

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

## Catch of the Day

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CALENDAR, PAGE 13 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 12

### Celebrating Volunteers In Detail

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### Affordable Housing and Pay Raises Are Budget Priorities

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### Sponge Bob!

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PHOTO BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Joe Yoon is ready to fish with son Emmett, 3, and daughter Ellie, 6, at Fairfax City's annual Fishing Derby on Saturday, April 16 at Ashby Pond.

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## Public Hearings



### Funding the Right Transportation Projects

You are invited to share comments on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding in the FY2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Additionally, pursuant to §33.2-202, comments will be accepted for new projects valued in excess of \$25 million. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will take your comments into consideration as it develops the FY2023-2028 SYIP. The program allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation projects. All federally eligible projects in the SYIP will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to document how Virginia will obligate its federal funds.

Meeting materials will be available <https://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/springmeetings2022/default.asp> before April 25, 2022.

**Public meetings begin at 4 p.m. in each of the locations except as noted below:**  
*A formal comment period will be held at these meetings.*

<p><b>Monday, April 25</b>                      Fredericksburg District                      James Monroe High School                      2300 Washington Avenue                      Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, April 26</b>                      Culpeper District                      Culpeper District Auditorium                      1601 Orange Road                      Culpeper, Virginia 22701</p>	<p><b>Thursday, April 28</b>                      Richmond District                      Richmond District Auditorium 2430                      Pine Forest Drive                      Colonial Heights, Virginia 23834</p>
<p><b>Monday, May 2</b>                      Staunton District                      Blue Ridge Community College                      Plecker Center                      1 College Lane                      Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, May 3</b>                      Lynchburg District                      Virginian Hotel,                      712 Church Street                      Lynchburg, Virginia 24504</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, May 4</b>                      *Northern Virginia District                      Northern Virginia District Office                      Potomac Conference Room                      4975 Alliance Drive                      Fairfax, Virginia 22030                      *meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Monday, May 9</b>                      Hampton Roads District                      Hampton Roads District Auditorium                      7511 Burbage Drive,                      Suffolk, Virginia 23435</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, May 11</b>                      Bristol District                      Southwest Virginia Higher Education                      Center                      One Partnership Circle                      Abingdon, Virginia 24210</p>	<p><b>Thursday, May 12</b>                      Salem District                      Holiday Inn Valley View                      3315 Ordway Drive NW                      Roanoke, Virginia 24017</p>

\*The Northern Virginia District meeting will serve as the required joint public meeting with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Virginia Railway Express, and the CTB per § 33.2-214.3 of the Code of Virginia.

You can submit comments by email or mail by May 23, 2022.

For roads and highways: [Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov](mailto:Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov), or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation 1401 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219.

For rail and public transportation: [DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov), Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond VA, 23219.

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

## BRIEFS

### Fairfax City's Art Walk on Main

Old Town Fairfax will transform into an open-air art market this Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The Art Walk on Main will feature more than 20 local artists. Admission is free, and a wide variety of artwork in different media and styles will be available to view and purchase. Free, accessible parking is available throughout Old Town Fairfax.

This event is part of Fairfax City's annual Spotlight on the Arts Festival and is in partnership with the Old Town Fairfax Business Association. Visitors are encouraged to engage with the artists to learn what inspires their work and to learn what techniques they use. Rain date: June 4.

### Drug Takeback Day Is April 30

National Drug Takeback Day is this Saturday, April 30. People may turn in their unwanted prescription or over-the-counter medications at the Fairfax City Police Department, 3730 Old Lee Hwy. in Fairfax. No I.D. is required.

### Fairfax City Jazz and Wine Festival

The City of Fairfax will hold its first ever Jazz and Wine Festival on Saturday, May 7, from 3:30-8 p.m., at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Hwy. in Fairfax. As part of the annual Spotlight on the Arts Festival, this event will highlight the talent GMU's jazz musicians while attendees enjoy offerings from local Virginia Wineries.

Tickets are required. Drinking tickets are \$25; register at [https://apm.activecommunities.com/fairfaxcityrecdept/Activity\\_Search/14184](https://apm.activecommunities.com/fairfaxcityrecdept/Activity_Search/14184). Non-drinking tickets are \$10; register at [https://apm.activecommunities.com/fairfaxcityrecdept/Activity\\_Search/14183](https://apm.activecommunities.com/fairfaxcityrecdept/Activity_Search/14183).

Sponsors are The Wine House, Curbside Kitchen and Spotlight on the Arts.

### Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park

The 24th Annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park in Lorton, VA returns on May 7.

This family friendly event runs from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and includes a full day of live animal shows, hands-on educational opportunities and outdoor recreation clinics that

all aim to highlight the rich natural history of Northern Virginia and foster stewardship of our environment.

The event provides the opportunity to see live reptiles, hawks and owls up close as well as learn about the park's resident bald eagles and see them fly overhead.

"Visitors really enjoy the unique experience of seeing the eagles soar in the sky and learning about their behaviors," Mason Neck State Park Chief Ranger of Visitor Experience Ericka Goines said. "We focus on educating the public about these precious beings as well as explain what other birds, reptiles and animals can be seen in the park and its surrounding area."

There will be live music, food, pony and wagon rides as well as exhibits from conservation partners.



**Bald eagle soaring**

Register for the 8 a.m. Bird Walk <https://friendsofmasonneckstateparkinc.wildapricot.org/event-4764665>

or the 9 a.m. Bird Walk <https://friendsofmasonneckstateparkinc.wildapricot.org/event-4764676> that both take place on the Bay View Trail.

For more event details visit [www.virginiastateparks.gov/eaglefestival](http://www.virginiastateparks.gov/eaglefestival).

Virginia State Parks would like to thank the Friends of Mason Neck State Park for their continued support of the park and this event, and thanks to all of the Peninsula partners and sponsors that make this event possible.

Visit [www.virginiastateparks.gov](http://www.virginiastateparks.gov) for more information about upcoming events at any of Virginia's 41 state parks

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# NEWS

## Earth Day Clean-up Efforts Bag Trash

Efforts prevent trash from reaching Chesapeake Bay.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**A**cross the area, volunteers celebrated Earth Day by removing trash from area parks, roadsides, and watersheds. First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day was created by the junior U.S. Senator from Wisconsin as a day for a national focus on the environment. In 1970, an estimated 20 million Americans – 10 percent of the population – took part in Earth Day activities. Today, more than one billion people in 192 countries participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it one of the largest civic observances in the world. For more of the history of the event and its current activities around the world see [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Volunteer Jessica Morris, Alexandria, gets close to her work removing confetti from park grounds



Members of Girl Scout Troop 52028 and the park's regular volunteer team worked together to remove trash at Laurel Hill Park on April 23 in acknowledgement of Earth Day: Lisa and Jovey Irish, Emma Niu, Emma Thomas, Karin Lehnigk, Mikayla and Jessica Martinez, and Therapy Dog Tia



Volunteers Cynthia Koshatka, who rode her bike to the event, David Lowry, and Will and Fio Dingfelder teamed up to work a section of the park near Giles Run



Mother and daughter team Candice and Aleeyah Toniolo, were in the earth animal spirit mode as they worked together on the Central Green portion of Laurel Hill Park



The brother and sister team of Brandon and Jessica Morris, of Alexandria, proving siblings can work together



Delegate Dan Helmer and his chief of staff Noah Bardash demonstrating they canvass communities for trash on March 28, not just for votes

## Changes Examined for Springfield Bus Links

Input sought on Fairfax Connector, TAGS and the Pentagon-Crystal City Express.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**hanges are being proposed for several bus lines that operate around central Springfield to include stops at the Springfield-Franconia Metro Station, the Transportation Security Administration and the Town Center. These proposed changes

could impact the Newington Circulator bus on Route 334 and the TAGS bus routes 350, 351, 352, and 353.

For the Newington Circulator, officials are looking at reducing the weekday rush hour service and a mid-day trip and for the TAGS buses, route 350 around the town center and Springfield Hilton will be split into routes 352 and 353. TAGS route 351

currently serves TSA and the Northern Virginia Community College Medical Campus off Loisdale Road during rush hour periods. The proposed change is to expand this service outside of rush hour. In addition, TAGS will take on route 352 which has non-rush hour and midday service between Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station and Springfield Town Center and route 353 to serve Metro Park.

All these changes are serving a blossoming area which edges the line between Lee District and the Mount Vernon District. Both Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon)

and Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) have been supportive of public transportation throughout recent years.

There was a public meeting hosted by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation to discuss these proposed changes, which may be implemented by October 2022. The reasons for the changes are to reduce inefficiencies in bus system, reallocate resources to where demand is greater and improve reliability of schedule, it stated on the meeting materials.

SEE BUS LINKS, PAGE 12

## VOLUNTEERING

# Volunteer Fairfax Names 2022 Service Award Winners and Community Champions

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**V**olunteer Fairfax, together with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, celebrated 149 service award nominees, 11 winners, and 10 Community Champions, honoring their volunteerism achievements during 2021 in a virtual awards ceremony on April 20th. Founded in 1992, The organization mobi-

lizes people and resources to meet regional community needs, running well known events, such as Stuff the Bus and the MLK Weekend of Service. Now celebrating its 30th year, their awards ceremony highlights remarkable achievements in volunteerism in several distinct award categories.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay congratulated the volunteers, thanking them for their service. "I have witnessed

the great work from a wide range of volunteers serving our community. They seek to shine a light, not on themselves, but on the needs of others and the issues that face our community. Volunteers serve at our local libraries, and our food banks; they are counselors and translators. They tutor children and drive our neighbors to doctors appointments. They plant gardens at our parks and schools. They clean up our streams and waterways and care for the most vulnerable

among us, animals included, and I have seen how volunteers have helped this community through a changing and unprecedented crisis during the COVID 19 pandemic. Volunteers do all of this work and more, because they share a desire for all to live in a vibrant, safe, and healthy community."

Speaking to the award winners and the nominees, he added, "Thank you for stepping forward to support this great community that we share."

### Loren Zander, Education & Literacy Award Winner

Since 2015, an integral part of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia's positive impact on the lives of English learners in Fairfax County. Serving learners from many different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds, Loren created a supportive community by strengthening students' sense of belonging and confidence to engage with wider society.



### Mary Lee DiSpirito, Lifetime Achievement Award Winner

A mainstay of the Annandale Christian Community for Action, a church-related volunteer organization providing rental assistance, day care, food, furniture, and other services to low-income families in the Annandale/Bailey's Crossroads area. She devoted countless hours to the organization over the past 35 years, including 1,500 this year.



### John O'Connor, County Volunteer Award Winner

A volunteer at the Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court for more than eight years and skillful intake officer teaching clients about the complex court process, while displaying empathy, particularly for those with limited English proficiency.



### Maria Lewan, RSVP Northern Virginia Award Winner

A registered nurse who used her clinical nursing skills to help those who face health issues, providing a community connec-



## Meet the 2022 Service Award Winners



### Fairfax Medical Reserve Corps, Volunteer Group Award Winner

A group of more than 3,550 members with a passion for helping to keep their communities healthy and safe provided thousands of volunteer service hours during public health emergencies, such as measles, TB outbreaks and the Coronavirus Pandemic, responding to public health implications of severe weather incidents, and conducting educational and outreach activities.

tion and resource for the social workers at Capital Caring Health. Each week, Maria made calls to patients to provide a touchpoint check-in, targeting any health needs and providing emotional support to them and their caregivers.



### Amini Bonane, Social Justice Winner

A community builder, organizer, and advocate used her titles of Miss Black DC 2020 and Miss Fairfax City 2021 to speak up for marginalized commu-

nities. During her time at George Mason University, was a founding board member of the COVID Student Safety Corps; also founded the Student Safety Advocacy Board, the Conflict-Free Campus Initiative, and GMU's first-ever delegation of the Model African Union.

### Kirsten Mikolashek, Youth Leadership Winner

A volunteer for Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program for more than



### Fairfax Master Naturalists, Environmental Sustainability Award Winner

Throughout the pandemic, offered refuge, for volunteers and citizens alike, who were seeking "outdoor relief" by developing volunteers to assist with the beneficial management and preservation of natural resources and natural areas in the County, widening opportunities for residents to enjoy the great outdoors.

four years with over 350 hours of service providing equine-assisted activities to people with disabilities, youth-at-risk, recovering military personnel, and others in need of an inclusive, community setting to help each individual realize their highest potential.



### Laurie Manning, Quality of Life Winner

Changed the face of Capital Caring Health's volunteer pediatric program and enticed many community members to join the volunteer workforce.



### Frank Pappas, Hunger Hero

The key volunteer leader of 65 large-scale emergency food distribution events in Fairfax County, organized to ease the economic and food insecurity impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, forming the

initial response structure in May 2020 and ensured its success over the next year.



### Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, County Volunteer Program Award Winner -

During the months in 2021 that volunteers had access to facilities, program members volunteered 3,868 hours providing 1,353 visits; helped ensure that 2,737 residents receiving long-term care services needs were addressed, and advocated for systemic changes. Since the program's founding in 1985, Ombudsman volunteers have contributed 261,547 lifetime hours, representing a total value of \$7,621,473.

SEE VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX, PAGE 5  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## VOLUNTEERING

# Volunteer Fairfax 2022 Service Awards

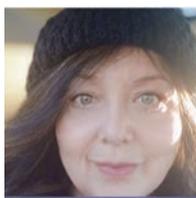
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors each selected an individual to be recognized for their commitment to promoting volunteerism within their community while addressing specific needs. Meet those selected for each district.



**Chairman/At-Large:  
Paul Berry**

Lead the Redistricting Advisory Committee, amplifying the One Fairfax policy of diversity, equity, and fairness.



**Braddock District:  
Javelin Soriano Lake**

As the parent liaison for Braddock Elementary, developed strong ties to families in the Annandale area.

**Dranesville District:  
Wade Smith**

Provided valuable advice on transportation, pedestrian, and development activities that impact his immediate neighborhood as well the broader community.



## Meet the 2022 Community Champions



**Hunter Mill District: Gloria Runyon and Sylvia Taylor**

Compiled a history of the town of Vienna's African American community revealing history that would have otherwise been unknown by many.

**Lee District:  
Carla Claire**

Provided leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic to help Latin X community members with vital basic needs such as food, vaccines, and more.



**Jim Albright  
representing the  
Annandale Greenway Team**

**Mason District:  
Annandale  
Greenway Team**

The greenway conceptualized by the team connected existing sidewalk and trail segments to connect neighbors, families, and friends building community and appreciation for the outdoors.



**Mount Vernon District: Jim Klein**

Provided suggestions and solutions to solve bicycle and pedestrian challenges in our region.



**Providence District:  
Mary Kent**

Helped Food for Others in direct support of youth and families in the Providence District as well as Fairfax County.

**Springfield District:  
Jenne Lindner**

Preserved our rich historical legacy as a volunteer for Friends of Historic Fairfax Court House and to preserve the historic African American Jermantown Cemetery.

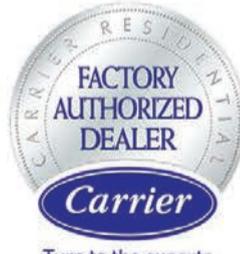


**Sully District:  
Geoff Pohanka**

Provided resources during the pandemic for transportation of food, medicine, and supplies to the infirm, invalid, and elderly population, as well as front-line workers and first-responders; provided vaccine to an underserved area community; and new winter coats to Title 1 elementary schools in the district



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**Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay**  
(D-At Large)



**Supervisor Pat Herryty**  
(R-Springfield)



**Supervisor Dahlia A. Palchik**  
(D-Providence)



**Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw**  
(D-Braddock)



**Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk**  
(D-Lee)



**Supervisor John W. Foust**  
(D-Dranesville)



**Supervisor Kathy L. Smith**  
(D-Sully)



**Supervisor Daniel G. Stork**  
(D-Mount Vernon)



**Supervisor Walter Alcorn**  
(D-Hunter Mill)



**Vice Chairman Penny Gross**  
(D-Mason)

# Affordable Housing, Education and Pay Raises Top Priorities

## Budget real estate and personal property tax hikes.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Following a three-day public hearing on the FY 2023 Budget, on April 26, 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved, by a vote of 9-1, changes in the FY 2023 Budget mark-up package. Supervisor Pat Herryty cast the dissenting vote. With the changes, the county has a balanced FY 2023 budget. The Board adopts the final FY 2023 Budget on May 10.

“We also fully funded the schools’ request, added millions for affordable housing, boosted funding for our parks, and increased the compensation package for our deserving county employees, including our brave public safety officers,” Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D) said.

The Board made tax rate adjustments to the FY 2023 Advertised Budget. More than \$199 million in revenue reductions are included in the budget to support tax rate reductions, although taxes paid will still increase. The Board reduced the real estate tax rate by three cents, from \$1.14 to \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value. With the rate cut, the average real estate tax bill still increase 6.7 percent from last year.

The Board decided to assess vehicles at 85 percent of the vehicle’s market value rather than 100 percent. That will help lessen the impact of sharply rising used car prices on taxpayers. The value of used cars has gone up an average of 33 percent.

The package, McKay said, includes a reduction in the Machinery and Tools Tax and phased reduction going forward to help the county compete with surrounding jurisdictions to attract and keep vibrant local businesses like craft breweries and other small-scale producers in Fairfax.

Affordable housing took center stage. In keeping with their newly doubled goal of 10,000 net new affordable housing units by 2034, the Board committed additional funding. That including a \$2 million balance from the FY 2022 third quarter, and added \$10 million to the \$5 million increase in FY 2023 for affordable housing.

The Board approved pay raises for county uniformed public safety employees averaging 7.86 percent, and non-uniformed employees, averaging 6.16 percent. But McKay

said, “The Board recognizes that recruitment and retention challenges remain ... especially true for our public safety agencies who are struggling to fill the positions required to meet minimum staffing requirements.”

When new employees come on board, they are hired at the same level as more tenured staff, contributing to turnover, McKay said. Thus, the Board included \$6.1 million to advance eligible uniformed employees in the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, and Office of the Sheriff, one additional step on their respective pay plans.

For parks, the county executive’s proposal included funding for a pilot equity program and recommendations to adjust the upcoming bond referendum scheduled for parks and other county agencies to address a backlog of unsold bonds. The county provided funding for debt service payments for Park bonds and fringe benefit costs for general fund employees, and for environmental and capital maintenance budgets. McKay added that the Board is committed to working with the Park Authority Board to address needs and provide necessary funding of \$751,954 for new positions to support the Parks’ natural resources sustainability efforts to help maintain the system’s actively managed acres.

The Board listened to the nonprofits and added \$825,000 to the proposed budget for contract rate increases for direct service providers and health and human services, representing a 50 percent increase over the funds included in the proposed budget. The package also provided \$180,000 and one new position for the Department of Economic Initiatives to develop a platform to assist small businesses.

The package removed an additional six positions initially proposed to expand staffing at the Office of Commonwealth Attorney.

“Additional resources will be provided to support the office in future years to continue to address workload concerns,” he said.

Finally, McKay said that \$250,000 is provided in the package for Arts Fairfax to supplement the organization’s existing grant program for the arts.

In their own words: Comments by the members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

**Supervisor Pat Herryty (R-Springfield):** “I think we

need to be clear that while the budget on the table contains a three-cent reduction in the tax rate, it also contains the most significant increase in real estate taxes since 2006 ... It represents a tax increase of 6.7 percent for the average taxpayer, and for many, much, much more at a time when they’re dealing with the impacts of the pandemic, high gas prices, rising inflation, interest rates, and uncertainty caused by a war in Europe. This is not a budget I can support, given the very realistic options to bring down the rate much further. We could have achieved a flat tax rate if we were willing to make the same tough choices our residents have to make every day, especially given the growth of 40 percent over the last ten years of the county budget... We are taxing our residents out of their homes, making it unaffordable for our children to stay here.”

**Supervisor Dahlia A. Palchik (D-Providence):**

“We have reached the historic milestone of surpassing one penny of the tax rate dedicated to its baseline funding for housing. We have started passing two pennies, including federal and other one-time funds. We are committed to reaching the two pennies of our baseline funding, a penny being about \$30 million, in the next one to two years to help us reach our goal of 10,000 units by 2034. We need to continue to ensure housing types, location, access to transit, and public-private partnerships ... (so) we do not have a community, our employees, our workforce that is continually priced out.”

**Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw (D-Braddock):**

“We have an opportunity here to take the next step and codify this Board’s commitment to the expansion of senior tax relief. ... We asked (the) police chief to tell us what you need to address recruitment and retention ... What do you need this Board to do? And he came to us and told us we need a 25-year longevity step... We have an opportunity here today to give him what he said he needed to address recruitment and retention, or we can vote no and turn our back on that really important issue that we all agree is valuable and important. I think we should listen to him.”

**Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk (D-Lee):**

“With regard to the Public Defender’s Office,

... I recognize the ongoing struggle to create parity between their office and the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office. I am proud of the resources and commitments that Fairfax County has made to that office, but I do confess that I’m a bit frustrated that it does not appear that the state has matched our level of commitment in this regard. So, understand that there is an inequity. I want to be crystal clear that we must find more sustainable pathways to work with the state to fund the Public Defender’s Office.”

**Supervisor Kathy L. Smith (D-Sully):**

“I think one of our biggest priorities has to be our employees and affordable housing. Affordable housing is so vital to being able to attract people here for jobs. We can support both things and still reduce the tax rate by three cents ... I know the next thing on the agenda is an adaptation of changes to the principles of sound financial management. I was really happy that we could work in the joint Capital Improvement Committee with the schools to come up with changes that will be beneficial by changing the annual bond limit from \$300 million to \$400 million over time.”

**Supervisor Daniel G. Stork (D-Mount Vernon):**

“People around the state are just saying, ‘Richmond, pay your bills. ... Treat the residents of Northern Virginia fairly, treat our needs fairly. Fund our schools fairly. Fund mental health services fairly. Fund our criminal justice system and supports fairly.’ I think those are our keys. We know when we get 23 cents back on the dollar, it’s incredibly difficult to do that. Even just a little bit more, we can make a huge difference in tax relief for our residents. ... If you don’t ask, you don’t get. So, we’ve got to keep asking and keep challenging folks to do more.”

**Vice Chairman Penny Gross (D-Mason):**

“I know that others paid for my children to go to school, and I’m happy to pay for other children to go to school through my taxes. That is part of the social compact. I firmly believe that, and I wish we could get more of that out to the public to understand why we were all in this together. ... At some point, I think we need to look at our 20 Year Environmental Vision and figure out what next steps we need to do for the environment if we’re going to meet our challenges and our promises for the future.”

# Spring Brings Colorful Blooms to Fairfax City

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS



Azaleas at Ashby Pond.



Daffodils by a picket fence.



Redbud and dogwood trees in bloom in a residential neighborhood.



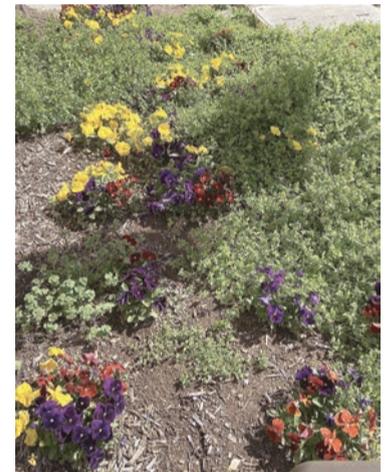
Pink and yellow tulips.



A white dogwood tree.



Flowers in the Kitty Pozer Garden behind Old Town Square.



Colorful pansies outside Old Town Hall.



Orange tulips.

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## FISHING FUN

# Family Fishing Fun at Fairfax City's Ashby Pond

Fairfax City's annual Fishing Derby was Saturday, April 16.



Janet Scaffido fishing with grandson Gabriel.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Dana Scaffido with sons (from left) Gabriel and Nicholas.



Having fun fishing are the Scaffido siblings, (from left) Gabriel, 5, and Nicholas, 2-1/2.



Fishing together are (from left) are David Scaffido (Dana's husband) and his father, Paul Scaffido.



Waiting to catch a fish are dad Robert Chang with his children (from left) Helena Mazur-Chang, 9-1/2; Gabriel Mazur-Chang, 6; and Kalina Chang, 16.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANG YI

Enjoying the fishing derby are the Yi siblings (from left) Harrison, 6, and Evie, 7-1/2. (Dad is City Councilman Sang Yi).

## CONNECTION

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
[south@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:south@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mary Kimm  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Bonnie Hobbs  
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415  
[bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mercia Hobson  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Ken Moore  
Contributing Writer  
[kmoores@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kmoores@connectionnewspapers.com)

Susan Laume  
Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

In Memoriam  
Managing Editor  
Kemal Kurspahic

Art/Design:  
Laurence Foong  
Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager:  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)



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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

This stream restoration project off Roberts Road is one of several in the county.

# Creek Restoration Kicks Off at Shanes Creek in Fairfax

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

Another stream restoration project just kicked off at Shanes Creek in the Kings Park West neighborhood of Fairfax to stabilize the channel and control the erosion that the stream has been experiencing for the past few years since the project appeared on the county's work plan in 2017.

The stream is known as either "Shanes Creek," or "Rabbit Branch," depending on who is describing it. There's even a rumor going around the community of Kings Park West is that this creek was named after a dog, one resident said. It's been all over the community social media, and at least one community outreach meeting to keep the community informed. "Everybody's asking questions about it," said one neighbor.

Either way, equipment arrived on the scene right off Roberts Road in early April and fencing was put up along a community trail that eventually goes to Lake Royal, a popular outdoor area for this neighborhood.

According to the plan, the project will restore more than 4,800 feet of natural channel and about 1,300 feet of outfall leading to it. Restoration goals are to stabilize the channel and prevent future erosion along the stream, reconnect the channel to its floodplain, improve water quality, and restore native trees and plants to promote natural reforestation, the county said. The project is in the Pohick Creek Watershed

Management Plan for stream restoration and stabilization and it is expected to take 18 months to complete.

This project is part of larger efforts to restore many of Fairfax County's degraded streams while improving overall water quality and the condition of the Chesapeake Bay. According to the county, there are 30 major watersheds – such as Accotink Creek, Difficult Run and Long Branch in the denser parts of Fairfax County and Bull Run, in the west. The 30 watersheds contain 980 miles of streams that all drain to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

Opponents of natural channel design techniques say that it is detrimental to local streams, leads to removal of thousands of trees that are critical to the ecosystem, and fails to address the problem of stormwater runoff. Stormwater control should be done by non-destructive practices outside of streams, they say.

"Natural channel design is mainly applicable to large order streams and rivers, especially the kinds one finds in the American west," wrote 10 concerned scientists and environmental advocates last year.

"The controversial stream construction projects currently planned throughout the region embody the worst elements of these misguided land use projects at virtually every level, from land giveaway to poor planning to rubber-stamping by elected officials.

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2020/sep/26/opinion-letter-editor-wrong-approach-stream-restor/>

## Connection's Mother's Day Photo Pages

As usual every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Mother's Day is Sunday, May 8. This year we will continue to publish submissions through the May 18th edition. Photo submissions are due by Monday, May 16, but now is the right time to submit your photos.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and in-

formation directly using the form at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/> or email to [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com).

This is also a fine time for submissions for our annual Father's Day galleries. Submit them online HERE <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday/>

Life is short.  
**Don't make it shorter.**

**Choose life.** Make sure your kids get their HPV vaccine and protect them against cancer.

@vaccinatevirginia



VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Newspapers & Online

## Special Connections Calendar 2022

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursdays unless noted.

### MAY

- 5/4/2022.....Wellbeing
- 5/11/2022.....HomeLifeStyle
- 5/18/2022.....A+ Camps & Schools
- 5/25/2022.....Senior Living

### JUNE

- 6/1/2022.....Wellbeing
- 6/8/2022.....HomeLifeStyle
- 6/15/2022.....A+ Camps & Schools
- 6/22/2022.....Senior Living
- 6/29/2022.....Summer Fun

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# HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



BONNIE HOBBS

The three heroes are (from left) Noah Tajudeen (SpongeBob), Hana Kewaisy (Sandy) and Diya Selvan (Patrick).



BONNIE HOBBS

Having fun onstage are (from left) Hannah Fidler, George Sullivan and Ava Acosta.

## ‘Unabashedly Optimistic and Very Funny’

### Woodson High presents ‘The SpongeBob Musical.’

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Featuring a cast and crew of nearly 100, “The SpongeBob Musical” is set to burst upon the Woodson High stage. It’s the school’s Cappie’s show, and Director Chris Rushing believes Woodson is the first FCPS school to perform it.

“I, personally, am a casual ‘SpongeBob’ fan, at best,” he said. “But I saw this production over the summer and fell in love with how fun it is, the characters and the story. It deals with serious, relevant themes – including the environment, climate change and prejudice. But at the end of the day, it’s unabashedly optimistic and very funny.

“It’s easy to be cynical right now, but so brave to be genuine and optimistic like SpongeBob is. And with the year we’ve had, we could all use the laughter. This show is for people of all ages, and the characters won’t be stereotypes of themselves – it’s a play about their humanity.”

The story takes place in the undersea town of Bikini Bottom, and audiences will see SpongeBob’s pineapple house, the Krusty Krab restaurant and the dangerous Mt. Humongous. Show dates are May 6-15; see “To Go” information at end of story.

“The set is super bright, with pieces constantly rotating in and out,” said Rushing. “And we have almost 200 colorful costumes, plus a live, almost all-student, pit orchestra of about 20 people. And since it’ll be like a party, we’ll have beachballs for people to toss around during the show, and ‘emotional-support sponges’ they can purchase to wave around like glow sticks during some of the songs.”

He praised chorus teacher Amy Moir, the show’s music director, and also noted the “cool choreography.” For example, he said, “We have a whole number featuring sponges with blacklight paint on them.”

Rushing picked this play “to show off both the vocal and acting talent we have. They’re incredible actors; and since they’re portraying cartoon characters, we’ve had casting flexibility regarding diversity and gender. In addition, this is the most talented and hardworking cast of understudies I’ve ever had, and they’ll get to do one of the shows. They’re just as great as the main cast.”

The story centers around the main, “SpongeBob SquarePants” characters. The heroes are SpongeBob, a simple sponge; Sandy, a squirrel; and Patrick, a starfish. A plankton named Plankton is the villain.

“An undersea volcano is going to erupt and destroy Bikini Bottom, where they live,” explained junior Noah Tajudeen. “Initially, some of the undersea residents are freaked out about it. But Plankton wants it to erupt,

so they’ll all move to another town where he’ll profit by that happening. The three heroes want to prevent the eruption and save the town. But all the other sea creatures – and even SpongeBob, somewhat – doubt that a simple sponge like him will be able to do it. So he has to gain enough self-confidence to save Bikini Bottom.”

Portraying SpongeBob, Tajudeen described him as “silly, goofy and unaware of social cues and personal space. But at his core, he’s an empath; he just wants to make everyone around him happy. But he’s grappling with self-doubt and insecurity.”

Tajudeen loves showing his character’s contrasting traits. “It’s genuine fun to be so loose and comedic, but unintentionally, because that’s the way he’s written,” said Tajudeen. “I also love that he’s dealing with something everyone in the audience can relate to. And I like the camaraderie between the three heroes because they’re best friends faced with an enormous feat. It makes you think, ‘How would I face the end of the world with my two, best buddies?’”

His favorite song is “BFF,” which SpongeBob sings with Patrick. “I love its harmonies, and it’s pleasant to hear,” said Tajudeen. “It also contains lots of spoken, one-liner jokes that make it consistently engaging.”

He said the show’s entertaining for “kids without a complete understanding of the world and diverse experiences. And for adults and older teens, it reflects times when they’ve been dismissive of others’ potential –

### To Go

Show times are:  
FRIDAY, MAY 6, AT 7 P.M.  
SUNDAY, MAY 8, AT 6 P.M.  
FRIDAY, MAY 13, AT 7 P.M.  
SATURDAY, MAY 14, AT 2 AND 7 P.M.  
SUNDAY, MAY 15, AT 6 P.M.

Tickets are “pay what you can,” on a sliding scale of \$10-\$30 at [wtwdrama.org](http://wtwdrama.org). Rushing doesn’t want the cost to prevent anyone from attending. If it’s an obstacle, contact him at [csrushing@fcps.edu](mailto:csrushing@fcps.edu).

and especially of their own.”

And, added Tajudeen, “Everyone will like the bright colors and smiles, because it’s a cartoon and we want it to be perceived that way – as plain fun. And the songs are just like you’d see in Broadway shows, including tap numbers and songs with amazing range, vocally and lyrically. So kids will enjoy it as a cartoon, and others will enjoy it as a Broadway-type musical.”

Senior Ava Acosta is co-director and also plays one of four, electric skates in an all-female rock band. They perform together at a fundraiser to save the town. “My electric skate has a cool, rocker personality,” said Acosta. “We all sing and have guitars and will either be on Rollerblades or skateboards. We’ll wear helmets and sparkly, punk rock-type tops, with skirts and fishnet tights.

SEE SPONGEBOB, PAGE 11  
[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

# Woodson High presents 'The SpongeBob Musical'

FROM PAGE 10

"We sing 'Bikini Bottom Boogie,' and the crowd will be able to sing along with Pearl the whale and a group of teen fans. I think it's cool that we have our own song, and I like our interaction with Pearl [played by Haley Kim]."

Overall, said Acosta, "This is a great story with wonderful songs, and our cast nails the comedic timing. It's a really fun and funny show, and it also has lots of heartfelt moments. Our set even has a slide, and our crew worked hard on all the lights and props."

Portraying Plankton is senior George Sullivan. "His first name is Sheldon, but he's embarrassed by it, so he goes by his last name," said Sullivan. "He's the villain and a smart, mad scientist. He loves being evil and acts big and out there – although he's really small. Throughout his life, no one took him seriously because of his size, so that's why he takes it out on Bikini Bottom."

"I like going into his evil personality; he's a bad guy and knows it," continued Sullivan. "It lets me be mean and the opposite of myself. As the bully, I get to scream at and insult the characters and manipulate them – which is fun."

He also enjoys rapping the song, "When the Going Gets Tough." In it, Plankton tries to brainwash everyone into liking his restaurant – the least-popular eatery in town.

Sullivan said the show's faithful to the cartoon, which its fans will appreciate. "And even people who haven't seen it will relate to its heart, character and feeling," he said. "It deals with how people view their self-worth, and I connect because I've had some of the thoughts SpongeBob had about himself. Seeing it changed me for the better, and I hope it'll do the same thing for the audience."

Senior Hannah Fidler choreographed the show – some 10-12 numbers. Dancing since age 4, she's trained in jazz, tap and ballet and competes in ballroom. Her toughest challenge was having a 47-person cast. "I liked having so many people to create cool, stage pictures, but it was sometimes hard to find a place for everyone," said Fidler. "But I loved seeing them improve every day. I'm having a fun time and so are they."

Her favorite song is "I'm Not a Loser," a traditional, Broadway-style, jazz and tap number. "Tap is tough to choreograph, in general, but it really paid off," she said. "And everyone is enjoying themselves onstage."

Noting that this show won Tony Awards on Broadway, she loves that its musical score was written by a variety of different composers and popular artists, including Panic at the Disco, David Bowie and John Legend. "Because every song was written by someone different, the choreography is different for each one," she said. "So audiences will enjoy the variety of songs, dances and character ensembles."

## Capt. Schoppa Dies of Occupational Cancer

With great sadness, Fire Chief John Butler announced the line-of-duty death of Captain Kimberly Schoppa on April 26, 2022 from occupational cancer.

Captain Schoppa was hired as a firefighter in 2004 and served with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department for over 18 years. She was assigned to Fire Station 27, West Springfield (C-Shift) and a member of the Honor Guard, at the time of her passing.

Captain Schoppa was a valued friend and esteemed member of the department. Captain Schoppa touched many lives throughout her career and will be remembered as a kind, caring and compassionate person. She was an exceptional leader,



Kimberly Schoppa

mentor, and friend. She will be greatly missed.

Fire Chief Butler and the men and women of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, extend our deepest condolences to Captain Schoppa's family - wife Master Technician (ret) Kim Klaren, parents Jan and Karl Schoppa, her brothers Chris and his partner Paul; and Brett (wife Amy and children Riley and fiancé Anya, Abigail, and Maura); Klaren's mom Shirley, brothers Bobby (wife Andrea and children Bo, Cody, and Tyler), Matt (wife Kay and children Kyle (fiancé Elyse), Kacie, and Cole), and sister Kara (husband Mike) – as well as extended family, friends, co-workers, and anyone whose life she touched.

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

#### STARTING APRIL 19

Caregiver Support Group Meets. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Online. A Zoom support group for caregivers of family members with dementia is held the first and third Tuesday of each month using Zoom. Times are 10 to 11:30 a.m. A link will be sent to you. The group is sponsored by the Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia and is free. For info: Jack Tarr: [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net). Visit the website: <https://scnova.org/services/services-caregivers-support-group/>

#### SHEPHERD'S CENTER SPRING CLASSES

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia will hold Spring classes from April 21 to June 9, 2022. All Classes will be held virtually on Zoom and in person at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Registration: April 4-19, 2022. The Spring 2022 semester schedule includes 40-plus classes with a wide range of subjects -- from a Health and Wellness series

to National and World Affairs. The following classes are but a few of the classes to choose from:

- April 28 – "Sorting Fact from Fiction" – Larry Lipman, AARP
- May 5 – "Monarch Butterflies – Life Cycle and Migration" – Scott Schroth
- May 19 – "Whale Watching in Baja" – Paul Wormeli
- May 26 – "Vienna African American Trailblazers and Liberty Amend-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15



### I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study City of Alexandria, Fairfax County and Prince George's County, MD

Virtual Public Information Meeting  
Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. (presentation at 7 p.m.)  
<https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>

In-person Public Information Meetings  
All meeting times are 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Presentation starts at 7 p.m.

Thursday, May 19, 2022  
Oxon Hill High School  
6701 Leyte Drive, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Monday, May 23, 2022  
John R. Lewis High School  
6540 Franconia Road, Springfield, VA 22150

Wednesday, May 25, 2022  
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center  
1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Learn about and provide input on the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) proposed 11-mile extension of the I-495 Express Lanes from the Springfield interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, Maryland. The goals and objectives of this I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study (495 Southside Study) are to evaluate transportation improvements that extend and provide continuity of the Express Lanes system on I-495 (Capital Beltway), provide additional travel choices, reduce congestion, improve travel reliability, improve safety, and provide consistency with local and regional plans.

VDOT will hold a virtual meeting option, as well as three in-person meeting options. All meetings will include the same information.

The virtual public meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 18, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer session. Visit <https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside> or call 703-259-3752 for information about how to access and participate in the virtual public information meeting.

The in-person public information meetings will be held on Thursday, May 19, at Oxon Hill High School, Monday, May 23 at John R. Lewis High School, and Wednesday, May 25, at Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center. Each in-person meeting will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m., with a formal presentation beginning at 7 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer session. Meeting display boards will be available to review, and project staff will be present to answer questions. In-person meetings will follow current CDC-recommended health measures and guidelines.

VDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, has initiated an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

Review study information on the project webpage (<https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>), during the virtual and in-person public information meetings, or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-3752 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Provide your input by completing a public opinion survey at <https://www.virginiadot.org/495Southside>, and by providing your written comments at one of the meetings or submitting them by June 6, 2022 to Nick Nies, AICP, VDOT 495 Southside Express Lanes Study Project Manager, 9030 Stony Point Parkway, Suite 220, Richmond, VA 23235, or email [495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov).

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.

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# COVID-19 Cases Up 62% In Fairfax Health District

SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Over the past two weeks in the Fairfax Health District, cases of COVID-19 have risen by 62%; and since a low on March 21, the daily number of cases has about tripled. Although not as high as the peak in cases seen in January, this change is concerning. Just during the past week, there have been 15 new outbreaks (clusters of three or more connected cases of illness) reported in the county with 12 occurring in schools and daycares.

Despite this surge in cases, hospitalizations continue to be low, and the community level remains at “low.”

The BA.2 variant now is causing most COVID-19 infections in the United States. While there is no evidence that BA.2 results in more severe disease compared to other variants, it is more transmissible as shown by the increase in cases and outbreaks in recent weeks. Additionally, the virus that causes COVID-19 continues to mutate with subvariant BA.2.12 identified first in New York state and now seen nationwide.

## Protect Yourself and Others

Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant to protect themselves from illnesses and help stem transmission of the virus. Health

officials urge the following steps:

Rethink your risk and the risk of others around you. We all make decisions about whether to get vaccinated, wear a mask or change our activities based on what we see as our own risk of COVID-19, the risk to our loved ones and to our community. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>

With the number of COVID-19 cases increasing again, here are some questions to ask yourself:

Have you held off on getting vaccinated? Have you or someone in your household been diagnosed with a new medical condition that increases your risk of COVID-19, started a new medication that decreases your immunity, or become pregnant?

Has an elderly parent or other relative moved in with you or is there someone you're providing care for?

Do you have a new baby; or is your child just starting daycare, school or will be going to camp this summer?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, consider getting a vaccination or a vaccine booster dose against COVID-19 for yourself and those eligible in your household. There are instances where some vaccinated people get COVID illness, but the disease will be milder and they will have a reduced chance of hospitalization.

Consider wearing a mask in indoor settings, avoiding crowds and taking other precautions to keep yourself and your loved ones safer.

While masks are no longer required in most settings, you can continue to wear a mask any time you are indoors or in crowds. Consider your risk and those you spend time with and select a mask with the best fit and protection (for example, an N95, KN95 and KF94). People with COVID-19 symptoms, a positive test or recent exposure to someone with COVID-19 should continue to isolate, wear a mask and take precautions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

Develop a posture of preparedness. Make sure to stay up to date on boosters and vaccinations, when eligible. Vaccines are proven to be highly safe and effective in preventing serious illness. Anyone 5 years and older who lives in Virginia is still eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, which is widely available and provided at no cost at Fairfax County clinics. A first booster dose is recommended for everyone 12 years and older who has received their initial vaccine primary series five or more months ago. A second booster dose with an mRNA vaccine is available for people who are 50 and older and some immunocompromised individuals at least four months after their first booster dose. More information on boosters can be found here. Finally, make sure to get tested if you have symptoms.

Stay informed. Continue to look for updates from the Fairfax County Health Department and other public health agencies.

Monitor COVID-19 community levels in the Fairfax Health District and/or where you might be visiting. Take additional precautions if you see an increase in community levels, especially if you are at high-risk for illness.

Take time to catch up. Now is the time to catch up on other health care that help keep you and your family members healthy. Schedule appointments that may have been put off, such as dentist visits, cancer screenings, or childhood immunizations.

Prevent spread of COVID-19, and other illness, by:

- ❖ Avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- ❖ Staying home when you are sick
- ❖ Getting tested when you have symptoms; order free at-home tests here <https://www.covid.gov/tests>
- ❖ Informing your contacts if you have COVID-19
- ❖ Covering coughs and sneezes
- ❖ Washing hands frequently

If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, please call 703-324-7404. Call the Health Department Call Center at 703-267-3511 with Coronavirus questions. Both call centers are open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

Email questions or concerns to [ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov). This email account will be staffed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.

## Changes Examined for Springfield Bus Links

FROM PAGE 3

Route 334 stops at the Fort Belvoir Golf Course and the Army Museum, while 335 goes through the Fort Belvoir gate near Island Creek and makes several stops along that road. Routes 352 and 353 will hit some employment centers around Springfield Town Center, so the idea is that someone who lives away from this area without a car can still get to an employment location via Metro and the TAGS bus or Fairfax Connector.

Another bus route being looked at is route 495 that currently links Burke with Tysons Galleria. It could be reduced to rush hour only service and one mid-day trip.

### Bus Fares

Fare changes are also part of the changes. Bus and rail transfer discounts will go from \$.50 to \$2.00 and the cost of a seven-day regional bus pass is being reduced from \$15 to \$12. A seven-day re-

gional senior and disabled bus pass is being reduced from \$7.50 to \$6.00. In addition, the Pentagon-Crystal City Express is being reduced from \$7.50 to \$4.25, and seniors and disabled fare will be \$2.10. This reduction in Arlington is being funded by the I-66 Commuter Choice grant from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

Transportation planners would like to hear from the riders on these proposed route changes. Provide comments by May 6. For more information about the October 2022 proposed service changes, and to take an online survey, go to [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/news/c11\\_22](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/news/c11_22). Submit comments to Fairfax County [fairfaxconnector@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fairfaxconnector@fairfaxcounty.gov) or by calling 703-339-7200, TTY 703-339-1608. Mail your comments to:

Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
C/O Transit Planning  
October 2022 Service Changes  
4050 Legato Road, Suite 400  
Fairfax, VA 22033



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

All TAGS routes include a stop at the Springfield-Franconia Metro Station.

# CALENDAR



The Eagle Festival will take place on Saturday, May 7 at Mason Neck State Park in Lorton.

## APRIL 27, 30

"Just Like Us." At Mason School of Theater, GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. April 27 - 30 at 8 p.m. and April 30 - May 1 at 2 p.m. Based on Helen Thorpe's bestselling book, this play follows four Latina teens living in Denver—two of whom are documented and two who are not—through young adulthood. Based on the real lives of Dreamers, Just Like Us poses difficult, yet essential questions about what makes us American. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/just-like-us/>

## THURSDAY/APRIL 28

Wind Symphony. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Come watch the Wind Symphony present its spring concert, conducted by Professor Mark Camphouse. This performance will include premieres of wind band works, including a Virginia premiere by Mason's own Mark Camphouse. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/wind-symphony/>

## FRIDAY/APRIL 29

String & Piano Trio. 8-10 p.m. At Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Trio Peridot - violin, cello, piano - is committed to performing music by women and composers of African descent. Join them as they perform "Distant Voices" in the heart of historic Fairfax City.

## APRIL 29 TO MAY 8

"True West." At Old Town Hall, Fairfax. True West, a dark comedy and character study, gives the audience a peek inside the lives of two estranged brothers as their worlds turn upside down. Performances will be held on April 29 at 7:30 p.m., April 30 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., May 1 at 2 p.m., May 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m., May 7 at 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. and May 8 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for students online and available here: <https://fairfaxcitytheatre.ticketleap.com/true-west/>.

## APRIL 29 TO MAY 1

"La Cenerentola." At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Join George Mason

University's Mason Opera for its production of Pauline Viardot's opera Cendrillon, a charming, comical, and lyric telling of the Cinderella story with a distinctly French flair. Times: Friday, April 29 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, April 30 at 2 p.m.; and Sunday, May 1 at 2 p.m. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/mason-opera-presents-pauline-viardot-8217-s-39-cendrillon-39/>

## SATURDAY/APRIL 30

International Jazz Day Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Share the vibrancy and vitality of jazz music with Mason Jazz students and faculty on April 30! International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics, and jazz enthusiasts on all continents to celebrate and learn about jazz and its roots, future, and impact. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/international-jazz-day/>

## SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Old Town Art Walk. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In the downtown streets in the City of Fairfax. The City of Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association are pleased to present some of the very best local artists and makers. An array of artwork at a range of prices will be available. Installation art shall also be on view. The rain date for this event is Saturday, June 4, 2022.

## MAY 1 TO MAY 30

Hope for the Warriors Fitness Challenge. Participants can now register for the Hope For The Warriors Memorial Day 30x30 Virtual Fitness Challenge. Kicking off May 1 and running through May 30, individuals can participate in the free virtual fitness challenge from anywhere in the world. The challenge is designed to get people moving by incorporating any type of physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes for 30 days. Any activity counts — walking, running,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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**Let us know about an upcoming event**  
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# CALENDAR

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hiking, swimming, lifting, etc. The goal for this challenge is to support individuals reaching their fitness goals while honoring and remembering fallen service members. Visit [hopeforthewarriors.org](http://hopeforthewarriors.org).

## MAY 4-7

Mason Film Festival. 4-10 p.m. At Johnson Center Cinema at GMU, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Mason Film Festival is an annual film festival at George Mason University representing the diverse work of Film and Video Studies students, including that of beginning video students, intermediate directing students, and graduating seniors. Visit: <https://film.gmu.edu/mason-film-festival-graduates>

## THURSDAY/MAY 5

LESSON ZERO. 5-8 p.m. At 8430 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The Austin Grill presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO, Thursday, May 5 for Cinco De Mayo from 5 to 8 p.m. at 8430 Old Keene Mill Rd., Springfield. For additional information see: [www.youtube.com/lessonzero](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero](http://www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero)

## MAY 5, 19

Burke Toastmasters. 7:30-9 p.m. At Burke Oaks Community Center, 5708 Leather Drive, Burke. Burke Toastmasters allows you to practice your speaking in a friendly, diverse environment. They welcome guests. First and third Thursdays. Come check us out. [www.BurkeToastmasters.org](http://www.BurkeToastmasters.org)

## MAY 6-8

Sesame Street Live! Let's Party! At EagleBank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Times: Friday, May 6 - 6 p.m.; Saturday, May 7 - 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 8 - 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets can be

# BULLETIN BOARD

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ments – Gloria Runyon/Sylvia/DeeDee Students may attend one or all of the all spring classes for a \$55 fee and are encouraged to create their own schedule – attend classes all day or attend only one class. For a complete listing of classes or to register, visit the ALL page on the SCNOVA website at SCNOVA Adventures in Learning Spring 2022 or call the office at 703-281-0538. Visit [www.scnova.org](http://www.scnova.org) or contact the Office at 703-281-0538.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or [eileen.thompson1@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.thompson1@gmail.com).

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

## ONGOING

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

purchased online at [SesameStreetLive.com](http://SesameStreetLive.com) or in-person at the venue box office.

## SATURDAY/MAY 7

Eagle Festival. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Free. Live animal shows, children's activities, live music, food trucks, pony rides, hay rides, environmental exhibits and activities, kayak and canoe try-outs, costumed characters. Visit the website: <https://friendsofmasonneck-stateparkinc.wildapricot.org/>

## MAY 7-8

LEGO(R) Model Trains. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area LEGO(R) Train Club (WamaTc) will be running LEGO(R) model trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum for a special Mother's Day weekend show. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 for special events); seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

## MAY 21-22

Girls on the Run Spring Registration. GOTR NOVA will be offering an in-person 10-week curriculum for the Spring 2022 season. Two in-person 5Ks presented by Cigna will be held on May 21st and 22nd in Sterling and Ballston, respectively. Teams will continue to be school and community-based to further our outreach efforts in being accessible to every girl across Northern Virginia. Currently, 105 teams throughout Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William are open for Spring 2022 registration through March 1, 2022. For more information about spring registration and sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, visit [www.gotrnova.org](http://www.gotrnova.org).

feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact [volunteers@fairfax-station.org](mailto:volunteers@fairfax-station.org) or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), or call 703-425-9225 for more.

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## I Know What I Saw and Heard



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As the homeowner of a historic 250-plus year-old house located on two acres in Montgomery County, there are constant maintenance-type demands, none of which, cancer notwithstanding, I am able or even willing to do. Nevertheless, I am caretaker of a property that has been designated as "historic" with the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Though compliance with the Commission is required for renovation like doors, windows, roof, downspouts, gutters and of course, additions, day-to-day upkeep inside and outside the house, grounds included, fall exclusively on the homeowner. And so, whenever I can afford (literally) help, I am almost dutybound to pursue it.

Winds gusting during or after a soaking rain always make me nervous. On a property full of hundred-year-old trees, there is always a risk of a tree toppling to the ground, and/or maybe even hitting the house, as we are surrounded by trees. Many of which, due the passage of time, the collection of moisture and the weakening of roots have already fallen on previous occasions. And so, it happened again a few weeks back multiple trees at multiple locations – some even risking an adjacent neighbor's property, fell or were leaning, compelled me to damage control.

I called our local tree service company – with whom we have had dealings with previously, to come by and estimate the fix. They came by later that day. I can't say the price they quoted me was in the range of what I expected – unfortunately. However, after a few days delay on my part, they offered a lower price, one that was a tiny bit more palatable.

And so, it was on Thursday morning, April 14 when I wrote the following paragraph:

With apologies to Robert Duvall as Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore in the movie "Apocalypse Now" (1979); I love the sound of chain saws in the morning, especially when it's not me holding one. I was forewarned by my architect-friend/homeowner Marty who after seeing my two acres of trees, bushes, shrubs, and all advised me that I needed a chain saw, a tool he characterized as "the most respected tool in the homeowner's arsenal." As a lifelong renter, the need for such equipment had previously been beyond my purview. But here I was, proud owner of a property that required all hands-on deck, so to speak.

The next Christmas, I received as a gift, a Poulan-brand 14" gas chain saw. Subsequently, as advised, I went out and bought steel-toed work boots and rawhide work gloves. I was almost ready to saw when after numerous unsuccessful pulls of the rip-chord, I was unable even to get the chain saw started. A neighbor came by at my request to help and with his one pull, I was in the chain-saw business. And though I tried to fulfill my responsibility, I failed miserably. I didn't hurt myself exactly, other than my pride, but I soon realized I wasn't the man for the job. Ed's Tree Service are the men for the job, as they were on the 14th, and thankfully so. All I could do was see what needed to be done.

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



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