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Downtown Herndon
 Project Update

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Traffic Jam Coming

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LambMowers

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It's the
 First Day
 Of School

PAGE 3

Students and family members crowd the front door of Coates ES in Herndon on the first day of school, Aug. 19.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

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First Day of School! Changes and challenges ahead in changing county.



On the first day of school for FCPS students, Monday, Aug. 19, the bell rings, and the doors open at Coates ES.



The youngest FCPS bus riders arriving at Coates ES are carefully watched by Michelle Spencer, supervisor A3, as they go down the steps.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

What's new At FCPS in SY 2024-25?

The new school year brings changes, including implementing the revised FCPS boundary and cell phone policies, installing 50 school bus cameras, increasing speed cameras in the county school zones, and early release Mondays for elementary school students.

Boundary Policy

The Fairfax County School Board approved updates to the boundary policy (Policy 8130) at its July 18 public meeting before the start of the FY 2024-25 school year, completing a year-long comprehensive review of the policy for the first time in nearly four decades. The updated Policy 8130.8 provides a roadmap for future boundary changes. The policy aims to “define the school boundary policy for the assignment of students to schools and programs, to close, open, or consolidate schools and programs where appropriate, and to outline the considerations for such determinations.”

School board members sought to address the community’s concerns, including temporary classrooms (trailers), instructional program locations, overcrowding, facility renovation timelines, and transportation. The division’s boundary locator system identifies a student’s given pre-K-12 school or center based on their residential address. According to the FCPS, the school board can change school boundaries. According to FCPS, it does not guarantee that the same elementary, middle, and/or high school(s) or AAP center(s) will consistently serve any residential address.”

Cell Phone Usage

Change is coming right now for schools in the cell phone pilot program: middle schools Frost, Irving, Jackson, Poe, Robinson, and Twain and high schools Edison Falls Church, Justice, Lewis, Madison, McLean Robinson, and Westfield.

The Fairfax County School Board initially discussed student cell phone usage at its July 16, 2022, meeting. The board approved the Student

SEE WHAT'S NEW, PAGE 8

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools began their first day of classes on Monday, Aug. 19. For its second year, the division’s Strategic Plan 2023-30, deemed its “North Star” by Superintendent Michele Reid, aims to ensure excellence, equity, and opportunity for all its students.

Traditional photos typically show young students sporting new, supply-filled backpacks on the first day of school. Other images show the county’s yellow buses arriving at the schools and students stepping down to be greeted by administrators, staff, and police School Resource Officers (SRO).

When thinking of typical FCPS back-to-school photos, students preparing to don construction site hard hats, such as those at Edison Academy, one of six academies, generally do not come to mind. The academy is located in Alexandria’s Mount Vernon District. According to FCPS, Edison Academy “offers career and technical education programs and courses that provide credit for supervised work-based learning experiences that meet the minimum curricular requirements.” Its programs, such as those in architecture, construction, and information technology, including its capstone cyber program, help prepare students for college or a career after high school graduation.

“Together, we are a strong community of learners that support one another and provide the necessary caring culture so ev-

everyone will thrive,” said Monica Bentley, Academy administrator, in her newsletter to families about the new school year.

Typical first-day school photos generally do not include students entering Fairfax County’s Juvenile Detention Center classrooms. FCPS provides a full 5.5-hour per-day instructional school program in all academic content classes, life skills and computer coding, art, and physical education there. For instructional days, the program follows the FCPS calendar.

These students and others are among the

approximately 181,000 registered Fairfax County Public School students who reported to one of the division’s 222 designated schools, academies, and centers on Monday.

COATES ELEMENTARY School in Herndon, home to the “Stars,” embodies schools across the FCPS division in many ways. Coates has a majority-minority population, reflecting the overall division’s changing demographics. Coates’ ethnic demographics are 31.19 percent Hispanic or Latino, 26.01 percent

SEE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES, PAGE 8



School staff at Coates check the bus lists as children arrive.

Comstock's 'Herndon Station' Status Update

Herndon Town Council approves resolution for Comstock's third extension, this to Sept. 10; first was approved Dec. 21, 2021.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

During its Town Council Meeting and public hearing on the evening of August 13, the seven-member Herndon Town Council unanimously approved Resolution 24-G-46, with all members present. Resolution 24-G-46 approved an extension of the Outside Satisfaction Date [OSD] of the November 1, 2017, Comprehensive Agreement between the Town and Comstock Venture, LC, to Sept. 10, 2024. It is the third extension in the last two and a half years.

"I'm here to tell you that it is now finally coming around to the point where we can make this work," Christopher Clemente, chairman and CEO of Comstock Holding Companies, Inc., offers a presentation during the public hearing of the Herndon Town Council Regular Meeting, Agenda Item 5.a. and provides an update on the Comstock Herndon Project. He explained that "the anticipated interest rate reductions over the next couple of years" matter because construction financing is typically floating.

"You don't borrow it at a fixed rate; you borrow based on the federal fund rate and some margin above that. So we're excited to be here. We're excited to be in a position by the end of this year to get this thing started, and we're excited to deliver a world-class project for the downtown," Clemente said.

Sept. 10 is the new deadline for satisfying remaining contract conditions regarding Comstock's redevelopment project of approximately 4.675 acres of town-owned downtown land for a mixed-use town center project, Arts Center, and associated parking. The town transferred the parcel to Comstock Herndon, LC, in December 2020. No construction has occurred on the parcel, although Comstock did fence in a portion.

According to online meeting documents, the Town and Comstock desired to extend the OSD briefly to allow further progress and discussions regarding the project. The first extension occurred from Dec. 21, 2021, to April 30, 2022. Then, following Comstock's action on April 28, 2022, to exercise its contractual right to a 24-month market pause, a second extension of the OSD occurred on April 25, 2024. A Letter Amendment extended the second OSD until August 15, 2024.

As of last night, Resolution 24-G-46, approved on August 13, 2024, authorized the Mayor to sign a letter of amendment extending the OSD from August 15 to September 10, 2024. That date, Sept. 10, coincides with the last day of employment with Town Manager Bill Ashton, who has accepted a position elsewhere.

Public Hearing

Status update presentation on the Comstock Herndon Project and Resolution 24-G-46 to approve an extension of the Outside Satisfaction date to Sept. 10, 2024.

Clemente opened his presentation, kick-



HERNDONVAAPORTAL MEETING AUG. 13, 2024

Far right, Christopher Clemente, chairman and CEO of Comstock Holding Companies, Inc., offers a presentation during the public hearing of the Herndon Town Council Regular Meeting, Agenda Item 5.a. and provides an update on the Comstock Herndon Project.

ing off the public hearing, saying that Comstock sees "the stars are now aligning" and believes they can start this project early next year. "January is when we hope to start," Clemente said. He spoke about how the pandemic and economy had made the process a "roller coaster" for the construction industry, turning it upside down. [0:35:30]

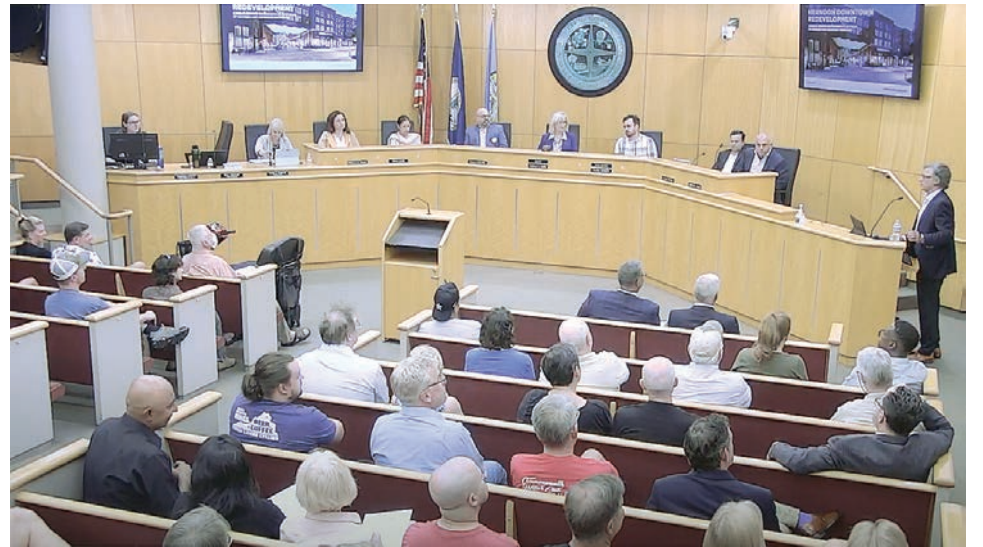
"It has been very difficult to make the numbers on this project work, but I think, long story short, I think we're there now," Clemente said. He described multiple rebidings and said the numbers "were just crazy." "Financing costs also soared." "Imagine the difference between a 300 or 400 percent increase in the cost of financing projects for construction and development projects. So that has played a huge [role]." [0:39:51]

Lesia J. Yeatts, the Herndon town attorney, answered a question from Town Councilmember Cesar del Aguila about why the town council had yet to comment on the closed meetings concerning the Comstock project. Yeatts said that the parties are still parties to a contract and contractually bound. "There are certain things at this point that the parties, especially the town council members, would not be able to disclose publicly, as they might jeopardize the relationship," she said.

Councilmember del Aguila responded, "I think that led to some of the apprehension that was out there. I certainly heard about it. I just want to be clear that no one on this dais has wanted anything but this to move forward. So, if you've heard otherwise, you were misinformed. We are committed. I like to use the analogy, 'We're at the altar, and we just want to get married.'"

Highlights of Comments Christopher Clemente Responses

Councilmember del Aguila asked Clemente: "What else do you need to move for-



SCREENSHOT HERNDONVAAPORTAL MEETING AUG. 13, 2024

August 13, Herndon Town Council Regular Meeting, Agenda Item 5.a.

ward?"

Clemente said, "Other than getting the agreement in place and getting the financing lined up and finalized, I don't think we need anything. ... I think we'll probably need some help separating the permits so that we can deliver the garage first But I think the town's waited long enough to get parking added to the downtown, so we'd like to work with the council and staff to get that built into the transaction."

Councilmember Donielle M. Scherff said to Clemente: "We love this town. We've been staring at that sign that says, 'Excitement is building' for a really long time. And I have to tell you, excitement is not what's building; resentment is We have done our dead level best to meet you where you are. Please finish this."

Christopher Clemente: "I wouldn't be here tonight saying what I've said if I didn't believe that we now have the opportunity to get the financing put in place, and the bond piece is a big piece of it. But that's all part of how we've restructured the project to account for the costs that were something like 40 percent higher than what was anticipated when we signed this agreement in 2017."

Ann Null: "When should we say enough of this?"

Jason Sickels: "This was a great example of selling the future. You know, Herndon is at the inflection point now. We're losing business to Reston and Wiehle [Station] ... I can't wait to have a drink at the rooftop of the JW Marriott, but I also want to come back to Herndon. And this is where I want to live, and I want to have a great cocktail sometime at Herndon Station."

Steven Porter: "As a paramedic, though, I do want to share a concept here. I want every patient I deal with to survive ... I want this patient to survive; I want this building project to go forward and be successful ... [Addressing Town Council:] If things are looking good and you think things are going to move forward, then please vote for this extension, and let's get this built. If, on the other hand, you think this is just going to be kicking the can down the road and just frustrating this community more and more, maybe it's time to let it flat line." [Applause].

Outside Satisfaction Date and Commencement of Construction defined.

Amendment to Comprehensive Agreement 11/6 2020, by and between the Town of Herndon Virginia ["Herndon" or the the "Town"] and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC ["Comstock"]

View: 5. Conditions Subsequent; Outside Satisfaction Date, pages 5-7 of 55 of Amendment

View: 6. Commencement of Construction, page 7 of 55 of Amendment

Herndon Town Council Adopts Resolution to Appoint Interim Town Manager

Herndon, VA (August 14, 2024) – The Herndon Town Council has adopted a resolution to appoint Christopher Martino, former county executive for Prince William County, as interim town manager to replace departing Town Manager Bill Ashton. Ashton has resigned his position with the town to accept the county executive position in Stafford County. His last day as Herndon's manager is September 10, 2024.

Martino's appointment was facilitated by the Bridgewater, VA-based Berkley Group and is in effect from September 3, 2024, until a permanent replacement for Ashton is named, likely in the first quarter of 2025. The town will be working with an executive search firm to conduct a national search for the town's next manager.

Additional interim management changes include the appointments of two town department heads to Acting Deputy Town Manager positions. Scott Robinson, the town's director of Public Works, will have oversight for the Community Development, Golf, Parks & Recreation, Police and Public Works departments. Kirstyn Jovanovich, currently serving as Town Clerk, will have oversight for the Communications, Economic Development, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Town Clerk departments. Robinson and Jovanovich will report to Martino and move into their new interim roles effective immediately.



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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jane Nash and Mary Drum hold their Rotarian banner quilt.

Rotary Banner Quilt Preserves Memory of Fellowships

An inspiration for future Rotarians.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

One of the Rotary Club's most colorful and popular traditions is members exchanging club banners, reflecting hometown pride and connection to Rotary International. For many years, members of the Rotary Club of Herndon-Reston wondered what to do with the gifted banners, some dating back 50 to 60 years and most works of art in themselves, featuring leatherwork, weaving, embroidery, or hand-painted designs.

That was until Mary Drum and

Jane Nash, two members of the Herndon-Reston Rotary Club, decided to sew the banners into a quilt.

"It will be like stitching together our shared history and the global connections we've made," they said, as told in their local Rotary's release, "Herndon-Reston Rotary Unveils Stunning Banner Showcasing Decades of Local and Global Fellowships."

During a recent meeting, when asked if anyone had "good news for the club," Drum and Nash unrolled their quilt, unveiling decades of local and global connections and the enduring spirit of Rotary fellowship. The club reported it plans to prominently display the quilt during meetings to inspire future Rotarians.

What's in Your Water?

Have a well, spring or cistern? Enroll now for test kit.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Cooperative Extension opened registration for its 2024 Fairfax County Household Water Quality Program for households with private water supplies, including wells, springs and cisterns. The registration deadline is Sept. 6 at 4:30 p.m. In the U.S., regular testing and treatment of public water supplies are required, but private water system

owners must take care of this independently.

The cost of each test kit is \$70. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available. For more information, contact the Fairfax County Virginia Cooperative Extension office at 703-324-5369 or visit <https://www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu/>. Enroll now at <https://register.ext.vt.edu/search/publicCourseSearchDetails.do?method=load&courseId=1009566>.



PHOTO GOOGLE MAPS

Northwest Federal Credit Union, headquartered in the Town of Herndon

Committee for Dulles Names Its 2024 Awardees

Three local recipients, Barry Biggar, Northwest Federal Credit Union and Marsha Senack

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Committee for Dulles announced the names of its three 2024 award recipients, who will be honored at its Dulles Awards Dinner on Nov. 15 at the Belmont Country Club in Ashburn.

"It is an honor to carry forward 30 years of tradition in presenting the Tower of Dulles Award as well as to remember the legacy of Hal Launders and David A. Edwards by awarding those who follow their respective examples of service," said Peter Lauten, president of the Committee for Dulles. "We have three excellent awardees this year."

Barry Biggar, Visit Fairfax's president and CEO, will receive the committee's most prestigious recognition, the Tower of Dulles Award, for his work promoting tourism in Fairfax County. The award is given annually to individuals or organizations for their meritorious service in enhancing Washington Dulles International Airport and the Dulles Economic Corridor.

According to a post by Visit Fairfax, Biggar, who joined Visit Fairfax in 2008, has been a driving force behind the growth of the tourism economy in Fairfax County, which has since doubled. Tourism "annually contributes more than \$3 billion to local businesses, leads to significant state and local tax revenue, and enhances the quality of life for residents." In addition, Biggar instrumental in securing the 2015 World Police and Fire Games (WPFPG) for Fairfax County. It is the world's second-largest multi-sport amateur sports event, next to the Summer Olympics.

Biggar joins the list of impressive past recipients, including the architect of Washington Dulles Airport, Eero Saarinen; the namesake of Fairfax County's Smithsonian Museum, Steven F. Udvar-Hazy;



PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT FAIRFAX

Barry Biggar, president of Visit Fairfax



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMITTEE FOR DULLES

Marsha Senack, owner of Ad-Centric Marketing in Burke

the past president of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Jack Potter; former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe; and Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, among others.

Northwest Federal Credit Union, headquartered in the Town of Herndon, will receive the committee's David A. Edwards Community Service Award. The award, established in 2011, recognizes an individual or group that best exemplifies Edwards, a tireless advocate who served in various capacities in his community throughout his 44-year residency in Reston. Edwards was a long-time committee member, past president (1990-1991), and chairman of the Economic Development/Transportation Subcommittee.

The Hal Launders Award goes to Marsha Senack, owner of Ad-Centric Marketing in Burke, a one-stop shop for promotional products and business gifts. The committee bestows the award on the member or members who significantly contribute to achieving its goals.

The mission of the Committee for Dulles is to support the economic vitality of Washington Dulles International Airport, educate the community, inform businesses and elected officials on the important role the Airport plays in the region's economy, and support federal, state, and local government policies that protect and encourage the growth of the Airport and Airport operations.



VDOT MAP

Plan to steer clear of the Georgetown Pike bridge over I-495 Aug. 23-26

Plan to Steer Clear of Georgetown Pike Bridge over I-495 Aug. 23-26

All travel lanes on the Georgetown Pike bridge over I-495 in McLean are scheduled to be shifted to a new northern portion of the bridge over the weekend of Aug. 23-26. Drivers are advised to avoid the Georgetown Pike and I-495 interchange area all weekend. Lanes will be reduced on Georgetown Pike and I-495 (Capital Beltway) ramps will be closed with detours in place. These closures are necessary for crews to complete paving, lane markings, ramp tie-ins and other work to implement the shift. This work previously was scheduled to occur the weekend of Aug. 16-19 but was rescheduled to Aug. 23-26, due to weather conditions impacting advance preparatory work.

During the weekend operation, Georgetown Pike Bridge over I-495 will be reduced from five to two lanes with one lane only remaining open in each direction. Additionally, all ramps between the Beltway and Georgetown Pike will be closed with detours in effect. Closures are scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 23. All lanes on Georgetown Pike are scheduled to be reopened and shifted onto the new northern section of the bridge, and all Beltway ramps reopened, by no later than 5 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 26.

VDOT and its project partners are urging travelers to stay away from the area and take alternate routes to avoid expected congestion and backups on Georgetown Pike near the Beltway. If travel is necessary, drivers should plan additional time and expect delays. Drivers affected by the Beltway ramp closures should slow down, www.connectionnewspapers.com

use caution and follow the signed detour routes. For more information about the traffic impacts and detour routes, visit 495next.vdot.virginia.gov.

The new Georgetown Pike Bridge over I-495 is being built in phases to keep traffic moving throughout construction of the 495 Express Lanes Northern Extension (495 NEXT) project. Working extended hours over a one-weekend period will enable crews needed time to build up pavement transition areas. This concentrated weekend period ultimately shortens the duration of impacts to local traffic.

After all Georgetown Pike Bridge traffic is shifted to the newly opened northern section of the bridge, crews will demolish the existing southern portion of the bridge. A new southern portion is expected to open in mid-2025, with traffic shifted into its final configuration on the overall new bridge in late 2025.

The upcoming Georgetown Pike Bridge traffic shift follows the recent opening of a new turn lane/ramp from westbound Georgetown Pike to northbound I-495. This lane/ramp opening provides drivers more gradual and smoother access in this busy interchange area.

Get traffic, work zone and incident information online at 511virginia.org, via the free mobile 511Virginia app, or by calling 511 in Virginia anywhere anytime.

Visit 495next.vdot.virginia.gov for the latest construction and lane closure information. All work is weather dependent.



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
SCOTT	16713	627	COPPER CREEK ROAD	CREEK	7/25/2024
SCOTT	16734	636	COWAN GAP TUNNEL R	COWANS BRANCH	7/11/2024
FRANKLIN	7920	713	POWER DAM ROAD 713	220 BP	7/10/2024
BOTETOURT	3537	T1003	2ND. AVE./T1003	TINKER CREEK	7/8/2024
LEXINGTON	20473	0	LIME KILN ROAD	WOODS CREEK	7/3/2024
FRANKLIN	7833	613	NAFF ROAD 613	MAGGODEE CREEK	7/3/2024

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 Traffic and Travel/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 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.

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Changes and Challenges Ahead in Changing County

FROM PAGE 3

Black (not of Hispanic origin), 20.83 percent Asian, 16.37 percent white (not of Hispanic origin), and 5.60 percent other. Along with Coates' successes this school year, it will face challenges, including possible accreditation change due to new state regulations and more capacity concerns.

Paul Basdekis is the principal at Coates ES. "At Coates this year, we are super proud to be a Title I school prepared with all of the support we need to maximize learning outcomes for our students," Basdekis said. He added that the school's collaborative teaching model and adoption of "The Power of We" mindset excite the school's team and allow them to give the best to the Coates community.

With its English learner population, Coates' accreditation, like other schools across the division, could be threatened by the Virginia Board of Education's new regulations. Coates is a microcosm of FCPS schools with a high English learner population. For the 2023-24 school year, FCPS.edu reported Coates' general education student membership by enrollment at 849 students, of which 464 receive English learner services, 139 receive special education services, 240 are in elementary/advanced academics, and 22 receive advanced academics, Level 4.

On Thursday, July 25, the Virginia State Board of Education approved its new Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, effective Sept. 25, 2024. The State Board of Education plans a final vote for Aug. 26 at the next board meeting.

Virginia proposes to raise the academic standards for English learners, among other things. The new regulations aim to lower the number of semesters that exclude English learners from the calculations from eleven to just three. In addition, "any student identified as an English Learner (EL) shall participate in the Virginia Assessment Program. A school-based committee shall convene and make determinations regarding the participation level of EL students in the Virginia Assessment Program. In kindergarten through grade eight, EL students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in the areas of writing and history and social science."

Melanie Meren, Fairfax County School Board member representing the Hunter Mill District, is concerned that the Virginia Board of Education's new school accountability system will likely over-identify schools as failing in their goal to educate students. "The Governor-appointed state Board Members approved the standards by vote over summer recess with minimal announcement, so I am working with fellow Fairfax County School Board members and the su-



Bahar Sarwary, 6, and her dad pose in front of Coates ES, a Fairfax County Public School, for the first day of the SY 2024-25. Bahar said, "I'm a little nervous."



Students and family members crowd the front door of Coates ES on the first day of school, Aug. 19.



Fairfax County Police Officers Anderson and Libby greet students on their first day of school at Coates Elementary.



FCPD Officer Libby shares a fist bump with a child at Coates ES.

Middle School Pilot

SCREENSHOT FCPS.EDU

On Tuesday, Sept. 3, students in FCPS' cell phone storage pilot program will receive a magnetic Yondr pouch, lock their cell phone within it and put the pouch in their backpack. Students will unlock their pouches at the end of the school day.





SCREENSHOT FCPS
Paul Basdekis, principal at Coates ES.



SCREENSHOT FCPS
Melanie Meren, School Board member



SCREENSHOT FXCO

After a successful pilot program, Fairfax County is adding more speed cameras in school zones throughout 2024.

perintendent to gather more information,” Meren wrote in her Aug. 14 newsletter. The Virginia Board of Education accepts public comments via the Board of Education Comment Form.

Coates operates with a substantial capacity deficiency.

Coates is one of seven Fairfax County public schools as the most “substantial capacity deficit(s),” according to the Fairfax County School Board’s revised FY 2025–29 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Table 5 in the CIP reports that in SY 2023–24, Coates ES was at 131 percent capacity, with elementary school runner-ups Wakefield Forest at 130 percent, Kent Gardens at 118 percent, and Pine Springs at 116 percent. The CIP reported capacity utilization for the three high schools in SY 2023–24: Justice at 119 per-

Table 5

Schools With Substantial Capacity Deficit (115% or More Capacity Utilization) in SY 2023-24 With Modulars

SCHOOL NAME	CAPACITY UTILIZATION		CAPACITY UTILIZATION WITHOUT MODULARS CONSIDERED, WHERE APPLICABLE	
	SY 2023-24	SY2028-29	SY 2023-24	SY 2028-29
Coates ES	131%	172%	-	-
Wakefield Forest ES	130%	78%	-	-
Justice HS	119%	87%	-	-
Kent Gardens ES ¹	118%	113%	-	-
Centreville HS ²	118%	104%	127%	113%
Pine Spring ES	116%	103%	-	-
Chantilly HS	116%	104%	132%	118%

¹ Effective SY 2024-25, Kent Gardens ES will go through a phased-in boundary change, with all grades fully implemented by SY 2029-30.

² Centreville HS is in planning/design for a renovation that will be completed after SY 2028-29.

Sources:

2. FCPS, *Certified Membership*, September 2023.

SCREENSHOT FCPS.EDU

Capacity Utilization at Coates ES dramatically increases to the highest in the division.

cent, Centreville at 118 percent, and Chantilly at 116 percent.

In addition, Coates is experiencing “historical membership, capacity utilization, and solutions implemented for over ten school years.” The division predicted in the CIP that its total student membership overall would remain flat over the next five years, and the county’s demographic report projects a decline in the school-aged population by next year.

Of the seven schools with substantial capacity deficits in SY 2023–24, only Coates’ projected SY 2028–29 capacity utilization increased. Coates capacity utilization soars to 172 percent for SY 2028–29, while the other schools’ capacity utilization decreased below the substantial mark. After renovations, Wakefield Forest fell to 78 percent, and Justice High School fell to 87 percent. [Source: <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/pdf/Proposed-FCPS-FY-2025-29-CIP.pdf>]



Residential construction demands rise in the Coates ES area, and more townhomes and apartments are being built, likely bringing many more students.

What’s new at FCPS In SY 2024–25?

FROM PAGE 3

Rights and Responsibilities handbook for FCPS students, incorporating cell phone modifications as a component of the broader document. According to FCPS’ current cell phone policy webpage, usage policies apply to all FCPS students.

The exceptions are schools participating in the SY 2024–25 cell phone storage pilot program.

According to FCPS, on Tuesday, Sept. 3, students in the middle school pilot program will receive a Yondr pouch, a special cell phone storage pouch. It is magnetic and stops students from using their phones. Students are responsible for their pouch and will bring it to school daily. Students lock their cell phones in their Yondr pouches each morning and put them in their backpacks. Students must secure their AirPods in the pouch or place them in their backpacks. Smartwatches must be off or in airplane mode. Students must go to an unlocking station at the end of the school day. Individual teachers will not be able to unlock the pouches. Parents or caregivers can contact the school’s front office in case of a family emergency.

The high school pilot program starts on Tuesday, Sept. 3. Students will place their cell phones into a storage unit at the beginning of each class. Phones never leave the classroom without being in the student’s possession unless confiscated for policy violations. FCPS recommends reading the Frequently Asked Questions or contacting their local school for more information. <https://>

www.fcps.edu/cell-phone-policy

School Buses and Speed Cameras

FCPS says on Facebook that the rules are straightforward. “If a school bus has flashing red lights, drivers must stop in both directions, UNLESS separated from the bus by a median. Check out all the back-to-school rules of the road from Fairfax County Government: bit.ly/BTS-RulesOfTheRoad.”

In his Aug. 13 newsletter, Jeff McKay, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, reminded drivers that the start of school brings changes in traffic and routines that affect everyone throughout the county. The county will install fifty school bus cameras to identify and cite drivers who refuse to stop while school buses are loading and unloading children. McKay said he led this initiative with former Sup. John Foust to better protect county students by changing driver behavior.

Early Release Mondays

The 2024–25 school year will see elementary school students released three hours early on seven Mondays. Teachers need time to prepare lessons, participate in professional development and training, and collaborate with peers. The early release days start in mid-September. Visit the FCPS’s Region and Pyramid Maps page. FCPS states online that they “will ensure that every student has supervised activities at the school and returns home at the regular time if that is what works best for your family.”

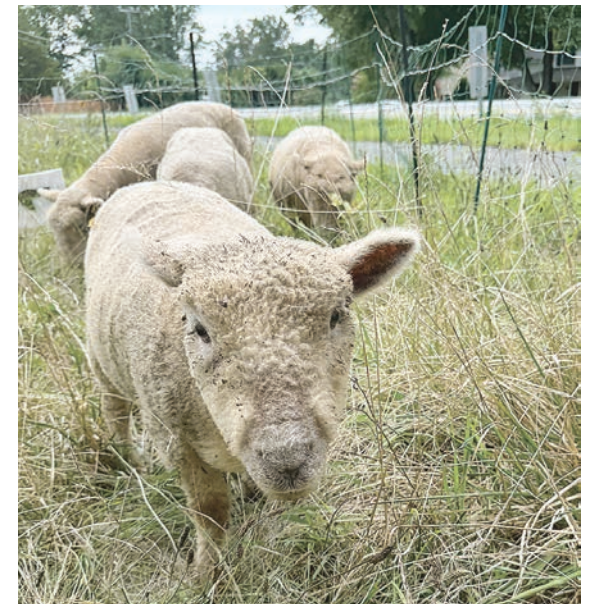
– MERCIA HOBSON



The LambMowers crew arrives in their lamb trailer and immediately begin their work.



The working flock immediately draws attention from community members and passers-by.



The Babydoll Southdown sheep breed is known for their small size, cute fleeced faces, and friendly disposition.

Lamb Work Turns Heads in Springfield

Sheep crew keeps invasive plants at bay.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

People walked from nearby developments, and traffic slowed or stopped along Gambrell Road on Sunday to watch LambMowers at work. The sheep landscaping crew, under the direction of shepherd Cory Suter of LambMowers, worked to clear

the Ridge Road Estates HOA common area field of invasive plants.

The small field, converted a few years ago from turf grass to a natural meadow, up to this time was only under the care of human hands. The sheep brought their grazing power, 17 sheep strong, to tackle new invasive vine and plant growth since the last human invasive removal touch-up.

The tall, non-turf grasses, allowed to grow here, serve as important carbon sequestrators, as do the native trees. The meadow in its natural state provides an attractive spot for insect and bird pollinators and wildlife of many kinds.



One last sniff before good-bye.



Preferring to work together, the team searches among the taller grasses for the delectable weedy plants.



Any worker enjoys a break, and one crew member found a shady spot for a short respite.



Would-be shepherds were able to get close to offer hand-fuls of tasty grasses.



After a two hour grazing session, it was time to say good-bye, even as more people arrived hoping to sheep watch.

Sheep tattoos provided a memento of the chance to meet the friendly sheep



NEWS

Airport Service Workers To Get Paid Sick Leave

Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority Board of Directors voted to enact a first-ever policy ensuring all airport employers provide paid sick leave for Dulles and Reagan National Airport wheelchair assistants, cabin cleaners, terminal cleaners and baggage handlers.

The victory comes as the result of a four-year, worker-led campaign supported by U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, Maryland Governor Wes Moore, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, dozens of Virginia lawmakers, including Delegates Alfonso Lopez and Irene Shin, Senator Barbara Favola and several community groups. Effective Jan. 1, 2025, workers will have access to 40 hours of paid sick leave per year.

“By staying united and getting lawmakers invested in their four year long fight, airport service workers were able to win basic benefits that most of us take for granted,” said 32BJ Executive Vice President Jaime Contreras. “MWAA knows that where there’s money, there’s a way because it’s how they enacted a wage policy and it’s the same way they can ensure health care too.”

“It’s a huge relief to know I can take time off from work to take care of my health without losing a day’s pay, but I still need help to afford all of my life-saving medical care,” said Marcellus Foster, a Dulles customer service counter representative from Dumfries, Va. Foster, who had brain cancer as

a child, continues to rely on four medications to survive.

When the paid sick leave policy goes into effect next year, Foster will no longer have to fear eviction or having his electricity, gas and water shut off as he has in the past after missing days of work without pay. However, Foster is still unable to afford all of his medicine, which can leave him with heart palpitations, breathing problems, swollen feet and leg pain. If he cuts back on another medication for his appetite, it causes him to lose weight, draining him of the necessary energy and strength to work.

At \$16 per hour, affording his own health insurance is out of the picture. That’s why Foster and his coworkers will continue their fight to ensure the Board improves their compensation package since the expenses that workers pay by not having health care undercut MWAA’s own wage policy. Just as MWAA enacted a policy requiring employers provide a living wage for airport service workers in 2018, they can also enact a policy mandating health care benefits or an improved wage policy to offset healthcare costs.

Major airports that already have requirements for hourly supplements earmarked for health or other benefits for their workforce currently include Philadelphia, Newark, Fort Lauderdale, JFK and LaGuardia, Los Angeles, Miami, Oakland, Saint Louis, San Francisco, and San Jose.

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.

MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

The McLean Community Center (MCC) Governing Board is holding two public meetings in September to discuss the center’s fiscal year 2026 budget. The board is inviting residents of Dranesville Small District 1A, who pay a real estate surcharge to support the center, to attend the meetings. All MCC Governing Board meetings are open to the public. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

The FY2026 budget year begins July 1, 2025, and ends June 30, 2026. The first meeting, the Finance Committee Meeting of the Whole, will be held in person at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 4. District residents are encouraged to attend the meeting to observe MCC Finance Committee Chair Kathleen Cooney Porter and the full board examine the proposed FY2026 budget as presented by MCC staff.

Public comment is reserved for the Public Hearing, which will occur Wednesday, Sept. 25.

The departmental and consolidated budget proposals will include a review of FY2024 year-end actuals, the current year’s budget (FY2025) and new proposals for FY2026. The preliminary consolidated budget will be posted on MCC’s website, mcleancenter.org, and will be available at the center’s front desk beginning on Thursday, Sept. 12.

The FY2026 Budget Public Hearing will be held in person at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 25. This hearing gives residents another opportunity to review the proposed budget. They can also prepare and provide verbal and/or written comments at the hearing. Residents of Small District 1A-Dranesville who wish to speak at the “Public Comment” portion of the hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY:711, to have their names placed on a speakers’ list; however, signing up is not required.

District residents who cannot attend the public hearing can submit writ-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

AUG. 10 TO OCT. 13

Life's a Stitch. 11 a.m. to 12 pm. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Life's a Stitch x4 looks at 4 very different ways that art quilts and fiber sculpture can use both humor and drama to express character and story. Website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/lifes-a-stitch>

FCPA'S SUMMER

ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Fairfax County Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series presents more than 190 exciting performances at 17 locations all summer long. Choose from an array of free, live performances featuring classical to bluegrass music and everything in between. Enjoy performances from outstanding local and national touring groups including:

(Aug. 23) Deanna Bogart – Grist Mill Park: Hear Deanna Bogart's dazzling keyboards, soulful saxophone, smoky vocals and cut-above songwriting.

(Aug. 24) Bruce in the USA – Arrowbrook Centre Park: Jam on to your favorite tunes by Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band.

(Aug. 31) Cloud Cult – Arrowbrook Centre Park: End your summer on a high note with Cloud Cult, a band known for their unique alternative-orchestral-folk-rock sound and hailed as one of the "Top 10 Green Bands" by Rolling Stone.

Performances are held outdoors and may be canceled in the event of inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) before leaving home for inclement weather updates.

KIDZ KORNER EVENTS IN FAIRFAX CITY

FUNDAY MONDAY: Mondays, 10:30 – 11:15 am at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. For more information: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

Aug. 26 – Storytime with Fairfax Library: "Ice Cream" theme

FAMILY FILMS AT SULLY HISTORIC SITE

Fairfax County Park Authority introduces another season of Starlight Cinema. Come enjoy this outdoor movie series with feature films for the entire family as well as pre-movie entertainment. Pack your picnics, blankets and chairs, and head out to enjoy movies under the stars — for free — all month long this August.

The Starlight Cinema gates open at 6 p.m. Opening children's entertainment begins at 7 p.m. with performances featuring music, magic, comedy and puppetry. The evening's feature film will begin at dark. Watch from your cars or on the lawn in front of the screen.

This year, the Starlight Cinema Series will be held at Sully Historic Site at 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. This year's performances will include:

Aug. 24: Geoff Marsh and "Elemental" Movies are held outdoors and are subject to cancellation in case of inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) one hour before the start of pre-movie entertainment for rain cancellations. Learn more about the Starlight Cinema and other performances being held throughout the summer by visiting the Summer Entertainment Series website.



A Women's Equality Celebration takes place on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.



A Women's Equality Celebration takes place on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

THURSDAY/AUG. 22

"The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band Performs. 7 p.m. At National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle. The premier band of the United States Marine Corps, "The President's Own" plays patriotic and martial favorites alongside selections from the wind band repertoire, works by contemporary composers, scores from film and theatre, and more. In case of inclement weather, check the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's Facebook page [facebook.com/MarineCorpsHeritageFdn](https://www.facebook.com/MarineCorpsHeritageFdn)

FRIDAY/AUG. 23

Free Advocacy Writing Workshop. 6-8 p.m. At St. John Neuman Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston. This free, non-partisan workshop is designed to equip you with the skills needed to write compelling opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and testimonies to elected officials. With the 2024 election on the horizon, now is the time to refine your advocacy writing and make your voice heard.



The Burke Historical Society will feature quilt maker **Bunnie Jordan** on Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024 at Pohick Regional Library in Burke.

SATURDAY/AUG. 24

Women's Equality Celebration. 1-4 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Honor Women's Equality Day with an afternoon of festivities commemorating the efforts and achievements of the groundbreaking activists that fought long and hard for women's enfranchisement. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/women-equality>

SUNDAY/AUG. 25

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Bunnie Jordan, a quilt-maker, collector, teacher, and author, will speak on the long history of quilting in Virginia. Free.

SUNDAY/AUG. 25

Honey Harvest Festival. Free Outdoor Festival runs 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Orchestra Concert at 5 p.m. Local honey, petting zoo, craft vendors, baked goods and Rocklands BBQ. Orchestra concert featuring the Great Falls Philharmonic. This concert is celebrating the 2024 "Year of Czech" music, starting with a world premiere by renowned Czech composer Sylvie Bodorová, following up with one of the most difficult concertos ever written for horn, the Strauss Horn Concerto No. 2 in E flat major. The major work on the program is Dvořák Symphony No. 8 - one of the most beautiful pieces of symphonic music ever written.



Koo Koo performs on Saturday, Sept. 14, 2024 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

TUESDAY/AUG. 27

Red Cross Blood Drive. 1:30-6 p.m. At Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Christ the King is having a Red Cross blood drive. Donors will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card via email! Register today at www.redcrossblood.org. Questions? Contact Melody Starya Mobley at 571-276-7356.

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation has announced its annual Summer Concert Series schedule at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia. The series will feature military bands performing music from traditional patriotic tunes to contemporary works and pop hits. All shows begin at 7 p.m. Visit www.marineheritage.org/eventcalendar-368789.

Thursday, August 22: "The President's Own" United States Marine Band will present a varied repertoire ranging from traditional concert band selections to the patriotic marches that made it famous. Thursday, Aug. 29: "The President's Own" United States Marine Band returns to close the Summer Concert Series for 2024.

AUG. 31 AND SEPT. 1

31st Annual Middle Eastern Food Festival. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, and 12:30 to 5 p.m. Sunday. At Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, 8501 Lewinsville Road, McLean. The festival will feature authentic Middle Eastern food, pastries, music and dancing, as well as vendors, church tours, and activities for both children and adults. A highlight of the event is the Saturday night, 7:00 p.m. "Hafli" ("party" in Arabic) that will feature live music and dancing. Join us and learn to dance the "Dabke," a traditional folk line dance. Visit www.MiddleEastern-FoodFestival.com.

SATURDAY/AUG. 31

Local Author Showcase. 1-4 p.m. At Mary Riley Styles Library, 120 N. Virginia Ave. in Falls Church. The Northern Virginia Writers Club and the Mary Riley Styles Public Library are hosting a free local authors showcase. This fun and free afternoon event will feature 20 local authors, readings, books for sale, along with complimentary refresh-

ments, and a raffle for a chance to win a reading bag filled with signed books. All ages are welcome, but this event is best for adults and high school aged children. Northern Virginia Writing Club members are diverse and write in a variety of genres offering something for every reader's taste. This is a great event to meet local authors, find a new favorite author, and even start your holiday shopping early.

SEPT. 1-2

Two-Day Model Train Event. 12-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Potomac Module Crew will have HO gauge model trains on display and running for two days over the Labor Day weekend. 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. <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SEPT. 5-8

Tyson's Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale. Tyson's Pimmit Regional Library 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Thursday, 5 Sept., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Friday, 6 Sept., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday, 7 Sept., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday, 8 Sept., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 6

Something Country. 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. At Electric Palm Restaurant, 12745 Sea Ray Lane, Woodbridge. Rockin' country that gets you dancing.

SEPT. 6 TO OCT. 27

"Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors." At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. September: Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. October: Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 4 p.m. Special October Twilight Performances: Dracula show combined with admission to the haunted trail that same evening. Filled with clever wordplay and pop culture references, Dracula is a gender-bending, laugh-out-loud reimagining of the gothic classic. In the treacherous mountains of Transylvania, a meek English real estate agent takes a harrowing journey to meet a new and mysterious client, the most terrifying and ferocious monster the world has ever known: Count Dracula! Famed female vampire hunter, Jean Van Helsing,

ENTERTAINMENT



Circus Vazquez performs Sept. 20 to Oct. 7 at Tysons Galleria in McLean.



The 2024 Taste of Annandale festival will take place on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024.

and company chase Drac from Transylvania to the British countryside to London and back. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Lesson Zero. 8 p.m. to midnight. At The Backyard Grill, 13999 Metrotech Drive, Chantilly. The music of Oasis recording artist Lesson Zero performs Saturday, September 7 from 8 to midnight. Admission is free and parking is available. For more information see www.youtube.com/lessonzero and www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero.

SEPT. 12 TO OCT. 6

“The Waverly Gallery.” At 1st Stage in Tysons Corner. 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. In this 2019 Tony Award nominee for Best Revival of a Play, Gladys, the elderly matriarch of the Green family, has run an art gallery in a small Greenwich Village hotel for many years. The management wants to replace her less-than-thriving gallery with a coffee shop. General admission tickets are priced at \$25 (limited availability), \$40 (limited availability), and \$55. Student, educator, and military tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 14

Koo Koo Performs. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Often described as the Beastie Boys meets Sesame Street, Koo Koo is a dance party for the senses. Lifelong friends and collaborators Bryan and Neil tour the globe delighting fans with their high-energy music, infectious positivity and interactive live show.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 14

Adat Reyim Gala. 8-11 p.m. At Congregation Adat Reyim, 6500 Westbury Oaks Court, Springfield. Congregation Adat Reyim of Springfield celebrates four decades of its congregant-led choir with a medley of instrumental and popular music, including show tunes and folk-rock tunes. Cost: \$36-\$72. Visit the website: <https://www.adatreyim.org/event/adat-reyim-choirs-40th-anniversary-gala.html>

SUNDAY, SEPT 15

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel. 7 p.m. Music of Joy and Peace. At GMU’s Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax. Visit <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 19

The 17th Annual Erin Peterson Fund Golf Tournament. At Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Avenue, Clifton. In memory of Erin Peterson who died 17 years ago in the Virginia Tech shooting. The faithful donations and participation have enabled them to give away 168 scholarships to date. They provide facilitation and sponsorship to the Westfield High and Stone Middle schools Young Men’s Leadership Group (YMLG), and Girls Reaching for Academic & Culture Excellence (GRACE) groups. EPF Koats for Kids program provides new coats to kids at Centreville Elementary and Stone Middle Schools. EPF gave away 24 new coats this year. For registration information go to: www.erinpetersonfund.org.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 19

Sorensen Gross HOPE Golf Tournament. 8:30 a.m. At Hidden Creek Country Club, Reston. Benefitting Hope for the Warriors. The tournament begins at 8:30 a.m. with check-in and a putting contest, opening ceremonies at 10 a.m., and a 10:30 a.m. shotgun start. Each entry fee includes breakfast, lunch and an awards dinner with a full round of golf. Sorensen Gross Construction Company was founded in 1925 and focuses on commercial, industrial, educational, medical, municipal, and multi-family residential building applications. Visit eventbrite.com/e/sorensen-gross-provides-hope-tickets-814094648007?aff=oddttdcreator.

SEPT. 20 TO OCT. 7

Circus Vazquez. At Tysons Galleria, 8025 Galleria Drive, McLean. The 2024 show features a brand-new cast, brand-new thrills, brand-new laughs and brand-new excitement! Now in its 55th year of entertaining audiences! Circus Vazquez is currently run by the five Vazquez brothers who are the third generation of their family to manage this circus. Circus Vazquez is currently the largest family-owned big top circus in the

United States. Featuring incredible performers from Mexico, Columbia, Guinea, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil and the U.S. All-human cast (no animals) Presented in the largest big top tent currently touring in the U.S., and it’s air-conditioned!

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

WB&A Northern Virginia Toy Train Show. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Greater Springfield VFD, 7011 Backlick Road in Springfield. Train layouts and a kids corner will be featured. Free train appraisals and “train doctor” available at the show. Door prizes drawing hourly. Admission is only \$5.00; free for WB&A members, Firemen and Military; and children under 12 and Scouts in uniform when accompanied with paid adult.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

Reston Multicultural Festival. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston.

The annual Reston Multicultural Festival celebrates our rich diversity through song, dance, food and art. Learn about our mosaic of cultures as the community gathers for a delightful day in Reston Town Center. If you are interested in being part of the entertainment or storytelling, or craft vendors (quality product representing a culture) application forms will be on the website. All are encouraged to dress in attire that shares their pride in their cultural roots. Visit <https://restoncommunitycenter.com/>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

2024 Taste of Annandale. 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Eileen Garnett Civic Space, 7200 Columbia Pike, Annandale. This free, family-friendly festival features live music and dance, food trucks and other food vendors, children’s performances and activities, a 5-K race, beer and wine, a chili cookoff, a pet contest, local businesses and organizations, and more. Visit this page for more information: <https://tasteofannandale.com/>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21

National Dance Day 2024. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax City. This free family-friendly event will feature a wide variety of dance groups

performing outside at Old Town Square. Many will be teaching mini-lessons, too! This year they’ll be joined by three exciting dance groups from George Mason University including the famous Masonettes Dance Team! At 2:30 p.m., you can join us onstage as they learn the official 2024 National Dance Day routine and then perform it all together (or watch others and cheer them on!) Visit the website for more information: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts> or contact us at megan.dubois@fairfaxva.gov or 703-273-6097.

FAMILY SKATE AND DANCE NIGHT

This fall, the Family Skate and Dance Nights at Franconia Rec Center will feature a lively schedule. Skaters of all ages will enjoy the festive themes, tasty food and fun music of these skate nights hosted by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Join the fun and break out your quad skates, inline skates or dancing shoes (bring your own skates/footwear) and take a spin around Franconia Rec Center’s gym floor. Each skate night includes music from a guest DJ, as well as food, snacks and drinks available for purchase (Please note that outside food/drink not permitted). Tickets for everyone (skaters, dancers, spectators and chaperones) cost \$10 and can be purchased in advance online. Or you buy them at the door for \$15.

SCHEDULE:

Sept. 21: Come on Skaters, Let’s Go Party! (Barbie™ themed) (6-9 p.m.)
Oct. 26: Halloween Costume Party (6-10 p.m.)
Nov. 16: Franconia Hold ‘Em Skate and Dance Night (Country Night) (6-9 p.m.)
Dec. 21: Holiday and Ugly Sweater Skate and Dance Night (6-9 p.m.)

SUNDAY/SEPT. 22

N Gauge Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will have N gauge model trains on display and running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. 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. <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SEPT. 26-29

Annandale Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. At George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Thousands of books, CDs, DVDs, and more at the George Mason Friends Fall Book Sale. Offering a preview sale on Wednesday evening, September 25, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for a \$20 entry fee per adult. Visit the website: georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com

SATURDAY/SEPT. 28

Arts by George! 5 p.m. At GMU’s Fairfax Campus, Fairfax. The annual ARTS by George! benefit, presented by George Mason University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), returns in 2024 with multiple award-winning actress and singer Lea Salonga as the headliner. The philanthropic event raises vital support for student scholarships in visual arts, dance, music, theater, game design, film, and arts management, as well as for the Mason Community Arts Academy, Green Machine Ensembles, and the Great Performances at Mason season at the Center for the Arts. Visit <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>

SUNDAY/OCT. 13

Paws in the Park. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park in Old Town Alexandria. Place your business in front of thousands of pet lovers this fall, all while supporting our mission to help Alexandria’s animals. They are looking for sponsors and vendors for our annual Paws in the Park event on October 13th in Old Town Alexandria. The free event features entertainment and music, food and drink, kids’ activities, silent auction, and so much more.

NOV. 8-9

“Beauty and the Beast.” At 7 p.m. at Ernst Theatre in Annandale. Oakcrest School will stage Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast.” Through the enchanted story of a beloved classic fairytale set in a “poor provincial town,” Belle encounters a young prince trapped under a spell that can only be broken by the power of love. Learn more at Oakcrest.org.

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Obituary



John Thomas "Tom" Fitch, aged 69, passed away on August 4, 2024, in Richmond, VA. Born on July 6, 1955, in Evansville, Indiana, Tom was a man of great integrity who devoted his life to his family and his work in environmental health and safety. Tom graduated from Greensburg High School in 1973 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science from Indiana University in 1977. Tom worked as an environmental professional and consultant for nearly fifty years, serving both private industries and government sectors. His career was marked by a passionate commitment to fighting climate change, preserving our environment, promoting reusable energy, and ensuring workplace safety. He retired in 2022 from Booz Allen Hamilton. Beyond his professional life, Tom enjoyed spending time with his family, cheering on his Green Bay Packers and spending time outdoors. He enjoyed attending community events, loved boating and fishing, and relished travel adventures. Tom was also an avid reader, always keen to explore new worlds through literature. Tom is survived by his loving spouse of nearly 40 years, Elizabeth Love Fitch (Beth) of Glen Allen, VA; his son, Sean Michael Fitch, and daughter, Lindsey Rae Fitch (Mike Groat), both of Glen Allen, VA. He also leaves behind his sisters, Sandra Murray (Bob) of Helena, MT, and Terri Stolze (Loren) of Lobelville, TN. He was preceded in death by his parents, John William Fitch and Jessie Alice Fitch, of Greensburg, IN. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in Tom's memory to The Nature Conservancy at preserve.nature.org or Feedmore.org, reflecting his lifelong commitment to environmental conservation and community service.

CALENDAR

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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE – Truist Bank, located at 440 Maple Ave E, Vienna, Virginia 22180, is in possession of assets owned by the following decedent, Patricia R. Dillard, who at the time of her death was domiciled outside of Virginia. In accordance with Va. Code Ann. § 64.2-609(A), Truist Bank hereby gives public notice of its intention to deliver the decedent's assets to the personal representative of decedent's estate, Michael J. Dillard, who has qualified as Personal Representative in accordance with the law of the decedent's domicile. Delivery is to be made after the lapse of thirty (30) days from the completion of due publication of this notice, pursuant to the Code, once a week for four successive weeks. Inquiries, including any notice of the appointment of a personal representative for decedent in Virginia or legal notice of any lien or encumbrance upon decedent's assets, should be directed to Truist Bank at the address above.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT
fairfax@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter
703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

In Memoriam
Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic

Art/Design:
Laurence Foong
Production Manager
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

More Speed Cameras Coming

Follow the speed limit, always, but especially in a school zone, and most especially when lights are flashing in a school zone.

Last year, nine speed cameras were installed in several school zones to improve pedestrian and road safety. Studies show that speed camera enforcement reduces traffic related injuries and accidents and ultimately save lives.

Additional speed cameras will be installed in the coming months, including the first 10 at various FCPS locations:

- ❖ Belvedere Elementary School
- ❖ Cardinal Forest Elementary School
- ❖ Chantilly High School
- ❖ Edison High School
- ❖ Flint Hill Elementary School/Madison High School (Shared)
- ❖ Marshall High School

Two Virginia Men Plead Guilty to Trafficking in Fake IDs

Two men pled guilty earlier this summer to importing, manufacturing, and trafficking fraudulent identity documents.

According to court documents, Arya Ebrahimi, 28, of Gainesville, and Tarik Sayed Metwally, 31, of Fairfax, imported high-quality counterfeit driver licenses and identification cards from China to the United States. Ebrahimi and Metwally operated an online enterprise using various websites to sell counterfeit IDs.

Ebrahimi opened bank accounts in the name of Top Notch IT Services, Inc., and Apex Tech Services, Inc., through which customers deposited payments through such payment platforms as Zelle. To receive shipments of fake IDs from China, they used fraudulent IDs and fake names. Ebrahimi rented a box in Manassas under the name Brian Padilla using a fake Illinois driver license and a box in Gainesville under the name Jordan Kalan using a fake North Carolina driver license. Metwally rented a box in Fairfax under the name Omar Mustafa using a fake Illinois driver license and a box in Vienna under the name Ahmed Mohammed using another fake Illinois driver license.

The fraudulent identification documents were sold to individuals across the United States. In addition to individuals who wanted to

- ❖ McLean High School
- ❖ Mount Vernon High School/Riverside Elementary School (Shared)
- ❖ Robinson Secondary School/Oak View Elementary School (Shared)
- ❖ Stone Middle School

Forty additional cameras will be installed throughout 2024.

The cameras are only active when the school zone is in effect with lights flashing. Drivers who exceed the speed limit by 10 mph or more will be fined based on an escalating fine structure that maxes out at \$100.

In addition to the speed cameras in school zones, cameras will also be added to 50 Fairfax County Public Schools school bus arms, with enforcement for that program starting soon.

appear 21-years-old or older, some customers were foreign nationals, others had criminal histories for fraud and firearms convictions, and one individual who used a fake ID to operate a scheme to sell stolen vehicles.

Ebrahimi and Metwally made or procured thousands of fake identification documents. Their criminal enterprise continued until at least July 2020. On Aug. 8, 2022, Ebrahimi knowingly engaged in a financial transaction of criminally derived property in the transfer of \$29,736.83.

Ebrahimi is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 18 and faces up to 15 years in prison for trafficking in false identification documents and 10 years in prison for engaging in monetary transactions in property derived from specified unlawful activity.

Metwally is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 4 and faces up to 15 years in prison for trafficking in false identification documents. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 11

ten comments to the MCC Governing Board by mail (address to: McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101), or email them to feedback@mcleancenter.org.

Residents may continue to submit written comments after the public hearing through Monday, Oct. 14. The MCC Governing Board will approve the FY2026 budget at its October meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 23. The final draft budget proposal will be reviewed and approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in spring 2025. Call MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711 or visit the center's website, mcleancenter.org.

MONDAY/SEPT. 23

Car Free Day 2024 is approaching, and area residents, commuters, and students in metropolitan Washington can show their support for and participate in this international event by registering online at carfreemetrodc.org. Organized regionally by the Commuter Connections program at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, this annual initiative encourages those who live and/or work in the metropolitan Washington region to embrace a greener way of getting around by going car-free or car-lite on Monday, September 23. Visit carfreemetrodc.org

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initia-

tive, 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/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that 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, or visit www.alnv.org.

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 or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmafc.org. The Center's website is www.scmafc.org.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltoombudsman/.

Dream On



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Apparently, when you reach a certain age (older age) you don't sleep so well or so long. But last night was different. So much so that when I woke up this morning, I immediately and enthusiastically commented on it to my wife, Dina. Moreover, I had the longest dream, with the most detail of any I've had in forever. If I hadn't been woken by my wife's phone alarm, I'd still be sleeping.

Typically, my sleep is average. With so many cancer-related thoughts and concerns locked up in my compartmentalized vault, it's no wonder that occasionally anxiety seeps out and I'm ever more cognizant of my somewhat tenuous life expectancy. Not last night though. No seepage. Just REM sleep. So relaxing and so refreshing that I'm looking forward to bedtime tonight. But I imagine; what's the positive version of lightening striking twice, well, whatever it is, I doubt it will 'strike' me/the same person on consecutive nights.

And as unpredictable as a lightning strike is, for a cancer patient who lives everyday with the "terminal" prognosis I was given 15 and almost six months ago exactly (late Feb. '09), my life is pretty unpredictable too. A random pain here. A disappointing lab result there. A problematic PET scan everywhere. It doesn't take too much for a cancer survivor - still undergoing treatment, to fret and when negative results, values, miscellaneous diagnostics, et cetera, rear their ugly head, it's difficult to take it all in stride. I mean, your life seems stable, but maybe it's actually hanging in the balance for all you know so your reality is never far from your day-to-day existence. Nevertheless, the longer I live, the luckier I feel. Unfortunately, there's few guarantees in life, especially if you're an oncology patient.

With all this underlying fear and worry front and center, back and to both sides of your brain, falling asleep is not always an easy task. As hard as you try, getting away from your reality, as a cancer patient undergoing treatment; it's just not possible, the vault notwithstanding. All you can do is try not to be bogged down mentally by your less-than-ideal circumstances. After all, I was given a "13 months to two-year" prognosis way back when. Yet here I sit, pen in hand, writing about those 15 and a half years. Still, my overwhelming concern remains the same: "Am I further from the beginning or closer to the end?" I have no doubts that trying to fall asleep with cancer thoughts/life expectancy in your head is a sure-fire sleep inhibitor.

But what if you received some good cancer news? Would your sleep be affected? To quote any number of regulars and guest stars from the old "Laugh-in" series: "You bet your sweet bippy." And you might even have the kind of dream that I had last night. Almost as if my subconscious didn't have a care in the world. For a cancer patient originally diagnosed as "terminal," 'almost' is plenty good enough to help you get a good night's sleep. That is, as long as I wake up.

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



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WASHINGTONIAN
2024**

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Sold for...\$1,550,000

6192 Hardy Drive, McLean
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SOLD!

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SOLD!

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SOLD!

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\$1,080,000**

SOLD!

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