THE CONNECTION

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Del. Dan Helmer, D-10, slips a "Don't Guess! Vote YES!" flyer into a door frame as he hosts a canvass launch in Fairfax Station on Saturday, Oct. 10, to inform area residents about the state's three constitutional amendment questions on the ballot.

# The Pitch: Vote Yes on 3 Questions

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PHOTO COURTESY PHOTO: HELMER FOR VIRGINIA

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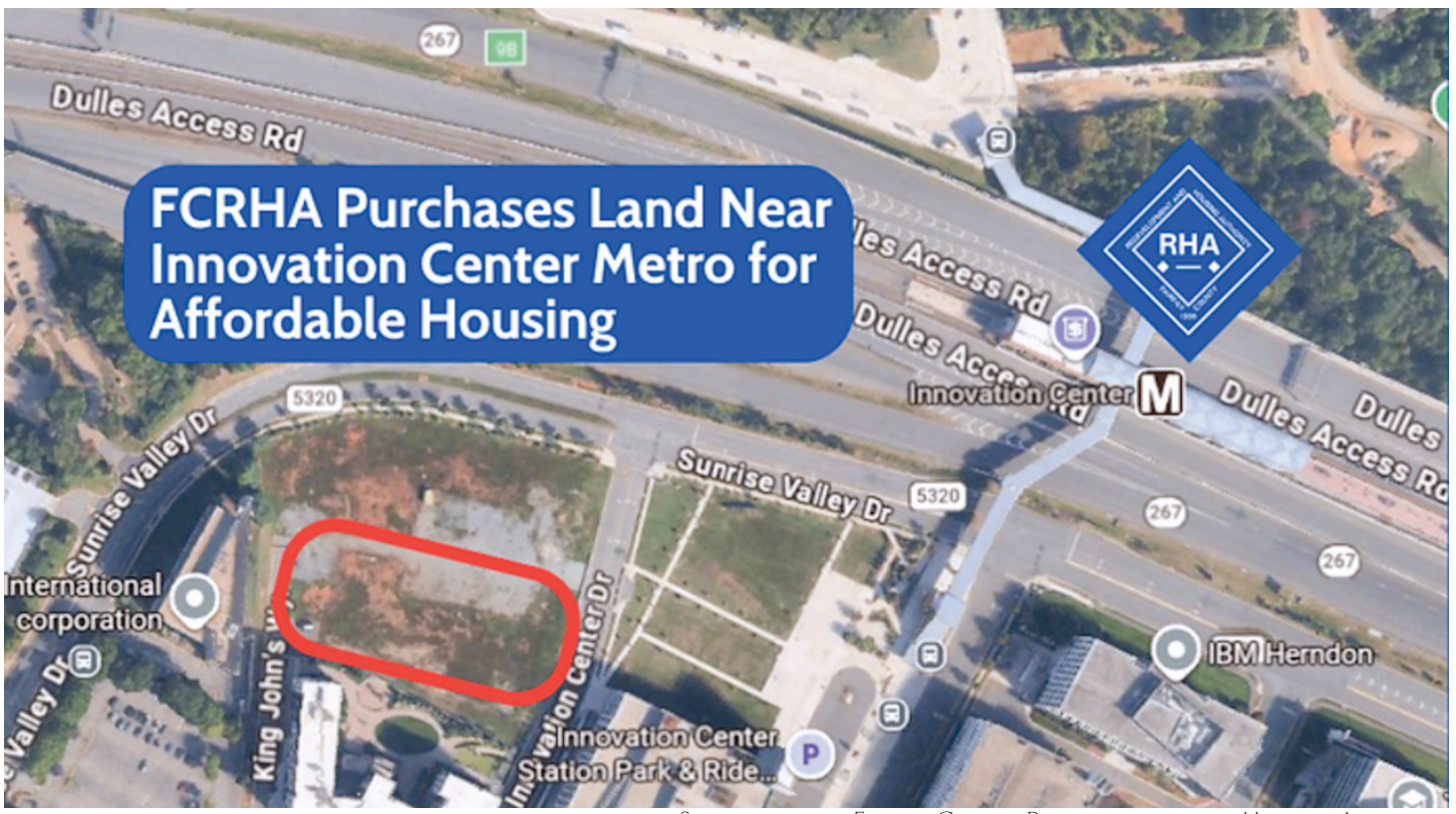
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- LARGE PARK-LIKE CAMPUS
- NOT FOR PROFIT
- MAJOR EXPANSION UNDERWAY



# Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority Purchases Land for 400 Affordable Housing Units

## Adjacent to Innovation Center Metro Station.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection




Screen grab via Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority

**The King Johns Way properties are adjacent to the Innovation Center Metro Station.**



Photo Google Maps

**The undeveloped site at 3625 and 3627 King Johns Way in Herndon, purchased by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority, sits adjacent to BrightView Dulles Corner senior living facility.**

More than six weeks after purchasing a 1.93-acre property in Herndon, the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) announced Oct. 13 its $22.88 million acquisition of 3625 and 3627 King Johns Way adjacent to the Innovation Center Metro Station.

The seller entity, Nugget A LLC, is tied to private real estate developer Rocks Engineering. In 2015, the developer broke ground with Fairfax County on Innovation Center South, combining public and private efforts. As Heather Diez, project coordinator for the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, noted at the time, the project was intended "to establish a transit-oriented development and a multi-use development that will take it from undeveloped as it is in its current state and end up with really a place where people can work and live and play."

Currently, neighboring commercial lots remain under affiliate ownership, where commercial brokers continue marketing adjacent parcels for office and mixed-use footprints. However, following the collapse of the office market and the post-2020 rise of remote work, demand for new suburban office footprints along the Dulles Corridor weakened significantly. As the original private master plan stalled, Fairfax County saw an opportunity to step in and purchase the 1.93 acres directly from Nugget A LLC to repurpose the site for affordable housing.

Land records confirm the King Johns Way transaction closed Aug. 28, with plans to build roughly 400 affordable housing units on the site. The county paid approximately $57,000 per prospective unit in land acquisition costs alone, underscoring the substantial public investment required to secure land adjacent to Silver Line Metro platforms.

"The real estate adage—'it's about location'—applies to affordable housing," said Lenore Stanton, chair of the FCRHA. "With close access to the metro and Dulles Airport, jobs, and amenities, this prime location will give more Fairfax County families an opportunity to flourish."

The parcels are located within the county's Planned Residential Mixed-Use (PRM) district, which permits high-density mixed-use development near transit. The purchase closed under a single deed (Book 28786, Page 2188) covering both addresses.

Building 400 homes on 1.93 acres yields a density exceeding 200 units per acre, requiring mid- to high-rise residential construction above structured parking. Combined with the housing authority's nearby site at 13500 Dulles Greene Drive, the FCRHA now controls land that can support approximately 835 affordable homes within walking distance of the Silver Line stop.

The FCRHA completed the acquisition without public debate or a Board of Supervisors vote. Because the FCRHA holds a designation under HUD's Moving to Work program, the agency possesses flexible administrative authority to allocate federal funds.

This status allowed it to complete the off-market land acquisition without navigating the traditional multi-cycle board approvals or county-level appropriation requests typically required for land purchases.

"The Dulles Corridor is an economic engine in Fairfax County," said Dranesville District Supervisor Jimmy Bierman, noting that affordable homes near transit enable essential workers to live in the communities they serve.

Housing accessibility also impacts broader commercial economic health, according to Jennifer Miller, Fairfax County deputy executive for community development, who emphasized that local executive leaders view housing affordability as a critical factor in employer recruitment and workforce retention.

However, acquiring the land is only the first step. The FCRHA has not yet issued a Request for Proposals, selected a private or non-profit development partner, or secured construction financing (such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits). As a result, construction remains several years away.

The site sits adjacent to Brightview Dulles Corner—the 196-unit senior living facility at 13700 Magna Way that opened in 2023.

# International Repair Day Celebrated in Vienna

## Americans are learning how to fix, not trash, household items.

By Eden Brown
The Connection

While many Arlingtonians were busy throwing things out at the E-CARE event on Saturday, others drove out to The International Repair Day held in Vienna to see if their old (or new) item could be fixed instead. That is the principle of the repair movement, which started outside the U.S. but is gradually taking hold in the U.S.

The movement in Northern Virginia can thank Ari Nicholas, who began the repair day program two years ago, roughly, and looked around at a room full of volunteers and customers.

Ari is trying to spread the word: Repair keeps things out of the landfill. Repair events bring people together to share resources and build community. Nicholas advocates, "Repair takes power away from corporations and puts it back in the hands of the people. International Repair Day is an opportunity to highlight when our right to repair our own things isn't available, and what a better future might look like."

The volunteers who come and help out with fixing things get their own satisfaction from doing something for their community. Doug Smith said he found it nourishing for the soul.

"The longterm goal is to use Repair Day and Repair Café to advocate for Right to Repair in the region and state, but that's still kind of a Big Idea that hasn't crystallized for most people," Nicholas said. The opportunity for legislation remains possible in the coming year, and following the General Assembly on this issue is a way to support repair.

To follow such efforts, see: https://www.vpm.org/general-assembly/2026-02-17/right-to-repair-diy-digital-devices-farm-equipment-glass-franklin-repair-cafe-rva/

And the learn more about International Repair Day, see:https://repairday.org/#about




Photos by Eden Brown/The Connection

**Doug Smith works on a vacuum cleaner holder that broke. After trying multiple hardware fixes, he finally told his customer Audrey Hu (all repairs are free) that some good old fashioned duct tape would be the best way to keep the item in good working order.**




**Mary Peters asked Frank Losche to help her with a broken wooden box. He put on two hinges and it was good to go. Losche grew up in East Germany, and there weren't a lot of stores with new items on sale, so fixing old items was just something people learned to do.**




**Anna Nyman lives in Burke and used her sewing abilities on this particular day to mend a hole in a sweater, stop another piece of fabric from fraying, and other simple tasks that most people don't know how to do anymore.**




**Doug Smith enjoys showing other "fixers" what he knows; passing down knowledge is one of the things that "nourishes his soul."**

# Fatal Pedestrian Crash in Chantilly

A fatal pedestrian crash occurred Sunday in Chantilly.

On Oct. 18 at 3:47 a.m., officers responded to southbound Route 28 near Air and Space Museum Parkway for reports of a pedestrian who was struck by a vehicle.

Preliminarily, crash reconstruction unit detectives determined Juan Linares Terrero, 24, of Sterling, was walking in the right lane of southbound Route 28 when he was struck by a Ford Mustang. Linares Terrero was pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the Ford was uninjured and remained on scene.

Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors for the driver. Alcohol is under investigation for the pedestrian.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

## 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.*

**FREE HALLOWEEN LYFT RIDES**

Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly a third of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers, a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this month's Halloween celebrations.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2026 Halloween SoberRide program will be in operation from 10:00 pm to 4:00 am on both the evenings of Friday, October 30 and Saturday, October 31 (Halloween), 2026 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During these two evenings, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to $15) safe transportation home. (One offer per user.) WRAP's 2026 Halloween SoberRide promo codes will be posted at 9:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30th and Saturday, October 31st on www.SoberRide.com.

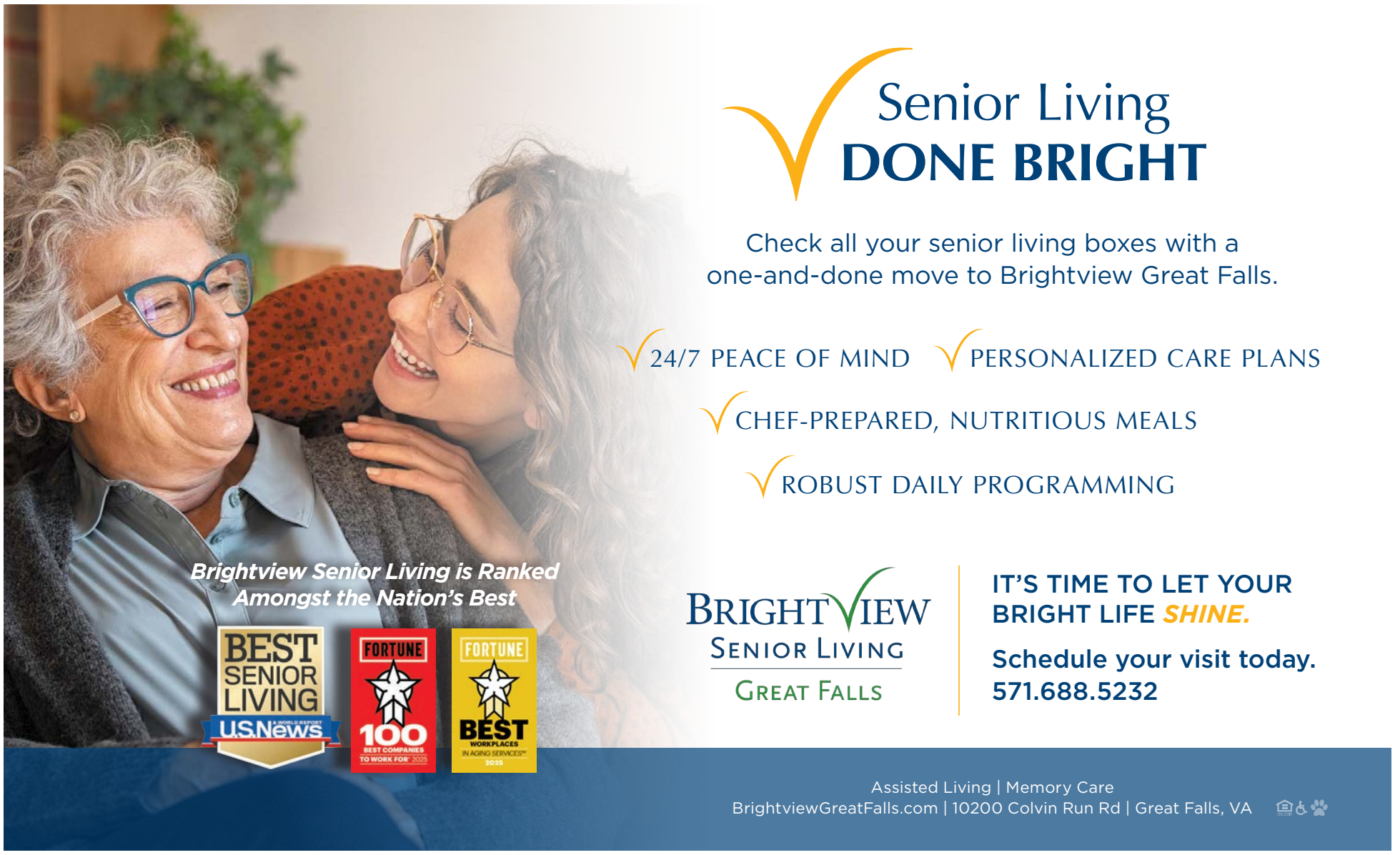

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Screen grab via Fairfax County

## Grant Check for EV Charger

Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) joins Waterford Square Condominium residents Oct. 15 to celebrate the unveiling of their new dual-port Level 2 EV charger, supported by a $10,000 Charge Up Fairfax grant. The association is Reston's fourth community to join the program. Steve Garver, association president, calls EVs "the future," especially for residents who do not log many miles..

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection



Photo via Facebook Supervisor Dan Storck

**Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mt. Vernon) reaches across the dais to shake the hand of a member of Virginia Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue during the board's Oct. 13 meeting and recognizes them for their work following this summer's earthquakes in Venezuela.**

## Board of Supervisors honors Virginia Task Force 1

After the meeting, Storck posted on Facebook, "These highly trained first responders put themselves in challenging and dangerous conditions to help our neighbors in need around the world." He added, "We are incredibly proud of the members of USA-01 who answered the call and represented Fairfax County and Virginia through their skill, dedication and service."

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection



Photo via Facebook Supervisor Dan Storck

**Members of Virginia Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue stand before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors as they are honored on Oct. 13 for their overseas deployment.**



File photo by Mercia Hobson/ The Connection

**Officials in the Town of Herndon filed a formal notice of appeal with the Court of Appeals of Virginia on Oct. 7.**

## Town of Herndon Appeals Court Order on Comstock

The legal filing challenges the Sept. 17 Fairfax County Circuit Court order regarding the 5-acre downtown redevelopment project at 770 Elden Street in Town of Herndon v. Comstock Herndon Venture, LC. The order prevented the town from reclaiming a 5-acre downtown parcel at 770 Elden Street after developer Comstock halted plans for a 273-unit mixed-use project featuring 273 apartments, retail space, and an arts center.

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection



Screen grab via Fairfax County

**Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors present a proclamation to Gin Dance Company founders Shu-Chen Cuff and Gary Cuff on Tuesday, Oct. 13.**

## Supervisors Recognize Gin Dance Company

Artistic Director Shu-Chen Cuff (front, center) and Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn hold the resolution, which recognizes the Reston-based company's 16-year legacy of high-caliber contemporary dance across the region and community programs following its August disbandment.

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection

# Community News at a Glance

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection



Screen grab via Fairfax County

**The Fairfax Circuit Court Clerk's Office, with the county's Department of Tax Administration and Department of Information Technology, launches the Fairfax County Property Alert Notification System.**

## Fairfax County Circuit Court Offers New Property Alert System

Available at no cost through the MyFairfax portal (fairfaxcounty.gov/myfairfax), the service monitors real estate records and automatically emails Fairfax County and City of Fairfax property owners when matching land documents are filed with the court. The system provides early detection for potential fraud, including unauthorized deed transfers and suspicious filings. For details and to sign up, visit the Fairfax Circuit Court website at fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit.


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# Community News at a Glance



Photo by Mercia Hobson/The Connection

**Great Falls Park, an 800-acre site along the banks of the Potomac River, is celebrating 60 years under U.S. National Park Service ownership this year.**

## Great Falls Park Marks 60 Years with National Park Service

The park focuses on conservation and public safety while hosting scouting activities, daily ranger-led talks, and weekly volunteer-led bird walks. It also features picnic areas and a visitor center. The admission fee is $20 per vehicle. Great Falls Park is visited for its three accessible observation platforms, which offer views of the Potomac River tumbling over steep, jagged rocks and dropping 76 feet through Mather Gorge.

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection

## Superintendent Explains Enrollment Drop and Next Steps




Screengrab via YouTube

**Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Michelle C. Reid addresses the Oct. 8 school board meeting regarding declining enrollment.**

Reid said that smaller incoming kindergarten classes over the last decade have created a deficit that international move-ins no longer offset. In response, FCPS is reducing hiring, redistributing existing staff to align with attendance, and forming a workforce rebalancing committee to improve demographic forecasting.

– Mercia Hobson




Photo grab via Fairfax County Transportation

**Three McLean corridors, Douglass Drive, Baron Road, and Ingleside Avenue, are among ten road segments across three Fairfax County districts, Dranesville, Mason and Providence, selected for a pilot program to lower residential speed limits from 25 mph to 20 mph.**

## Pilot Program Drops Speed Limit to 20 mph

County transportation officials chose the streets in coordination with district supervisor offices, evaluating pedestrian activity, transit stops, nearby schools, local vulnerability indices and community feedback. Reducing urban speed limits to 20 mph reduces total stopping distance by 20–30%, providing drivers additional reaction time to avoid vulnerable road users, according to the National Association of City Transportation Officials.

–Mercia Hobson/The Connection




Photo by Charity Moreno-Hines

**Helping to close the "weekend gap," Fairfax County teenagers with the Young Men's Service League Fox Mill Chapter take a break while loading a rental truck with 1,918 meal packs, totaling 4,000 pounds of donated food, for local children facing food insecurity.**

## Young Men's Service League, Fox Mill Chapter, Provides 'Ultimate Gift'



Photo by Samara Weinstein

**Moms of Young Men's Service League, Fox Mill Chapter, find success with their first "Ultimate Gift" benefitting Northern Virginia Family Service. A national 501(c)(3) non-profit, YMSL pairs mothers and their high school sons to serve local communities, develop leadership skills, and nurture their mother-son relationship.**

– Mercia Hobson/The Connection

# Pathway Homes Honors Leaders for Support of Mental Health and Affordable Housing Services

Pathway Homes recognized the dedication, leadership, and support of Sen. Mark Warner; Kerrie Wilson, retired CEO, Cornerstones; and HomeAid for their efforts to ensure vulnerable members of the community have needed services and a place to call home. The awards were presented on Oct. 9 during Pathway Homes' Steps to Pathways Breakfast, which raised funds and awareness about Pathways' work to prevent and end homelessness.

The annual event brought together nearly 200 leaders, clients, speakers and awardees and raised more than $185,000 to Pathways — a nonprofit providing mental health services starting with safe, stable housing to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity.



Kerrie Wilson



LaVelle Crawford, Pathway Homes' client

La'velle Crawford, Pathway Homes' client, provided heartfelt remarks about the impact and importance of Pathway Homes on his life. After years of addiction followed by a critical health issue, he entered a recovery program and was referred to Pathway Homes' Assisted Living Program in Arlington.

He explained to the attendees: "Coming to Pathway's, I have found the support, structure, and community that I needed to survive. I have the stability of a home, that feels like home, with staff that recognize us as individuals and treat us with respect, and housemates to share everyday life with…I have found that with Pathway's and NA/AA I am able to turn my pain into purpose."

For more than 45 years, Pathway Homes has enabled tens of thousands of people in Northern Virginia, Washington, DC, and Central Florida with serious mental illnesses and other co-occurring disabilities to access affordable housing and critical supportive services to help them recover their lives. Pathway Homes is a partner in preventing and ending homelessness, touching over 2,000 lives in 2025 and ensuring access to affordable stable homes in permanent supportive housing units.

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Virginia Department of Transportation

## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

| Jurisdiction | Fed Struc Id | Route # | Route Name | Crossing | Posted Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NELSON | 12503 | 628 | RHUE HOLLOW ROAD | BRANCH REEDS CREEK | 9/24/2026 |
| BUCKINGHAM | 4032 | 601 | MANTEO ROAD | SYCAMORE CREEK | 9/22/2026 |
| SCOTT | 16849 | 689E | LUNDSFORD MILL ROAD | BRANCH | 9/16/2026 |
| BUCHANAN | 3825 | 600E | HURRICANE CK ROAD | HURRICANE CREEK | 9/14/2026 |
| SCOTT | 16850 | 689E | LUNSFORD MILL ROAD | STREAM | 9/14/2026 |
| FLOYD | 7501 | 221N | FLOYD HWY S 221 | BR OF DOBBINS CREEK | 9/11/2026 |
| BEDFORD | 2832 | 699E | BORE AUGER ROAD/699 | BR OF BORE AUGER CREEK | 9/11/2026 |
| BEDFORD | 2816 | 691E | SHEPERDS ST ROAD 691 | WOLF CREEK | 9/10/2026 |
| CARROLL | 4779 | 881N | CROSS CREEK ROAD 881 | L REED ISLAND CREEK #1 | 9/9/2026 |
| CAMPBELL | 4203 | 604E | RED OAK SCHOOL ROAD | SOUTH FORK FALLING RIVER | 9/8/2026 |
| BUCHANAN | 29782 | 3304 | MALLARD ROAD | BIG LICK BRANCH | 9/3/2026 |
| BUCHANAN | 29789 | 4080 | LOCKHART BRIDGE ROAD | WAR FORK | 9/3/2026 |
| FLOYD | 7631 | 785N | BURKS FORK ROAD/785 | BURKS FORK | 9/17/2026 |
| SUFFOLK | 22113 | 616 | ROUNDTREE CRESCENT | CYPRESS SWAMP | 9/3/2026 |

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Travel and traffic/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

*The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.*




Courtesy Photos: Helmer for Virginia

**Del. Dan Helmer (second from right), Del. Kathy Tran (far right), Springfield District School Board Member Sandy Anderson (center front), Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano (back row, white pullover), and dedicated volunteers at the Vote Yes canvass launch in Fairfax Station.**




**Del. Dan Helmer, D-10th, slips a "Don't Guess! Vote YES!" flyer into a door frame as he hosts a canvass launch in Fairfax Station on Saturday, Oct. 10, to inform area residents about the state's three constitutional amendment questions on the ballot.**

# Local Delegates Canvass for Yes on Constitutional Amendments 1, 2 and 3.

## 'Knocktober' getting the vote out matters.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

Democratic lawmakers across Northern Virginia are mobilizing volunteers every weekend throughout October for a coordinated "Knocktober" push to support three proposed constitutional amendments on Virginia's ballot regarding reproductive freedom, marriage equality and voting rights.

Del. Dan Helmer, D-10, hosted a canvass launch in Fairfax Station on Saturday, Oct. 10, to ensure area residents understand the questions.

"Our majority sent these amendments to the voters because Virginians deserve the final say on their most fundamental freedoms: the freedom to make their own healthcare decisions, the freedom to marry who they love, and the freedom to vote," Helmer said in a statement. "But none of this happens unless people show up."

Highlighted by Del. Kathy Tran, D-18, the effort includes weekend canvasses hosted by local lawmakers, including Dels. Holly Seibold, D-12, in Vienna; Marcus Simon, D-13, in Falls Church; Laura Jane Cohen, D-15; Paul Krizek, D-16; and Irene Shin, D-8; alongside Sens. Stella Pekarsky, D-36; Saddam Salim, D-37; and Scott Surovell, D-34.

"We're hitting the doors every weekend in October," Tran shared on social media. Supporters can sign up at https://linktr.ee/VOTEYES123

Other prominent Virginia Democrats, including U.S. Rep. Suhas Subramanyam, D-10th, and U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, also publicly support the amendments.

The collective effort builds on action by House Democrats, who passed the measures to send them to the ballot after securing a 64-seat majority in 2025.

# GMU Is Official State Climate Center

By Glenda C. Booth
Connection Newspapers

The summer of 2026 was the warmest on record for the contiguous United States in the 132 years of record-keeping, surpassing previous records, set in 1936 and 2021 by .4 degrees, reported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Sept. 9.

"But is very clear that—with global warming now heating the world to 1.2 degrees Celsius above its average in the late 19th century – summers are dramatically ramping up," wrote Andrea Thompson in a Scientific American article. Other scientists say that El Nino, warmer oceans and urban heat islands contribute to a warming planet too.

A year after George Mason University (GMU) issued the state's first climate assessment, the Virginia General Assembly authorized a new state climate office to be anchored at GMU. Virginia is experiencing more extreme heat events, more severe storms, more droughts and rising sea level, for example.

The legislation says that the center will "develop and deliver data, analyses, assessments and expertise about Virginia's weather and climate-related impacts, risks and risk management options to state and local government agencies, businesses and communities of place or practice in the Commonwealth."

Del. David Reid, one of the sponsors, said in an email, "Prior to my budget amendment, Virginia was one of only two states in the nation without an operational state climate office. The other was Arkansas. While GMU, its professors and researchers had assumed responsibility for all the previously collected climate data, there was no official designation.

"That gap left citizens, localities, farmers and businesses without an identified central source for climate information. Hosting the State Climate Office at George Mason puts proven scientists to work for every corner of the commonwealth — collaborating to ensure improved strategic planning, data collection and analysis and information sharing."

Dr. Luis E. Ortiz, Assistant Professor, GMU's Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences, explained, "A state climate office provides subject matter expertise and data resources for their state. Right now, those needs are often provisioned either by contracting firms or through individual projects.

"Our vision is to provide a

See GMU Is Official, Page 11

# Local Author Launches Newest Book

## Everything she believed about her grandmother was wrong.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

*The Connection interviewed local author Caroline Crocker on Oct. 13, regarding the launch of her most recent book, "The Truth Was Different: One Woman's Journey Through Occupied Holland." Crocker has written two other books, "Brave Face" (2022) and "Unforgivable" (2024), focusing on her mother's survival during the Hunger Winter and her father's wartime childhood, respectively.*



Courtesy images via launch flyer
**Author I. Caroline Crocker.**

Fairfax author Caroline Crocker, a former professor at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College, will launch her third nonfiction book, "The Truth Was Different: One Woman's Journey Through Occupied Holland," on Nov. 21. Scheduled for publication Nov. 16, the 424-page work draws on letters, family documents and personal accounts to examine the choices of Crocker's paternal grandmother, Rita, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands from 1940 to 1945. The book completes a trilogy following her previous works, "Brave Face" and "Unforgivable."

### Catalyst and Investigation

Crocker began investigating Rita's life after readers of her second book, "Unforgivable: Through a Child's Eyes," repeatedly asked, "What in the world was wrong with his mother?" The question made Crocker wonder if there was more to Rita's story. "She can't just be horrible," Crocker recalled thinking.

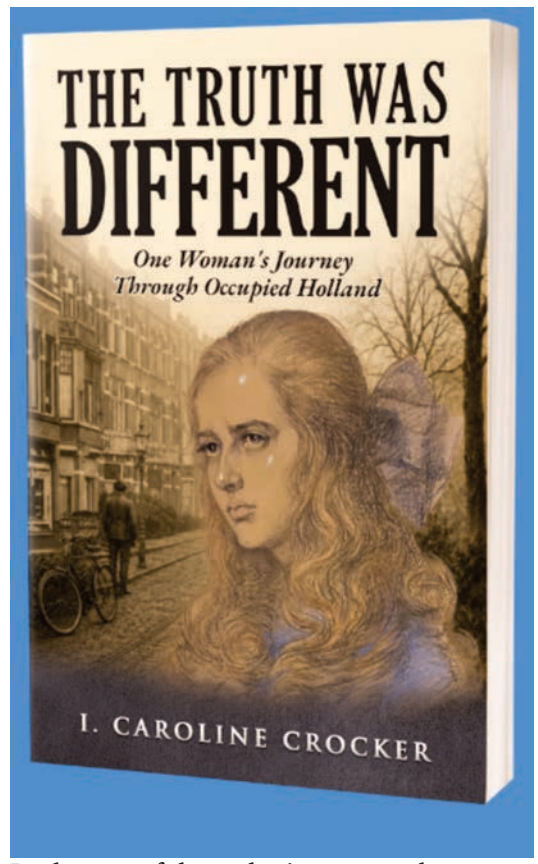
Crocker obtained Rita's out-of-print autobiography, written in Dutch, and worked through it using her own Dutch-reading skills and Google Translate. She also examined Rita's other books, which were presented as fiction. When she encountered an incident described repeatedly and in detail, Crocker said, "I know this is not fiction. This incident really happened." She came to see the books as clues to Rita's life: "She changed all the names. She changed all the places. She changed the relationships."

### Scientific Methodology

"I found I was using the skills that I used as a scientist," said Crocker, who has also led a nonprofit and a technology startup. Her research included wartime letters and family records obtained with help from a Dutch genealogist.

"Rita didn't think she was a nasty piece of work," said Crocker. "She thought she was a reasonable human being, and then I went to investigate that, and so I looked at all the papers that are out there, which is what scientists do — they look at what has already been done."

Crocker then sought feedback on the manuscript from a physician, psychologist, rabbi and bishop — an approach she compared with scientific peer review. The book underwent extensive revision: "I've only rewritten this thing five or six times," Crocker said laughing.



**Book cover of the author's newest release, pending publication on Nov. 16.**

### Impacts of Trauma

Crocker said Rita's wartime trauma affected her emotional relationship with her sons, with effects that carried into later generations.

"Something I have become very aware of is that trauma can be inherited. … My grandmother experienced unbelievable trauma during the war, and the result was that she shut down emotionally, and she did not show any emotion whatsoever to her sons. Oh, guess what? Then her sons developed attachment disorder, and that affected their children."

She urges readers to preserve family stories, saying, "These things do get lost, and they are important."

But her broader message is, "You can't judge people unless you know their history, unless you've lived their life. … So be gentle with people."

### Book Launch

The public book launch is scheduled for 2 p.m. Nov. 21 at 10520 Main St. in Fairfax. Crocker plans to discuss how and why she wrote the book, read an excerpt and answer audience questions. Signed copies will be available alongside her two earlier World War II books. She plans to display enlarged reproductions of historical photographs and documents.

# GMU Is Official State Climate Center

From Page 10

baseline of information, both as a facilitator of data from the federal government and as a creator of value-added products to serve the needs of specific stakeholders. These may be state agencies, municipalities and economic sectors." He clarified, however, "We view our role as providing data and analysis to support decision-making rather than prescribe policy to municipalities and states."

State Senator Stella G. Pekarsky, another GMU center supporter, said in an email, "With the growing threat of climate change and its impact on the Commonwealth, this office will give Virginia a seat at the national table to research and discuss solutions to protect our communities from the worst impacts of climate change."

GMU faculty recently partnered with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions on urban heat island mapping this summer and will report the conclusions in October.

### Humans Cause Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases, like methane and carbon dioxide, trap the sun's radiation and warm the Earth. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Human activities are responsible for almost all of the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the last 150 years.

The largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in the United States is from burning fossil fuels for electricity, heat and transportation." Examples of fossil fuels are coal, oil and natural gas.

In 2021, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted a Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan. The plan's goals include energy carbon neutrality in government operations by 2040 and community-wide carbon neutrality by 2050.

The county reports that the transportation sector accounts for over 50 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions. The plan describes several strategies, including electrification of county's passenger and bus fleets or using non-carbon emitting alternatives.

In 2008, then-Virginia Governor Tim Kaine's Commission on Climate Change recommended a statewide 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below business-as-usual levels levels by 2025.

Under this scenario, emissions were expected to continue to increase, reaching a level of 230 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent, which includes methane and other gases.

According to Dr. Jim Kinter, "In the last year for which data are available, 2021, emissions were well below the targeted reduction. There are no publicly available official estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for 2025, so we can't directly evaluate whether Governor Kaine's target has been met." Kinter is the director of GMU's center.


Photo by Evan Cantwell/George Mason University
**A statue of George Mason at Wilkins Plaza on the Fairfax Campus of George Mason**

# 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.



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

### 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.

### 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, 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.

### 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 years' experience promises to be the most immersive yet. Tickets run $25–$35 depending on the night.

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

### "AN OLD-FASHIONED FAMILY MURDER"

**Presented by Vienna Theatre Company. 7:30 p.m.** at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. This comedy takes numerous twists and turns on a dark and stormy night when murder-mystery author Arthur Whittington gathers Colonel Claythorne's family at his mansion to announce that the family patriarch has cut one of his daughters out of his will. Upon learning this, tempers flare and someone is murdered, making everyone a suspect. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. on select Fridays and Saturdays: Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 30. Matinee performances begin at 2 p.m. on Sundays, Oct. 25 and Nov. 1. Please note there will not be a performance on Halloween, Saturday, Oct. 31. Tickets are $16 each and may be purchased online at www.viennava.gov/webtrac or in person at the Vienna Community Center.

## 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, ghoul and goblin.

❖ **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.

# Entertainment

❖ **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 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. 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!

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**VMBC Marching Band Competition. 12 p.m. to 9 p.m.** At South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. Experience the excitement, energy, and pageantry of marching band as South County High School hosts the South County Invitational on Saturday, October 24, 2026. Spectators will enjoy powerful music, creative visual performances, colorful uniforms, dynamic choreography, and talented marching bands from across Northern Virginia and the state competing for top honors on the field. General admission is $10, and tickets may be purchased with cash or credit card. Concessions will be available throughout the event. For the performance schedule and additional event information, visit www.vmbc-online.org/soco

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**39th Anniversary. 12-4 p.m.** At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. There will be games and activities outside just for fun. Local train enthusiasts will be selling trains and model train supplies. Join them for this family friendly day of celebration, community, and appreciation as they look back on 39 years. Free entrance. Make it a family day! They will have an all-American lunch, popcorn, cotton candy, and more for sale.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**8th Annual Halloween Bark Bash. 12-3 p.m.** At One Loudoun, 20365 Exchange Street, Ashburn. This outdoor, Halloween-themed festival brings together local pet-focused businesses, animal rescue groups, and pet owners for a day of trick-or-treating, adoptable dogs, music, costumes, and animals galore. This year's festival features over 50 vendors, tenants, and sponsors.

**Event highlights include:**
Costume Contest: At 12:45 PM, judges from the event's sponsors will choose five finalists, and the audience will decide the top three by applause, with prizes for the winners. One Loudoun swag is up for grabs, including a "Date Night" from The Alamo with two movie passes and two snack passes.
Trick-or-Treat Trail: Multiple stops around One Loudoun offer dog treats, candy and tenant swag. A trail map will list every stop and the promotion each tenant is offering.
Kids' Activities and Photo Booth: The kids' tent will have face painting and a photo booth.
Dog Caricatures: A caricature artist will be on-hand to artistically capture your dog's personality.



**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.**




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

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**Fall Festival at Tysons Corner Center.** At PenFed Plaza,Tysons Corner Center. Celebrate the season with a family-friendly fall event at Tysons Corner Center, featuring live music from the Scott Kurt Band, a retailer market, face painting, fall games and crafts, giveaways, a photo booth, and more. PenFed Credit Union will also be serving up a backyard barbecue experience with plenty of extras, including mini golf, a haystack adventure for kids, barbecue, giveaways, and more. PenFed members can receive a special VIP gift by showing their PenFed email invite or PenFed debit or credit card.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**Art & Craft Fair. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** At United Christian Parish, 11508 North Shore Drive, Reston. They are currently seeking vendors selling handmade crafts, original artwork, jewelry, pottery, woodwork, textiles, and seasonal decor. How to Apply: Interested vendors can find the application form at https://unitedchristianparishartandcraftfair.com/ or contact directly at kevin@ucpreston.org or 703-620-3065.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 24**
**Monster Morphs: A Reptile Genetics Lab. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.** At Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean. Step into a Mad Scientist Lab for a family-friendly, slightly spooky Halloween introduction to genetics! Meet live reptiles and discover how inherited colors and patterns can be passed from one generation to the next. They'll explore beginner-friendly concepts such as phenotypes, genotypes, and simple Punnett squares through observation, questions, and approachable examples.

**SUNDAY/OCT. 25**
**Borisevich Duo. 2 p.m.** At the Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Real-life couple pianist Margarita Loukachkina and violinist Nikita Borisevich and their piano prodigy son return to the Alden stage for an afternoon of breathtaking chamber music! Longtime audience-favorites, the group is well-known for creating a rich and intimate musical experience that celebrates artistry, connection and the joy of performing together. Enjoy an inspiring program of classical masterworks performed with passion, precision and heart.

**SUNDAY/OCT. 25**
**Halloween Carnival. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** At

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**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 Jermantown Road
Wakefield: May 6-Oct. 28, 2-6 p.m. Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road

**THURSDAYS**
Annandale: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike
Herndon: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn Street by the Red Caboose

**FRIDAYS**
McLean: May 1-Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-noon. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road
Kingstowne: May 1-Oct. 23, 3-7 p.m. In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

**SATURDAYS**
Burke: Apr. 18-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway
Reston: Apr. 25-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza

**SUNDAYS**
Lorton: May 3-Nov. 22, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd.




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

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Screenshots via Protect Our Care / Facebook

**Katie Baker, Virginia state director for Protect Our Care, speaks at a health care rally Oct. 12 at Washington Dulles International Airport. From left behind the podium: health advocate Laura Packard, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw (D-11), U.S. Rep. Suhas Subramanyam (D-10), state Sen. Kannan Srinivasan (D-Loudoun), and 32BJ SEIU union members.**

# 'Sick of It' Bus Tour Stops at Dulles

## Calling out GOP health care cuts, Congressmen and SEIU airport workers demand legislative action.

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

U.S. Reps. James Walkinshaw (VA-11) and Suhas Subramanyam (VA-10) joined state Sen. Kannan Srinivasan and SEIU union members Oct. 12 at Washington Dulles International Airport to denounce Republican health care cuts. The event marked a Northern Virginia stop on Protect Our Care's nationwide "Sick of It" bus tour.

At the rally, Walkinshaw outlined a three-step priority list for Congress: reverse a proposed $1 trillion Medicaid cut, restore middle-class health care tax credits, and lower prescription drug costs. He stressed that the stakes extend beyond those losing coverage directly.

"If you have health care coverage today, your insurance premiums are rising because of these cuts," Walkinshaw said. "When someone loses their Medicaid, when someone can't afford their coverage on the Affordable Care Act exchange, your premiums go up, and it's one of the reasons that premiums across the country are skyrocketing right now."

The rally brought together contracted airport service workers — including baggage handlers and wheelchair agents — who often rely on Medicaid or go uninsured because they lack employer coverage. Demonstrators urged lawmakers to expand Medicare prescription cost protections and extend ACA tax credits.




**David Broder (front right), executive director of the SEIU Virginia State Council, gathers with 32BJ SEIU airport workers during an Oct. 12 rally at Washington Dulles International Airport.**



**U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw speaks during a health care rally Oct. 12 at Washington Dulles International Airport.**

David Broder, executive director of the SEIU Virginia State Council, emphasized the need for both state and federal legislation.

"We're calling out this GOP Congress's devastating cuts to our health care system," Broder said following the event. "We're calling for the next Congress to restore those cuts and improve our health care system. And we're calling on Virginia to pass the Healthy Terminals Act to ensure health care and a living wage for the airport workers who keep us all moving."

The stop at Dulles is part of Protect Our Care's "Care Force One" tour, traveling across 15 states and making over 35 stops to campaign against rising health care costs and coverage losses.

# Entertainment

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Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Join in a spooktacular day at the Railroad Museum as they transform the historic grounds into a hauntingly fun Halloween Carnival! Families, friends, and thrill-seekers of all ages are invited to celebrate the spookiest time of the year with an array of exciting activities. Bring your friends and family and don your best costumes for a day of fun and memories.

**SUNDAY/OCT. 25**

**Arabian Nights Fair. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.** At Lake Anne Plaza, 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston. More than 70 vendors from different cultural backgrounds are expected to participate, creating a colorful souk-style experience with international foods and sweets alongside clothing, accessories, perfumes, spices and herbs, home décor, jewelry, crafts, and gifts. Entertainment will continue throughout the day with a DJ, live music, and a fashion show.

**SUNDAY/OCT. 25**

**Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m.** At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Yankee Doodle Spies: Historical fiction and research. Speaker S.W. O'Connell is a retired U.S. Army officer. Among his publications are four books in the Yankee Doodle Spies series.

**MONDAY/OCT. 26**

**Free Film Screenings. 7 p.m.** At Cinema Arts Theatres, 9650 Main Street, Fairfax.

THE LAST OSPREY: The Last Osprey follows one of nature's most remarkable birds of prey, revealing how osprey chicks in the Chesapeake Bay are struggling to survive because of a human-caused decline in their food supply—an issue that also raises concerns about the health of the broader ecosystem. The documentary explores the complex challenges facing the Bay, bringing together conservationists, commercial fishing interests, and policymakers with different perspectives on how best to protect its future.

BECOMING WILD, a meditation on beauty in the natural world: In a neighborhood transformed by gentrification and loss of green space, a backyard becomes a sanctuary and a teacher – alive with creatures who ask for nothing more than a place to live. Through seasons of change, Becoming Wild explores how beauty survives—when we choose to nurture it—and how ordinary people can help rebuild the natural world right where they live.

**MONDAY/OCT. 26**

**Cash-Flow Breakfast Club Fairfax: Your Off-Market Playbook. 5:45–9 p.m.** At Fair Lakes Circle, 12700 Fair Lakes Cir, Ste 120, Fairfax. The Cash-Flow Breakfast Club Fairfax, a free monthly education, networking and mastermind meetup for real estate investors, agents and professionals, meets Monday, Oct. 26, 5:45-9 p.m. This month's topic is finding off-market real estate deals: four core strategies investors use, how to spot a motivated seller and what to say when you reach one, with a live software demo and an introduction to creative financing. Free and open to all levels. RSVP at site.cfbcinvestor.com/fairfax.

**TUESDAY/OCT. 27**

**Energy Town Hall. 6:30 p.m.** at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Learn about your electric bill and the policies that impact energy costs. This event is hosted by Senator Jennifer Boysko and Delegate Rip Sullivan and co-hosted by MCA.

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

**SENIOR MOVIE DAY**

Sponsored by Reston Association. Meets 10 a.m. At the movie theater at Reston Town Center. Registration is not required. Just show up.

Oct. 28: Solo Mio

Nov. 18: Young Washington

Dec. 16: Blue Moon

**FRIDAY/OCT. 30**

**Clemyjontri Park Open House.** At 6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Explore the wonders of this inclusive play space between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. This free event will feature tables showcasing community resources and opportunities for hands-on nature experiences at the Wonder Wagon Mobile Nature Center. Upon entry, all visitors will receive a ticket to ride the trackless train and the carousel, and to enjoy popcorn and cotton candy and an arts and crafts activity. Registration is not required. Parking is limited, but shuttle service will be available from Cooper Middle School, located at 977 Balls Hill Road, McLean.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 31**

**11th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon Bike Ride.** 8:30 a.m. kick off. Take a 20- and 40-mile bike route through Lorton. Starts and ends at Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Includes a Halloween costume contest.

**SATURDAY/OCT. 31**

**OFC's Festival of Frights & Trunk or Treat. 5 - 8 p.m.** At The Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Celebrate Halloween with festive activities, creative trunk displays, games and plenty of treats at the Old Firehouse Center. Families and kids of all ages can enjoy a free evening of spooky fun, costumes and community spirit!

**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, November 1 – Ayreheart

Sunday, November 8 – Infamous Holman Sisters

Sunday, November 15 – Charlie Zahm & Tad Marks

Sunday, November 22 – Piper Jones Band

Sunday, November 29 – Kinnfolk

Sunday, December 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:

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

**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.

**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.

**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

**SATURDAY/NOV. 21**

**WWII Book Launch. 2-4 p.m.** At Truro Anglican Church Community Room, 10520 Main Street, Fairfax. Her family remembered Rita as cold-hearted and self-centered. But what if they were wrong? Come hear about the true story of a half-Jewish mother facing impossible choices in Nazi-occupied Holland. Visit https://ramblingruminations.com/the-truth-was-different

**SATURDAY/DEC. 5**

**Clifton Arts & Crafts Show. 2-7 p.m.** At Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Clifton Arts & Crafts Show. Fine Arts, Photography, Jewelry, Fiber Arts, Holiday gifts. Also Horse Parade, Tree Lighting Ceremony, Caboose Open House. Visit www.Artguildofclifton.org.

## *Are You Listening to Me?*



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I think I crossed the relationship Rubicon in the early days of our marriage, sometime in the early 80s. Dina and I had gotten married in the fall of 1978 and it took a few years to build up the trust and familiarity with one another so that in the following examples, I wasn't being sent totally on a fool's errand.

The first example of my wife having to ask/send me on an errand that was normal for her (but due to miscellaneous physical problems became difficult)/awkward for me was to buy feminine hygiene products for her. (And yes, I would look for a male cashier to lessen my anxiety.) Under the circumstances, I was happy to help; a bit uncomfortable with the process, nevertheless, I did what any good husband would do. However, not having been raised with sisters or having had too many serious girlfriends previously, I was quite inexperienced for the task at hand. That being understood between both parties, and my having failed at previous similar "shoppings," I began to ask Dina for explicit, mind-numbing details - and back-up options as well, to buy exactly what she needed me to buy. And since there were no cellphones back then, I was given those details because if left to my own devices, Dina no doubt would have ended up with a variety not of her preference. After fits and starts and poor choices by yours truly on previous occasions, eventually I learned what options - so to speak, to select and what never to get. Over time and with proper follow-up training, I became a reliable purchaser.

The second similar situation involved the purchase of stockings. Sometimes, Dina would get behind in her preparation - or suffer a stocking malfunction, and once again, yours truly would be thrown into the breach. And quite a breach it was. There seemed to be endless varieties: size, color, "sheer," "opaque," "reinforced toe," "ventilated panel," "reinforced waistband," et cetera. It was all very intimidating, almost equal to the feminine hygiene aisle. "I was," to quote my late brother, Richard, "flying blind." Moreover, I had become aware of the importance of the correct stocking. Likewise, this was no place for an executive decision to be made by you know who. As repeated purchasing opportunities arose, it gave me a chance to right some previous wrongs. I was now writing down Dina's explicit instructions on a piece of paper. Forearmed is forewarned. A necessary step as it had become clear I had bad stocking-purchase instincts.

The final example which re-arose recently are food selections made at the supermarket. Typically, I am the food shopper (Dina is the social director). And since we have different tastes/requirements, again I am thrust into situations where if my instincts take over, I will likely make the wrong selection. Cottage cheese and yogurt are those recent requests where I am at a loss. At least now, after multiple errors or incorrect presumptions, I know to ask specific questions depending on whether the product is available or not. (Obviously cellphones make this current issue less impactful as the two previous examples but hopefully you'll appreciate the problem nonetheless.)

If I were left to fend for myself in the dairy aisle, I would likely come home with less-than-desirable choices. For cottage cheese, I need to know the brand (no substitutions I now know), the size of the container, the fat content, the curd size and the sell-by date. Are there flavors? I don't know. I'm getting plain. As for yogurt: what brand? what size? what fat content? what flavor (very important?) what style (flip top, with or without fruit, Greek or not? Not that I'm a dunce but if I don't my notes in hand, once I'm in store and see all the choices and variables, my mind goes blank. Every product looks and sounds similar enough to what Dina requested - but?

Years ago when I was a rookie husband, these choices were all new to me. Very often I did not fare very well. I was willing but for awhile, it appeared as if I was unable. But I was willing to learn and I was somewhat coachable. Oh sure, I made plenty of mistakes. Generally speaking, I knew what trouble was in the offing by the request and tried to anticipate my inevitable failings. But thanks to my evolution as a husband, I write everything down now and then review it all with Dina before I leave the house. Sure the cellphone eliminates the real disasters but sometimes my instincts kick in and it's 1978 all over again. I never said I was perfect.

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

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