, \$6; Teachers, First Responders and Military, \$5; Seniors 65+, \$5. Visit www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org. www.facebook.com. 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/OCT. 11

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel: Glorious Musical Jewels –Beethoven and Schubert. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The program includes Beethoven's joyous Polonaise, the beloved Für Elise, and humorous Bagatelles, alongside Schubert's tender Waltzes, fiery F minor Impromptu, and the heavenly Ave Maria. Praised for his "pianistic eloquence with a special gift for commentary" (The Washington Post), Siegel offers an evening not to be missed for new and returning classical music lovers, concluding with a short audience Q&A.

MONDAY/OCT. 12

Touch a Truck. 9 a.m. - Noon. At the McLean

FAIRFAX COUNTY

FARMERS MARKETS

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 Jermentown 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.

Community Center Parking Lot, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Kids can climb aboard, explore and get up close with trucks and specialty vehicles at this hands-on community event. Meet the people who operate these vehicles, discover how they work and enjoy a fun, interactive experience for the whole family!

TUESDAY/OCT. 13

Treasure Island Reimagined: Jane Hawkins and the Pirate's Gold. 7 p.m. At the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. In this adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic, the ultimate pirate story comes to life as a live-action graphic novel! Jane Hawkins, 12, lives a quiet life at a seaside inn on England's western coast in 1754. When a sinister stranger arrives with a mysterious trunk, her world is transformed into a thrilling adventure. Three performers create character voices and sound effects live as 1,200 projected illustrations bring this edge-of-your-seat tale to life. Filled with suspense, skeletons and pirate action, this production is recommended for ages 8+.

OCT. 13 TO NOV. 18

Virtual Author Series. 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

Upstart Crow, Inc. and Fairfax County Public Library will present four free virtual author conversations from October 13 through November 18. The programs are online, open to the public, and sponsored by the library. Registration is on the Fairfax County Public Library calendar. A link to join is sent to registrants.

Tuesday, Oct. 13, at 6:30 p.m. with Lois Romano, a longtime Washington Post editor and POLITICO reporter, on her New York Times bestseller, An Inconvenient Widow: The Torment, Trial, and Triumph of Mary Todd Lincoln (Simon & Schuster, 2026). William Miller hosts.

Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 6:30 p.m.: Shubha Sunder on her novel Optional Practical Training (Graywolf Press), with William Miller. Sunder

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 19

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Fairfax City Council Candidates

FROM PAGE 11

quality at half the cost of the big guys, there's no reason our City can't do the same thing.

We don't need higher taxes or bloated budgets; we need better management. So I'd be bringing a contractor's eye to government spending, cutting the waste, demanding accountability, and making sure the City delivers real results at a lower cost. I'm Russell Jones, and I consider myself the common-sense candidate."

Susan Kuiler



Susan Kuiler

"Here's what I've heard from residents and neighborhoods across our City. Two concerns come up repeatedly – redevelopment and rising real-estate taxes. Fairfax City is a 6.4-square-mile, largely built-out community of about 26,000 people. Yet too often, our approach to growth seems to assume the only way to grow is to build up, with seven-, nine- and even 11-story mixed-use projects.

Many residents question whether that's a right path for Fairfax City. They worry about the added demands on schools, first responders, transportation, water and sewer, green spaces, increased traffic on roads like Fairfax Boulevard, Main Street, Chain Bridge Road and Pickett Road. They also worry about the long-term costs of providing services and maintaining infrastructure.

But beyond those concerns, residents tell me they value Fairfax City's character. We're a City of neighborhoods. Recently, a young couple told me they chose this City for their home because they wanted a community with a small-town character. That's our competitive advantage. We need to plan for the future and develop a revenue model that doesn't increasingly rely on ever-higher real-estate taxes and fees. We should support and retain local businesses, attract new investment and create an environment where visitors want to locate, grow and stay."

María José Padmore

"As I look around this room, I see a community of different



Maria Padmore

backgrounds, different languages – Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic. I'm making history because I'm the first Latina that has actually gotten her name on the ballot, so let's make history together.

There are 26,772 Fairfax City residents, according to the census in 2025. And when people look different on the outside, they can still decide to look in the same direction.

I've worked for the Fairfax County Health Department for 24 years, and I do home visits, so I know who in the City and county is suffering. I was also president of the PTA; and when everybody and all the students come from different walks of life – and speak different languages at home, have different faiths and come from different cultures – they can still get together."

Steve Chang

"I'm a father of two and husband



Steve Chang

of one wife for 42 years. I'm a retired church pastor by vocation, physicist by training and a businessman by experience. And I'm an advocate and international relief worker by passion. I'm not running with a pre-cast vision of what Fairfax City should look like. I want to listen to the people who live here, who work and run their businesses here, who are raising their children here, and everyone who cares about the future of Fairfax.

Fairfax City is founded on the idea that our elections are non-partisan – the idea that the local government should be about

neighbors pulling together, solving problems together. No political mandates and agenda imposed upon the rest of us. After knocking on almost 4,000 doors, I have more questions than answers. How do we keep Fairfax City a wonderful place to live, while being responsible with our tax dollars?

How do we support our local businesses, strengthen our neighbors and make thoughtful decisions about growth, infrastructure, public safety and our City's future? And perhaps, most importantly, how do we make sure everyone feels heard, even when we disagree? I believe good decisions come from listening."

Jessica Lough

"I believe our City government



Jessica Lough

should start with all of you and with the people who live here. Putting residents first means more than just listening; it means bringing residents into the process at the beginning – before plans are drawn and decisions are nearly made – and actively incorporating your feedback to shape the outcome.

We all want an outstanding school system, thoughtful development that considers long-term impacts on our community, and a City that remains affordable and green for the people who call it home. That includes lowering the tax burden on residents. We can't treat every new idea as a new expense. We have to set priorities, spend efficiently, invest in what matters most and be willing to say no to what matters least.

I've spent more than 20 years leading complex programs in government and Fortune 50 companies. I've managed large budgets, built teams and am accountable for delivering results. And I've learned that the best decisions come from bringing people together, looking at the facts and being disciplined about priorities. My approach is residents first, facts before politics and responsible use of your tax dollars.

Fairfax's future shouldn't be decided for you – it should be shaped with you."

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 17

won the 2025 Whiting Award and the 2025 New American Voices Award. Registration opens at 6:30 p.m. on October 6.

Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 6:30 p.m.: Valerie Tripp, author of the American Girl stories of Felicity, Josefina, Kit, Molly, and Maryellen, with Jennifer Disano. Registration opens at 6:30 p.m. on October 20.

Wednesday, Nov. 18, at 6:30 p.m.: Jane Kamensky, president and CEO of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, on Declare: A Civic Gospel, with Ken Budd. Registration opens at 6:30 p.m. on October 28.

HALLO-WEEKEND THRILLS AWAIT IN FAIRFAX PARKS!

Step into a Halloween season packed with thrills, treats and traditions across Fairfax County parks. Ghostly golf, costumed parades, harvest festivals and family-friendly haunts fill the calendar with festive fun. Create memories with loved ones, explore new adventures and celebrate the magic of fall at Fairfax County Park Authority events designed for every ghost, ghou and goblin.

Farm Harvest Festival – Big Trucks, Carnival Rides and Fall Fun!

Frying Pan Farm Park, Oct. 16-18

Celebrate fall with carnival rides and games, farm animals, hands-on activities, food vendors and more. Big Truck Night is Friday from 5-7 p.m., Farm Harvest Days run Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and the carnival continues throughout the weekend. Purchase unlimited ride wristbands in advance and save by Oct. 16. Individual ride credits are also available on site. Parking is \$10 per vehicle.

Sensory-Friendly Family Trick-or-Treat

Clemjjontri Park, Oct. 18, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Celebrate Halloween in a calm, inclusive, sensory-friendly way at Clemjjontri Park. Enjoy a variety of fun and accessible activities, including the carousel, train, arts and crafts, and themed treat stations throughout the playground, all with reduced noise and sensory support. Costumes are welcome but not required. Tickets cost \$20 per person.

❖ **Halloween on the Farm**

Frying Pan Farm Park, Oct. 23-24

Celebrate Halloween with farm animals, trick-or-treating, crafts, games and a tour of the decorated farmhouse. Choose a one-hour time slot Friday between 5 and 7 p.m. or Saturday between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Advance registration is \$12 per person through Oct. 22. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult.

Haunted Mini Golf

Oakmont Rec Center, Oct. 23-24, 4-9 p.m.

All werewolves, vampires and goblins (and their families) are invited for a fun night of mini golf. Trick-or-treat and win various goodies at Oakmont Mini Golf. Trick-or-treat and get various goodies at every mini golf hole. Come dressed in your best costume and enjoy family fun! Cost is \$15 in advance and \$18 at the door. Please note that the mini golf course closes at 9:30 p.m.

Ghost Town

Burke Lake Park, Oct. 24-25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Put on your costume and enjoy a not-so-spooky Halloween celebration with train and carousel rides, mini golf, crafts, trick-or-treat houses and family activities throughout the park. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Free for children younger than 2 with a paying adult.

Spooktacular Halloween Runs

South Run Rec Center, Oct. 24, beginning at 3 p.m.

Hustle down to the South Run Rec Center to join in some Halloween fitness fun featuring the Monster Mash 5K Dash, Halloween Fun Run 1-Mile and Spooktacular Tiny Tot Trot. Come in your best costume to enjoy the spooktacular atmosphere with your community. Cost is \$25 for the 5K and \$15 for other runs.

Halloween Costume Party: Family Skate and Dance Night

Franconia Rec Center, Oct. 24, 5-9 p.m.

Calling all gliding ghouls and goblins — our spooky Family Skate and Dance Night will be

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The OFC's Festival of Frights & Trunk or Treat will be held Saturday, Oct. 31, 2026 at the Old Firehouse in McLean.

skele-fun for the entire family. Gather your favorite spooky crew and head out for this thrilling family-friendly event, with tunes sure to bring you back from the dead. Cost is \$10 per person.

House of Reptiles

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park Visitor Center and Amphitheater - Oct. 24, 6-8 p.m.

Amazing reptiles call Ellanor C. Lawrence Park home. Play games, test your courage at a touch table and meet these fascinating creatures up close. Then, calm your nerves by roasting s'mores around a campfire while listening to stories before taking a stroll through the darkening autumn woods

Mark your calendars, grab your costumes, and step into a month of Halloween adventures across Fairfax County parks by visiting the Events Calendar website.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

An Evening of BioRhythms. 6-8 p.m. At Beloved Yoga, 11109 Sunset Hills Road, Reston. Award-winning percussionist, composer, educator, and sound facilitator Tom Teasley brings his distinctive approach to rhythm, mindfulness, and global musical traditions to Beloved Yoga for An Evening of BioRhythms with Tom Teasley. Blending live music, storytelling, world percussion, and immersive sound meditation, BioRhythms explores the connections between rhythm, sound, deep listening, and well-being.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

Expungement Clinic. 9 a.m. to noon. At Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 6600 Old Centreville Road, Centreville. Fairfax Circuit Court and Fairfax County's Sully District will host a free Expungement Clinic. The clinic will help eligible individuals clear criminal charges that did not result in a conviction from their record. Volunteer pro-bono attorneys will be on-site to determine eligibility and assist in preparing all necessary court paperwork at no cost. Only charges from Fairfax County or the City of Fairfax can be considered at this clinic. Expungement is a court-ordered process that removes an arrest or charge record from public access, while not eliminating the record itself. It applies to charges that resulted in:

- Acquittal
- Dismissal (including *nolle prosequi* or accord and satisfaction)
- Cases in which an individual's identity was falsely used

Petitions for Expungement can now be filed FREE OF CHARGE.

Attendees must bring copies of the warrant of arrest and/or final disposition for each charge they wish to have reviewed. For more information or to register, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit/criminal-case-information/expungement or call (703) 691-7320.



The Burke Historical Society meets on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026 in Burke.

gov/circuit/criminal-case-information/expungement or call (703) 691-7320.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

WFCM'S Walk to End Hunger. Part of the Centreville Day Parade, Centreville. The day begins with a Fellowship Breakfast. This hearty meal will include pancakes, eggs, crispy potatoes, breakfast meat, and family-friendly activities. After breakfast, the Walk to End Hunger is a one-mile family-friendly walk at the end of the Centreville Day Parade to raise awareness about food insecurity in our communities and raise funds for WFCM's Free Food Markets in Chantilly and Centreville. WFCM supporters may register for breakfast only, the walk only, or both! People concerned about walking the full mile in the parade can choose to register for both breakfast and the walk, take the WFCM shuttle with the walkers, and find a good spot to watch the parade, with minimal walking to and from the shuttle drop-off location.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

Mason District Arts Festival. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At Eileen Garnett Civic Space, 7200 Columbia Pike, Annandale. The 2nd Annual Mason District Arts Festival will feature local and regional artists showcasing murals, paintings, prints, poetry, jewelry, pottery, and more, including an artist material exchange space.

SATURDAY/OCT. 24

NEW OFC 7th & 8th Grader Party: Haunted Masquerade. 6 - 9 p.m. At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Old Firehouse themed parties raise the energy of the OFC with a live DJ, an open dance floor, and light refreshments for participants. Come enjoy great music and a fun, lively atmosphere. Registration is required and costumes are encouraged!

Don't "Boss" Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We do 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 food serving/delivering public. 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 being 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 and people's eating routine has 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. 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 not your boss. 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.

DID YOU KNOW?

DATA CENTERS IN VIRGINIA FUND NEW ENERGY PROJECTS, ENOUGH TO POWER 325,000+ HOMES.

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