

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ♦ Chantilly ♦ Great Falls ♦ Herndon ♦ McLean ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Oakton
Reston ♦ Vienna ♦ Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton

Six of the young lads in the O'Brien family enjoy the 27th Annual CCÉ O'Neill Malcom Irish Folk Festival with their mom and dad at Arts Herndon on Saturday, Sept. 28.



Marking Black Contributions

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Fairfax City, Herndon Town Elections

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Saying No to Casino

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Irish Festival Comes to Herndon

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION WALKING TO END ALZHEIMER'S, PAGE 4 ♦ OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 14-17 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 18



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NEWS

Historical Marker Unveiled and Dedicated

Celebrates the legacy of Robert Gunnell and Gunnell's Chapel.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Black/African American Historical Marker Project celebrated its second installation, this one in Clemyjontri Park, 6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean, on Sept. 21. Fairfax County officials, community members, and Haycock Elementary students and staff gathered to mark the unveiling and dedication ceremony of the Robert Gunnell and Gunnell's Chapel marker. It is part of the Fairfax County Student Marker Project. Gunnell was one of Fairfax County's African-American landowners who played a significant role in its history.

Robert Gunnell and his family founded the Methodist church on the site, which became a center of life for Blacks in the area from the late 1800s until the late 20th century.

According to Jeffery C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the marker celebrates Gunnell's Chapel. McKay emphasized that sharing stories and ensuring we are telling our full history is important. McKay said it is a way for the county: "To focus on equity and to do better ... always to make sure we know what our past is and how we can learn from that and improve."

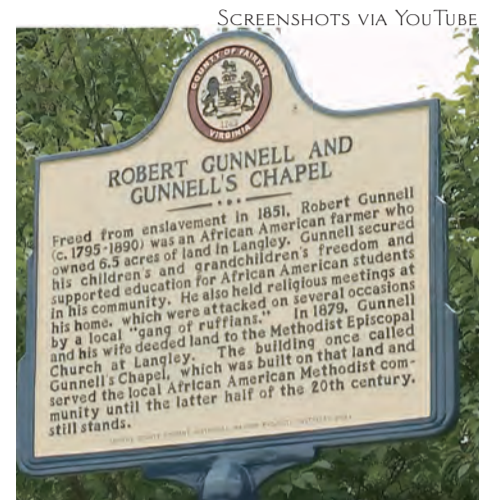
Student Noa Herz said that after the students came across Gunnell's Chapel, they researched it and learned that "it was a school and church for Black people. ... I know that



Unveiling the Fairfax County Black/African American Historical Marker at Gunnell's Chapel.



Student Noa Herz listens as student Carys Barnes speaks.



Black/African American Historical Marker at Gunnell's Chapel, part of the Fairfax County Student Marker Project

Black people didn't get a lot of opportunities to worship and have a good education, so we wanted to share this with the world."

Dalia A. Plachik, Providence District Supervisor, said that Gunnell's Chapel was among the numerous student nominations the board received for the marker project. "But I think what's so powerful is that it's not just about putting up the marker, right? It really is about learning in the classroom and learning out of the classroom, and for our kids to take pride in turn, learning a little bit more of the history of our community."

In 2021, the county launched the Black/African American Historical Marker Project. For additional information, go to fairfaxcounty.gov and search for Black Historical Marker.

New Food Bank Distribution Center in Newington

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

In one of the most wealthy sections of the country, there are still those that go hungry in Fairfax County. Recently the Capital Area Food Bank opened an expanded food distribution center in the Newington area in a 43,000 square foot building on Cinder Bed Road.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors allocated \$5 million for the project which is a building that can store not only non-perishable goods, but refrigerated and frozen food as well.

Chairman Jeff McKay joined Supervisor Rodney Lusk and other officials last week to cut the ribbon on the new building.

"I am proud that the Board of Supervisors allocated \$5 million for this massive project that will positively impact so many people across the DC metropolitan area," said Lusk.

The new facility is named the Bedford Falls Foundation Northern Virginia Distribution Center, in recognition of a leadership gift given to the building fund from the foundation of long-time Capital Area Food Bank supporter Bill Conway. The new distribution center is roughly 3.5 times larger than the previous building, which was torn down last year to rebuild on the same site. The added size and upgraded technology now allow Capital Area Food Bank to distribute more than twice the amount of food in Northern Virginia, including more fresh produce and frozen protein. The expansion also provides more space for CAFB's partner nonprofits, and enables the food bank to offer volunteering opportunities in Northern Virginia for the first time, they said.

A CAFB-NORC general population survey found that 37% of households experienced food inse-

SEE NEW FOOD BANK, PAGE 18



Supervisor Rodney Lusk with Del. Mark Sickles and Del. Kathy Tran at the new Capital Area Food Bank warehouse.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



From left, Thad Nowak, Benji Nowak, Tim Nowak, Connie Nowak, Mark Shirey, Carol Shirey. "Impressive, positive energy at the walk. The Polish Power Walkers team had a great time."



Susan Coyle, Kate Coyle and Lynn Anderson of Great Falls



Walking for four loved ones who died.

Walking to End Alzheimer's

Improving treatment through pharmaceuticals and care for the growing population through legislation.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The 829 registered participants from 156 teams in Sunday's Walk to End Alzheimer's Northern Virginia, held at Reston Town Center, understood that each dollar they raised and each step they took that day would support the Alzheimer's Association's fight to #ENDALZ. More than likely, they were aware that the FDA-approved pharmaceutical treatments, such as aducanumab and lecanemab in 2021, could play a role in slowing down the cognitive decline of Alzheimer's. Still, the pharmaceuticals are not cures for Alzheimer's, that results in loss of brain cells and function.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, according to the CDC. Alzheimer's disease is eventually fatal. There is no cure. According to the Alzheimer's Association, Stages of Alzheimer's, the average life expectancy for someone living with Alzheimer's disease is four to eight years after diagnosis. However, some people may live for as long as 20 years or more.

Some participants, like Susan Coyle, Kate Coyle and Lynn Anderson of Great Falls, said it was "fantastic to be at Walk for Alz supporting the cause." They carried purple Promise Flowers, which are for those individuals who have lost someone to the disease. Susan Coyle said her husband died of the disease in 2021. "He had it for three to four years," she said.

Standing at the microphone under the Reston Town Center's open-air pavilion, speaker Congressman Gerry Connolly told how Alzheimer's disease is a leading cause of death in the United States. Facing him, walk participants created a meadow of 800 plus raised Promise Garden flowers, everyone crammed in tight under the pavilion and spilling over onto the sidewalks and streets. Each participant was given a Promise Garden flower in the color that best represented their diverse connection to the disease. A blue flower represents someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia.

According to Connolly, over 6 million Americans now live with Alzheimer's, and 1 in 9 people aged 65 and older has Alzheimer's disease. Because baby boomers live longer, the Alzheimer's Association estimates that number will triple by 2050.

In the crowd stood Thad Nowak and Connie Shirey, members of the Polish Power Walkers team, both holding blue flowers.

Connolly said it was critical to provide the necessary resources to help tackle the demands of Alzheimer's disease and the disease itself. Connolly said that his grandmother received a diagnosis of Alzheimer's and watching her fade away before his eyes was one of the most difficult things he had to deal with growing up. Connolly explained that he couldn't fully comprehend the toll it was taking at the time, not only on her but also on his family.

Thad Nowak and Connie Shirey did not stand alone holding their blue flowers. Gathered close to them, Benji Nowak, Tim Nowak,

Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

According to Connolly, this year alone, the cost estimate for providing care to individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia was over \$345 billion, and by 2050, these costs could rise to nearly \$1 trillion. Connolly said for Fiscal Year 2025, he requested increases of \$318 million for Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health and significant investments in the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, which bolsters the public health infrastructure for Alzheimer's and dementia.

Connolly said he has tried to do all he could during his time in public service to ensure that every family going through this struggle has better access to care, support, and more treatment options. Connolly supported the S.134 - Alzheimer's Accountability and Investment Act to ensure a strategy for all medical research dollars going into the search for Alzheimer's treatments and cures. This bill passed in the Senate on July 30, 2024, and goes to the House next for consideration.

Connolly backed the H.R. 7688- Accelerating Access to Dementia and Alzheimer's Provider Training Act (AADAPT Act), which would bolster training on dementia and treatment to primary care providers to better detect, diagnosis and treat Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia and deliver high-quality, person-centered care in community-based settings. The bill is in committee. Connolly is a cosponsor of the S.626 - Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer's Act. It aims to improve care coordination for Alzheimer's patients, their doctors, and caregivers.

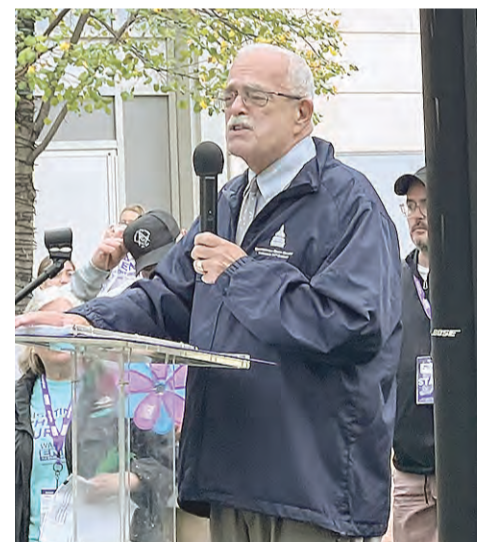


PHOTO BY ANH "AP" PHAN

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly

Pharmaceutical progress against Alzheimer's disease grows. Cindy Schelhorn, senior director of communications and marketing for the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter, said that FDA-approved Alzheimer's medications fall into two categories: drugs that temporarily ease some symptoms and drugs that change disease progression in people living with the disease. Lecanemab and donanemab, specifically, aim to decelerate the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Schelhorn explained, "This is why early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's is more important than ever."

According to a 2023 news release by Eisai, the manufacturers of LEQEMBI™ (lecanemab), the company announced that they set the U.S. launch price of the drug



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The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority is finalizing its Master Plan for Washington Dulles International Airport. The Airport Master Plan is a comprehensive study that describes short, medium and long-term improvements proposed for the airport. It is designed to establish a roadmap for incremental development to meet future aviation demand and other airport needs for the next 25 years.

The master planning process is designed as an inclusive process that encourages citizen participation. A public open house workshop will be held to provide information on the preferred development alternative for the airport. Representatives from the Airports Authority and its consulting team will be available to answer questions and receive comments on the ongoing master planning analyses and preliminary recommendations.



For additional information, please scan the QR code or visit us at the website below: <https://www.flydulles.com/about-airport/master-plan/dulles-international-airport-master-plan>
 The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Master Plan team can also be contacted at: IADMaster.Plan@mwa.com



PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE

Last week, the VA-TF1 team loaded up the trucks to head south.

Local Fire and Rescue Teams Battled Helene in Florida

BY MIKE SALMON
 THE GAZETTE

After packing up 30 tons of equipment, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue team VA-TF1 headed off for Florida to meet Helene last week. Hurricane Helene gained strength to Category 4 (out of possible 5) wreaking havoc on the houses and people of the sunshine state.

The individual members of VA-TF1 might be at home watching the storm on the television news, but when the phone rings, "it is get up and go," said John Morrison, the

team's spokesperson.

There are a total of 220 members and dogs on the team but for this effort for Helene, 80 people and four dogs were sent. The team also consists of doctors and engineers. How long they stay and what the conditions are going to be like are things they don't know but typically it's about two weeks, Morrison said. The county officials behind the effort work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, familiarly known as FEMA.

The storm was still in the Gulf of Mexico stewing before heading inland on Friday,

SEE LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE, PAGE 7



Last week, the VA-TF1 team loaded up the trucks to head south.

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Local Fire and Rescue Teams Battled Helene in Florida



On Saturday, VA-TF1 members conducted primary searches on buildings in Treasure Island, Fla., checking for damage and any victims needing assistance. The team has been reassigned north and is traveling to the Carolinas to provide additional assistance.

FROM PAGE 6

Sept. 27. The path on the weather forecasts showed it going inland instead of up the coast but it's never a sure thing. According to a National Weather Service report mid-day on Friday, "HELENE is forecast to move inland, heading northwestward to the Ohio Valley, and slowly weaken by Saturday. Showers and thunderstorms with heavy rain will develop over parts

of the Southern Appalachians and southern Mid-Atlantic.

Around the same time, four members of the swift water rescue team from the City of Fairfax responded to the Floyd County, Va. area in anticipation of heavy rains and flooding from Hurricane Helene. They have been evacuating residents, completing welfare checks, and conducting damage assessments along the New River

in southwestern Virginia.

On Sunday, Sept. 29, the team was mopping up after the storm fizzed out in the Midwest, but it had left much damage in Florida where the Fairfax County Fire and

Rescue team was located. They kept in touch through social media and as of "Update #6," on Sunday morning, "all VA-TF1 team members are safe and well in Orlando," the report said.

Next up is named Kirk, predicted at 90% chance of becoming a cyclone within 7 days, but whether it or other storms could pose a problem for particular areas on land still remains to be seen.

Virginia Parks, Natural Area Preserves Closed Due to Storm

Nine Virginia State Parks and four natural area preserves are closed or partially closed following significant damage caused by Hurricane Helene. These closures will allow for thorough assessments and necessary repairs to the affected areas. All dates are subject to change.

Virginia State Parks

- ❖ Grayson Highlands: Closed through Oct. 14.
 - ❖ Hungry Mother: Closed through Oct. 14.
 - ❖ Natural Tunnel: Closed. Will reopen on Oct. 3.
 - ❖ New River Trail: Closed until further notice.
- All campgrounds are closed through Feb. 28, 2025.
- ❖ Seven Bends: The park (both access points) is closed until further notice.
 - ❖ Claytor Lake: All boat ramps inside the marina and other public boat ramps on the lake are closed due to excessive debris. Swimming and launching kayaks and other small watercraft are not allowed.
 - ❖ Clinch River: Riverside Trail at the Sugar Hill Unit and the day-use cartop boat launches at Artrip, Carbo and Old Castlewood in Russell County are closed until further notice.

❖ James River: The Green Hill picnic area, Branch Pond Road and Branch Pond Campground are closed until Oct. 4.

❖ Powhatan: River Launch Rd., Launch A and the primitive/canoe-in campground are closed until further notice. All trails are closed to bikes and horses until further notice.

Natural Area Preserves

- ❖ The Channels: Closed.
- ❖ Pinnacle: Closed.
- * Buffalo Mountain: Closed through Oct. 14.
- ❖ Cleveland Barrens: Closed beyond Tank Hollow Falls.

For guest safety as well as the safety of DCR staff and emergency response workers, visitors should not attempt to access any parks, preserves or areas that are closed.

Virginia State Parks will contact guests with overnight reservations impacted by these closures. Visitors with questions about trail conditions, special events and educational programs should check the park's webpage for more information at virginia.stateparks.gov/find-a-park. To learn more, see dcr.virginia.gov/closures.

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OPINION

Frank Wolf: Casino Would Bring Many Unwanted Problems to N. Va.

Congressman Frank Wolf (retired) wrote a letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors which is shared with the Connection. Wolf lives in Vienna.

I am writing to urge you to tell Sen. Dave Marsden that you are opposed to his proposed legislation to allow a casino in Fairfax County and to ask him to withdraw it from consideration when the Virginia General Assembly reconvenes in January 2025. I would also recommend that you share Sen. Marsden's casino plans and your opposition to those plans with your constituents. We need as many voices as possible speaking up against a casino in Reston, Tysons, or elsewhere in Fairfax County.

I'm familiar with the various arguments that those concerned with potential process ramifications have made, as well as the arguments in favor and in opposition to a casino.

While concerns have been expressed that public opposition by you to casino legislation would damage Fairfax County's ability to achieve its legislative goals or result in further State restrictions being placed on the County's legislative authorities, I sincerely doubt that either would happen, particularly if we stand united regionally. I expect that down-state legislators would know of the power of our local delegation and would not want to set precedents that could come back to bite them.

While casino proponents continue to argue that a casino would increase Fairfax County's tax revenues and thereby decrease the need to raise property taxes or reduce services to balance the County budget in future years, the argument is dead wrong. Casinos do not grow local economies and are not the answer to balancing local budgets. In fact, casinos do considerable damage to local businesses.

The tax revenue data reported by state tax and gaming authorities in states that have hosted casinos for years is clear: In the first few years, tax revenues increase in both real and inflation-adjusted terms. But over time, the inflation-adjusted tax revenues are flat or trend downward. This is true, for example, in nearby Pennsylvania, which has had state-authorized casino gambling since late 2006. This would be

true in Virginia and in Fairfax County as well. Plus, for every \$1 in casino tax revenue, the social costs in crime and added welfare payments associated with casinos are estimated by scholars to be between \$3-12 dollars.

My biggest personal concern, however, with having a casino in Fairfax County is what it might do to the fabric of Fairfax County, the Town of Vienna, and surrounding communities. A casino would upend the lives of so many families. We should not ignore the recent, compelling testimony before the Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission in Richmond that summarized how gambling affects the fabric of our society:

As Brianne Doura-Schawohl, the former vice president of U.S. Policy and Strategic Development for global harm prevention consultancy EPIC Risk Management and now head of Doura-Schawohl Consulting LLC, told the assembled group:

❖ Problem gambling is not just a personal problem, it's a family, community and state problem. One individual that struggles with gambling-related harm negatively impacts eight to 10 other individuals.

❖ About 5% of people who actively gamble will suffer from problematic gambling at some point.

❖ Or, as Dr. Carolyn Hawley, the president of the Virginia Problem Gambling Council and an associate professor in mental health counseling at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Allied Health Professions, stated: "We are seeing a huge demographic shift where people right at the beginning of their careers are now being devastated by developing a gambling disorder."

The impact that problem gambling has on people, on their families, on their work, and on their schools is significant. When you get people this early in their lives that are experiencing this condition, it's such a setback.

If you are skeptical of these scholars' findings, there is an older in-depth study on the impact of casinos in communities, published in 2013, from the Council on Casinos that makes the same points and goes even further in its

analysis. The Council, an independent, non-partisan group of scholars and leaders, examined the role of casinos in American life. The study was funded by the Bodman Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation and other contributors to the Institute for American Values (IAV). While the IAV is no longer operational, the Council Report was archived by the Stop Predatory Gambling Foundation and can be found on its website. The line conclusion of the report states: "Evidence from the health and social sciences suggests that the new American casinos are associated with a range of negative health, economic, political, intellectual, and social outcomes. For this reason, we view state sponsorship of casino gambling as a regressive and damaging policy."

I also would point you to the American Gaming Association's 2022 report on human trafficking in the gaming industry which states in part, "Hospitality venues like casinos are used by traffickers to set up and conduct meetings or seek out potential buyers. Most of the victims are women and young girls; however, men and young boys also find themselves in these coercive scenarios and should not be overlooked."

Finally, I would note that the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5, which is used by healthcare providers and insurers as the principal source for mental health diagnoses, recognizes gambling as an addiction on the same level as heroin, cocaine and opioids.

I know of 24 local community organizations throughout the County and the Town of Vienna as well as numerous individuals that have expressed firm opposition to a casino in Fairfax County.

Fairfax County is a good place to live and raise our families and all of us want to keep it that way. As a community, we hope that you will speak out in the face of all this clear, nonpartisan economic, social and medical evidence.

I hope that you agree that a gambling casino in Tysons, Reston or elsewhere in Fairfax County would bring many unwanted problems to Northern Virginia. Along with thousands of Fairfax County residents, I firmly believe that a casino has no place here and I urge you all to speak out against it.

LETTERS

Confusing FCDC Sample Ballot

To the Editor:

Some might be confused or fooled by the names that will appear on the Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) sample ballot that will be distributed at the polls on Election Day.

Two Democrats are running for Herndon Mayor — Keven LeBlanc and Pradip Dhakal — and yet only Dhakal's name will be on the FCDC sample ballot. Nine candidates are running for Herndon town council, and yet only five names will appear on the FCDC sample ballot.

Those five all got onto the sample ballot unopposed, while the others refused to participate in partisan party politics for Herndon.

Our town founders, and many current residents, expressed that they want Herndon elections to stay nonpartisan. So how is it that FCDC weighed in to Herndon elections, when they did not weigh in to any other town elections? (e.g., Vienna or Clifton). It is because Councilmen Pradip Dhakal and Ce-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

Submit a Letter to the Editor

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Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy.

Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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LETTERS

Confusing FCDC Sample Ballot

FROM PAGE 8

sar del Aguila solicited the FCDC to get involved in Herndon's elections. At their request, the FCDC membership (only a fraction of whom are from Herndon) decided to conduct a caucus endorsement vote in Herndon.

FCDC decided that they would "allow the people of Herndon to vote" to decide which candidates FCDC should endorse. But they did not tell the Herndon residents that the caucus vote was occurring. Also, any town residents who were Republican, Libertarian, nonpartisan or who just did not want to declare any party, were not allowed to vote in the caucus. Some of those who tried to vote online had many technical issues, and were unable to vote. There are about 25,000 residents who live in Herndon and only about two percent of them voted in this caucus, which resulted in Dhakal winning by a small number. This caucus vote was not only statistically insignificant, and does not reflect the will of the Herndon voters, but it was also an unfair process.

The caucus vote was not a primary. In actual primaries, all Democrats would be running against

each other and the winner would advance to run in the general election. But not so with the FCDC caucus vote. The FCDC is a nonprofit organization and the only purpose of their caucus was to decide whose name would be put on their sample ballot. The FCDC sample ballot carries no more weight than any other organization's sample ballot that might be distributed at the polls.

Both LeBlanc and Dhakal — two Democrats — are still running for Mayor.

Dhakal and del Aguila worked to seek FCDC's involved in Herndon elections because they know if their name appears on the FCDC sample ballot, then those Herndon residents (who, demographically, are mostly Democrats) who show up on Election Day to vote for president will likely vote for whomever else is on the FCDC sample ballot as well. It also means that Dhakal and del Aguila will be more beholden to the FCDC than to Herndon residents.

I support nonpartisan elections in Herndon. I also support Keven LeBlanc for Mayor and I hope you will too.

Barbara Glakas
Herndon, VA



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Fairfax City Candidates Address Residents

Two are running for Mayor and 11 for City Council.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City’s mayoral and City Council candidates spoke directly to the voters during a Candidates Forum last Wednesday, Sept. 25, at the City’s Sherwood Center. Then, after brief speeches, they answered residents’ questions at tables around the room. The event’s main sponsors were the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. Speaking first were the two people vying for mayor, followed by the 11 candidates for six City Council seats.

Catherine Read

Holding up a framed chart that hangs in her office, incumbent Mayor Catherine Read said, “This is basically a breakdown of who voted since 2014 in local elections. And for most of the 60 years, voters in the City voted every other May for mayor and city council, and that was 20 percent.



Catherine Read

“In 2022, because the General Assembly changed the election from May to November – and there was a lot of opposition to that – 59 percent of the people voted in this City. So two-thirds of the people who voted in 2022 had never voted for mayor and city council before, and that’s important to recognize when we talk about how elections are changing here.

“The City of Fairfax Democratic Committee and, as far as I know, the Republican Committee in the City, had never endorsed candidates before 2022. But we did in 2022 because we understood that a lot of people coming to the polls had never participated in local elections. So with 2,000 people voting every other May, most people knew the political persuasion of most of the people that were running for mayor and city council.

“Fred Silverthorne was the mayor from 1978-1982 and is somebody we honor every year in the City of Fairfax Democratic Committee because he was a Democrat. I have received the Fred Silverthorne Award, [as have] a lot of other people in this City.

“So, I just want you to understand that what’s on the ballot – what we’re talking about – is not partisanship. It’s about what we stand for and what we want you to know about us as candidates, and I stand for the values of the Democratic Party.”

Susan Kuiler

Saying she’s running as an independent, challenger Susan Kuiler said she’ll listen to residents’ concerns and will work with City Council and staff to find “practical, nonpartisan solutions to keep our City safe, viable and affordable for all of us.



Susan Kuiler

“Early in my business career, I managed a store that went from losing money for the preceding seven years to turning a profit – and did it during an economic downturn. I did this by building a team. I drew on each member’s skills and ideas; and together, we achieved our goals. I’ve learned firsthand the power of a highly collaborative team.

“For the next 40 years, I worked in the public and private sectors in software development, program management and capital planning. I’m most proud of the disaster response and recovery systems we built for FEMA. Through collaboration, we reached consensus on what to do, and I led the execution of the solutions.

“As mayor, I’ll apply the same dedication and team-based approach to addressing the City’s problems. I’ll draw on my professional leadership experience. I’ll ask you how we can make the City better for all of us. Residents not only deserve to be heard, but also have a lot to contribute.

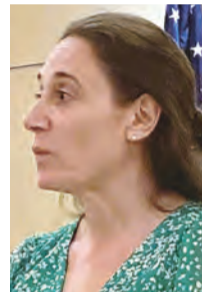
“I’ll seek out neighborhood and community input and City staff ideas, making sure our government is responsive to the issues of importance to the community. I care deeply about keeping local elections free from political-party influence. I’ll strive to gain and maintain the trust and support of all City residents. Most importantly, you’ll never hear me say, ‘I don’t have to listen to you because I’m now elected.’ I ask for your support on or before Nov. 5.”

City Council Candidates

The slate includes incumbents Billy Bates, Kate Doyle Feingold and Jeff Greenfield, plus challengers Anthony Amos, Amini Bonane, Taylor Geaghan, Stacy Hall, Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Rachel McQuillen, Tom Peterson and Jack Ryan. Their speeches below are in the order in which they spoke. Voters will vote for up to six candidates

Stacy Hall

Stacy Hall is serving her first term as a City of Fairfax school board member. Calling herself an independent, Stacy Hall said she sees each resident as “a concerned neighbor who cares deeply about the future of our City. Fairfax deserves leadership that’s committed, experienced and, above all, independent from party lines. Listening to our community is essential in decision making; this is your City and your opinion matters, especially when it comes to projects in your backyard. Engaging with you is the heart of effective leadership.



Stacy Hall

“We face important issues together – land development, taxes, school renovations and local laws – none of which should be viewed through a partisan lens. We need to ensure all residents feel safe, treat our vulnerable populations with dignity and work toward fully staffing our police, while actively reducing crime. Fiscal responsibility is crucial, too. We need to differentiate between needs and wants, making tough decisions about what we can truly afford, while continuing to provide outstanding City services to all. ...

“I’m focused on local issues; I’ve lived here since 2011. At my core, I’m just a mom who cares about our community. When asked to run for School Board, two years ago, I stepped up and accepted the challenge.”

Kate Doyle Feingold

In Texas for work that morning, Kate Doyle Feingold arrived late, so her husband David filled in for her. “I get to tell you things she’d never tell you, herself,” he said. “She received a double major from NYU, earned a law degree from one of the best schools in the country, was a Marine Corps judge advocate and earned a Ph.D from Mason – all while managing two daughters and one husband.”



Kate Doyle Feingold

“But more importantly, she’s caring and people-smart. She brings an incredibly strong work ethic to everything she does, and she’s a humble leader. Kate’s responsive to residents on big issues, like when she fought for Cobdale residents for a compromise on the Route 123/Eaton Place project. And she continues to fight to preserve the City’s natural environment.

“Kate’s also responsive to residents and businesses on small issues. She’s helped numerous individuals with their City-related problems and makes it a point of pride to respond to everyone who reaches out to her. Kate has integrity for miles; if she says it, she means it. She fights for transparency and doesn’t support making government decisions in secret. She’s whip smart and she’s an elected leader without being a politician.”

Rachel McQuillen

Currently on the City’s School Board, Rachel McQuillen also serves on Fairfax’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and is assistant treasurer of the Rotary Club of Fairfax. She and her family have lived in the Westmore neighborhood since 2010. Their oldest child is a Fairfax High senior, so, said McQuillen, “I’ve been part of that community for 12 years and served 10 years on the Providence Elementary PTA.”



Rachel McQuillen

She graduated from NVCC and GMU and has an associate’s degree in business administration and a bachelor’s in marketing. In 2018, she opened a dog-care and pet-training services business in the City. Prior to that, she worked in finance and accounting for 11-1/2 years.

“I’m running for City Council to provide thoughtful and collaborative leadership to our community,” said McQuillen. “I’m focused on improving public safety, enhancing communication, maintaining our excellent educational resources and prioritizing our environmental sustainability. I’m running as an independent to show that accurate representation doesn’t require large financial backing or a political party. Instead, it depends on your diligence and ability to listen to the community.”

Amini Bonane

“Many of you know me as a fun-loving, lighthearted person who doesn’t take life too seriously,” said Amini Bonane. “But the reason I’m running for City Council is a serious one.” She then related how her queer best friend was found dead in August 2016, in the woods near GMU, shortly after they’d both celebrated their 21st birthdays.



Amini Bonane

She said he’d still be alive today if he’d had access to resources available in Fairfax City. “Knowledge saves lives,” said Bonane. “My lifetime commitment to service has been to democratize access to services people need the most. As an advocate, I put people in touch with organizations who can help their specific needs.

“As a public servant, I practice heart-centered leadership to embody the values of transparency, honesty and accountability. I volunteered and led the Homelessness Task Force to create a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community.”

“I’m proud to be from here, but we need more leaders with lived experience who’ll listen to people, understand and not just respond. Instead of being distracted by our differences, let’s work together to make Fairfax accessible, safe and sustainable.”

Billy Bates

Billy Bates said his eighth-grade teacher stressed that local government “has the biggest impact on your life, more so than state or federal government, and I believe that’s true. That class was really where my interest in local government first blossomed.



Billy Bates

“And that’s why teachers are so important to society and to our City. When I ran for City Council, I wasn’t expecting to win, the first time around, but I wanted to bring specific positions on issues into the race [and I still do].

“And that goes to development and supportive affordable housing. We need to increase housing affordability and walkability in Old Town and throughout the City. I know a lot of students at GMU who love Old Town but wish they could walk around and feel safe while doing so. And they wish that more of the City was like Old Town.

“At the end of the day, I want to be open about who I am and where I stand, what my values are and what my background is. And yes, I’m endorsed by the Democratic Party and was involved in it for many years before I ran.”

Jeff Greenfield

“I’ve been involved in this community my entire adult life – whether serving on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the 2020 Commission or City Council, or raising money for charities I feel passionate about in the City of Fairfax,” said Jeff Greenfield.



Jeff Greenfield

“I love this community; giving back makes a big difference, and I’ve always enjoyed it. I feel strongly about where we’re at as a community. We have to pay attention to our schools and our seniors: our schools because we need a strong environment for our kids to learn, and our seniors because they’ve made this community what it is today.

“We need to bring our spending in line with a reasonable tax break. I think our spending has been a little out of control, the last few years. And we [need] a moderate development plan as a community – not just one year at a time but 30 years out. If you’ve reached out to me, I’ve never asked what your political beliefs are. I asked where you live, if you’re a City resident or City business owner, and how I can help. I’ve always listened to you, and I’ll continue to on the dais.”

Stacey Hardy-Chandler

“My campaign is about people and purpose; I’m a social worker,” said Hardy-Chandler. “I think we all want a City that’s robust and resilient. We’re going to be facing some really big challenges as a relatively small City, and we have to face them together. The word that describes all of that is my family name, ‘hardy.’ We want to be a hardy community because we’re concerned about our future.



Stacey Hardy-Chandler

“When I went around talking to people, getting on the ballot, I heard a lot of concerns. Some varied by neighborhood; but whether they were about infants, older adults, schools or housing, they all fell under one big umbrella – quality of life.

“You can look up my background; I’m not going through all that in too much detail. But my whole career has been about centering people, so [another important word] is ‘us.’ I’ve done direct practice, delivering services, I’ve taught at university level – including at George Mason – and I’ve served in senior management. But it’s all been about bringing communities together.

“So my campaign is about a hardy future for all of us. Let’s move Fairfax forward together.”

Tom Peterson

“I’ve worked 42 years as a professional in government, business, finance and in the nonprofit sector,” said Tom Peterson. “We’ve lived here 22 years. I’m a Fairfax County native and attended William & Mary, Duke and then the University of Texas to get my MBA.



Tom Peterson

I’ve founded and run a national nonprofit, The Center for Climate Strategies, for 20 years. It’s nonpartisan and designed to bring people together to solve problems at the state and local level, in and outside the U.S. We’ve worked in 20 countries, 40 states.”

“For 20 years, I’ve been a professor at Johns Hopkins University. I’m also a professor at George Mason and have taught at the Penn State law school. And before founding my nonprofit, I spent 10 years as an economist for the EPA, serving two years as a senior advisor in the White House and two years as a legislative aide.

I say this because I think this City’s reached the stage where we need people on our City Council who are able to address issues at a high level and, at the same time, listen closely to what the community needs.”

Anthony Amos

“As a military kid and local-government employee, you see a lot of things,” said Anthony Amos. “There’s a lot of angst and suffering around us. My partner and I moved to this City because the owner of a townhome we rented decided to move back in, and we had 60 days to find an affordable place to live.”



Anthony Amos

After moving elsewhere, they discovered their new abode was plagued with floods, bugs and critters, forcing them to sleep in their car or the bathtub. “Unfortunately, it’s not an uncommon occurrence here,” said Amos. “You learn a lot when knocking on doors. I share this because it’s a narrative seldom discussed in the City.

“It’s time for an affordable-housing renovation fund. And it’s time to launch a participatory budgeting pilot program where a portion of the City’s budget is allocated to a citizens task force – and you decide how it’s spent.

“It encourages more people to get engaged in local government, especially the youth and the underrepresented. We need to come together, regardless of creed or color, to promote and advocate for these ideas to form a more prosperous and democratic union.”

Jack Ryan

“Thank you to everyone for coming out tonight and supporting us,” said Jack Ryan. “I have deep roots here in the City of Fairfax. I grew up here, went to Sidney Lanier Middle School, then Fairfax High, and graduated back in 2007. The George Mason staff helped me get an ROTC scholarship to Penn State to achieve my dream of becoming a military officer in the Army.



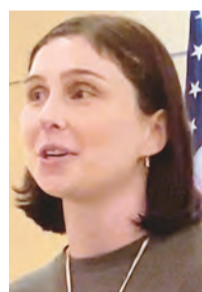
Jack Ryan

“There are a lot of great things about this City that deserve being preserved, and I think we can come together as a community. We have incredible people that live in the City with us – doctors, lawyers, Ph.Ds, service members, police officers. We can come together and figure out some of these complex problems that me and the other candidates have been talking to the community about.

“So I look forward to meeting all of you, if there’s time, at the end of the night. And for those I’ve already met, I look forward to engaging with you further. Thank you for everything you all do to support the community.”

Taylor Geaghan

One of Taylor Geaghan’s favorite things to do when she meets new people is to ask them what they love about Fairfax City. “The answers range from the area’s history to the culture and arts, to the overall quality of life,” she said. “Everyone’s answers are different – and valid. But one thing we agree on is that we love Fairfax City.



Taylor Geaghan

“And that’s what’s so special about the residents here. Even though we have different opinions and ideas of what makes Fairfax City so great, we can all come together and agree that we want to see it continue to thrive in the future.

“Some people want to capitalize on fear and make it seem like Fairfax is on the cusp of going over a cliff. But I don’t agree; no city is perfect. But this is my home – the place I want to raise my family and where I envision a better future for all.

“My vision for Fairfax City isn’t one of doom and gloom, but of hope – including expanding attainable housing initiatives, focusing on affordable and accessible childcare options and fostering a culture of inclusion and diversity.”

HERNDON ELECTIONS

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Pradip Dhakal, a current Town of Herndon councilmember, is a candidate for mayor.



Keven LeBlanc, a current Town of Herndon councilmember, is a candidate for mayor.



Mike Williams, incoming chair of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Fanny Salazar-Laske, Neighborhood Ambassador Opportunity Neighborhoods-Herndon.



Rev. Charles Cowherd, rector St. Timothy's Episcopal Church.



Candance Hunstad, principal, Herndon Elementary.

Town of Herndon Mayoral Candidate Forum

Dhakal and LeBlanc take on the challenge.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Sept. 30, the Town of Herndon Mayoral Forum hosted by Cornerstones and the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce focused on critical issues impacting the diverse community in the largest town within Fairfax County, home to 24,000 residents within its 4.2 square miles. Pradip Dhakal and Keven LeBlanc, current councilmembers, are the two mayoral candidates on the ballot this November at the general election on Nov. 5. Early voting is already underway.

Andy Larcher, chair of Cornerstones' board of directors, served as moderator. Each candidate gave a two-minute opening statement and answered questions from a panel of four community leaders representing faith, business, schools, and Opportunity Neighborhoods-Herndon. The Forum Planning Committee preselected questions based on community input.

Larcher said the committee was "overwhelmed" by the number of questions residents submitted, "the most input we've ever received," he said. The turnout at the forum caused organizers to relocate the event from its originally planned use of Trinity Presbyterian Church's fellowship hall to its sanctuary, which offered greater space.

What set the candidates apart from each other at the forum were the expanded and specific plans each candidate outlined. The following is a sampling of those comment topics and words.

Pradip Dhakal

❖ **Specific Affordable Housing Targets:** Dhakal proposed that the town aim for 20 percent affordable



The panel of four community leaders representing business, Opportunity Neighborhoods-Herndon, schools and faith asked pre-selected questions based on community input.

Attendees at the Town of Herndon moderated community forum with Town of Herndon Mayoral Candidates.

housing in the Comstock redevelopment area by providing a "density bonus" and suggested 15 percent in the rest of the town's development areas. Also, align 12 percent of affordable housing with the county's requirements. "We have to be intentional. It's not about the words; it's about the action."

❖ **Pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding with Fairfax County:** Dhakal suggested working with Fairfax County to create a memorandum of understanding to administer affordable housing programs.

❖ **Creating a Community Safety Task Force:** Dhakal proposed establishing a community safety task force as a liaison between the community and the police department.

❖ **Expanding the Neighborhood Watch Program:** Dhakal said he would advocate for expanding the Neighborhood Watch program in the town.

Keven LeBlanc

❖ **Comprehensive Plan and Town Manager Selection:** LeBlanc emphasized the importance of focusing on a well-structured com-

prehensive plan for the town's future and the critical role of the next council in selecting the right town manager.

❖ **Leveraging Federal and State Relationships:** LeBlanc mentioned his experience working at the federal level and the need to work with state legislators and organizations like the Northern Virginia Regional Commission to secure resources. LeBlanc said the town needs a quick way for residents to get to and from the Herndon Metro. LeBlanc said he would work with the state to fund a transportation pilot within a one-mile radius of the metro. "That will be critical for us to look at a trolley service, or similar service that will circulate."

❖ **Community Outreach and Engagement:** LeBlanc proposed holding town council roundtables and "Sunday dinners with the mayor" to engage with residents directly. He also discussed continuing successful community events, including the Holiday Homes Tour.

❖ **Preserving the Arts and Arts Center:** LeBlanc highlighted the importance of protecting the town's arts and arts center and empha-

sized that it had to be part of the negotiations around the Comstock redevelopment rather than being fully preserved as initially desired.

Dhakal and LeBlanc discussed several key issues with similar emphasis and needs. Herndon's mayor and town council members are non-partisan positions.

Affordable Housing: Candidates emphasized the importance of addressing affordable housing in the town and discussed the need for diverse housing options, not just legally defined "affordable" housing. They mentioned working with the county and developers to create more affordable and workforce housing.

Community Engagement and Diversity: Candidates stressed the importance of inclusive community events and celebrations to welcome and engage the town's diverse population. They discussed the need to support community organizations in their production efforts and cultural festivals to unite people.

Partnerships with County and State: Candidates highlighted the

importance of collaborating with Fairfax County and state legislators to secure resources and funding for the town's initiatives. They discussed working with the county on issues like transportation, affordable housing, and community programs.

Balancing Growth and Preservation: Both candidates acknowledged the need to balance the town's growth and development with preserving its historic charm and small-town feel. They recognized the challenge of managing this balance.

Police and Community Safety: The candidates discussed the importance of community policing, building relationships between the police and residents, and ensuring the town's safety.

As CEO of the Reston-based nonprofit Cornerstones and its affiliate, Cornerstones Housing Corporation, Kerrie Wilson thanked everyone who came out that night, the leaders in the community and others who helped them with the questions and "most importantly, show the face of our community."

Walking to End Alzheimer's

FROM PAGE 4

at \$26,500 per year. "Eisai continues to pursue a less frequent maintenance dosing regimen for LE-QEMBI, such as monthly instead of current biweekly regimen, upon significant amyloid beta clearance to prevent re-accumulation of amyloid beta biomarkers while maintaining clinical efficacy," states the 2023 news release.

On July 2, 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted full clinical approval to Eli Lilly to market donanemab, brand name Kisunla. Eli Lilly announced they set the drug's price at \$32,000 a year. Unlike the other therapies in this class, the drug's testing aimed to stop the treatment once the plaques had cleared the brain. The treatment cost will vary depending on the patient and the length of treatment.

Shelhorn said the Alzheimer's Association Center for Dementia Respite Innovation (CDRI) funds new respite care innovation projects nationwide. "Over the course of five years, the CDRI will award \$20 million in competitive grants to local respite care providers to improve and increase the delivery of person-centered dementia care with a focus on innovation, collaboration, outcomes, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability. We do not have a Fairfax County recipient in 2024."

There are two additional Promise Flowers. The orange one is for those who support the Alzheimer's Association's cause and vision of a world without Alzheimer's. The white one is reserved for the first person cured of Alzheimer's disease.



The Promise Garden Flowers offer a quick guide to each person's connection to Alzheimer's disease.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



'Fighting for a different future,' the 2024 Walk to End Alzheimer's - Northern Virginia held at Reston Town Center on Sept. 29.

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Local Film Festival is Peppered With Big Names and Ideas



GMU students entered their movie about women's basketball.



A scene from "1001 Cuts," about the world of surgery.

Films focus on positive change and the world around us.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Remember when helicopters were scrambled to deal with a runaway balloon that floated away with a six-year-old boy inside? What about documenting the melting glaciers in Iceland, an Afghan ski club, or the oldest woman scaling Yosemite's famed El Capitan? These are all just a glimpse of what will be showing at the Washington West Film Festival in early October.

This is the 13th annual Washington West Film Festival in Reston and Tysons that will be showing from Oct. 10-13t in theaters. Other films alongside of the Balloon Boy include "Searching for Amani," a Tribeca Film Award-winning movie, and "Watershed," the story of Mallory Weggemann, a five-time Paralympic medalist who was paralyzed at the age of 18 and found refuge in the pool as a swimmer. Filmmakers from George Mason University will also have some of their shorts featured in this festival.

The filmmakers involved are teaming up with Kevin Bacon's Charity, SixDegrees.org, and "Virginia's Kids Belong," to support fos-

ter children and build kits. The film festival will donate 100% of its box office proceeds to Virginia Kids Belong. There will be a special Footloose screening to celebrate its 40th anniversary with Kevin Bacon.

One activity aimed at making a difference will be filling backpacks for foster kids on Sunday Oct. 13, at 1 p.m. Filmmakers and other participants will be there, making a difference in another way.

The Big Picture

The film festival is aimed at bringing together people to celebrate world class film as well as creating inspiring stories of change for a world in need. Politics is big in the Northern Virginia area and it creates a division of thoughts amongst residents but the film festival is trying to bridge that gap.

"Our Founder's dream is that Washington West would, in this very divided city, bring people together who would otherwise never come together," WWFF said.

Although the variety of topics goes in several directions, filmmakers at George Mason University are involved with films by female filmmakers. Two of their entries are "1001 Cuts," and "Can't Retire From This." 1001 Cuts is a film about surgery, while "Can't Retire From This," follows women and girls in the DC metro area who find community and

inspiration in their youth basketball league.

Another area film is called "The Test," and is about a Ghanaian maintenance worker at a Virginia retirement community who dreams of becoming an American citizen to provide a better life for his family, so he enlists the help of two elderly residents to help him prepare for the US Citizenship exam.

Balloon Boy will be showing on Friday, Oct. 11, LOOK Dine-In Cinemas, 1667 Silver Hill Dr., McLean. Go to <https://wwfilmfest.com/> for the complete schedule..



In "1001 Cuts," filmmakers take a look at gender in the surgery industry.



A scene from "The Test," about studying for the citizenship test.

McLean Project for the Arts Secures New Space, \$500,000 in County Support for New Arts Center

McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) has secured a new space in the Signet Building in downtown McLean, setting the stage for the development of a state-of-the-art arts and education center. This new facility will complement MPA's current programming at the McLean Community

Center and is expected to open in September 2025.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to designate \$500,000 from the County's Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR) toward the construction of the new arts and education center. The EOR, designed to support "economic development activities

of strategic importance," will help fund the build-out of the downtown McLean location, ensuring the space becomes a cultural beacon for the community.

"The arts and education center, located in the heart of McLean, will not only be a landmark for the arts, but will serve as a space for residents to gather and connect," said Fairfax

County Supervisor Jimmy Bierman.

"This new arts and education center will greatly enhance McLean's cultural and economic landscape," said Lori Carbonneau, executive director of MPA. "It will also create a dynamic and essential new platform for the region's artists and art community, providing increased visibility and opportuni-

ties for artistic expression."

The new space will allow MPA to broaden its reach, offering a wider array of exhibitions, workshops, and educational programs, while also serving as a catalyst for increased community engagement.

MPA@MCC: 1234 Ingleside Ave.; McLean, Va. 22101; 703-790-1953 [@mp4a](http://www.mpaart.org)

Accotink Pump Station Rehabilitation Groundbreaking

On Thursday, Sept. 26, the Accotink Pump Station Rehabilitation Project at 9201 Richmond Hwy, Fort Belvoir, ceremonially broke ground for the new station and Force Main replacement. The \$71.7M project will rehabilitate the existing pump station.

The project marked Virginia's first local government Project Labor Agreement. Fairfax County awarded the contract to Northeast Remsco Construction, Inc., and it is included in the FY 2025-FY 2029 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (with Future Fiscal Years to FY 2034). The construction contract for this project includes a Project Labor Agreement, and all wages and fringe benefits meet or exceed the PLA's Collective Bargaining Agreements or the Commonwealth of Virginia Prevailing Wages, whichever is higher.

At completion, the pump



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE

Jeffrey C. McKay Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Greg Ackerman President, Baltimore/DC Metro Building Trades and others participate in the \$71,699,000 Accotink Pump Station Rehabilitation Project groundbreaking.

station will replace 6,600 feet of force main, boost its daily capacity from 37 million to 45 million gallons, and upgrade the odor control system. All work will be completed while maintaining continuous

pumping operations throughout the project duration using supplemental and bypass pumping. The new force main will be built in a cross-country easement on Fort Belvoir land adjacent to the old

pipe. Fairfax County owns and operates Accotink Wastewater Pump Station and Accotink Force Main. As the county's largest pump station it conveys sewage from over

63 square miles of Fairfax County and Fort Belvoir.

The construction is anticipated to take 48 months to complete.

— MERCIA HOBSON

Irish Folk Festival Comes to Arts Herndon

Vibrant Irish culture, music and dance at 27th Annual CCÉ O'Neill Malcom Irish Folk Festival.

The 27th Annual CCÉ O'Neill Malcom Irish Folk Festival was held on Saturday, Sept. 28, at Arts Herndon in downtown Herndon. Thanks to Culture Ireland, which provided travel support, the public experienced free performances by renowned headliners Brendan Mulville, Angelina Carberry, Dan Briuder and David O'Flaherty.

A donation from the Town of Herndon partially supported the noon to 6 p.m. event, which featured performances on both the inside and outside stages, a beer tent, food vendors, family-friendly activities, and an on-site bookstore.

While the event drew many

families, the O'Brien family from Shenandoah brought six of their young boys to the festival. The oldest boy in the group said he was enjoying the knights the most.

Joanna Ormesher, CEO and president of Arts Herndon, reported that more than 1,500 people attended the festival. "Surely, the luck of the Irish. The sun shone, folks had fun and music and dancing were wonderful," Ormesher said.

<https://www.ccepotomac.org/>

— MERCIA HOBSON

Six of the young lads in the O'Brien family enjoy the 27th Annual CCÉ O'Neill Malcom Irish Folk Festival with their mom and dad at Arts Herndon on Saturday.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



It's Guinness all around at the festival.

ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU 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>



The "Lasting Impressions" Art Show takes place Oct. 1-27, 2024 in Reston.

NOW THRU 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 re-imagining 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, and company chase Drac from Transylvania to the British countryside to London and back. Visit www.workhousearts.org.



"Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors" takes place Sept. 6 to Oct. 27, 2024 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS WITH SUPERINTENDENT DR. REID

Your voice matters, and Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid wants to hear from you! This fall, a series of Community Conversations will be held across the school division. These events are an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and ask questions regarding Fairfax County Public Schools. Events are planned for the following dates from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.:

- Monday, October 14, at Fairhill Elementary School.
- Monday, October 21, at Virginia Run Elementary School.
- Wednesday, October 30, at Herndon Middle School.

NOW THRU OCT. 13

"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.

OCTOBER 1-27

"Lasting Impressions" Art Show. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza West, Lake Anne, Reston. Julia Malakoff presents an exhibition of her newest mixed media collages inspired by unique objects. Open weekends from 12 - 5 pm and by appointment on weekdays. Meet the artist at two receptions, October 6 and 27, from 2 - 4 p.m. Visit RestonArtGallery.com

ment on weekdays. Meet the artist at two receptions, October 6 and 27, from 2 - 4 p.m. Visit RestonArtGallery.com

'SURVIVE UNPLUGGED' AT SULLY HISTORIC SITE

Dive into the past with the Park Authority's "Surviving Unplugged" series at Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. It's where history comes alive through hands-on activities that teach you the secrets of sustainable living and self-sufficiency. Whether it's foraging for wild edibles or mastering the art of ancient crafts, these sessions will leave you inspired to incorporate timeless skills into your modern life. Sessions are \$15 per person for each class. Weaving and Wool: Saturday, Nov. 9, 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Explore the world of textiles before department stores. Enjoy a make-your-own experience with working wool into felt and learn basic weaving techniques to make useful items.

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 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. The circus features performers from Mexico, Columbia, Guinea,

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.
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.)

ANIMAL TEA PARTY: FRYING PAN FARM PARK
Indulge your taste buds and embark



A Talk on Indonesia will be held on Friday, Oct. 4, 2024 at Reston Regional Library in Reston.



Haunted Wine Tours will be held from Sept. 29 to Oct. 31, 2024 at The Winery at Bull Run in Centreville.

on a culinary food and drink journey through Fairfax County parks. Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024, 10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 12, 2024, 10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m. Animal Tea Party: Frying Pan Farm Park, \$10,

SEPT. 29 TO OCT. 31

Haunted Wine Tours. Sunday to Thursday. 6:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m. At the Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Hwy., Centreville. Join in a lantern-led journey through the historic grounds. During this one-hour outdoor walking tour, sip on our acclaimed Virginia wines as you encounter the spirits of the battlefield as they come to life, sharing their chilling stories of long ago.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 2

Blood Drive. 1-5:30 p.m. McLean Volunteer Fire Department is partnering with Inova Blood Donor Services to host a blood drive at the station, located at 1455 Laughlin Ave., McLean. Sign up to help the community replenish its vital blood supplies! Here is the link for signing up: https://www.inovabloodsaves.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/33648

OCT. 4 TO NOV. 2

Workhouse Haunt: Twisted Tales of Terror. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, plus Halloween night. Gates open at 6:30 p.m. Back for

its 11th season, one of Northern Virginia's most popular Halloween events is bringing even more scares (and laughter) to its creepy outdoor walk-through trail. The Haunt will lead guests on a frightening journey that brings them along the abandoned, historic buildings of the former prison, where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights and sounds that are not for the faint of heart. This year's theme, Twisted Tales of Terror, features more than a dozen creepy live-action scenes portraying classic fairy tales gone wrong, including Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Pinocchio and more. To keep everything moving along, guests will travel in small groups via a timed entry. While waiting for their timeslots, or following their trail experience, guests can enjoy Halloween fun in the Rizer Pavilion: DJ-mixed music (Fridays, Saturdays, and Halloween Night); refreshments at the bar, including Halloween-themed alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks; sweet and savory food truck treats; and Halloween art and trinkets in the Haunt Pop-up Shop. Tickets are on sale now; prices start at \$25 per person. Visit www.workhousearts.org for schedule and event details.

FRIDAY/OCT. 4

Talk on Indonesia. 1-3 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Join in a

ENTERTAINMENT



The Vienna Oktoberfest takes place Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024 in the Town of Vienna.

discussion of the relationship between Indonesia and the United States. It is based on the FPA article "Invisible Indonesia," which is accessible through the web link or at the library. Leading the talk will be Ambassador David Merrill, President of the U.S.-Indonesia Society. Visit the link: Great Decisions: Invisible Indonesia - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home (fairfaxcounty.gov)

SATURDAY/OCT. 5
Oktoberfest. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Historic Church Street in the Town of Vienna. Oktoberfest celebrates its 15th anniversary this year with the biggest festival yet! More vendors, more food, great music and entertainment, plenty of free kids' activities and locally-sourced beer and wine selections. Oktoberfest will feature live entertainment on three stages: Beer Garden, Town Green, Center Street Beer Garden Stage; Large Beer/Wine Garden featuring: Caboose Brewing Company, Hawk and Griffin, Norm's Beer and Wine, Settle Down Easy Brewing, and Vienna Vintner. Visit the website: www.viennaoktoberfest.org.

OCT. 5-6
LEGO-Based Train Show. Saturday noon to 4 p.m.; Sunday 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area LEGO Train Club (WamaLTC) members will hold a two-day LEGO based train show at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. All trains, buildings and scenery in the display are built from LEGO bricks. Donations of unwanted LEGO pieces and sets are appreciated to help support



An Irish Dance Performance takes place on Sunday, Oct 6, 2024 at Reston Regional Library in Reston.

WamaLTC's efforts to bring fun and education to all ages through its activities. Admission: museum members, free; adults 13 and over, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; under 4, free. Seniors (65+ and military (active & retired), \$4. For more information on the museum and show events phone 703-425-9225. Visit the website: www.fairfax-station.org

SATURDAY/OCT. 5
Historic House Tours. 10:30-12:15 p.m. at Sunrise at Silas Burke House, 9619 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The Burke Historical Society is pleased to announce that the Silas Burke House will be open on October 5 with free tours. Reservations not needed.

SATURDAY/OCT. 5
2024 SOCO Marching Band Invitational. Gates open at 1:30 p.m. South County High School will be hosting 14 bands from across the region for an awesome day of music. Check out the schedule of

events here: https://schedules.competitionsuite.com/435b17ca-1fda-4e74-b42d-519741ea3123_logistical.htm

SUNDAY/OCT. 6
Irish Dance Performance. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Come enjoy a performance by this talented group of young dancers as they present classic and modern dance routines. Fun for the whole family! Visit Foley Academy of Irish Dance Performance - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home (fairfaxcounty.gov)

SUNDAY/OCT. 6
2024 Annual Vienna CROP Hunger Walk. 12:30 p.m. Begins and ends at Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. The walk is approximately 3 miles and takes about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. A shorter route is also available. The Vienna Walk's proceeds support the local relief efforts of The Committee for Helping Others

(CHO), which provides food and emergency assistance to local residents at its facilities in Vienna and Oakton, and the international hunger relief activities of Church World Service. There is no fee to walk, but walkers are encouraged to donate or to find sponsors who will make donations to support their efforts. You can even form your own team. To register, donate, or for more information, go to Vienna CROP Hunger Walk.

SUNDAY/OCT. 6
2024 Friends of Reston Fall 5K. At Browns Chapel Park, Reston. Join the Friends of Reston for their 4th Annual Fall 5K, to help raise funds for their scholarship and enrichment programs. All proceeds for this event support the Friends of Reston, a 501(c)3 supporting organization of Reston Association. Race will start at 8:00 a.m. Registration Fees: 5K - \$45 September 1 through October 1; \$50 October 2 through Race Day. 5K (14 & Under) - \$30 September 1 through October 1; \$35 October 2 through Race Day. Online registration will close on Thursday, October 3 at 8:00 p.m. Visit <https://potomac.enmotive.com/events/register/2024-friends-of-reston-fall-5k>

SUNDAY/OCT. 6
The Heart Collectors. 7:30 p.m. At Earp's Ordinary, 10420 Main Street, Fairfax. From acoustic harmony lead ballads to Bowie-esque sonic soundscapes, Australian four piece 'Epic Folk' group The Heart Collectors capture the essence of inspiration, honesty of love, and the nature of the cosmos in their music.

Info at <https://focusmusic.org/shows#sun-10-6-the-heart-collectors-fairfax>

SUNDAY/OCT. 6
Miles for Migraine. 9:30-11:30 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station.

This is a 2-mile Walk, 5K Run and Relax event to support Migraine and Headache Awareness, Treatment and Research. Come connect with your local migraine and headache community, listen to speakers and visit sponsors in the festival area. Dress up in your best purple flair for a chance at a fun prize. Visit the website: <https://dc.milesformigraine.org/>

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 9
Guest Artist Speaker. 7-9 p.m. At the Springfield Art Guild at Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. The Guild will welcome the next guest artist to the monthly meeting. The speaker will be Cindy Packard Richmond, an award-winning artist in both pastels and oil. Everyone is invited to attend.

THURSDAY/OCT. 10
Best of NoVA Soiree. 6-10 p.m. At CrystalView Event Center, 12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy., Fair-

fax. Dress to impress and enjoy a night on the town celebrating the best that Northern Virginia has to offer. Tickets include an open bar and samples from all participating restaurants, including select Best of NoVA winners and top restaurants featured in Northern Virginia Magazine. This event, empowered by Project Purple, also will celebrate The 50 Most Influential people in NoVA, appearing in the magazine's October 2024 issue. Visit bestofno-vasoiree.com

OCT. 11-13
Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. Featuring 225 juried artisans in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Attendees may buy directly from the artisans who create the work, all of which is crafted by hand. Hours: Friday, Oct 11 and Saturday Oct 12: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday Oct 13: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$11 in advance Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACF.art

SATURDAY/OCT. 12
Rocktober Benefit Concert. 10 a.m. Doors Open. Show Begins at 1 p.m. At Earp's Ordinary, 10420 Main Street, Fairfax. Cancer Can Rock, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping musicians facing cancer, is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated Rocktober Benefit Concert. This year's Rocktober Benefit Concert will feature performances by Delta Spur, Keeton, and other incredible artists, all providing their talents in support of Cancer Can Rock's mission. Since its founding, Cancer Can Rock has worked to create an uplifting environment where artists can produce and record their music even in the face of life-threatening illness. Visit the website: <https://aftontickets.com/event/buyticket/gl9enzm795>

SATURDAY/OCT. 12
Fire & Rescue Department Open House. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Stations will be hosting an Open House Event. Visit your local fire and rescue station and join in the activities and learn about fire safety. Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 6-12, 2024.

SATURDAY/OCT. 12
Arctober Fest. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, Chantilly. This free, family-friendly event offers a unique opportunity to dive into the fascinating world of archaeology and learn about the incredible archaeological resources found in Fairfax County. Arctober Fest visitors will engage in an array of interactive, hands-on activities guided by expert archaeologists.

SUNDAY/OCT. 13
Clifton Day. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the Town of Clifton, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Now celebrating the 56th year of Clifton Day, the annual town event celebrates the beauty and charm of the beloved town of Clifton. Join in experiencing the magic of arts, crafts, entertainment, and food they have in store. Live music, children's activities, pony rides, a beer and wine garden,

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19

New Food Bank

FROM PAGE 3

curity in the year prior to the survey from May 2023 to May 2024. That number is up five percent from the previous year. Although it may be 37 percent in the whole DMV area, the numbers for Fairfax County only have 27 percent in the “food insecure,” category. In the City of Alexandria, there are 36 percent and 23 percent in Arlington.

A grocery receipt from June 17, 2020 is \$25.01 for basic household foods, but those same foods cost \$32.73 on June 23, 2024, according to the food bank website.

The warehouse is at 6833 Hill Park Drive in Lorton, VA. Although technically it’s a Lorton address, it’s right off Newington Road in the Cinder Bed industrial area. They are looking for volunteers too. To reach out, go to <https://volunteer.capitalareafoodbank.org/>

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.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Would you like to help a neighbor feel less lonely? Will you help someone get much-needed groceries? Form new connections and make a meaningful difference. Older adults in the Annandale, Falls Church, and Alexandria regions are waiting for volunteer social visitors and grocery shoppers. If you can give the gift of your time, consider providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email Volunteer-Solutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

LET YOUR CIVIC OPINIONS BE KNOWN

The annual Fairfax County Federation of Citizens’ Associations (Federation) on-line survey asks questions about a broad range of issues, from neighborhood to Nation, and is open to all Fairfax residents. Your answers allow the Federation to create an annual Legislative Package shared publicly with the Fairfax Delegation to the General Assembly in Richmond as well as the residents of Fairfax County. Link: <https://forms.gle/MozCgXd1pSU8vd9r9>
Survey open: September 24, 2024, to October 7, 2024

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Celebrate Fiesta Fairfax, this Saturday, Oct. 5

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The public is invited to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at Fiesta Fairfax. It's slated for this Saturday, Oct. 5, from 2-7:30 p.m. in Old Town Square, 10415 North St. in Fairfax City. The fun will include cultural performances, music, food and educational exhibits highlighting the contributions and experiences of the Hispanic, Latino and Latinx community.

The Old Town Square stage will host folkloric dance performances from various countries, as well as a salsa dance demonstration and class, followed by a live band so attendees may practice their new dance moves.

Latin food vendors from around the area will be available to share the flavors from across Latin America. Area nonprofit organizations will also be on hand to share information about services and opportunities to work with the City's growing Latino community. With Latino residents comprising some 20 percent of Fairfax City's population, it's hoped that Fiesta Fairfax will be a time to celebrate their contribution to the City.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read (center) poses with the members of Mariachi Estrellas (from left) Jorge Anaya, Judith Gomez, Daniel Sheehy and Richie Medrano. The group entertained prior to the Sept. 24 City Council meeting, during which Read read a proclamation recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month in Fairfax City.

FROM PAGE 17

and other delicious food and beverage choices add to the fun. Visit the website: www.Cliftonday.com

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.

SUNDAY/OCT. 13

Fall Festival. 2-5 p.m. At Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center, 10800 Belmont Blvd., Lorton. Fall Festival - food, cider, pony rides, live music, pumpkin painting, family friendly games. Cost is \$100. Call 703-402-3613. Visit the website: <https://simplechanges.org/events/fall-festival/>

MONDAY/OCT. 14

Touch-A-Truck. 9 a.m. to noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. It's "What do you want to be when you grow up?" coming to life. Touch-A-Truck is a free event that gives kids a chance to explore their favorite vehicles. Quiet hour: 9-10 a.m.

FRIDAY/OCT. 18

"The Remember Balloons." 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden is hosting the world premiere of this new performance based on the book "The Remember Balloons" by Jessie Oliveros and illustrated by Dana Wulfekotte. The dance theater work is directed and choreographed by Dominic



A Fall Festival will be held Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 at Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center in Lorton.

Moore-Dunson with an original score by Theron Brown. James' Grandpa treasures his balloons, each representing cherished memories—his wedding with Grandma, a fishing trip with James. When the balloons begin to drift away, James is devastated until he discovers he can share those balloons one by one.

FRIDAY/OCT. 18

Halloween Trivia Night. 7-10 p.m. At Dunn Loring Volunteer Fire & Rescue Dept., 2148 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. Join in a spooky, 21+ adults-only night of food, fun, facts, and festivities! Bring your competitive spirit and fact-filled brain, and start planning your Halloween outfit for the costume contest! Winners take home prizes and their pride. Purchase tickets here: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/LVdUwtimQtjGYB-5BzwxQ_Q Visit the website: <https://www.jlnv.org/halloween-trivia/>

FRIDAY/OCT. 18

Raise the Region Gala. At McLean Hilton in Tysons Corner. The 2024 Raise the Region Gala, hosted by the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, celebrates the impact of local charitable giving and empowers the vision of the Foundation which is to build a community that works for everyone. The annual

event is designed to connect the community to causes that inspire us. Register by purchasing a ticket at www.cfnova.org/gala. Questions may be directed to Vice President of Marketing and Events, Tara Nadel, at tara.nadel@cfnova.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 19

9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon. 8:30 a.m. Starting and ending at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. Riders will enjoy a fun ride through the many Potomac Bank's historic, ecological and cultural sites in the southern and central parts of the Mount Vernon District. The route consists of paved roads, paved trails and has some challenging sections. The event is rain or shine. Kickoff at 8:30 a.m. Short Route 20 miles; Long Route 40 miles. Youth and Family Ride Kickoff at 9 a.m. Youth Route 3 miles. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/MountVernon

OCT. 19-20

Voce Concert: Divine Spark. 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 4 p.m. Sunday. At Church of the Holy Cross, Dunn Loring. Immerse yourself in the heavenly sounds of Voce Chamber Singers at our most intimate venue! Be transported by this soulful program of works for organ and choir including Benjamin Britten's Rejoice in the Lamb and R. Nathaniel Dett's

breathtaking cantata, Chariot Jubilee, featuring guest tenor soloist Devin Mercer and keyboard artist Neil Weston. Visit www.voceorg.

OCT. 19-20

Great Falls Studio – Studio Tour 2024. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. 21st Annual Great Falls Studio Tour. Studio tour map and brochure link - <https://www.greatfallsstudios.com/studio-tour-2024-home>

SATURDAY/NOV. 2

Project Community Connect Resource Fair. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Northern Virginia Community College Loudoun Campus. PCC connects community members with assistance programs and support organizations that can help meet their diverse needs, whether rent relief or reliable food bank locations. At this event, they offer fliers, conversations with community partners, job opportunities, and more, and accept donations to support resource programs. During the resource fair, they also host a street outreach program to meet community members where they are. They provide pre-prepared care packages and have volunteers available to direct individuals in obtaining additional resources. The outreach program connects individuals to vital community resources, including rent assistance, medical care access, mental and physical health services, food and housing resources, and 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.

Brotherly Love



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Even though it's my birthday (9/30)- or will have been by the time this column publishes, it is my late brother Richard's birthday (10/28) that I'm thinking about. Unfortunately, as the surviving Lourie of the Athelstane-Road-Louries, birthdays now are much less celebrations and more so recollections.

A little context. My brother and I had been living in the same area (the Metropolitan Washington DC Area) since I matriculated to the University of Maryland in late August 1972. Richard, being five years older than me, had already under-graduated from American University and was planning on attending Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fl. to earn a master's in criminology - which he did. However, Florida didn't take, and Richard returned to Washington DC after graduation where he lived until his extremely unexpected death in early Dec. 2022. Vanessa, his widow and I will never be the same. Richard was so much more than merely a husband and a brother, he was, as we say in the Jewish faith (Yiddish actually), a mensch. There is no higher praise. In short (very short) it means the best of the best. His death is not simply a loss, it's closer to a devastation. It's almost two years since his passing and Vanessa and I are still regularly exchanging memories of him for any number of unforgettable reasons.

As for the substance of this column, I mention Richard - aside from a thousand other reasons, because my birthday is in nine days and Richard won't be here to celebrate it. And that rarely happened while he was living because Richard was a great celebrator of other people's birthdays. Typically, we'd all (Dina and Vanessa of course) go out for a nice dinner with dessert and generous gifts to follow. Whichever date suited me, suited him. He was always available for me. Without my brother alive to share my birthday anymore, it's slowly becoming just another day, or if not just another day, then a very somber one. I used to look forward to my birthday, now I look backward.

And given that I've been a stage IV cancer patient since Feb. 2009 - which calculates to the last 13 years and 10 months of Richard's life, he always made an extra effort to understand, encourage and accommodate the demands of my diagnosis. He was certainly a part of Team Lourie and often attended my infusions (6+hours per treatment) and regularly attended doctor's appointments, especially when there was likely to be a discussion of changing medications, treatments, et cetera. He wanted to be a part of it all and I certainly welcomed it and appreciated his input. He was the type of support system every cancer/seriously ill patients need. He would liaise with the doctors and staff to make sure I was receiving the best care anywhere. If he couldn't attend my appointment, he was to be my first call after to provide any and all details. As much as anything, it gave him an opportunity to reassure me and infuse me with as much positivity as was appropriate. He made a difference in my life, and when you're A "terminal cancer" patient sitting in an infusion center for six to seven hours per treatment, having someone to count on is crucial. I was lucky to have him in my corner. Not having him there anymore is a huge loss.

As difficult as it was for Richard when he was diagnosed with cancer, it gave me the opportunity to help him navigate what was an unfamiliar path form him, but a very familiar one for me. Now he was living the cancer life as I had, and he had questions. As an experienced cancer patient, I had answers. And now I could help him - as he had so often helped me. The juxtaposition brought us even closer together.

The last time I saw my brother alive was on his birthday on Oct. 28, 2022. He had been home about a month after being hospitalized the entire summer. Now, he was rehabbing at home. He wasn't quite ready for prime time, but he was happy for the company at home - and the cake. I tried to be as encouraging and positive as he had always been to me. We had a great evening together. Five weeks or so later, around eight o'clock on a Saturday morning, Vanessa called me in tears. Richard had died sometime during the night. We'll never forget his death. But more importantly, we'll always remember his life.

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



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