

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton

American Legion Color Guard tops the Veteran Bridge horizon.



First Day of School

PAGE 3

Coyote Grill  
Reimagined

PAGE 4

Historic Bridge  
Walk Returns

PAGE 8

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

AUGUST 21-27, 2024

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



## 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. Dist. ID	Route #	Route Name	Structure	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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov).

## NEWS

# New Grant Opportunity for Women Entrepreneurs

## Fairfax City wants to help its female business owners.

By BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City Economic Development (FCED) wants to help female business owners in the City succeed. Toward that end, it's established the Women's Entrepreneur Grant Opportunity (WEGO) program.

Via this new program, it will award a total of \$25,000 to five, women-owned businesses located in Fairfax City. Businesses must apply for a grant, and those chosen to receive one will be able to use the money to procure specialized services geared toward enhancing their business capabilities.

For example, the funds will allow the grant recipients to connect with local industry experts and consultants, equipping them with the essential tools and support they need to remain competitive. These women-owned businesses may also seek out valuable advice from capacity-building services to help them develop and strengthen the skills and processes they'll need to adapt and thrive in a fast-changing world.

"Fairfax City's women-owned businesses drive economic growth and innovation," said Economic Development Director Chris Bruno. "These businesses mean so much to our City and the local economy here in Northern Virgin-

ia. This grant opportunity aims to support these local leaders as they continue to inspire everyone by achieving business success here in Fairfax City."

Grant applications are now open and will remain that way until all five grants are awarded. All awardees will be notified no later than Sept. 20 and will be honored during a special luncheon on Sept. 25.

To be eligible for this grant, businesses must be women-owned, licensed within Fairfax City, for-profit, and have one or more locations in the City. Those eligible for a grant include home-based businesses, start-ups or expanding businesses.

"We are very proud of the women business owners who have chosen to establish their businesses here in the City, many venturing into this role for the first time," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "Investing in their success means finding ways to help them sustain their operations. Our Economic Development Department continues to develop programs that address the many facets of business ownership, and we will remain creative in how we support our local businesses."

To apply for a grant, go to <https://gofairfaxcity.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/WE-GO-Application.pdf>.

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## Donate Clothing and Supplies to The Lamb Center

The Lamb Center (TLC), a nonprofit, daytime drop-in center for the homeless, is in urgent need of food, supplies and clothing for its guests. Any donations would be greatly appreciated. Here are the most-needed items this month:

❖ Supplies: Bath towels, 13-gallon trash bags with drawstrings (unscented only; they're used for laundry); small bars of soap (travel-sized); sturdy, 9" paper plates (no Styrofoam); sturdy, disposable 16-ounce bowls (no Styrofoam); disposable heavy-duty cutlery; and laundry detergent.

❖ Clothing: TLC's clothes closet is almost out of the following items for men: Men's jeans (30-38" waist); men's and women's sweatpants, all sizes; men's sweatshirts (M-XXL); men's belts (30-48"); lightweight socks (black and white); and men's sneakers (sizes 8-13). Except for the socks, lightly used clothes are fine.

Anyone who'd like to organize a clothing drive for these items may contact Marisa Alonso, development manager, at [marisay-alonso@thelambcenter.org](mailto:marisay-alonso@thelambcenter.org).

All donations may be delivered to The Lamb Center at 3160 Campbell Drive in Fairfax, Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Saturday, 9-11 a.m. (Donations cannot be accepted outside of these hours).

# 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 7

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

SEE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES, PAGE 6



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

# Celebrating Innovative, Reimagined Coyote Grille

Fairfax City restaurant offers upscale Central and South American food.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

The old Coyote Grille in Fairfax City served Tex-Mex food. The newly revamped and remodeled Coyote Grille is a cool, chic, upscale restaurant featuring a modern and creative menu from a different part of the globe.

“We serve South American and Central American dishes with some French techniques and presentation, because the chef is classically French trained,” said Zack Savage, front-of-the-house manager. “And the food is seasonal and as fresh as we can make it.”

The chef is his dad, Chris Savage, who’s proud of both his menu and his seven-person kitchen staff – most of whom are from Honduras and all of whom are female.

“I give my cooks techniques and make their dishes aesthetically pleasing, and they give me authenticity – a lot of the menu items are from them,” said Chris. Savage. “And it’s by far the best kitchen experience I’ve ever had. Our kitchen has a great atmosphere; we listen to good music and sing and dance.”

“We’re trying to provide a unique dining opportunity, and business is growing every week,” he continued. “We’re completely different than anything around here, and our staff reflects the community.”

The most popular entree is Peruvian Chicken and Papusas. It’s smoked chicken cooked sous vide (slowly, over low heat, for a long time) to make it more tender and lock in the marinated flavors, with corn masa stuffed with cheese and seared. Another big hit is the Carne Asada made with flavorful hanger steak, marinated for a couple days and sous vide for 6-8 hours. It’s then quickly grilled to caramelize it and served with guacamole and tortillas.

Chef Savage also recommends the Moqueca – a Brazilian stew from the state of Bahia. It’s made with lobster, squid, scallops, shrimp, mussels and oysters quickly steamed and sauteed in a tomato-coconut broth with white wine.

Coyote Grille also offers vegetarian dishes, such as tacos, arepas and tostadas made with plant-based chorizo and tofu with black beans, cabbage and pico de gallo. And a tropical fruit salad – to which scallops may be added – features baby field greens, pineapple, mango, strawberry papaya and goat cheese fritters in a light citrus

vinaigrette.

The large menu offers appetizers such as Elote – grilled corn on the cob with chipotle mayo, lime and southwest spice; and a beef short rib empanada with mole sauce and red-pepper relish. And the creative sandwiches include a Nacho Burger – a half-pound burger smothered in nacho cheese, sauteed onions, jalapenos and a fried egg and topped with avocado, tomato and crisp greens.

There’s also a wide variety of fajitas, arepas, tostadas and tacos, as well as tasty side dishes. And among the dessert offerings are house-made Tres Leches Layer Cake, Mexican hot chocolate with house-made churros, a tropical fruit lime tart, and Banana Cheesecake Flautas - banana cheesecake deep-fried inside a tortilla.

Coyote Grille is at 10266 Main St. in Fairfax City’s Main Street Marketplace shopping center. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Closed Mondays. It offers Sunday brunch, happy hours, a private dining room and an all-seasons patio bar.

The former Coyote Grille closed last fall, and the brand-new restaurant opened this spring. And it was recently filled with well-wishes who gathered for its official ribbon cutting.

“Coyote Grille is back and better than ever,” said Tara Borwey, programs manager with Fairfax City Economic Development. “I’ve heard so much positive feedback from the community, and we feel honored to be part of this celebration today.”

Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read then noted that among the attendees was Lydia Russo, founder of Vienna Foodies, which fed people during the pandemic and still provides meals for people needing emergency help. “Our restaurant community isn’t just Fairfax City, it’s Vienna, also,” said Read. “And Manny Andrade, one of the owners here, also has a foot in both communities.” He owns The Virginian, a breakfast restaurant in Vienna.

“We’re honored that Manny and his business partner, Albert Lee, decided to take this space, and a much-beloved restaurant, and reimagine it,” continued Read. “And this really is reimaged. So people going, ‘Coyote Grille, whatever happened to that?’ you need to come back. My husband Tom and I love the food here. It’s got its own flavor, it’s very fresh and the wine list is amazing. I love the cocktails,



Father and son Chris and Zack Savage, with appetizer-sized tostadas with Peruvian chicken, pico de gallo and Salvadoran crema.



Chef Chris Savage holds a plate of Argentinean Churrasco – Peruvian red potatoes and flank steak marinated in and topped with chimichurri.



From left, Dawn McGruder, Patrick Soleymani, Catherine Read, Tom Ross and Albert Lee listen to Tara Borwey speak.

and I love the décor and ambience of this place.

“Everything about Coyote Grille is so lovely; I invite everybody to come out and experience it for themselves. And Chef Chris Savage is a premier chef who also does high-end catering. We’re always grateful and honored when a business chooses to open in the City of Fairfax. We hope you feel valued and supported and feel the love from the City. And we know residents and visitors walking through your doors will be just as impressed dining here as I’ve been,” Read said.

Welcoming everyone, Lee said how excited he was. “When rebranding this restaurant, the main thing was staying authentic to ourselves, our kitchen staff and the community at large,” he explained. “Manny is El Salvadorian, and we’re so lucky to be able to bring some of his generational recipes here – but via a modern, local lens

SEE CELEBRATING, PAGE 5

Albert Lee addresses the crowd.



# Celebrating Innovative, Reimagined Coyote Grille

FROM PAGE 5

through our brilliant chef, Chris Savage.

“Likewise, our kitchen staff is entirely Central and South American. They give us ideas and food tips every day. Some of our dishes come from meals they’ve made for us. Of course, as anyone who grew up in Fairfax knows, we’re surrounded by wonderful South and Central American food. And to be able to offer an elevated take on those cuisines that are so entrenched in this community is really important to us. So again, welcome to the new Coyote Grille; we hope to serve you for years to come.”

City Councilmember Tom Ross noted that, when he moved to the City 44 years ago, many residents wanted it to stay a small town that didn’t engage much with outsiders. “Today that world has changed – demographically, economically and in the way we think – and it’s a credit to Fairfax’s past and present mayors and leadership. This is a wonderful community, and I hope the things we’ve started will continue for our future generations.”

Lastly, Jennifer Rose, executive director of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, summed things up. “This Coyote Grille is a whole, new world,” she said. “It’s delicious and beautiful, and we’re thrilled to have this iconic City business back in business.”



Mayor Catherine Read (center) cuts the ribbon for the reimagined Coyote Grille.

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Proposed Limited Access Control Change  
I-95/I-495 On-Ramp at  
South Van Dorn Street  
Fairfax County  
Willingness for Public Comment**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) invites you to review information about a proposed change in limited access control on the I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway) ramp from northbound South Van Dorn Street (Route 613) to northbound I-95/eastbound I-495.

The purpose of this requested change in the limited access line is to include the existing on-ramp built in 1997 within the limited access. This project will involve changes in limited access control.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE) was prepared under an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed change on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is also included in the PCE.

Materials are available for review online at <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/VanDorn> or by contacting the VDOT Project Manager, Ms. Tienjung "Tina" Ho, P.E. at 703-259-2752 or TTY/TDD 711 to review the materials.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board will consider the proposed limited access change at a future meeting.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied, VDOT is willing to hold a public hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Ms. Tienjung "Tina" Ho, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 on or prior to **September 6, 2024**. If upon receiving public comments it is deemed necessary to hold a public hearing, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be posted.

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, as amended. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

**NEWS**



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.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

**Changes and Challenges Ahead in Changing County**

FROM PAGE 3

percent 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 max-

SEE CHANGES AND, PAGE 7

**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.



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.

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# Changes and Challenges Ahead in Changing County

FROM PAGE 6  
imize 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

SEE CHANGES AND, PAGE 11

## 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>

[edu/cell-phone-policy](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](http://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

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American Legion Color Guard tops the Veteran Bridge horizon



New garrison commander David Stewart and Supervisor Rodney Lusk follow the Color Guard across Veterans Bridge



American Legion Historic Color Guard members Anthony Esteve, Peter Tuttle, Royes Gernandt prepare to join the walk in historic uniforms



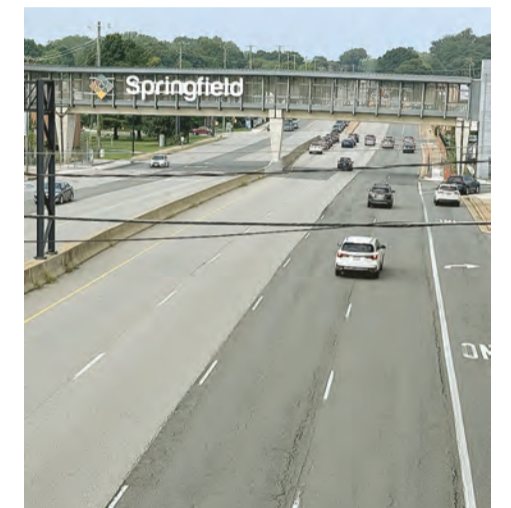
Boy Scout Troops 4673 and 1518 walk the bridge



Veterans Bridge built in the 80s is amid revitalization efforts, such as the commuter parking garage standing behind it



Kimberly Palmer sang the National Anthem for the ceremony



View of Old Keene Mill Road from atop the Veterans Bridge leads the eye into the business section of Springfield

# Springfield Continues Bridge Walk Tradition

## Community Covenant between Fort Belvoir and Springfield celebrated anew.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

For nearly two decades, neighbors, businesses, civic organizations and representatives of Fort Belvoir military command have gathered to walk over Springfield's Veterans Bridge as a united community. The walk and ensuing celebration, hosted by American Legion Post 176, includes signing the Community Covenant, an agreement to solidify the strong ties between the greater Springfield community, veterans and Fort Belvoir. Franconia Su-

pervisor, Rodney Lusk, calls the partnership "unique and special," saying, "With the signing of the covenant, we prioritize communication and collaboration, which together ensure a successful partnership."

This year's Aug. 17 walk, the first since 2019 due to Covid 19, began at Bland Street and Amherst Avenue, making a symbolic crossing of Veterans Bridge in Springfield's Revitalization District.

Lusk introduced new Fort Belvoir garrison commander Col. David J. Stewart to the community. Moving to the area in 2019, Stewart held prior positions at the Pentagon,

and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, before his assignment to the Fort Belvoir garrison command position on Aug. 8. Also introduced, new Mount Vernon District Police station commander, Marisa Kuhar; members of the State legislature, Delegates Kathy Tran and Mark Sickles; Supervisor Dan Storck, and American Legion Post 176 Commander, Kevin Gaddis.

Fort Belvoir and its families significantly contribute to the County's economy. The base is the largest employer in Fairfax County, with nearly 26,000 service members, Department of Defense civilians and contractors. In addition, there are more than 2,100 families that call Fort Belvoir home; Springfield has a population of approximately 31,339 (2020 Census).

The Bridge Walk initially began to mark the installation of new lighting on Veterans Bridge, located in central Springfield. The bridge provides a link to both sides of Springfield's Commercial Revitalization District. Along with District acorn lights, wide sidewalks, pedestrian stairway and attractive façades, the bridge linkage symbolizes the vision for a revitalized Springfield, providing an attractive gateway to the central business district. The four color diamonds decorating the bridge display the color logo for the revitalization efforts; also seen on the new commuter garage.

Other new District improvements expected include: 140 bed boutique hotel, construc-

tion beginning this year; 400 unit multi-family housing; a 240,000-square-foot data center; new 750,000-square-foot hospital space; and a coming mural project with details yet to be announced.

Franconia museum historian Nathaniel Cary Lee shares that the bridge was built in the 80s and was updated in the early 2000s. Last inspected in December 2023, it was rated "a good bridge" by VDOT.

Entertainment by dancers of Morgan Legacy Irish Dance Academy, music, a routine by the Friends of Richard Byrd Library with their book carts, and craft and information tables and refreshments added to the event at the American Legion Post 176 grounds.



Color Guard stands during remarks by Fort Belvoir Commander Col. David J. Stewart

PHOTOS BY  
SUSAN LAUME/  
THE CONNECTION



Members of the Legion Riders, motorcycle enthusiast group motor the bridge



The Woman's Club of Springfield, recently recognized for 70 years of community service, joins the bridge walk



Friends of Richard Byrd library glam up their book carts to participate



Not your school's quiet library and scholarly calm librarians, one member noted, "We're not in the library now!"



Commander Col. David J. Stewart and Supervisor Rodney Lusk display the signed Community Covenant



Neighborhood & Community Service's Leslie Hernandez adds a butterfly to the face of high school junior, Lynn Corpus, of Alexandria



Members of the Morgan Legacy Academy perform Irish dance

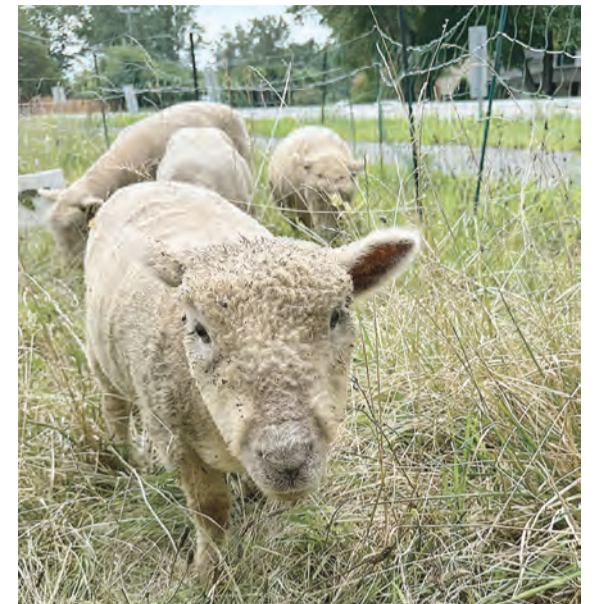




The LambMowers crew arrives in their lamb trailer and immediately begin their work.



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.**

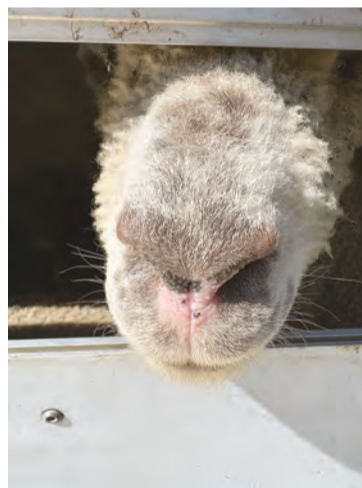
BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

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-fulls 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



**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 <sup>1</sup>	118%	113%	-	-
Centreville HS <sup>2</sup>	118%	104%	127%	113%
Pine Spring ES	116%	103%	-	-
Chantilly HS	116%	104%	132%	118%

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

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

Sources:

1. FCPS, Certified Membership, September 2023.

SCREENSHOT FCPS.EDU

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

# Changes and Challenges Ahead in Changing County

FROM PAGE 7

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 superintendent 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 percent, 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>]



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.

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Starting September 9  
Mondays  
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
Church of the Good Shepherd  
100 W. Luray Ave, Alexandria

[encorecreativity.org](http://encorecreativity.org)

# ENTERTAINMENT

## AUG. 10 TO OCT. 13

**Life's a Stitch.** 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. 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 Svlav 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.youtube.com/lessonzero) and [www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://Oakcrest.org).

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# 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. "MWA 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 MWA's own wage policy. Just as MWA 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.

## Man Convicted for Springfield Mail Theft Ring

A federal jury convicted a Springfield man Aug. 15 on three charges of possessing and receiving stolen mail.

According to court records and evidence presented at trial, Kenshaun Thompson, 26, participated in a conspiracy to steal mail on several occasions in October 2023. Thompson's co-conspirator, Adam Bekele, 33, of Annandale, accessed several mailboxes including the mailbox at the West Springfield

Post Office on Rolling Road and took the mail from the box into a vehicle. On multiple occasions, and specifically on Oct. 24, 25, and 26, 2023, Bekele transported the stolen mail to an apartment in Falls Church where he transferred it to Thompson, who knew when he received the mail that it had been stolen.

On Feb. 22, Bekele pled guilty to conspiracy to commit mail theft. He faces a maxi-

mum penalty of five years in prison when he is sentenced on Oct. 3.

Thompson faces a maximum of 15 years in prison, five years for each count of receiving stolen mail. Sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 5. 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.

## 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 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

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://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](http://mcleancenter.org), and will be available at the center's front desk beginning on Thursday, Sept. 12.

## 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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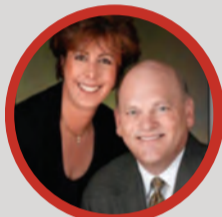
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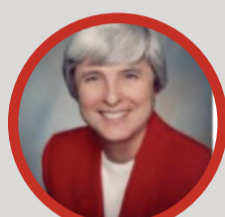
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