CONNECTION
Burke❖Fairfax❖Springfield❖Fairfax Station❖Lorton❖Clifton

Every Vote Counts with Super Turnout

Page 3



Debbie Wathen, of Alexandria, was out to encourage early voting.

Photo by Susan Laume/The Connection

Remembering Traffic Victims as Carnage Increases

Page 6

Go See a (High School) Play (They're Great)

Pages 10 &11

Reading & Literature Surging Locally

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Entertainment, Page 12 ❖ Classifieds, Page 14



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News

Fairfax City Veterans Day Ceremony Is Nov. 11

Sponsored by VFW Post 8469 and American Legion Post 177, a Veterans Day ceremony will be held Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 10:30 a.m., at Post 177's upper level at 3939 Oak St. in Fairfax. It's free and the public is welcome. Unlike this event's previous speakers, who've been senior military professionals, this year's speaker will provide an optic from the enlisted man's perspective, including combat in Iraq.

Keynote speaker is Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Judge Michael Sprano. He enlisted in the Marine Reserves and deployed for a combat tour in Iraq in 2004, serving in tactical operations in Al Anbar Province.

Fairfax City Election Results in Next Issue

Because of the Connection Newspapers' press deadline, we were unable to include the results of the Fairfax City mayoral and council races in this week's papers. See the next issue instead.

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.

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.

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL

Photos by Susan Laume/The Connection



Offering sample ballots to voters at Franconia Government Center, Erica Sorohan, of Kingston, Terri Henry, a veteran from Alexandria, and Sabrina Williams of Fairfax, were supported by Boise the dog in his Vote cape.



Andrea Cale, of Alexandria, donned a cow costume and rang the cowbell as a reminder to vote, with Rich Brooks and his sign at a Kingstowne intersection.



Voters experienced waits of 15 to 30 minutes at some locations during the first early in-person voting, as they did here at Franconia Government Center, where lines snaked through the amble halls of the new building.

Northern Virginia Votes

Lead-up to Nov 3 sees early voting by more than 27% of Fairfax County's eligible voters.

By Susan Laume
The Connection

In the weeks leading up to the Nov. 3 midterm election, local TV news and national newspapers reported heated campaigns across the country, with a plethora of negative political ads.

Here in Northern Virginia, however, races and airwaves were relatively quiet. In the Commonwealth, voting reliably Blue in recent years, has meant the loss of swing state status, sparing voters from much of the heat of national campaign attention.

As polls opened for mail-in and early in-person voting, support signs appeared in neighborhood yards and massed at polling locations. In its late October edition, The Connection published its voting guides to introduce candidates.

Activists and various grassroots organizations took to the sidewalks, to remind citizens who might have slept through the quieter election news, and used attention grabbers to encourage early voting. Indivisible of Franconia, a group which touts dedication to non-violent activism, held their first-day of early-voting sidewalk rally using sign messages linked to kitchen table issues. (The Connection, South edition, October 8-21, page 3). Their "Party at the Polls" event at the Franconia Government Center on Oct. 22 coincided with the first Saturday of early voting, in which the 13 additional government centers and libraries joined the initial three early voting

See Northern Virginia, Page 15



Incumbent Congressman James Walkinshaw rallied supporters at a gathering prior to Nov. 3.



State Delegate Kathy Tran (D-18) and her husband Matt, dressed in costume for her annual Halloween "Don't Boo - Vote Blue" party in Springfield.



Debbie Wathen, of Alexandria, was out to encourage early voting.



From left are Wendy Sanford, Catherine Read, Saddam Salim and Monica Backmon.



Part of the new Farr Avenue extended, complete with bike lane.

Northfax West's New Road Network Celebrated

Partnership between Fairfax City and others made it possible.

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

For a long time, Orchard Street in Fairfax City's Northfax West community was a diagonal road going nowhere. But thanks to a partnership between the City, VDOT, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), the property owners and a local business, it's been realigned – and Farr Avenue was extended to reach it.

The work created a new, north-south roadway between Fairfax Boulevard, Farr Avenue and Orchard (renamed Northfax Street). It also marked construction completion of Northfax West's grid road network and a new connection between Chain Bridge Road and Fairfax Boulevard.

Orchard is now a straight road coming from Chain Bridge to Farr Avenue Extended, which now boasts on-street parking and bike lanes. And a new traffic signal at Farr Avenue and Fairfax Boulevard, installed as part of the nearby Warwick Avenue improvement project, is an added bonus.

The grid is expected to reduce congestion at the Chain Bridge/Fairfax Boulevard intersection, while providing an expanded network for non-motorized traffic, plus local access to existing homes, commercial properties and future, mixed-use redevelopment areas.

The City received $4 million in NVTA regional funding and $2.4 million in VDOT Revenue Sharing funds for the road work. And property owners Russ Rosenberger and John Napolitano donated the land for the realigned Orchard Street. So when Farr Avenue Extended opened to traffic, Sept. 24, the City and its project partners celebrated with a ribbon-cutting.

"This created a whole neighborhood, plus new development opportunities, and saved the City millions," said Fairfax Transportation Director Wendy Sanford. "We paid Safford Mazda for the right-of-way from their property line to Fairfax Boulevard, and they paid for the construction of Farr Avenue Extended to Orchard Street. Now, the residents have better access to their homes, directly from Fairfax Boulevard. Before, they had to go from Chain Bridge to Orchard to Farr."

At the ceremony in late September, she said the City started talking about this project in 2014. "There were 15 or 20 of us in the work-session room trying to figure out how to make it happen," said Sanford. "So it's really exciting that we're here today and it's complete." She then recognized several City staff members who helped make it possible, as well as the various partners, including engineer Nick Soucy of Timmons, the construction team from Stonebridge, the two property owners, and Jay Cunningham and Trey Rogers of Safford.

Initially, explained Sanford, Orchard was just a "crooked, dirt path that connected to nothing. A couple developers were interested in doing more in this area, and that's what we wanted. Our Comprehensive plan called for higher density [here] and an interconnected grid of streets. This area was impenetrable; you couldn't even walk back here.



Photos by Bonnie Hobbs/The Connection

Catherine Read officially cuts the ribbon for the new road project.

"So we had this vision for this Northfax West quadrant – lines on a plan showing these roadways that have now been constructed. And we had long meetings about how we could satisfy the needs of the property owners, the City and the Mazda dealership. At the end of the day, this was a partnership, and we couldn't have done it without all of them working together. Thank you to everyone who worked on this."

Next, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read praised Sanford, calling her "the most remarkable person in transportation in this region. Wendy makes the impossible happen because she has vision and persistence and can bring people together to explain how this is going to work, why it needs to work – and bring it home.

"We have a City urbanizing at a fast pace, and we need roads to be connected into a grid so people choosing to move into these new developments can easily get around without a car. We need sidewalks and bike lanes, and we need to make this a place that has connectivity and where people can choose not to have a car. So a lot of our transportation projects are focused around that."

Read also acknowledged the two property owners, plus the Mazda representatives, who "didn't have to do what they did. But they did it, and that's the true essence of a partnership – 'I'm willing to do a little to make it better for everyone.'

"We have people, businesses and property owners in the City, and developers who want to work in the City. And it means so much to us that we can sit at a table, share a vision and work for 12 years to get to the point where we're celebrating that the road is open. So thank you; I appreciate all of you."

Sen. Saddam Salim (D-37th) was also pleased that "this was truly a partnership between the

See Northfax, Page 5

Northfax West's New Road Network Celebrated

From Page 4

City, private entities, and folks who said, 'I do business here, but this is home to a lot of people and I could be part of that in making sure their commutes are better and they can get home to their children quicker. What can we do?' And this is the example I'll be taking to Richmond, when we do additional projects, to say, 'This is the gold standard we need to use, going forward.' So thank you to everyone who's made this possible."

Lastly, before introducing NVTA CEO Monica Backmon, Sanford stressed that no local funds were used for this project, and it didn't impact the City taxpayers. Backmon then said it "really represents what collaboration can bring to the region. Funding transportation projects leads to better accessibility, and [that] leads to better opportunity, which leads to better quality of life.

"This project represents everything NVTA stands for. It's multimodal and provides accessibility and safety options, and that's what we strive to do. When we have something like this that's open, a mixed-use development, bikes, pedestrian facilities – somewhere that feels like home – we're happy to have had a part in it."

Besides Safford Mazda, this neighborhood also contains Brightview Senior Living and multifamily homes, and this road project is one element of what's planned for Northfax West.

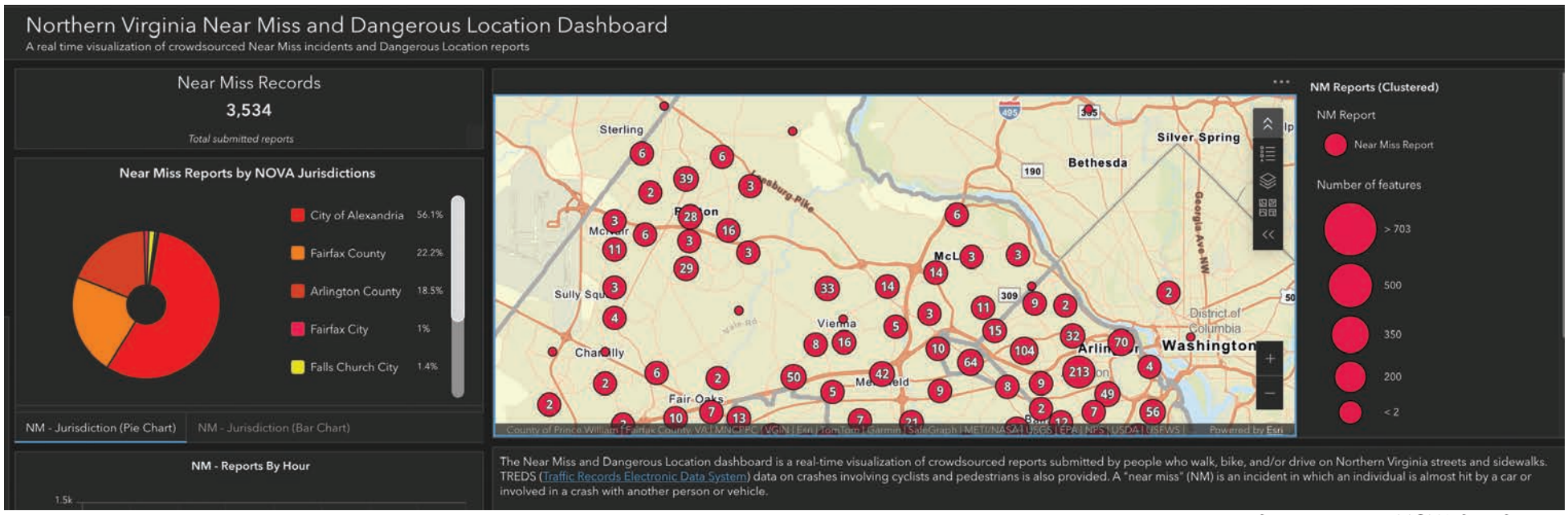
Some 25 years ago, Napolitano began consolidating 17 parcels from 14 different property owners in this area, for a total of about 11 acres. Part of it is in Northfax West, including the site of a development proposed by his company, Lann Cos.

According to Brooke Hardin, the City's director of Community Development and Planning, "We have a proposal for a mixed-use development consisting of multifamily rental units with groundfloor commercial. [If approved], it would be on about 3-1/2 acres to the east of Brightview and would front on Chain Bridge Road."









Screen grab via NOVA Safe Streets

Northern Virginia Near Miss and Dangerous Location Dashboard.

Theme: 'Invest in Safety, Not Speed'

NOVA Families for Safe Streets World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is Nov. 15.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets reports that 32 people have been killed while walking, biking, or rolling on Northern Virginia streets and highways since last year's World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. The advocacy group will host a public memorial event at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 15, at W.T. Woodson High School, 9525 Main St., Fairfax, to honor the victims and advocate for safer regional infrastructure. This year's U.S. theme, "Invest in Safety, Not Speed," is a call to action.

The fatalities, as of Oct. 29, 2026, include 24 in Fairfax County, five in Alexandria, two in Arlington, and one in Fairfax City.

The 32 deaths recorded over the past year represent a sharp increase from recent annual figures. According to an analysis by NoVA FSS using state crash data from the Virginia Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS) — the database managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Motor Vehicles — vulnerable road user deaths across the region totaled roughly 25 in 2023–2024 and 21 in 2024–2025.

Mike Doyle, founder and executive director of NoVA Families for Safe Streets, said outdated road designs and low visibility are primary drivers of these crashes. He noted that "Approximately 70% of Vulnerable Road User fatalities happen at night and another 15% are killed during dawn or dusk," making better street lighting and personal visibility essential.

Doyle highlighted how the rapid urbanization of major arterial roads puts multimodal travelers at risk. On high-crash corridors such as Richmond Highway and Route 7, traffic signals are often spaced 600 to 1,500 feet apart. This spacing frequently compels pedestrians to attempt dangerous mid-block crossings across four to six lanes of traffic.

A distance of 1,500 feet is the length of five football fields.

Doyle called on state and local officials to adopt tactical road modifications, lower speed limits, and safer crossing designs to protect the region's growing population of vulnerable road users. "We urge VDOT to modify their road design standards on selected high crash corridors to reflect better how increasingly urban and mixed-use development creates an environment where tactical modifications to the road design provide better protection for today's multimodal road users," Doyle said.

In conjunction with the Nov. 15 event, NoVA FSS has outlined three specific calls to action. The first is safety cameras; the group is urging local and regional policymakers to leverage "new authority to install stop-sign cameras in school zones and expand speed safety cameras across high-crash networks."

The second is "VDOT Urbanization/Modernization," calling on VDOT, as well as state delegates and senators, to "modernize VDOT's high-crash corridors so that protecting people walking, biking, and rolling is as fundamental as preserving vehicle mobility."

The third is "Victim Justice." NoVA FSS is targeting state delegates and senators to "ensure justice, accountability and fair treatment for everyone killed or injured in a traffic crash — and for the families and survivors left behind — by modifying the Contributory Negligence rule so that crash victims and their families get a fair chance at justice."

Under the current contributory negligence doctrine in Virginia, if an injured party is found to be even 1% at fault for an accident, they are generally barred from recovering any compensation, regardless of the other party's negligence. Only a few other areas in the U.S. follow pure contributory negligence: Alabama, Maryland, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.



Screen grab via NOVA Safe Streets

Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets and national Families for Safe Streets movement use candles, flowers, and shoes or empty chairs during the World Day of Remembrance to bridge personal grief with advocacy.

Detectives Investigate Fatal Crash in Burke

Detectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating a three-vehicle crash that left one man dead in Burke.

On Oct. 31 at 5:43 p.m., officers responded to a multi-vehicle crash at Fairfax County Parkway and Burke Lake Road.

Preliminarily, a 2014 Infiniti Q-70 was traveling southbound on Fairfax County Parkway when the driver made several lane changes before veering onto the right shoulder, striking a traffic signal pole. The Infiniti then struck a 2007 Lexus RX 350 stopped at a red light on Burke Lake Road, causing the Lexus to strike a 2024 Mazda MX-5.

The driver of the Infiniti, Daniel Locke Jr., 82, of Fairfax Station, was transported to a local hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased. The occupants of the Lexus and Mazda were not injured.

Preliminarily, detectives believe speed was a factor in the crash. Alcohol does not appear to be a factor. Detectives are continuing to investigate the circumstances surrounding the crash.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers of Fairfax County by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

10th Anniversary of Food for Neighbors

— Mercia Hobson





Photos contributed

In recognition of the Diamond Anniversary, the 10th, of Food For Neighbors, Dalia Palchik, Supervisor, Providence District and Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District Supervisor, present Food For Neighbors Founder Karen Joseph (center) with a proclamation recognizing the organization's impact in collecting over 850,000 pounds of food, serving 12,000 students in 60 middle and high schools in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Arlington County and the city of Falls Church.

Hundreds of Northern Virginia neighbors gather Saturday during Make a Difference Day, sorting red bags of food to help local students learn and thrive. Unlike traditional pantries, Food for Neighbors focuses on feeding middle and high school students during weekends and holidays. To learn more, visit Food for Neighbors' Get Involved page.

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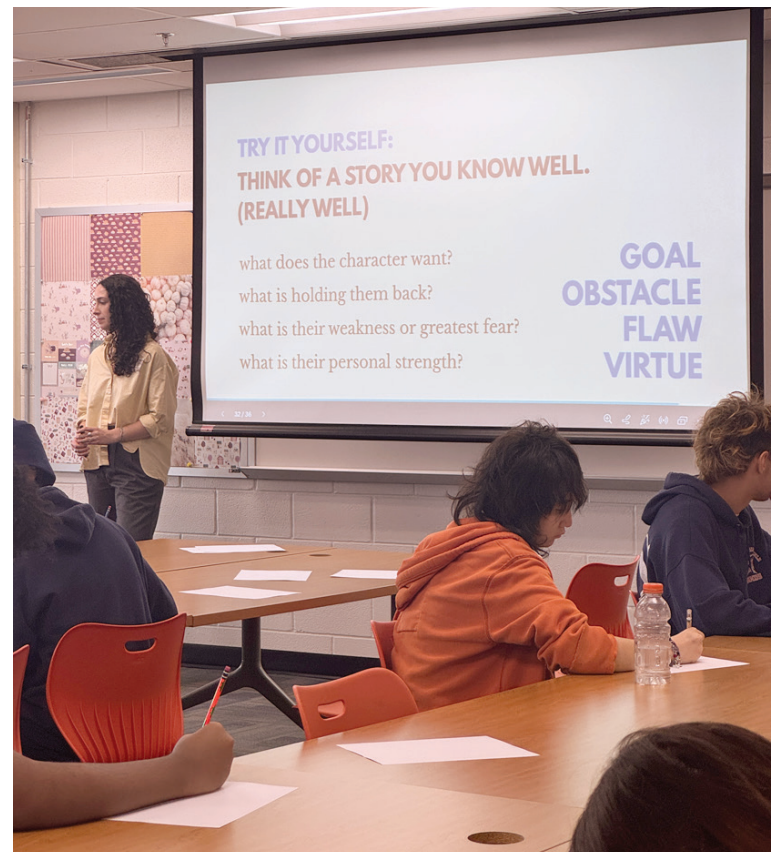
BEST SENIOR LIVING U.S.News · FORTUNE 100 BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR · FORTUNE BEST WORKPLACES IN AGING SERVICES

Author Amanda Foody Talks to Students about Character

Students listened carefully as she described her life as a writer.



Amanda Foody talks with Librarian Colleen Conwell before the event.



Photos by Eden Brown

The students were asked to describe a story they know well and identify the struggles the character faces.

Amanda Foody knew she wanted to be a writer as a child. When she applied to college, her parents told her they would only pay for college if she majored in something practical. So she majored in Accounting at WIlliam and Mary, but she also wrote her first novel, getting it published while still in college. She did work for an accounting firm for a year, she told the fifty high school students who had come to hear her speak at West Springfield High School. But soon, writing became her full-time job. She told the students how she can pretty much call her own shots in terms of how she spends her day. She got their attention.

Foody was in the high school thanks to Fall for the Book, a nonprofit book festival based in Fairfax. The Festival runs year round. As part of it, authors visit schools to talk about their writing and their books, encouraging young people to read books and write creatively. The idea is to get kids off their phones, which is already happening to a degree at West Springfield High because students are not allowed to use their phones during the day. The librarian who invited Ms. Foody to come to West Springfield, Colleen Conwell, keeps an eye on the students — she knows them all by name — and takes note of what they are reading. She reached out to the Fall for the Book team to see if she could get an author visit at West Springfield. Conwell said she is already seeing a change in students as a result of the phone policy. They talk to each other more.

Foody was conveying her first-hand knowledge of writing to the high schoolers. Her main point was about character. "Genres can change, but character — It's the one thing they all have in common," she said. "The character needs to change, to evolve."

Foody co-authors most of her books with C.L. Herman. Herman, who she met during a writer's mentoring program, is the same age. They both grew up in Catholic families. They hit it off as writers and then as friends. Foody liked Herman's style of writing. Writing together has been easy: They each write a character. No one knows who wrote which character. Even their publisher. Only their spouses know.

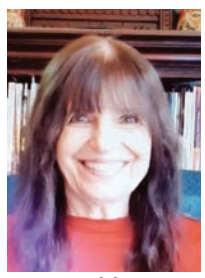
Poet and Historian Speaks at Workhouse

Learning at Lunch series recalls history of women's suffrage.

By Susan Laume
The Connection

As contemporary women prepared to vote early, in-person or by mail, for the 2026 mid-term general election, the Workhouse Arts Center provided a reminder of just how recent, and hard fought, is that right of women's suffrage. On October 16th, as part of their "Learning at Lunch" series, the Lucy Burns Gallery of the Lorton Prison Museum, featured award-winning poet, scholar, and performer, Dr. Susanna Rich, presenting her work "SHOUT! Poetry for Suffrage".

During the hour-long, free program, Rich stepped into the shoes of iconic historical figures to bring to life monologues and dialogues of those fighting at the core of the women's sufferage cause. The period between the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, is the subject of her original collection, of specialized historical poetry.



Author's public media

Poet and lecturer Susanna Rich

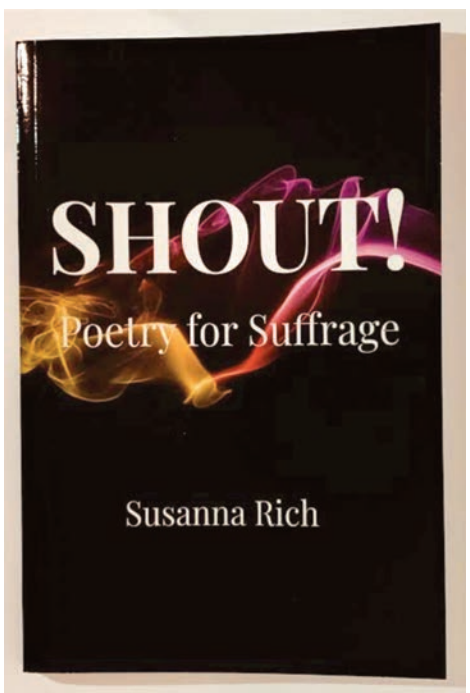
Rich shared that her inspiration for the collection began during a November 2019 visit to the museum at the Workhouse Arts Center. She was moved by the historic site and its chronicle of the brutal night of November 14, 1917, when imprisoned suffragists were tortured after their arrest for picketing at the White House. Rich gives voice to over 65 central figures of the movement in her work. "SHOUT!" was published on the 200th anniversary of Susan B. Anthony's birth, in February 2020.

"We're so excited to welcome Susanna Rich back to the place where her collection was born," said Katie Crooks, Director of Museum and Visitor Experience. "Her poetry bridges the gap between historical artifact and human emotion, offering our community a powerful way to reflect on the legacy of the women's suffrage movement."

Susanna Rich is a 2009 Mid-America Emmy Award nominee for poetry, a Fulbright Fellow in Creative Writing, and recipient of the Presidential Excellence Award for Distinguished Teaching at Kean University. With over 1,000 publications, performance, and presentation credits, she is the founding producer, writer, and principal performer at Wild Nights Productions, LLC, through which she crafts immersive visual-poetic experiences.

Workhouse Arts Center is in its fourth season of Learning at Lunch, a series illuminating aspects of the former prison's 91-year history. Each month, an expert, often an author, tackles a complicated topic related to the past.

The 30-minute talks are followed by a question /answer period. Next in the series: Nov. 13, "Prisoners After War", with professor and author, Jason Higgins; and Dec. 11, "The Foggy Bottom Gang," with author Leo Waring. Free, no registration required. See workhousearts.org for more.



Screen shot public media

"SHOUT!" A collection of historical poetry.

Photos by Eden Brown/The Connection



Celeste Ng was in conversation with Priyanka Champaneri, a local author, as she talked about her new novel.



It was a sold-out (although tickets are free) crowd at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax.

Celeste Ng Talks About her New Novel at Fall for the Book Festival

"Our Missing Hearts" features librarians as safeguards of democracy.

Celeste Ng was the featured headliner at this year's Fall for the Book Festival. She spoke to a sold-out crowd on Oct. 9, in conversation with local writer Priyanka Champaneri. Ng was charming, finding much in common with Champaneri and laughing as they explored their backgrounds.

Ng wanted to be a writer from an early age. She told the audience she tells stories to decode human behavior and to examine dark times and social pressures. Her novels, "Everything I Never Told You," "Little Fires Everywhere," and now, "Our Missing Hearts," grapple with identity, race, insider-outsider feelings, motherhood, and how political or societal pressures impact families.

Champaneri pointed out that motherhood is a frequent theme, and Ng acknowledged it is, not because of any deficit in her own relationship with her mother, but perhaps because of her mother's importance in her life and her own role as a mother to a (now) teenage boy.

Ng wrote this recent novel to explore that mother-son relationship given her concern about growing up in an era where some books are banned, and some immigrants are being singled out.

It is no accident that the young man in her novel encounters an underground network of librarians and activists as he searches for his mother. It was no accident that earlier in the day, another novelist sponsored by Fall for the Book was speaking at a high school in Fairfax thanks to a librarian who is clearly tuned into the teens that wander in and out of her "safe space" full of books. Books help us interpret the complicated world we live in.

Ng finished her evening by signing copies of her new book. It took almost an hour for the long line of fans to purchase a copy from Bard Alley books and meet the author in person.

That close personal interaction with authors is one of the hallmarks of the Fall for the Book festival. To learn more about the festival and year-round events, or to join as a friend and get updates, see: https://fallforthebook.org.

Upstart Crow and Fairfax County Public Library Open free virtual author series, ongoing through Nov. 18

Upstart Crow, Inc. and Fairfax County Public Library will present four free virtual author conversations from Oct. 13 through Nov. 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. Each program runs from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

❖ 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 is open.

❖ 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 is open.

All four conversations are also episodes of the Upstart Crow podcast, affiliated with Watershed Lit Radio at George Mason University. The podcast began in 2025. Episodes are at upstartcrow.org.

The series opened Tuesday, Oct. 13, 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.

On Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 6:30 p.m.: Shubha Sunder spoke on her novel Optional Practical Training (Graywolf Press), with William Miller. Sunder won the 2025 Whiting Award and the 2025 New American Voices Award.

"People keep saying the book is dead. Come to Fairfax County," said Jennifer Disano, president and CEO of Upstart Crow. "We have book clubs; writing communities; Watershed Lit at George Mason; Fall for the Book, a major literary festival now in its 28th year; and the New American Voices Award, founded with George Mason's Institute for Immigration Research to recognize books by immigrant and first-generation writers.



Valerie Tripp



Jane Kamensky

Learn more at upstartcrow.org.



Photos by Bonnie Hobbs/The Connection

Tinker Bell, Peter Pan and Wendy (Devin Linthicum, Evan Curtas and Abi Hansen, respectively) in the nursery.



With Tiger Lily's help, Peter Pan fights Capt. Hook to save Wendy. (From left) are Olivia Ho (Tiger Lily), Devin Linthicum (Tinker Bell), Evan Curtas (Peter Pan), Lucas Schnotala (Capt. Hook), Daniel Plummer (Smee, Hook's righthand man) and Abi Hansen (Wendy).

Actors Take Flight in Swashbuckling Story

Fairfax High presents 'Wendy and Peter Pan.'

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

Featuring a cast and crew of nearly 100, Fairfax High's upcoming production of "Wendy and Peter Pan" is set to soar – literally – across the stage. It's also the school's Cappies entry.

"It'll bring back memories for a lot of people, plus we have so many technical elements," said Director Chris Whitney. "There'll be pirate ships, flying, special effects and sword fighting."

Show times are Thursday-Friday, Nov. 12-13, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 14, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are $15, adults; $10, students, at the door or via www.fx-players.org.

"There's a lot of comedy, but it's also an adaptation of the original book, which is much more serious," said Whitney. "It deals with grief, so it makes the story way more emotional. The actors make me laugh and tear up every day, and I'm very proud of the work they're putting into this show."

The story's set in 1908, with scenes taking place in the Darling children's London nursery, the Lost Boys' hideout and on Capt. Hook's Jolly Roger pirate ship. And, said Whitney, "We had a special flying professional – Robb Hunter of Preferred Arms – come and teach the actors and techies how to safely fly across the stage at up to 24 feet in the air."

Now in his seventh year at Fairfax, Whitney said this show has the largest cast the school has had since he's been there. "It's a great family story, full of adventure, and is a twist on the classic tale that's a little bit darker, but still appropriate for children," he said. "And it's a show that'll bring out that spirit of childhood adventure in all of us."

Junior Abi Hansen plays Wendy Darling, who changes and grows throughout the story. "She wants to be both a kid and a grownup at the same time," said Hansen. "She starts off super eager and playful. She loves her little brothers and really wants to make them happy. But then, after one of them dies, she feels like she has to take more responsibility for the other two. It also changes the way she sees the world, because she now realizes bad things can happen to everyday people."

Hansen said her role is fun because "Wendy goes through so much more than regular people do – processing her grief while balancing responsibility with still being a playful kid of 13. I also interact with so many other different groups of people, including her brothers, the Lost Boys, pirates, and the Shadows – the group of men that Peter Pan leads – and I like getting to meet them all."

As for audiences, Hansen said they'll appreciate that this show is "a fresh take on the story. It's told from Wendy's perspective and what she feels, instead of just Peter's. They'll also like how it's focused on childhood joy, and the flying system will be really exciting to see."

Portraying Peter Pan is junior Evan Curtas. "He's about 13 and is naïve and very much a little kid," said Curtas. "He doesn't understand a lot of his emotions, especially about Wendy. He's outgoing and extroverted, while also trying to navigate all these new emotions he's never had before.

"He sees himself as the leader of the Lost Boys on Neverland and isn't challenged much until Wendy comes there and is on a mission that conflicts with his. She's trying to find her dead brother, and he's trying to help her without letting her know that. And he grapples with not always being successful doing so."

Loving his "amazing role," Curtas said, "I channel a younger version of myself. Peter has youthful energy and gets distracted easily. He always has something he's ready to do, say or try to forget. So that makes him a complex character to play, and it's a good challenge for me as an actor to try to portray that. Being a lead is a lot of work, but so much fun. And Devin, Abi and Lucas [Tinker Bell, Wendy and Capt. Hook, respectively] are all phenomenal leads and inspire me to become a better actor."

Regarding the show, Curtas said, "The flying is fantastic, as is Mr. Whitney's vision for how it's all going to come together. The set will be huge, super-layered and awesome, and this show will be a true joy to witness."

Senior Devin Linthicum plays 19-year-old Tinker Bell, often called just Tink. "People think of her as silent and objective in the original version," said Linthicum. "But here, she's very charismatic and sassy, but protective of what she values – for example, her relationship with others, especially Pater. I like this adaptation because it's more feminine-driven and Wendy doesn't always need to be saved. Tink is more reserved with people she doesn't know well, and she likes things to stay the same and not change."

Linthicum said playing her is a dream-come-true for her. "I grew up watching Tinker Bell in the Disney movies and even had my own Tinker Bell nightgown," she said. "I was so excited to get this role because now, as a senior, it's a real, full-circle moment for me.

"Tink is blunt and speaks her mind, and I like that about her. And we both value our friends. She also has so many funny lines, and it's a really positive experience playing her. And unlike the original, where Tinker Bell wore a green dress, I'll wear a poofy pink dress with patterned wings, big hoop earrings and combat boots with heels – kind of like a 'Jersey Shore' character."

"Our cast is very good, and we're friends, so people will be able to see that connection when we're performing together," continued Linthicum. "And I know a lot of the actors playing the Shadows, so that makes a fun dynamic between them and Tink. And Evan, as Peter Pan, feels like my little brother now."

She said audiences will enjoy this adaptation because "it gives all the characters their moment. It also deals with how to manage grief, which will resonate with the audience. There are even two dances – one with the pirates and one with the Lost Boys – and my friend Reese O'Donnell choreographed them both. Everyone's having a really great time doing them, which makes them even more fun to watch."

Portraying Capt. Hook is junior Lucas Schnotala. "What makes him cool and interesting is his duality of character," he explained. "On one side, you see the swashbuckling, fearsome villain people associate him with.

"But he's also a deeply hurt person who has a lot of regrets in his life for the things he hasn't done. But because of age and time, he believes he can no longer do them. He's closed himself off from making real connections with people because he's been hurt in the past, so it's a self-fulfilling cycle."

As a result, said Schnotala, "It creates a real dynamic between playing the more sincere side of him and when he's being over-the-top and kind of foolish and unserious. So I like finding that balance. It's liberating to release my inhibitions to expand my own silly personality traits and try new things to portray this outlandish character."

He said people will like "how expansive this show is, in that there's something for everyone. It's kid-friendly with comedic moments, plus serious topics that get confronted.

So everyone seeing it will have a different perspective. I'm also excited about the set and the flight system, so audiences will also enjoy the technical spectacle this play will be."

People Learn the Importance of Being in the Moment

Woodson High presents the play, 'Our Town.'

By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

In today's fast-paced world filled with ever-evolving technology, Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" is a welcome slice of nostalgia and Americana. And this classic and heartfelt play – made even more special with the addition of music – is Woodson High's upcoming show.

The curtain rises Friday, Nov. 6, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 7, at 1 and 7 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 13, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 14, at 1 and 7 p.m. Pay-what-you-can tickets range from $10-$20 at the door or via www.woodsondrama.org.

The story takes place in Grover's Corners, N.H., in the early 1900s, with act one showing the daily life of the Webb and Gibbs families and the childhood of George Gibbs and Emily Webb. In act two, the couple falls in love and gets married. And in act three, townspeople who've died reflect on life as a whole and realize all the things they should have appreciated when they had the chance.

The cast and crew total about 80, and Director Chris Rushing said this play was such a good fit for so many of the actors who auditioned that he double-cast seven roles. It's also the school's Cappies entry.

"A colleague of mine unexpectedly passed away in Atlanta, this summer," said Rushing. "And at his funeral service, the actress who'd played Emily in an 'Our Town' production he'd directed recited the third-act monologue about being present with each other in everyday life. Hearing that brought me back to that play, so I re-read it and decided it would be perfect for our students to do. And they're doing so excellent that, even in rehearsals, it's very moving to watch."

While staying true to the original story, Rushing said, "We're bringing it in interesting ways to our own city. For example, we'll have a slide show of cast members' families because they're a part of both our local, Fairfax City community and of 'Our Town.' And in every show, a community member will do a walk-on role – including [U.S. Rep.] James Walkinshaw] and former Woodson theater teacher Terri Hobson – to drive home the connection to our community."

He also noted that the set is "highly theatrical" in that planks are used to create walls and tables "in really creative ways to portray not just physical objects, but also the passage of time. And for everyone who sees a production of 'Our Town,' the week after, the grass looks greener, flowers seem more fragrant and they find themselves more present with the world and with others."

Senior Blue Kennedy is the technical director, overseeing all the show's technical elements. He said the set is deliberately minimalistic "because the actors are portraying everyday people. And the whole audience will be seated onstage and around the sides of a thrust stage [a runway-type platform that projects forward from the actual stage]. And we've raised the actors' area to set them apart from the audience."



Photos Courtesy of Allison MacDonald

Wesley Pruitt portraying the show's stage manager.



From left, downstairs in their homes facing each other are Maya Blumenthal (Mrs. Gibbs), Karina Miller (Mrs. Webb), Madeline VanBeuge (Mr. Gibbs) and Samuel Abbruzzese (Mr. Webb). Flirting from their upstairs bedroom windows (the ladders) are Rex Kady (George) and Brooke Maylett (Emily).

In addition, he explained, "Some actors will also be elevated in the audience. This story is about community and how we're all connected, so Mr. Rushing wanted everything closer together and intimate, like in a small town."

Regarding sound, said Kennedy, "We've gone out and recorded sounds from around Fairfax, like crickets, and town noises like traffic from the Old Town area, to bring some essence of Fairfax into the performance and make it more local.

"We'll also have some special lighting on certain performers to highlight them, and an LED will move in an arc across the stage. There's a moon box, too. Inside a box, there's an illuminated picture of a moon that'll glow."

The special effects even extend to the sense of smell. "Some of the characters will actually make bacon and eggs onstage for a breakfast scene," said Kennedy. "And right before it, we'll be selling coffee during intermission to get people in the mood for breakfast. It's all about immersion."

"I love this show so much," he continued. "It just feels like home and the things I enjoy talking about, like mortality and community. My grandmother died over the summer so, to me, the story is personally relevant. The audience will be drawn into the story because of all the technical elements and will also like seeing themselves in the lead characters who are ordinary people like them."

Portraying Emily's mother, Mrs. Webb, is senior Karina Miller. "She's the standard, domestic homemaker of her time – hardworking, dutiful and focused on her daily tasks of taking care of her husband and family," said Miller. "She also sings in the church choir.

"In act two, she's coming to terms with the fact that her daughter is getting married, and she won't see her every day. She also feels like she hasn't prepared Emily for married life. And in general, she regrets the things she left unsaid to her. At that time, people didn't express their feelings enough to their children."

Since Miller usually plays comedic roles, she's enjoying playing Mrs. Webb because "she's someone who loves her family and is grounded, warm and motherly. But her character saddens me a bit, though, because of all the hard work women of this period were expected to do with little to no recognition."

She said audiences will "hopefully walk away with a newfound sense of joy about the smaller things in life and the people around them that they shouldn't take for granted. The story and dialogue seem simple, but the truths they convey are profound, universal and still relevant – and will be, forever."

Senior Wesley Pruitt plays the show's stage manager, narrating the story to the audience. (She shares this role with sophomore Nora Easter). "I introduce the characters and give backstory and insights into what we want the audience to take away from the show," said Pruitt. "I interact multiple times and say, 'We want you to remember this, in the next scene. I represent the town – everything Grover's Corners was, is and will be."

She said this part is fun to play because "I get to put aspects of myself in the character, like my sense of humor. And I can put my own personal experiences behind the lines I say, while also applying Grover's Corners to it through my relationships with the other townspeople. I also get to have specific opinions about everything I say – and I say a lot."

Pruitt said audiences will love this production because "it's beautiful, and everyone – the actors, tech crew and director – are so insanely talented. This show especially emphasizes the importance of community, and that's reflective of Woodson Drama because we're all so close. There are no barriers between what we do in a show and our offstage friends. We're all a family. The main thing we want the audience to take away is the simplicity and beauty in everyday life."

Speaking of talented, senior Allie MacDonald plays piano for almost the entire show, and she even arranged some of the music. A pianist since age 4, she said the music matches the themes of the action on stage and some songs repeat. For example, MacDonald sings "Can't Help Falling in Love" during the wedding and at the play's end. A jazzy number, "Mama, I'm Coming Home," is one of the songs illustrating daily life; and "Aerith's Theme," from a video game, encapsulates the peacefulness of a cemetery and death.

MacDonald also portrays George's little sister, Rebecca, 8. "She's interested in outer space and is curious about the moon," said MacDonald. "And when she and George argue, I try to embody annoying-little-sister qualities that are fun to play. She has child-

See Woodson High, Page 15

Entertainment

WEDNESDAYS NIGHTS

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

CONCERTS AT OLD BROGUE IRISH PUB

Each concert has two performances: 4:30–6:00 p.m.; 6:30–8:00 p.m. Meets at The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA

Sunday, Nov. 8 – Infamous Holman Sisters
Sunday, Nov. 15 – Charlie Zahm & Tad Marks
Sunday, Nov. 22 – Piper Jones Band
Sunday, Nov. 29 – Kinnfolk
Sunday, Dec. 13 – Jody Marshall & Friends Annual Holiday Concert

NOV. 6-9

Cirque Italia. At Fair Oaks Mall, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Join this cast of acrobats, jugglers, aerialists, dancers, and clowns—a daring team of explorers who sail between worlds, diving deep beneath the waves and soaring high into the clouds. Cirque Italia's Water Circus is filled with nautical wonder, fabulous fountains, and theatrical spectacle that will dazzle and delight the young and the young at heart. Under the stunning White & Blue Tent:

- Nov. 6 – Friday: 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 7 – Saturday: 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 8 – Sunday: 1:30 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.
- Nov. 9 – Monday: 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY/NOV. 8

AAUW McLean Area Branch Meeting. 2-4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The 2026 Midterm Elections: Results, Implications, and the Political Road Ahead with speaker Stephen Farnsworth, Ph.D. Farnsworth will examine results of the 2026 midterm elections and their implications for the political landscape in the United States.

SUNDAY/NOV. 8

CROP Hunger Walk. 2-4:30 p.m. At Burke Presbyterian Church to Knollwood Church and return. Starting address: 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Community walk to raise awareness and funds to help fight local and global hunger. Website: Burkecropwalk.org.

NOV. 10 AND NOV. 18

Virtual Author Series. 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. Upstart Crow, Inc. and Fairfax County Public Library will present free virtual author conversations from Oct. 27 through Nov. 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, 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.

FRIDAY/NOV. 13

25th Annual Jazz4Justice in Fairfax. 8-10 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Jazz4Justice, an award-winning partnership between the George Mason University Jazz Program and Northern Virginia's legal community. For a quarter century, Jazz4Justice has demonstrated the power of music to unite communities, raise awareness of the justice gap, and support access to civil legal services for those who cannot afford an attorney. The evening will feature the George Mason Jazz Program performing swinging classics from the golden age of the big band.

NOW THRU NOV. 24

Lions Citrus Sale. At American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak Street, Fairfax. Fresh from Florida's Indian River Groves: Navel Oranges; Mandarins; Pink Grapefruit; Whitley's VA Peanuts. Pick up orders Dec 10-12, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (or fruit shipped to you). Visit the website https://www.fairfaxlions.org/



The Judy Carmichael Trio will perform Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026 at the Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center in McLean.



The iMusical - Musical Comedy Improv will perform on Friday, Nov. 6, 2026 at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center in Fairfax.

NOW THRU NOV. 13

Sheehy Auto Stores Collecting Food for Local Pantries. Sheehy Auto Stores is collecting non-perishable food at dealerships across Maryland and Virginia. Donations will go to local food banks and pantries partnered with each dealership. Customers, employees and area residents can drop off food during regular business hours. No appointment is needed. Bring unopened, non-perishable food in cans, boxes or plastic jars, such as canned tuna and chicken, peanut butter, soups, canned fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice and cereal. Find the nearest location at www.sheehy.com.

NOV. 4-29

McLean Art Society's "City Life" Exhibition and Members Show. 12 to 6 p.m. At McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean. "City Life" explores the energy, character, and beauty of urban living through original artwork inspired by city streets, architectural forms, vibrant neighborhoods, bustling cityscapes, and the quiet moments tucked within the rhythm of daily life. The exhibition celebrates the many ways artists interpret the movement, contrasts, and unexpected beauty of the city. Opening reception will be held Friday, Nov. 6 from 5-7 p.m. to meet the artists, enjoy conversation about summer-inspired artwork, and relax with live music, wine, and light refreshments.

FRIDAY/NOV. 6

iMusical – Musical Comedy Improv. 8 p.m. At Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. Part of the Old Town Hall Performance Series. A cast of singer-improvisers instantly creates a compelling new show with each performance, comprised of completely improvised scenes, lyrics and music, all inspired by a single audience suggestion!

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Fall Festival Celebrating German Culture. 12:30 to 5 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Welcome the arrival of autumn with authentic food, vibrant Bavarian dancing, live music, and family-friendly activities. Alt Washingtonia, a local Bavarian dance group, returns for its third year to fill the air with music, dancing, cowbells, and alphorns. Hungry guests can visit Chef Sergio and Jeff, at the grill. Traditional German food will be available. From a meal of bratwurst, potato salad, sauerkraut, to snacks, pretzels. You can purchase meal tickets directly at the event. A German Crafts Tent also returns with a new outdoor market twist. Browse traditional crafts created by a German Swiss family. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, $4; ages 13 and older, $6. First responders, teachers and military (active and retired) $5. Seniors, age 65+, $5. www.fairfax-station-railroad-museum.org,

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

SATURDAYS

Burke: Through Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway

Reston: Through 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.

Entertainment



The McLean Antiques Show & Sale will be held Nov. 14-15, 2026 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.



A CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026 at Burke Presbyterian Church in Burke.

www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

OFC IGNITE: Gobble Gobble Cooking Demo. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Bring the family to OFC Ignite, a monthly family play experience featuring ping pong, board games, arcade games, refreshments, the Sensory Room and more. Enjoy a holiday-themed Saturday learning to make tasty seasonal treats and festive favorites. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

SUNDAY/NOV. 8

The Judy Carmichael Trio. 2 p.m. At McLean Community Theater's Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. A stride pianist so accomplished that Count Basie gave her the nickname "Stride," Judy Carmichael is more than just a great jazz musician in the style of Fats Waller. She's an enchanting performer and sharp as a tack. Many will know her from 'Judy Carmichael's Jazz Inspired," and she brings the same charm, warmth and humor to the stage. The program will celebrate swing favorites of the American Songbook, from Gershwin and Cole Porter to Frank Loesser and Harold Arlen.

THURSDAY/NOV. 12

Cold War Museum Annual Gathering. 6 to 9 p.m. At Old Bust Head Brewery adjacent to the Cold War Museum at Vint Hill. During the gathering, Chris Pocock, the renowned British aviation historian and foremost authority on the U-2 program, will be honored. Chris is the author of three definitive histories of the U-2 aircraft, and the only foreign civilian ever to fly in the U-2, he has done more than anyone to preserve the U-2 program's story and legacy. Tickets are $80 and include dinner from Mission BBQ. The Cold War Museum will be opened for gathering attendees from 3:00 to 5:45 PM on Thursday November 12. During this time, Chris Pocock and Gary Powers Jr. will be at the museum to welcome guests and participate in a book signing for their assortment of books on the U-2 program and Cold War.

FRIDAY/NOV. 13

Fairfax Area Agency on Aging Celebrates 50 Years. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Fairfax County Government Center, Fairfax. This free event will include a screening of Facing the Falls, featuring a conversation with the film's star, Cara Yar Khan, plus a resource fair, workshops, door prizes, and much more!

FRIDAY/NOV. 13

"The Conductor" (Marin Alsop). 7 p.m. At Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. Part of the ARTScreen – Free Film Series. A riveting documentary about the former conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. One of the foremost conductors of our time, Marin Alsop is the first woman to serve as the head of major orchestras in the United States, South America, Austria, and Great Britain. Winner of the 2025 Golden Baton Award from the League of American Orchestras, Alsop is also the first and only conductor to receive a MacArthur Fellowship.



The Duo Mosaic Piano Duo will perform Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026 at the Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center in McLean.



A Free Symphony Concert will be held Sunday, Nov. 15, 2026 at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Clifton. (Pictured): Maestro Simeone Tartaglione conducts the CUA Symphony Orchestra.

NOV. 13-15 AND NOV. 20-22

Sterling Playmakers Present Camelot. At Theatre at Seneca Ridge Middle School, Sterling. Journey back in time to the majestic kingdom of CAMELOT, to King Arthur's court, and the knights of the round table. Packed with thrilling sword fights, pageantry, suspense and romance, this legendary Golden Age musical has enchanted generations of theatregoers.

Show times:
Friday, Nov. 13 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 14 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m.
Friday, Nov. 20 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 21 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 22 at 2 p.m.
General Admission available at the door or online at https://www.sterlingplaymakers.org/tickets

FALL BOOK SALE

At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centreville.
Friday, Nov. 13, 1-5 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 14, 10 a.m.-5 p.m
Sunday, Nov. 15, 12 p.m.-5 p.m.
Bag sale on Sunday; fill provided grocery bag with books and DVDs for $10.

SATURDAY/NOV. 14

Story Worx Book Festival. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, McGuire Woods, Lorton. They are gathering the brightest minds in literature for a day of panels, sales, and live readings. The Workhouse Arts Center is a hub of creativity — home to 80+ artists and several galleries — making it the perfect backdrop to promote your work to a passionate audience. Email marketing@workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 14

Health Fair. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. At James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. A free health fair offering a variety of services, information, and resources for Mason residents including flu vaccines, hearing and vision screenings, child dental screenings, HIV tests, Hepatitis C tests, and more.

SATURDAY/NOV. 14

Wellness Expo. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, Vienna. Vienna Business Association's fourth annual Wellness Expo features 50 local wellness vendors and activities for all ages. Explore local wellness resources, connect with health professionals, and gain practical tools for maintaining wellness. Meet local businesses in the wide range of the wellness industry to include physical, mental, and spiritual. Families are encouraged to attend, as a variety of activities have been designed for children to help make wellness fun and engaging for all ages. The Vienna Singing Princesses will be wandering the event and offering face painting as well. The event also emphasizes community connection, providing opportunities for attendees to meet neighbors, discover local resources, and build supportive wellness networks. Visit www.gethealthyvienna.org or contact the Vienna Business Association.

NOV. 14-15

McLean Antiques Show & Sale. Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Celebrate the 50th Annual Antiques Show & Sale at McLean Community Center, featuring dozens of dealers offering fine antiques, art, furniture, jewelry, collectibles and unique finds from around the world. Enjoy the onsite café and a free anniversary lecture by interior designer Josh Hildreth at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14, at The Alden Theatre.

SUNDAY/NOV. 15

Free Symphony Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. At St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 6720 Union Mill Road, Clifton. Experience the Catholic University of America Symphony Orchestra in a free concert featuring Dukas' Sorcerer's Apprentice, Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto, and Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony. All are welcome! Free-will offering is appreciated. Website: www.st-andrew.org/concerts

SUNDAY/NOV. 15

Amadeus Concerts presents Sasha Beresovsky & Friends. 4 p.m. Preconcert talk at 3:15 p.m.; post-concert reception with the artists to follow. At St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Passion in Full Color. A piano/violin/cello trio performs classics from the trio repertoire, mixing well-loved pieces by Maurice Ravel and Robert Schumann with rediscovered French female composer Mel Bonis. Free for children and active military, $25 1/2 priced ticket for young adults 19 - 29, $50 general admission ticket. More Info and tickets: www.amadeus-concerts.com

TAX NOTICE
CITY OF FAIRFAX

REAL ESTATE TAX PAYMENTS ARE DUE

Real Estate tax bills have been mailed and are due

Monday, December 7, 2026

We continue to receive a high number of tax complaints that either no paper tax bill was received, or that mailed payments did not make it to city hall.

When paying, please consider using our 24-hour drop box located at 10455 Armstrong Street (at the front of City Hall, near the flag poles) in lieu of the USPS. (Checks only, no Cash)

LATE PAYMENT PENALTY

To avoid incurring a 10% late payment penalty and interest of 10% per annum, **payment in full must be received or postmarked by close-of-business on Monday, December 7, 2026**

Taxes may be paid online, by mail, or in-person to the City of Fairfax Treasurer's Office (City Hall, Suite 234) 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)

IMPORTANT

Even if you do not receive a physical bill, to avoid late payment penalties **you are still responsible for requesting a copy** and remitting payment by **Monday, December 7, 2026**

For Additional Information, please check the City website at www.FairfaxVA.gov or call (703) 385-7900









Photos courtesy of Stobbi

With the Stobbi, reaching the bathroom sink is not an issue.



The Stobbi has three characters.

Springfield Father's Idea from His Daughter Comes to Fruition

Stepping stools with an identity bring confidence at the bathroom sink.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

It's bedtime and that comes with a session of brushing the teeth at the bathroom sink, but when you're three-years-old and can't reach the sink, it's a problem. Not with the "Stobbi," though, it's a child's stepping stool to provide the extra boost.

Abhi Kishore invented these solid wood stools to alleviate this problem. "The whole idea came when my daughter was growing up," said Abhi Kishore of Springfield. Abhi is a parent of two daughters and co-founder of Stobbi, a new line of solid wood step stools designed as characters so kids can do everyday things independently. "It's a companion buddy to help her do things," he said.

He came up with the stool business with his brother and now both of them run the company.

These step stools come in three different child-friendly models: Doe the Turtle, Ray the Panda and Mei the Butterfly. With a named character for each model, Kishore has gone beyond just making another piece of furniture. They are designed to feel like a helper that goes with them from the bathroom to the kitchen and back.

He got the idea from watching his three-year-old struggle to reach the sink. "Kids light up when they do something themselves, even small things like brushing their teeth, helping in the kitchen or reaching their books," he said. A step stool is one way to make that possible, but the options out there were plastic, fiberboard or bulky learning towers so he stayed away from those materials and went back to wood, an earthy building material.

"We don't want our kids to grow up in a plastic environment," he said.

Kishore works with a company in India to manufacture the Stobbi, and is heading into his third year of production. Right now, it is only available through the website but he's looking for more venues to give his new product some exposure. He hasn't tried the "Shark Tank," show for entrepreneurs but he is open to the idea.

For more information, go to https://stobbi.com



Photos by Susan Laume/The Connection

At sunrise, polling places like Sydenstricker, opened at 6 a.m. saw a slow trickle of arriving voters with no waiting to vote.



Volunteers handing out sample Democrat ballots had no countering GOP volunteers at several Springfield voting precincts this year.

Northern Virginia Votes

From Page 3

locations in the county. A cow and a cowbell attracted attention.

The Franconia group, which holds numerous "No Kings" sidewalk events in Kingstowne, indicated their goal was to promote early voting as a strategy. "Voting early is an essential strategy to combat efforts to disrupt the election," said Andi Cale, event co-organizer. "The larger the number of votes cast early, the harder it will be for the Trump Administration to contest the results." Because of the national rhetoric related to election interference, various grassroots groups also were planning to mobilize nonviolent protests as a rapid response to any attempted subterfuge of the election or undermining election integrity.

Whether it was the messaging, the cow, or the cowbells, by the end of the first full weekend of early voting, over 20 percent of Fairfax County voters had cast a ballot; the majority using the early in-person option. Wait times at some times and locations reached 15 to 30 minutes; with several locations seeing lines formed awaiting poll opening. One Republican poll worker noted that one voter expressed surprise at finding the wait; he had come to vote early in-person to avoid lines on Nov. 3 only to find lines for early voting.

As the early voting period ended for Virginia on Oct. 31, the percentage of ballots cast had reached nearly 28 percent of Fairfax County's eligible voters. The final weekend alone saw a push of 31,551 voters; with over 13,000 on Saturday and over 18,000 on Sunday.

On Election Day, reports of morning lines were limited to opening, a d voting could still be completed in five minutes.

Incumbent Congressman James Walkinshaw spent the day visiting polls and greeting voters. Asked how he expected to fair, he said, "I take nothing for granted, but I'm feeling that all is going well." He planned to attend incumbent Senator Mark Warner's watch party in Alexandria with others elected on election night to see the returns.

The Connection went to press before the final results and percentage of voter turnout was reported.



Incumbent Congressman James Walkinshaw visited several precincts greeting voters, including Antoinette Rabatin, of Burke, at South Run precinct.



Kenny Lourie's column will return in the Nov. 18 editions.

Woodson High Presents the Play, 'Our Town.'

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like wonder about space and is also really funny. And she's one of my favorite roles because she's so three dimensional and in touch with herself, the solar system and God as the creator of everything."

As for the music, MacDonald said some of the songs – like "Kiss Me" by Sixpence None the Richer – are modern. But others, like "Adagio" by Vivaldi, are much older. And, she added, "Since 'Kiss Me' shares the same chord progression as 'Here Comes the Bride,' one song blends into another during the wedding scene. And the play starts and finishes with "End of August" by popular singer Noah Kahan.

Thrilled to be able to contribute so much musically to this show, MacDonald said, "Music is the biggest part of my life, with piano and singing. And it sets the tone for the play, gives life to a story full of vulnerability and emotion, and elevates the whole experience. Most productions of 'Our Town' don't have music, but sound does an amazing job of conveying the play's message."

Overall, she said, "This show is very touching and demonstrates how ephemeral life is. And it being so minimalistic gives space for creativity. I think audiences will not only see this play but will feel it."

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