

THE CONNECTION

CENTREVIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

Dominion Ignores Pleas To Stop Cutting Trees

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Dominion Energy is clear-cutting trees and brush beneath its transmission lines in the easement of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park, administered and maintained by NOVA Parks.

County Options for Taxes in Uncertain Times

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Leave It to Beavers

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MARCH 19 - APRIL 1, 2025

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Options Set for Real Estate, Meals Taxes

Advertised rates are a cap on options; actual rates can be less or equal but not more.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MARCH 18, 2025

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at its March 18 meeting.

At the March 18 meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Chairman Jeff McKay stressed that the board was building in some flexibility by advertising a possible increase in the Real Estate Tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value. That is an increase of \$0.015 over the current rate for FY 2025. Also advertised is a meals tax of up to 4 percent. These advertised rates act as a ceiling.

The Board of Supervisors adopts the FY 2026 Budget on May 13. The actual rates can be less than advertised but not more.

"We have extensive public hearings, town halls, and a number of meetings with a number of groups that take place every budget season where we can discuss the pros and cons of the actions that we must take to balance our budget when it comes time for budget adoption," McKay said.

The Board unanimously (with Pat Herrity absent) approved authorizing staff to advertise a public hearing to be held on April 22,

2025, at 3 p.m. to consider the adoption of an ordinance to amend Chapter Four of the Fairfax County code by adding a new Article 31 food and beverage tax. It is sometimes called a meals tax. It does not apply to groceries.

The proposed amendment states a maximum tax rate of 4 percent at implementation and the option to provide a seller's commission of up to 3 percent of the tax collected, as outlined in the draft ordinance. The supervisors approved the action at their March 18 meeting. Chairman McKay said the board had held an "entire budget committee meeting dedicated to a conversation on this subject."

Wanting to ensure the public's understanding, McKay explained that they were authorizing the implementation of a potential food and beverage tax for consideration through a public hearing. He clarified that the Commonwealth of Virginia allows juris-

dictions to implement a meal tax of up to 6 percent. His motion asked the board to consider implementing a potential meal tax at a cap of 4 percent.

"And just to be clear for folks, when we authorize this, we are authorizing the maximum amount that can be implemented. So, anything below that number is still permissible within the span of this motion," McKay said.

"We want to make sure that we have a public hearing on a potential meals tax for full transparency and disclosure, in concert with the annual adoption of the Fairfax County budget and related financial documents so that folks can understand the choices."

McKay asked the board to approve the publication of the FY 2026 advertised budget, the effective tax rate increase, the advertised capital improvement program, and the required tax rates outlined in administrative Item 8. The board voted unanimously (with

"And just to be clear for folks, when we authorize this, we are authorizing the maximum amount that can be implemented. So, anything below that number is still permissible within the span of this motion."

— Jeffrey C. McKay (D),
chairman of the Fairfax County Board
of Supervisors

Herrity absent) to give notice of the public hearings that would be happening as a result.

This includes the advertisement of a real estate tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value, which reflects a potential one-and-a-half cent increase over the current real estate tax rate of \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value.

The county executive used this figure as the recommended tax rate in his budget presentation, echoing the meals tax discussion.

How Far Will Dominion Energy Go?

Reactions to Clear-Cutting NOVA Parks W&OD Trail.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution during its March 18 supervisors meeting that addressed Dominion Energy's clear-cutting of trees on the W&OD Trail. NOVA Parks owns and operates the 45-mile long, 100-foot-wide park, with Dominion Energy transmission lines on 33 of the 45 miles.

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) read the resolution requesting that Dominion Energy consider selective pruning and replanting.

"The W&OD is a park and one of the most popular parks in our region, with nearly 3 million uses a year," said Paul Gilbert, Executive Director of NOVA Parks. "We are very concerned that Dominion seems ready to cut

most of the trees on all 33 miles of trail that have powerlines overhead. We would like Dominion to stop the cutting now, adopt a selective pruning standard as they have used for decades, and engage in robust habitat restoration where cutting is necessary."

Beth Meyer, co-owner of Green Lizard Cycling, located steps from the W&OD, said, "I use the trail in Herndon on a daily basis and other parts of the trail on a regular basis. I haven't read anything about the reasons for the clear cutting rather than selective pruning as outlined in the Resolution. I hope that a compromise can be reached to reduce the number of trees cut. The trees are important for many reasons as noted in the resolution as well as providing shade for trail users."

"I support the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' resolution urging more selective pruning and replanting as the W&OD Trail and its natural elements are vital to Herndon's beauty, identity, environmental health and community enjoyment. I am

"We are very concerned that Dominion seems ready to cut most of the trees on all 33 miles of trail that have powerlines overhead."

— Paul Gilbert, Executive Director,
NOVA Parks

SEE DOMINION, PAGE 4



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Dominion Energy transmission lines are easily visible, running through the Town of Herndon



PHOTO COURTESY NOVA PARKS

Dominion Energy is clear-cutting trees and brush beneath its transmission lines in the easement of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park, administered and maintained by NOVA Parks.

Dominion Clearcutting W&OD Trail

FROM PAGE 3

closely monitoring Dominion Energy’s plans and am working closely with Town staff regarding any potential impacts,” said Keven LeBlanc, mayor of the Town of Herndon.

Since November 2024, officials have reacted with alarm to Dominion Energy clear-cutting shrubs and trees on a wide swath of the W&OD Trail from Vienna to Dunn Loring.

On Feb. 6, 2025, Del. Holly Seibold sent a letter to Edward Baine, president of Dominion.

Seibold urged Dominion Energy to task for its “decision to move forward with extensive tree-cutting along the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail without a comprehensive plan to mitigate the envi-

ronmental and canopy damage this plan has, and will continue to cause.”

“Dominion’s rejection of the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding on vegetative management is extremely unfortunate. Even more unfortunate is Dominion’s decision to decline NOVA Parks’ proposal to replant native grasses, flowers, and shrubs to establish pollinator habitats, citing the ongoing financial support required to implement this plan,” Siebold added. While Dominion offered a one-time donation, the amount fell “significantly short of what is needed to address the environmental damage caused by these actions.”

Siebold urged Dominion Energy “to reconsider its position and work collaboratively with NOVA Parks to reaffirm a vegetative management agreement and/or approve NOVA Parks’ proposed plan for native replanting with adequate financial support.”

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email calendar@connectionnewspapers.com

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE WISH LIST

Assistance League of Northern Virginia has been serving at-risk children for over 20 years with multiple programs to help meet basic needs. Assistance League invites the public to join its efforts by making a purchase from our current monthly wish list to augment the nonprofit’s ability to serve even

more elementary students at local Title 1 schools. The March wish list features the short-sleeve T-shirts that children will need for spring and summer. Use this link <https://tiny.alnv.org/wish-short-sleeves> to make your selection. Visit the website www.alnv.org.

MCC GOVERNING BOARD’S PUBLIC HEARING

McLean Community Center’s (MCC) Governing Board is holding a Public Hearing on FY2027 Programs at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26. The hearing offers residents of Dranesville Small District 1-A, who pay a real estate tax surcharge to support the center, an opportunity to share their ideas for programs

and activities they would like to see offered and/or improved upon as the center plans for the 2027 fiscal year. The hearing will be held in person at MCC, which is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean.

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5



PHOTOS BY FCPS

Illegally Passing School Buses About to Get Expensive

New cameras on school bus arms will catch violators; \$250 fines start May 12.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The law about passing school buses is sometimes ignored these days, so much so that the Fairfax County school bus fleet recorded 1,453 violations in one day. The bus drivers try waving their arms or looking at the license plate, but more had to be done for students’ safety. This month, FCPS launched the “School Bus Arm Camera Program,” to boost safety.

The camera is mounted on the stop-arm that comes out of the side of the bus when students are getting on or off the bus. When the bus stops, the arm comes out and the camera detects vehicles that pass the bus on the side.

The camera will get the license plate and the violators will get a ticket in the mail, similar to the speed cameras that have been used for years.

“Our new stop arm camera initiative will remind motorists of their responsibility to drive responsibly and keep students safe,” said School Board Chair Karl Frisch, in their press release.

Starting April 9, 50 Fairfax County school buses will be outfitted with the cameras

across the county but for the first month, there will just be warnings sent out. May 12 the county will start fining each driver \$250 for these violations. It’s not all automatic though. Violation videos and license plate images are reviewed by law enforcement for approval before a warning or Notice of Infraction is issued, FCPS said.

Comments online seemed to vary. Some are against the one-month grace period that comes with the new camera rule, others are pointing out instances where the buses are speeding while others are happy with the cameras.

“Glad to see this as no one hardly ever stops on Guinea Rd in the mornings for the school bus,” said one Burke area driver.

Despite some drivers passing against a flashing light, school buses are still a safe route to school, said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Between 2013-2022, 111 occupants were killed in school transportation vehicles, and 50 were drivers and 61 were passengers. More than 20 million school students ride school buses.

“However, children are more at risk when approaching or leaving a school bus,” NHTSA said.

Turn Down the Lights To Help Migrating Birds

Twice a year, billions of birds travel hundreds of miles between their winter and summer homes, mostly at night, using the stars to navigate. In Northern Virginia alone, an estimated 100 to 160 million birds migrate through our skies each spring and fall.

Artificial lights can turn their journey into a confusing and dangerous trek. Bright lights on tall buildings and city skyglow attract the feathered travelers, leading to window collisions or exhaustion from circling illuminated structures.

As birds begin their migration this spring, the county is supporting the "Lights Out for Birds" campaign led by the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance. The alliance, in partnership with local organizations such as Nature Forward, Friends of Huntley Meadows and DarkSky NOVA, encourages residents and businesses to reduce excessive outdoor nighttime lighting from 11 p.m. through 6 a.m., March 15 to May 31 — the peak of spring bird migration.

Simple changes to lighting can make a difference.

A Chicago study found that reducing nighttime lights in a single high-rise building decreased bird deaths by 80%, while also saving energy and lowering costs.

Residents do not need to surround themselves in total darkness to support bird-friendly lighting. Motion sensors, shielded lights and warm-colored bulbs can help reduce excess light while still providing

enough outdoor illumination. Keeping lights directed downward and using lower-intensity bulbs can also make areas safer for both people and wildlife.

Here's how you can support migrating birds:

- ❖ Dim interior lights or close blinds. Prevent indoor lighting from escaping and disorienting birds.

- ❖ Use motion sensors or timers. Install lighting that only turns on when needed.

- ❖ Use warm, downward-facing lights. Outdoor lights should be shielded, aimed downward, and have a warm (amber) color instead of blue-white light.

- ❖ Install window decals or protective film. Help prevent birds from flying into glass by using patterns or films that make windows more visible to them.

- ❖ Reduce decorative and upper-floor lighting. High-rise buildings can turn off or reduce lighting on upper floors and exterior decorative lights.

- ❖ Follow DarkSky International's Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting. Ensure lighting is useful, low-level, targeted, controlled and warm-colored.

- ❖ Spread the Word. Tell neighbors, friends and local businesses about the "Lights Out for Birds" campaign.

- ❖ Sign the Lights Out Pledge hosted by the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance and show your commitment. <https://www.nv-birdalliance.org/lights-out-for-birds>

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

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

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

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Castor canadensis—the American Beaver is part of the native wildlife in Fairfax County and is instrumental in maintaining healthy ecosystems by creating and shaping wetland environments.

PHOTOS BY FAIRFAX COUNTY WILDLIFE BEAVER MANAGEMENT
Beaver damage to trees appears as clean, axe-like cuts at a 45-degree angle.

Beavers Are a Native Keystone Species Here

Humane coexistence tactics can protect trees; beavers benefit wildlife.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County recently released educational material on its role and responsibilities in working with its furry, four-legged ecosystem engineers on private property following the board matter introduced by Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) last June.

Human-beaver conflicts surfaced concerning vegetation and tree damage, safety concerns of tripping over stumps of felled trees, blocked road culverts, and flooding, which potentially undermines roadbeds, leading to maintenance and repairs. All these were caused by the instincts and actions of *Castor canadensis*, the American Beaver.

The large rodents are second only to humans in their ability to change the landscape. They typically weigh between 10 and 30 pounds (although they can weigh more) and have a stout body, small eyes and ears, a large, flat, hairless tail shaped like a paddle, an almost black waterproof fur coat, and webbed feet. They are herbivores, plant eaters with large orange incisors that grow continuously to counter wear and tear of chewing on trees. The beaver must keep the incisors worn back by using them daily. The tree damage appears as clean, axe-like cuts at a 45-degree angle. Beavers reside in semi-aquatic habitats and can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes at a time.

Fairfax County published best practices in its recently released beaver management information.

The plan is to mitigate the situation amicably while respecting homeowners' rights and beavers' needs while protecting land and infrastructure.

The guide covers, as directed, in Alcorn's board matter, "updated educational outreach materials that outline applicable laws relating to beaver relocation or removal, provide guidance and resources for human/beaver coexistence, and describe the county's role and responsibilities in the guidance as it relates to beavers and beaver activity on private property."

Beavers, a keystone species, shape ecosystem and benefit wildlife. Dams store and release water to control downstream flooding. Beaver wetlands filter water, trap silt, and remove toxins. Slowing water flow stabilizes stream banks and promotes vegetation, reducing erosion. Beaver dams also recharge groundwater, ensuring water sustainability. Fish, amphibians, and birds use beaver ponds for habitat, and their ponds help with irrigation, flood control, and droughts.

Fairfax County recommends nonlethal ways to discourage beavers from maintaining dams on property, such as exclusion fencing and flow devices to manipulate the water level of a pond for a long-term, effective approach to reducing flooding and property damage associated with beaver damming activities. The county does not recommend lethal control of beavers.

Tree wrapping is one of two available tree protection measures recommended for high-value trees. Using galvanized welded wire fencing, 14-gauge with 2x4 mesh, encircle the trunk upwards four

feet, leaving a 6-inch to 12-inch gap between the tree trunk and the fencing for future tree growth. Fasten the ends by bending or securing them with hog rings or zip ties. For clusters of shrubs or groves of trees, encircle the priority area with a single, larger-diameter fence instead of individual tree guards, as needed.

The second method of tree protection, which may deter beavers, is to paint the trunks of adult trees, not saplings, with a mixture of coarse mason's sand (30–70 mil) and exterior latex paint. The ratio is twenty ounces of sand to one gallon of paint. Stir often, and paint tree trunks from the bottom of the tree to about 3–4 feet high.

As for flooding control, there are numerous designs for flow devices and fencing solutions, such as beaver baffles, beaver deceivers, Clemson beaver pond levelers, diversion dams, keystone fences, starter dams, and fence and pipe installations.

Beavers dislike the sound of running water; it signals a breach in their dam, prompting them to immediately begin its reconstruction, which can be completed within 24 to 48 hours. Hence, dam breaching and removal are ineffective. Additionally, "activities must comply with local, state, and federal laws and permitting related to land disturbance, floodplains, wetlands, or streams, including Resource Protection Areas and protected waters.

Beaver lodges or bank dens cannot be removed when occupied by beavers (Va. Code § 29.1-521). Virginia law prohibits the relocation of beavers. See also Va. Code



Tree guards are one option to protect trees from beaver activity.

4VAC15-30-10.

Beaver trapping is a lethal control. "Beavers that are trapped must either be released onsite or humanely dispatched if the animal is removed from the property. The Fairfax County Animal Protection Police and Wildlife Management Office do not provide services for

trapping and removal of nuisance beavers," states the county. Dispatched means killed.

You can find more information about permitting and Fairfax County's role and responsibility in beaver management at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/beaver-management>

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON

Arts Herndon current location, 750 Center Street, Herndon.



PHOTO BY KEVEN LEBLANC

Interior (partial) of 397 Herndon Pkwy, available for Arts Herndon.

Where is Best for Arts Herndon?

When Comstock dropped downtown redevelopment, many things changed for Arts Herndon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Michael L. O'Reilly, chairman of the Arts Herndon Board of Directors, on Friday, March 14, said: "Since Comstock is not going forward with its project, the building at 750 Center Street is not going to be demolished anytime soon. As a result, Arts Herndon doesn't need to move out. We have informed the Town. ... We aren't moving to [the] new space as downtown is the best place for an art center."

Clark A. Hedrick, vice mayor of the Town of Herndon, and Michael O'Reilly, president of Arts Herndon, signed the Sublicense Agreement. The Town of Herndon is the named Landlord, and Arts Herndon Inc. is the Tenant of the 6,000-square-foot building and its surrounding premises at 750 Center Street in downtown Herndon.

The Sublicense states, "Beginning Nov. 12, 2024, Landlord sub-licenses the Premises to Tenant ... Tenant shall return the Premises to its original condition prior to Tenant's vacation of the premises... In any event, the term of this Sublicense shall expire on March 31, 2025."

Will Tenant Arts Herndon abide by the aforementioned terms?

"The circumstances (including the parties) of the Sublicense have changed dramatically since it was
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signed. The town no longer owns the property, Comstock does. The reason for the move-out date (after being run as an art center since 2008), which was the redevelopment of the Downtown, has, once again, been delayed indefinitely. I would suggest that with these changes the expiration date set out in the original agreement is no longer valid and is therefore unenforceable."

Arts Herndon operates its community arts center at 750 Center Street. The building and premises are in the middle of the 4.675-acre property that was deeded to Comstock Venture LC. for redevelopment in Herndon's downtown. Comstock notified the Town in December 2024 that it will not proceed with the project, citing a variety of factors.

"As a result, in January 2025, the Town notified Comstock that it was exercising its contractual right to have the property returned. Comstock was supposed to execute certain documents to transfer the property back to Herndon, but to date, it has failed to do so," states the Town in Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project.

On Feb. 28, 2025, the Town of Herndon filed a declaration indicating the termination of Comstock Herndon Ventures LC's interest in the property. According to the Town of Herndon, the termination declaration is on record with the Land Records Division of the

Fairfax County Circuit Court.

At the March 11 Herndon Town Council Meeting and Public Hearing, Mayor Keven LeBlanc addressed many issues concerning the future of the arts center operated by Arts Herndon. Teen and young adult members of the LGBTQIA+ music community and others testified against what they understood to be the Town's forced closing of the arts center on March 31. Some speakers erroneously said that the Town was "evicting" Arts Herndon.

Some speakers expressed anger, and others exhibited sadness, confusion, and distress as they testified on the value of keeping the arts center open and the need for greater transparency by the town. One woman said she doesn't want another vacant building in the town.

LeBlanc read a statement and reaffirmed his "unwavering support for downtown redevelopment and a thriving arts district" at the March 11 council meeting. He also highlighted the ongoing mediation over the deed title concerns with Comstock.

"This is a complex legal matter, and until it is resolved, we are unable to move forward with any formal agreements regarding the existing space" at 750 Center Street, LeBlanc said. [Comstock Fails to Transfer Property Back to

SEE WHERE IS BEST, PAGE 8

In-Person Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY 2027 Programs

Wednesday, March 26, 6:30 p.m.

The governing board and staff of the McLean Community Center seek **input from residents** of Dranesville Small District 1A at a Public Hearing on Programs for FY 2027 (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027).

This is an opportunity for residents to suggest classes, events, performances and youth and teen activities.

Residents are encouraged, but not required, to call the center to be placed on the speakers' list or may submit written comments to feedback@mcleancenter.org.



McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
703-790-0123, TTY: 711
mcleancenter.org



Fiesta del Sol Festival

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1234 Ingleside Ave.,
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Find more information at:
mcleancenter.org

Where is Best for Arts Herndon?

FROM PAGE 7

Herndon, Connection Newspapers, March 4, 2025] Another challenge, LeBlanc said, is that the building is nearing the end of its lifespan.

According to LeBlanc, because of these challenges, the Town offers an alternate space that Arts Herndon could use to operate an arts center. The renovation was completed at town cost.

"This new space meets ADA compliance, ensuring accessibility for all, includes two spaces large enough for indoor events, galleries, studio work, an office, and two sinks, matching or exceeding the footprint of their current location.

Still allows Arts Herndon to reserve the Town Green, Town Lawn, and Community Center for additional programming." He said the arts are, and will remain, an essential part of our town's identity. "I look forward to working together to find the best path forward."

Other tenants at 397 Herndon Pkwy. include the Herndon Police Department on one end, along with hallway neighbors Next Stop Theatre, Fairfax County Public Schools, Supervisor Jimmy Biermann, Va. Sen. Jen-



SCREENSHOT: GOOGLE MAPS

The red pin (far left) indicates the proposed space for the arts in a town-owned building offered to Arts Herndon at 397 Herndon Parkway.

nifer Boysko, and Del. Irene Shin. The space for the arts center is at the far left-hand side of the sprawling building.

Councilmember Cesar del Aguila said, "Given that Arts Herndon is not the Tenant at 397 Herndon Parkway, other non-profits will likely be interested in the space. The Town needs facilities to support soup kitchens, food distribution centers, and day laborer facilities," he said.

See www.artsherndon.org.



SCREENSHOT:

SOURCE HERNDON-VA-GOV

Herndon Councilmember Cesar del Aguila.



Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc.



Michael L. O'Reilly, Esq.

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NEWS

6 Year Sentence for Tax Crimes, Wire Fraud

A Great Falls man was sentenced March 14 to six years and six months in prison for tax crimes and his wire fraud scheme, according to the Department of Justice.

According to court documents and statements made in court, Rick Tariq Rahim, 56, owned and operated several businesses, including laser tag facilities and an Amazon reseller. From 2015 to 2021, Rahim did not pay the IRS the taxes withheld from his employees' paychecks or file the required quarterly employment tax returns reporting those withholdings.

Between October 2010 and October 2012, Rahim filed two personal income tax returns on which he reported owing substantial taxes, but did not pay all the taxes due. When the IRS attempted to collect the unpaid taxes, Rahim submitted a false statement that omitted valuable assets he owned, including a helicopter, a Bentley, a Lamborghini and real estate in Great Falls. Approximately two weeks later, Rahim transferred ownership of the Great Falls property to his wife. He also paid personal expenses from his business bank accounts, including more than \$889,000 toward his mortgages and more than \$669,000 to purchase or lease cars, including three different Lamborghinis. Rahim withdrew more than \$1.1 million in cash in amounts less than \$10,000 to avoid triggering currency transaction reports from the bank. Rahim has not filed a personal income tax return since 2012 despite earning more than \$34 million in gross income.

In total, Rahim caused a loss to the IRS of at least \$4.4 million.

Rahim also defrauded customers who invested using his automated trading bots and by "copying" Rahim's supposed trading activities that he posted to Discord. He marketed his products on websites named Bots-

forWealth, TradeAutomation, ProChartSignals, OptionCopier, CopyAndWin, SnipeAlgo, and QQQtrade. Rahim charged customers a subscription fee to access his bots and other software, and to copy his supposed trades. Rahim also offered a "lifetime membership" through which customers received access to Rahim's private Discord channel, some of his products, and his "in-office" trading days. Rahim personally traded stocks for at least two individuals, claiming "We'll hit home runs and make \$500k+ per day very very often." Instead, Rahim lost over \$300,000 of his clients' funds in eight months.

Rahim induced customers to subscribe to his products by using social media tools, including TikTok, YouTube, and Discord. He also sought to induce customers by claiming he was extremely wealthy, boasting about trading millions of dollars and posting about his large home, pool, and luxury cars, including his Lamborghini. He posted false information to his websites and to his social media accounts claiming to "beat the stock market every day" and promising extreme profit margins. His claim of regularly beating the market was exaggerated. In reality, he did not post his trades that lost money. In fact, Rahim realized over \$500,000 in losses from February 2021 through December 2022, and did not earn millions in the market during this time as he had claimed. As part of his fraud scheme, Rahim also created at least 20 Discord user profiles where he posted emojis, likes, and symbols showing agreement and excitement regarding Rahim's posts. Rahim earned at least \$1,397,000 in subscription fees during his schemes.

In addition to Rahim's prison sentence, he agreed to forfeiture of over \$1.3 million and must pay restitution to the IRS and to his investment fraud victims.



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Town of Herndon Faces FY26 Budget Season

Nearly 30 percent increase year over year in the proposed budget: countered by tax and fund increases, cuts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Christopher E. Martino, interim town manager of the Town of Herndon, presented his proposed Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget during the Town Council's March 11 work session. Martino emphasized the driving force behind the FY26 budget was the town's Strategic Plan and its vision statement for a sustainable, safe and equitable town.

The FY26 proposed budget of \$95,628,447 meets the needs of the General Fund, Stormwater Management Fund, all enterprise funds, Water and Sewer, Cemetery, Golf Course, and the FY 2026 portion of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). It is a 28.1 percent increase from the previous year adopted budget of \$74,632,183.

"Much of the budget is focused on and supports the regular ongoing provision of programs and services throughout the town, the overwhelming majority of our costs. And then there are emerging issues that we need to respond to and deal with, whether it's the weather and snow or some other event," Martino said. "Then there's a small portion that provides some capacity to begin to focus on the strategic initiatives. I reflected back on that, because so much of the budget and what is driving the cost increases exceeding our revenue capacity are those regular programs and service needs," he said.

Martino said multiple departments are planned to have programs reduced or slashed, including

- ❖ Community Development-Public Tree Forestry Program, a viable program for replacement and gradual increase in the canopy (\$293K); with a proposed cut of \$25K

- ❖ Parks and Rec-Park Operations-Safety (\$166K); proposed cut of \$38K by delaying inspections and turf testing and making repairs reactively rather than proactively

- ❖ Public Works-Building Maintenance and Repairs- Continued maintenance of town facilities (\$358K) budgeted below recent actuals; all facility systems are aging and past useful life, cut of \$185K

Martino's proposed FY26 balanced budget anticipates increased costs associated with projects, personnel and operations, and capital spending across all funds. Recommended increases in taxes are:

- ❖ Meals tax increase to 4 percent from 3.75 percent, projected to add \$300K of revenue

- ❖ Real estate tax rate to \$0.270 per \$100 of assessed value tax from 0.260 when combined with the 4.38 percent increase in assessed values would add up to \$562K in additional revenue; the average residential owner would pay \$133 more annually

- ❖ The Business, Professional, and Occupational License (BPOL) rate schedule would match Fairfax County's

- ❖ Recycling Fee increases from \$16 to \$21 per quarter.

Additionally, a General Fund Capital Outlay of \$2.9 million is planned to be funded via the General Fund Capital Reserve and Capital projects for FY 2026; a total of \$5.9 million is reflected in the Capital Improvement Program.

The Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration Real Estate Division collects data for all real property in Fairfax County, including property in the Town of Herndon, at full and fair market value as of Jan. 1 of each year.

Challenges to the budget picture for the Town of Herndon emerged given the unknown impact of federal policies on the region and grant funding uncertainty, inflationary pressures across products and services used by the town to deliver programs and services, aging infrastructure/facilities, and adjustment to post-American Rescue Plan Act (2021-2022). According to Martino, core service costs, which the town has no control over, have kept going up, which meant that changes had to be made to maintain the level of services people in the town had come to expect. In some cases, resources have had to be repurposed, and services would be cut. The \$120,000 cost of the spring cleanup and the \$1.2 million needed for brand marketing are both slated for cancellation.

The Town of Herndon's proposed General Fund expenditures are \$50,328,225, an increase of 12.7 percent from the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. This rise is primarily due to higher costs related to staff (8.7 percent rise) and capital (28.7 percent rise) as the town moves from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, grant funding to the General Fund and other funding sources for projects and purchases that require capital assets.

The Stormwater Fund is the most significant expenditure change, a 216 percent increase comparing the FY 2025 Adopted Budget and the FY26 Proposed Budget. According to Martino, the primary reason for increasing water and sewer rates for FY26 and in future years is that significant cost increases. In February, the Town Council received an update on the status of the fund and an overview of the multi-year rate plan. Without changes to water and sewer rates, the town would be forced to use retained

Average Residential Tax Bill

Proposed FY 2026 Average Residential Tax Bill - \$1,515
By Dollar Amount with Functional Area



23 March 11, 2025 FY 2026 Proposed Budget: Governmental Funds Herndon

HERNDONVA@PORTALCIVICCLERK

Where do the funds go from the average Town of Herndon residential tax bill?



TOWN OF HERNDON VIDEO, MARCH 11, 2025

From left, Town of Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc Jr. and Christopher E. Martino, interim town manager of the Town of Herndon

"Much of the budget is focused on and supports the regular ongoing provision of programs and services throughout the town, the overwhelming majority of our costs.

— Christopher E. Martino, interim town manager

earnings to balance the fund.

The FY26 proposed budget includes a 20.6 percent increase in water and 9.8 percent in sewer rates for a combined quarterly rate of \$210.45. The average quarterly impact per household over FY 2025 is \$25.23.

The town's primary funding sources to support the General Fund and provide critical municipal programs and services to the Herndon community are residential and commercial real estate taxes, meals taxes, transient occupancy taxes, and business, professional, and occupational licenses (BPOL). In FY 2026, residential and commercial real estate assessments are estimated to increase by 6.63 percent and 0.62 percent, respectively, resulting in a combined increase of 4.38 percent.

"Due to rising personnel and operational costs and planning for further capital investments, the overall cost of providing the base level of services and programs to the

community has risen further than what town revenues can support at current rates," said Martino to Mayor Keven LeBlanc and Town Council members in a letter dated March 7.

The Town of Herndon's proposed budget increase of 28.1 percent is the most significant increase percentage-wise compared to the FY26 proposed budgets of Fairfax County and other jurisdictions within the county for which staff leadership has presented their FY26 budgets to date.

- ❖ Town of Vienna: "This proposed balanced budget is lean compared to previous budgets, with a modest 3.2 percent increase over the current year's budget to manage inflationary pressures," said Town Manager Mercury Payton. "While proposed budgets in some of our neighboring jurisdictions call for an increase in

property taxes to cover their operating expenses, our proposed budget demonstrates our commitment to provide services that we can with the revenue that we have."

- ❖ City of Fairfax-Fairfax City Manager Bryan Foster presented his recommended fiscal year 2026 budget. Proposed net total expenditures for all funds in FY 2026 are \$306,551,165, representing a 21.3 percent increase from FY 25. "This budget will enable the City to plan, design and build the 130 projects in its proposed CIP [Capital Improvement Program] by appropriating \$105.1 million for FY 26 and forecasting \$618.3 million for FY 26 to FY 30."

- ❖ Fairfax County- The Fairfax County FY 2026 advertised budget shows a net increase of \$297.1 million, or 7.9 percent,

SEE TOWN OF HERNDON BUDGET.

PAGE 14

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Million Dollar Initiative To Help Recently Unemployed Federal Workers

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) has launched NOVAnext, a \$1 million initiative to help recently unemployed federal workers and contractors transition into new careers.

Approved participants can enroll in one of 14 courses for free, covering IT certifications, program management, HR, entrepreneurship, and a new Generative AI class. NOVA also offers resume-writing and job search workshops.

Eligible individuals must have been laid off after Feb. 1, 2025, reside in the NOVA service area, and apply through Virginia Career Works.

ROUNDUPS

Donate Blood this Saturday in Chantilly

Inova Blood Donor Services is holding a blood drive this Saturday, March 22, from 8 a.m.-noon, at the Sully District Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Schedule an appointment at <https://bit.ly/SullyD0322>. Bring a photo ID and allow about an hour for the donation. Donors must be at least 17 (or 16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. As a thank-you, donors will receive an Inova umbrella (while supplies last). For more information, email sully@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Employment Job Fair this Sunday in Centreville

People seeking employment, needing help to spruce up their resumé or considering a career change are invited to the Empower and Elevate Employment Job Fair at Mount Olive Baptist Church. It's set for this Sunday, March 23, from 12:30-2:30 pm., and the church is at 6600 Old Centreville Road in Centreville.

Representatives from Fairfax County's Department of Human Resources, Neighborhood and Community Services and the Economic Development Authority will be onsite and ready to speak with attendees about new opportunities. For further information, contact Suzette.Reynolds@fairfaxcounty.gov.

WFCM'S Free Food Markets Need Donations

With an increased demand for food to feed local families in need, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) is seeking donations of the following items for its Free Food Markets in Centreville and Chantilly: Flour (maseca preferred), sugar (1-pound or 2-pound bags), vegetable oil, pasta and pasta sauce, brown rice, pancake mix, family-sized snacks (crackers, pretzels, nuts, seeds, dried fruits, etc.), canned chicken, and ground coffee, tea bags and hot-chocolate mixes.

Toiletries are also needed, especially toilet paper, bar soap, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair shampoo, hair conditioner, feminine-hygiene products and baby wipes. Bring items to donate to WFCM's back door at 4511 Daly Drive, Suite H, Monday-Friday, 8-10 a.m., and on the second Saturday of the month, 9-11 a.m.

Car Seat Inspections on April 10

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, April 10, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants should install the child safety seat so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly. Everyone is eligible. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for May 22, at the same place and time.

Register for the Feed Fairfax 5K

Here's a family-friendly way to support Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) weekend meal programs for students in Fairfax County

SEE ROUNDUPS, PAGE 19



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
DINWIDDIE	6048	623	SUTHERLAND ROAD	WHIPPONOCK CREEK	3/1/2025
LOUDOUN	11147	600	NEW ROAD	BULL RUN	2/25/2025
BLAND	2942	42	BLUE GRASS TRAIL	BIG WALKER CREEK	2/19/2025
BUCHANAN	3949	651	OLD LESTERS FORK ROAD	LESTER'S FORK	2/19/2025
SCOTT	16802	665	MANVILLE ROAD	BLACK OAK BRANCH	2/13/2025
LEE	10977	764	ROUTE 764	CANE CREEK	2/13/2025
CHESTERFIELD	4993	1	JEFF DAVIS HIGHWAY	TRIB ASHTON CREEK	2/10/2025

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

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

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

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

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Free Formal Dresses and Accessories for Students

RCC's 23rd Annual Diva Central Giveaway.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Reston Community Center announced it is hosting its 23rd Annual Diva Central Formal and Prom Dress Giveaway at RCC Lake Anne, 609-A Washington Plaza, on Saturday, March 22, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Local middle and high school students can select up to two free formal outfits, dresses, shoes, jewelry, and other accessories for their special spring formal dance or prom. "In addition to making prom more accessible, we hope that Diva Central helps students feel valued," said RCC Board Chair Beverly Cosham. "This event is designed to empower students by allowing them to choose a dress that makes them feel their best."



FILE PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON

Middle and high school students consider formal wear for prom and spring dance at a previously held Diva Central event presented by Reston Community Center at Lake Anne.



FACEBOOK HERRITY

More than 400 students and 50 businesses and government entities participated in the job fair.

Fairfax County Teen Job Fair Draws Over 400 Students

Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) Hosts Event at Chantilly High.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) hosted his second 2025 Teen Job Fair on Saturday, March 15. Held at Chantilly High School, the fair focused on students seeking part-time, summer and seasonal employment, internship opportunities, and volunteer roles.

More than 400 students as well as 50 businesses and government entities participated.

"A lot of teens walked away with contacts, experience in talking with employers, updated resumes, and even jobs," said Supervisor Pat Herry in a Facebook post.



FACEBOOK HERRITY

Some teens opted for the free professional headshots to use in their resumes.

'Rest Easy, K9 Max,' FCPD's Got It From Here

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On March 10, the Fairfax County Police Department announced the death of K9 Max, who served the department for eight years, from 2012 to 2020. "Max bravely apprehended dangerous criminals alongside his handler and brought joy to countless children through K9 demonstrations. In retirement, he remained a loyal companion and mentor to his K9 siblings," posted FCPD on Facebook.

In September 2018, FCPD posted that PFC Matthew "Kyle" Kunstel, Max's handler, said that the best part of being a K9 handler is being able to locate suspects that might have gotten away were it not for the help of a four-legged partner. "A successful catch as a K9 team is very rewarding. In his opinion, a K9 handler is given a tool no other officer has access to. When not patrolling with Max by his side, Kyle spends his time with his family. ... And when Max isn't out on patrol, he's at home with Kyle's family," posted FCPD.



FCPD FACEBOOK POST SEPTEMBER 2, 2018

FCPD announced on March 10 that K9 Max, died. K9 Max served as a police officer with the department from 2012-2020 and enjoyed his retirement years, during which he remained a loyal companion and mentor to his K9 siblings.

K-9 Max, described as a "gentle giant as well as a serious police officer," retired from police work early in 2020 when Kunstel was promoted out of the K9 Unit. The then 9 1/2-year-old German Shepherd from the Czech Republic had served a distinguished career as a valuable asset of the department's SWAT K9s.

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Jessica Robinson



Carol Moore



Miriam Nadel



Sarah Snyder

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JESSICA ROBINSON

Laughter, Joy, Discovery, Wonder, Empathy and Healing

Women's Storytelling Festival is March 20-23 in Fairfax City.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It's always satisfying to sit down and read a good book or hear an engrossing story via podcast. But it's also special to see and hear those stories come to life from the mouths of the people who wrote them.

Toward that end, the sixth annual Women's Storytelling Festival is slated for this Thursday through Sunday, March 20-23. It kicks off March 20, at 8 p.m., with a virtual showcase, followed by in-person performances, March 21-23, at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax City. The entire festival will also be live streamed online.

Showcasing a wide range of storytelling styles, the festival spotlights 19 storytellers who'll perform spoken-word stories. They'll share personal stories and folk tales, as well as tales of adventure and magic. This event is intended for mature audiences; and all ticket holders – whether in-person or virtual – will be able to watch the festival videos for one month after the event concludes.

Hosting the event is the nonprofit Better Said Than Done. Fairfax's Jessica Robinson, Women's Storytelling Festival producer, founded it in 2011 to bring the art of storytelling to Northern Virginia. And she's proud of and excited about this year's festival.

"The stories go deep, the performances are amazing and the audience is rapt," she explained. "The WSF is truly one of the best festivals of any performance-art I've ever seen. It features many of the best storytellers in the country and gives them a space to let loose and tell stories they might not share on other stages."

"You might think, 'I'll only go for one showcase,'" continued Robinson. "But once you start to watch, you're not going to want to miss a second of the rest of the weekend. Plan to come and stay – you won't regret it."

Virtual tickets for the entire event are \$45, and in-person tickets, \$70. In addition, one-day, in-person passes will be available at the www.connectionnewspapers.com

door for \$35. For schedules and further information, to learn more about the 2025 storytellers, and to purchase tickets, go to <https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/>.

The storytellers span a wide range of experience, with relative newcomers telling alongside veterans of more than two decades. Among the festival performers are authors, poets, podcasters, teaching artists and contributors to various storytelling shows and festivals across the country, including the National Storytelling Festival.

And they're coming here from across the nation – from Alaska to Colorado, Minnesota to Virginia. "A festival is a celebration, so dedicating a weekend to celebrate the voices and stories of women shows their perspectives are valued," said storyteller Jennifer Hillery of Massachusetts.

This year's in-person storytellers are: Laura Deal, Swapna Deshpande, Linda Gorham, Jennifer Hillery, Tobey Ishii Anderson, Andrea Kamens, Amanda Lawrence, Carol Moore, Miriam Nadel, Ingrid Nixon, Laura Packer, Jessica Robinson, Aimee Snow, and Sarah Snyder.

"Honestly, it's one of the best emotional vacations you could take."

— Carol Moore, storyteller from Herndon

Karin Amano, Sarah Brady, Sarah Beth Nelson, Shani Womack and Janel Woodland will perform virtually only; but everyone who buys a ticket will be able to see and hear their stories.

Besides Robinson, three local women will be among the storytellers. They are Miriam Nadel of Vienna, plus Carol Moore and Sarah Snyder of Herndon.

Storyteller Miriam Nadel (Vienna, VA) goes on to say,

"[This festival] is more interactive than most forms of entertainment you can experience," said Nadel. "Everyone in the audience ends up nodding their heads in understanding and agreement. It always impresses me what a variety of experiences women have had. We may come from different places and cultures, but our experiences can bring us



Logo of the Women's Storytelling Festival.

"It features many of the best storytellers in the country and gives them a space to let loose and tell stories they might not share on other stages."

— Jessica Robinson, Women's Storytelling Festival producer

together across the generations."

Moore, a returning storyteller, said the festival "feels like an escape into an entirely different world for days. Somehow, you're constantly comforted by camaraderie but also guaranteed to hear, learn or experience something new. There's laughter and joy, discovery and wonder, empathy and healing. Honestly, it's one of the best emotional vacations you could take."

Snyder described it as "like hanging out in the living room of someone's house, whom you may or may not know. But one thing you [learn] is that everyone is welcome, and you get to meet and befriend so many amazing women."

Furthermore, she said, "Women aren't afraid of getting raw and personal. We aren't afraid of being vulnerable, once we're together and realize this is a safe place to be who you are. Having attended just about every WSF so far, I feel totally comfortable letting loose, going deep and trusting that the listeners will hold me and honor me."

Agreeing, storyteller Aimee Snow of Manassas, added, "So many women from different backgrounds and ages in one place makes for an amazing experience."

And storyteller Amanda Lawrence stressed that "Now, more than ever, the world needs

to hear women's stories."

"Women's voices matter, our lived experiences are real – and yet, those voices and experiences are often dismissed," explained storyteller Laura Packer. "This festival gives women a chance to share their personal stories, their interpretations of traditional material, and to be heard without apology or fight."

As for Robinson, she's also pleased that, "For the many people across the country who cannot make it, for one reason or another, to the in-person event in Fairfax, we continue to offer a livestream and the recordings, for one month afterward. And we welcome people of all gender identities to attend."

Overall, said Packer, "The festival will exceed your expectations. Each story is powerful, and the stories heard together become a celebration and exploration of what it is to be human. Be prepared to feel feelings, to laugh and to connect powerfully with everyone there."

To learn more about the festival's storytellers, go to

<https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/2025-festival-storytellers/>

— BONNIE GARDNER CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Brandon Glass



The circus is a great spectacle, even without animals.

Fairfax County Man Ran Away to the Circus

The John Lewis High School alum found his calling with *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

As teenagers approach high school, running away to join the circus comes up as a last resort, but for Brandon Glass it became a reality.

After graduating from John R. Lewis High School in 2010 he dabbled in work with the people who were hearing impaired, as a stunt man in show business and is now part of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus.

Joining the circus may be something to say jokingly but “now it’s actually my life,”

Glass said.

The journey there is as roundabout as a three-ring circus. “The story is quite an adventure,” he said. Out of Lewis High School, where he played the trumpet, Glass ended up at Towson University studying deaf studies and sign language. From there he went to being a stuntman in Los Angeles where he did a lot of stunt fighting with pyrotechnics. Glass described it as “basically fireworks coming out of my shoes,” he said.

The circus found him out in L.A., and now he’s the touring public relations manager, working with many of the city and town officials where the circus is performing. When

they need performers, he sometimes finds people in gyms working out and they end up applying for jobs that demand physical traits and talents in the circus.

When mentioning a job with the circus, thoughts may involve elephants and tiger tamers but those days are over. In about 2017, the treatment of animals became a focus and the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus moved away from animal acts.

“We’ve shifted the focus,” Glass said, “we have no animals in the show now.” Some of the newer acts feature BMX bikes or a robo dog.

Instead, they have high-wire and acrobatic shows, and parts where the audience gets involved as well. Picture the audience joining in when a well-known rock star sings

one of their hits. This year they have a triangular high-wire act with people going everywhere.

“It’s some things you’ve never seen before,” he said.

Travelling around the country with a group of people, especially entertainers can be colorful. Everyone gets to know everyone else from the many different cultures at the circus. Connecting with people is one of the positives he’s gained from the experience. The antics of the performers are “always fun to me,” he said.

Next up for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus aka “The Greatest Show on Earth,” is scheduled to be at the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, from March 28 to April 6, 2025, showcasing an all-new production with over 50 acts.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

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

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner’s meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help

Desk at 703-324-8556 for more. Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

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

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Town Of Herndon Budget

FROM PAGE 10

over the FY 2025 approved budget. “Even when revenue growth is sluggish, we cannot ignore our community’s desire for high-quality services or our employees’ expectations for fair pay increases,” Hill said. “Responsible budgeting is about balance, and this proposal seeks to strike the right balance in funding necessary expenditure increases, finding sensible reduction opportunities and managing the impact on our residents.”

The proposed FY 2026 Enterprise Fund Budget will be presented at the Town Council’s March 18 meeting. The council will discuss the proposed FY26 budget at the work session.

The council will hold two public hearings on Tuesday, April 8, and Tuesday, April 22. The Town of Herndon seeks community feedback on the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Plan. Input will help the town shape its financial priorities and decisions. Visit <https://www.herndon-va.gov/government/town-budget-and-acfr/fy-2025-budget-comment-form> to learn more.

The hearings are open to all residents to provide testimony or express their views on the proposal. Details on these and all components of the proposed FY 2026 budget are available in interactive detail on the town’s website at Herndon-va.gov/Budget.



Madison junior Audrey Wang (left) faced up against Langley junior Maddie Shamloo (right), the two-time district Defensive Player of the Year.



Senior Sara Becker prepared for a free throw, putting everything on the line for a win that would keep Madison in the playoffs.

“We kept fighting to the very last second.”

— Sara Becker, Madison senior forward

Gameday Glory

Langley bests Madison to advance to the regional semifinals.

BY SARA SASTRY
THE CONNECTION

Langley faced Madison in the high school girls basketball quarter-finals of the regional tournament. Langley had a rough start in the first quarter with the team down by 8 points, but that did not last long as senior Anya Rahman and freshman Alice Allen led Langley to a quick comeback. The first half held many lead changes, ultimately ending with a score of 25-18 and Langley in front.

Although the first half was full of anticipation, Langley extended their lead to double digits in the third quarter.

Despite Madison's screen-heavy offense succeeding in confusing and weakening Langley's defense, their inability to consistently make shots and draw fouls ultimately led to their defeat.

Freshmen Mariah Armah and Alice Allen proved their first-team all district status with two dominant performances, Allen tallying 20 points to lead the team. The combination of Armah and junior Maddie Shamloo was a potent combination on defense, limiting Madison to 44 points.

Armah's versatility was on full display. Langley head coach Amanda Baker said that she "asked Mariah to do a lot today and guard a bunch of different

people," despite Armah struggling in the game prior.

By the fourth quarter, Langley held onto their double-digit lead despite Madison's efforts to turn the game around. Full-court pressing for the last eight minutes, Madison was able to get steals from the inbound passes under Langley's basket, capitalizing on turnovers to keep their tournament hopes alive.

This perseverance is what Madison senior Sara Becker said made her most proud of her team's performance, as "at the end, [they] kept fighting to the very last second."

But the game concluded with a score of 61-44, and Langley ended Madison's season to advance to the semifinals.

Ultimately, the name of the game was chemistry, and both teams greatly utilized this intangible to make it to the regional tournament. Teammates' strong connections with each other were perfected through hours of practices and games, both teams starting from scratch at the beginning of the season with new faces meeting seasoned players.

With packed stands, Armah was able to feel this chemistry in full effect, as "with the energy of the whole environment, [they] all worked together and from there, just flowed into the game."



Madison regrouped in the second quarter led by their head coach Kirsten Stone (5th from right).



Senior Anya Rahman rests and watches her teammates play during her limited time on the bench.

“We all worked together, and from there, just flowed into the game”

— Mariah Armah, Langley freshman



Langley Head Coach Amanda Baker (sixth from left) leads her team in strategy during a timeout.

Coda

Langley finished their season 23-4, undefeated in their region and first in their district. After their win against Madison, they went on to beat Centreville HS in the regional semifinals and Oakton HS to win a regional championship, a feat they had not accomplished since 2017.

Ultimately, Langley lost in the quarterfinals of the state tournament to West Potomac HS with a final score of 48-37, capping off a monumental year for the team. Despite it being senior guard Anya Rahman's last season, Langley still has talent and potential in its freshmen duo composed of Alice Allen and Mariah Armah, in addition to upcoming senior and defensive weapon Maddie Shamloo.

ENTERTAINMENT



RCC's Diva Central Dress Giveaway takes place on Saturday, March 22, 2025 in Reston.



The Fiesta del Sol Latin American & Caribbean Festival takes place on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at the McLean Community Center.

PLANT A TREE

The McLean Trees Foundation, Neighborhood Trees Program, wants to help you plant a native tree in your yard. Don't know how to plant a tree but want to support the environmental health of your community? Want your family to have the experience of planting a tree? If you live in McLean, Virginia, the McLean Trees Foundation (MTF) (a local nonprofit) will help you select an appropriate native tree for your property, deliver the tree to your yard, help you plant it, provide information on maintenance, and even check back with you a few months after planting to see how your tree is doing. If you are interested in participating in this terrific program to boost our native tree canopy in McLean, please visit our website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/neighborhood-tree-program> and submit your application! A modest fee of \$100 is assessed to cover the costs of the program (limit one 6-7 foot tree in 15 gallon container per household). We have a separate program for those who are interested in spearheading a community tree planting campaign in their neighborhood. MTF's Tree Champion program makes it easy to help your neighbors plant more trees! For more information, visit the website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/tree-champions-program>.



The Flourish Exhibit 2025 takes place now through March 23, 2025 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

preschoolers, but children of all ages are welcome at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. For more information, visit the website at <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts> or contact Megan DuBois at 703.273.6097/ Megan.DuBois@fairfaxva.gov.

The Bonita Lestina Old Town Hall Performance Series is now in its 35th Season! 8 p.m. at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. For more information, visit the website at <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts> or contact Megan DuBois at 703.273.6097/ Megan.DuBois@fairfaxva.gov.

SCHEDULE

March 28 – Dr. John "JJ" Mitchell, Organ Recital (held at Truro Anglican Church, Fairfax)

April 11 – Bobby J and the Hot Lanes

MARCH 8 TO APRIL 6

Workhouse Arts Center Presents Clyde's by Lynn Nottage. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, Bldg. W3 Theater. At a truck stop sandwich shop, a group of formerly incarcerated kitchen staff get a

second chance at life. Under the oppressive rule of their tough-as-nails boss, they find purpose, redemption, and even inspiration in their quest to craft the perfect sandwich. This witty and uplifting play explores themes of resilience, reinvention, and the power of dreams as these five characters navigate life's twists and turns as returning citizens.

NOW THRU MARCH 30

"Hang." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road Tysons. Times: 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. One crime. One room. Three people. A woman's unspeakable decision as the criminal's fate hangs in the balance. Set in a haunting world where every word is a revelation and every silence speaks volumes, this electrifying production will take you on a journey through the complexities of justice and human nature.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 19

Guest Artist Speaker. 7-9 p.m. At Grace Presbyterian Church, 7434 Bath Street, Springfield. Springfield Art Guild will be hosting guest artist Diana Cull to discuss and give a demonstration of Ikebana, traditional Japanese flower arranging. Free. Visit the website: <https://www.springfieldartguild.org/>

MARCH 20-23

2025 Women's Storytelling Festival. At Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. The festival features 19 of the nation's top storytellers, hailing from as far away as Alaska to Fairfax County, sharing a range of stories - from personal to folk, historic to fantastic - intended for a mature audience. Hosted by Better Said Than Done, in-person performances will be held at the Sherwood Community Center, with a special virtual only showcase premiering on March 20. The festival will also be live-streamed online. It kicks off Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 8:00 p.m. ET, with the virtual showcase, and the in-person and live streaming storytelling begins on Friday March 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The festival concludes Sunday, March 23, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. For sched-

ules, other details, and tickets, visit <https://betersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/>

MARCH 21-23

Capital Art & Craft Festival At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. Featuring painting, clothing, jewelry, glass, woodworking, leather, photography and ceramics. Dates are Friday, Mar 21 and Saturday Mar 22: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday Mar 23: 10 a.m. -4 p.m.; Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door; Senior & Military discounts available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACF.art

MARCH 22 - 23

Traveling Players Presents Sea Changes: A Festival of Two Plays. Treasure Island — 3 p.m.; Orlando — 7 p.m. At their Studio in Tysons Corner Center. Tickets are \$16 online, \$20 at the door. Call 703-987-1712. Performed by Traveling Players students, the festival will breathe new life into satirical romances and scurvy sailors, with modern twists on two beloved novels.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

The Workhouse Ball. 6-11 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The highly anticipated inaugural Workhouse Ball is set to be the premier arts and culture event of the season, bringing together influential figures from politics, sports, and the arts for a night of creativity, philanthropy, and entertainment. Hosted at the historic Workhouse Arts Center, this Met Gala-inspired soiree will captivate guests with an immersive and dynamic experience, all in support of artistic innovation and cultural impact. A Night of Artistic Excellence and Celebration Themed "Art After Dark," the Workhouse Ball will transform the venue into an interactive, sensory-filled experience featuring: Immersive Art Activations and live performances; A Stylish Cocktail Hour followed by a gourmet dinner; Dancing and an Exclusive After-Hours Party; and Silent & Live Auctions offering one-of-a-kind art and experiences. Reserve your spot now: www.workhousearts.org/workhouse-ball

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Fiesta del Sol Latin American & Caribbean Festival. 5-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234

Ingleside Ave., McLean. Taste sumptuous tapas, enjoy great live music and hear the sounds of Latin America and the Caribbean right here in McLean with renowned live bands, top notch chefs, quality artisan exhibitors and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Learn how to dance the salsa, meringue or cumbia from the best dance instructors, free throughout the evening. Free Admission. Drink and food tickets sold onsite.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Huge Rummage Sale. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Providence Presbyterian Church, 9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Gently Loved Items at Low Prices. Furniture, Clothing, Shoes, Books, Toys, Accessories, Housewares, Glassware, Linens, Books, Home Décor, Kitchenware, Seasonal Items, Boutique with higher-end items, and more! Presale: Friday, March 21, 2025; 12-3 p.m., \$5 admission; Main Sale: Saturday, March 22, 2025; 8 a.m.-1 p.m., free admission. Visit the website: <https://www.providencechurch.org>.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

RCC's Diva Central Dress Giveaway. At Lake Anne, Reston. Local middle and high school students are invited to enjoy a boutique shopping experience where they can select a complete outfit for their spring formal dance or prom. The combined cost of hair styling, makeup, gowns, tickets and transportation puts attending the prom out of reach for many families. This one-day event offers an ideal shopping experience for middle and high school students in need of a dress, shoes, jewelry and other accessories. Everything is free and each shopper can select up to two outfits.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Rhythm India: Bollywood & Beyond. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. With colorful costumes, dynamic music, and soulful beats, Rhythm India evokes the glitz and glamor of a blockbuster Bollywood dance sequence and the graceful movements of classical Indian dance.

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel: Humor in Music. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax.

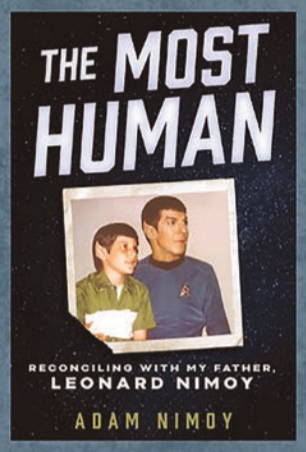
CITY OF FAIRFAX EVENTS

Funday Monday. 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.


This is a free program perfect for

ENTERTAINMENT

**Adam Nimoy:
On Reconciling with my Father**



THE MOST HUMAN
RECONCILING WITH MY FATHER,
LEONARD NIMOY
ADAM NIMOY



Adam Nimoy

Thursday, March 27 | 7 p.m.

Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center
3740 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22030

A talk by Adam Nimoy: On Reconciling with My Father, Leonard Nimoy takes place on Thursday, March 27, 2025 in Fairfax.

Siegel closes out his season of Keyboard Conversations with music to raise the spirits—and stimulate smiles! Center audiences are invited to enjoy merriment in musical tones from the enchanting works of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Copland, and Stravinsky.

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Guided Pokemon Go Hike. 2:30-4 p.m. At Riverbend Park, Great Falls. Learn about nature while enjoying playing Pokémon Go with your family or friends. Participants must be familiar with Pokémon Go, supply their own smart device, and have Pokémon Go already installed. Backup battery or charger recommended. Program will be outdoors, so participants must dress for the weather. Visit <https://bit.ly/3QrP7GV>

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Heather Cole, author of Virginia's Presidents: A History and Guide, will speak on the stories of our eight Virginia born presidents. Free.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 26

Senior Movie Day. 10 a.m. At Movie theater at Reston Town Center, Reston. Featuring the movie "Here." Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day. Join them on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie.

THURSDAY/MARCH 27

Adam Nimoy: On Reconciling with My Father, Leonard Nimoy. 7-8:15 p.m. At Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. In *The Most Human: Reconciling with My Father* Leonard Nimoy, Adam Nimoy explores his complicated and often tumultuous relationship with his father, Leonard, the iconic half-Vulcan science officer he portrayed on *Star Trek*. Despite their differences, father and son travelled parallel paths from divorce, to addiction, and finally

to recovery. More importantly, Adam Nimoy shares how he and his father reconciled with the help of AA meetings and over Shabbat dinners. George Takei says "The fact that Leonard and Adam found a way to rebuild their relationship should resonate with anyone who struggles with difficult family dynamics.

MARCH 28-29

2025 Mason School of Dance Gala Concert Performances. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. This year's program showcases George Mason School of Dance majors in four varied, critically acclaimed works by well-known choreographers: Robert Battle (*The Hunt*), Christopher d'Amboise (*Twist*), Robyn Mineko Williams (*Cloudline*), and Yue Yin (*Through the Fracture of Light*).

FRIDAY/MARCH 28


Learning at Lunch. 12-1 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, W16, McGuire Woods Gallery, Lorton. Discover a New Way to Learn Women's History! Have you ever thought about how games can bring history to life? Join them for Learning at Lunch: Gamifying Women's History, where they'll explore how educators and historians are using interactive storytelling and game design to make women's history more engaging than ever!

SATURDAY/MARCH 29

"Happiness Happens": Lecture by Ester and Arthur Brooks. 7 p.m. At Oakcrest School, 1619 Crowell Road, Vienna. Dr. Arthur Brooks is a Harvard professor, Ph.D. social scientist, #1 best-selling author, and columnist at *The Atlantic* who specializes in using the highest levels of science and philosophy to provide people with actionable strategies to live their best lives. Mrs. Ester Munt-Brooks is a Catholic educator dedicated to helping ordinary people deepen their faith and apply it to daily life. She speaks widely in parishes and Catholic events around the United States. Ester and Arthur will share

CLYDE'S

A PLAY BY LYNN NOTTAGE



Workhouse Arts Center Presents "Clyde's" by Lynn Nottage now through April 6, 2025.

their different approaches to finding happiness in daily life. To RSVP, visit oakcrest.org/parent-support-speakers.

SATURDAY/MARCH 29

Tails, Trails and Ales. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lark Brewing Company, 24205 James Monroe Highway, Aldie. Join FOHA (Friends of Homeless Animals) for a charity walk, adoptable pets, vendors, raffles, pet-friendly activities, and craft drinks. Tickets include event access and a souvenir. Cost: \$20 Adults, \$10 Youth, Kids under 12 Free. Buy tickets at <https://fohata-2025.eventbrite.com>. Visit the website: <https://www.foha.org>

SUNDAY/MARCH 30

Les Arts Florissants: Vivaldi's Four Seasons at 300. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. In celebration of the 300th anniversary of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, Les Arts Florissants, one of the foremost Baroque music ensembles in the world, reframes the iconic work for the 21st century. The 15-person chamber orchestra, which performs on period instruments, intersperses the movements of the beloved *Four Seasons* with lesser-known works by Monteverdi, Uccellini, and Geminiani in this "performance to be celebrated" (*New York Times*).

SUNDAY/MARCH 30

Blossom Bash at Tysons Corner Center. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Take part in an Official National Cherry Blossom Event as they paint the plaza pink! Experience vibrant retailer activations and exclusive promotions, live chalk art featuring 20 local artists, food and beverages specials and tastings, live music, face painting, giveaways, festival parade entertainment and more! Enjoy performances from the Washington Wizards Dance Team and Washington Commanders Command Force. Be sure to check out PenFed Petals during the event. PenFed Credit Union will be giving away beautiful build-your-own bouquets featuring cherry blossom branches and other seasonal flowers. Plus, their flower wall will be

available for selfies. PenFed members get VIP access and premium bouquets.

TUESDAY/APRIL 1

Dinaw Mengestu, Ethiopian-American novelist & journalist. 6:30 p.m.

At The Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. By exploring courage, Mengestu will present us with his ideas on the politics of language and masculinity. Through his work the multitudes of men and women at work in the cities and small towns in America become personal and quietly heroic. Mengestu is the author of four novels, including *Someone Like Us* (Knopf 2024), and *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (Riverhead, 2007), all New York Times Notable Books. Visit <https://cheusecenter.gmu.edu/events/16747>.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 2

National Walking Day. 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. At The St. James, 6805 Industrial Road, Springfield. Visit The St. James sports complex in Springfield for a special National Walking Day event presented by Sheehy Auto Stores. The event is free and open to the public. Guests will participate in a walking challenge with interactive sessions including fitness demos led by St. James trainers and professional rugby team, Old Glory DC, healthy cooking demos, hands-only CPR coaching and more. No advanced registrations or RSVPs required. Questions? Reach out to us at ESGWRHeartWalk@heart.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Cirque Mechanics: Pedal Punk. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Known for their modern circus incorporating mechanical marvels, Cirque Mechanics introduces the wildly astonishing Pedal Punk, set in a Steampunk-inspired world where cycling provides wondrous escape from pervasive obsession with technology. A 22-foot, pedal-powered performance platform (dubbed the Gantry bike) serves as the caravanning mobile centerpiece of

this high-flying thrill ride, featuring spectacular storytelling and daredevil acrobatics. The awe-inspiring ensemble of aerialists, jugglers, and clowns—including a zany bike shop mechanic—interacts with the elaborate contraption as well as penny farthings, unicycles, and tandem cycles.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Sydenstricker Schoolhouse Trivia. 7-9:30 p.m. At Historic Sydenstricker Schoolhouse, 8511 Hooes Road, Springfield. Sydenstricker Schoolhouse Trivia Night with host Mike Loos! Teams limited to 6 persons due to space in the Schoolhouse. Contact Sharen Sheehan with team information – name / number of team members. Make payment at Schoolhouse website (www.sydenstrickerschoolhouse.org) using yellow 'donate' button on left side of home page.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Historic House Tours. 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. At Sunrise at Silas Burke House, 9619 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The historic house at Sunrise at Silas Burke House will be open for free tours (10:30-12:15 April 5) given by the Burke Historical Society. Registration not needed.

APRIL 5-6

SPRINGPEX Stamp Show. At John R. Lewis High School cafeteria, 6540 Franconia Road, Springfield. Presented by Springfield Stamp Club. SPRINGPEX is the Washington D.C. area's largest club-sponsored stamp show. Features interesting philatelic exhibits, 20+ dealers, U.S. Postal Service booth, 2nd annual Postcrossing meet-up, and free materials for young, beginning, and returning collectors. Free admission and parking. Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Details: springfieldstampclub.org/springpex

SUNDAY/APRIL 6

The Hot Lanes Perform. 6-8 p.m. At Earp's Ordinary, Fairfax. The Hot Lanes makes its debut at this fine eatery/bar/music venue that rivals Jammin Java! Tickets available at the door. Two sets of fine music in a two-hour span for \$15.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 9

Potomac Harmony Chorus. 7:30 p.m. At St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 3241 Brush Drive, Falls Church. As the chorus prepares to participate in the Sweet Adelines Regional Competition, they will have a dress rehearsal in which they will present their two-song competition package as well as a few other fine tuned numbers. All music will be sung in 4-part harmony, a cappella style! For more information, contact Jackie Bottash at jackiebot-tash@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/APRIL 11

Community Comedy Show. 6:30-8:30 PM. At Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, Reston. Hilarious, spontaneous comedy meets meaningful community impact at the inaugural event of Resonance Improv Alliance. Your laughter contributes directly to our mission to spread joy in Fairfax County. Improvisation is unscripted and may include adult content. Shows typically

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19

Know The Facts

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- Reporting is mandatory with penalties for non-compliance.
- All businesses, legal entities, non-profits, & corporations must report.
- Reporting is an annual requirement, not a one-time task.
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Employment

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

McLean Project for the Arts' Spring Solos Debut April 10

Featuring work by Jackie Hoysted, Emon Surakitkoston and Heidi Fowler

McLean Project for the Arts will open its spring solo exhibitions — Detrimorphose, by Heidi Fowler; Rudimental, by Jackie Hoysted; and Crossing Culture, by Emon Surakitkoston — on Thursday, April 10, 2025. An Opening Exhibition Reception will take place Thursday, April 17 from 7-9 pm.

"These three artists were chosen from our most recent open call for proposals, from more than 200 applicants," said Nancy Sausser, MPA Artistic Director and Curator. "They were selected for the strength and originality of their work, and represent three very different styles and approaches to making art."

In the exhibition Detrimorphose (Atrium Gallery), Heidi Fowler depicts the power of brokenness and redemption through mixed media paintings. The artists bring together discarded materials (junk mail, plastic, rus-

tic pieces, and old computer parts) in assemblages to inspire a greater consciousness and creativity towards the paraphernalia we would otherwise discard; exploring the tension between the beauty of creation and the priorities of man.

Jackie Hoysted's Rudimental (Emerson Gallery) is an interactive immersive installation that evokes ideas of nature in interconnectedness. Using simple geometrical elements to generate imagery, and meditative sounds the installation harks back to undervalued ancestral connections with the land, the planet, the universe. It is a call for mutual respect, reciprocity and recognition of our minuteness in the universe.

Also on display in our Emerson Gallery, Crossing Culture features two recent bodies of work by Thai-American artist Emon Surakitkoston, a culmination of her professional journey over the past five years. Using multiple conjoined canvases and wood panel, Emon created works that use shape and

composition to convey unity among their unique contributing parts. The individual pieces take on new meaning and value when seen as part of a collective. With her sculptural work Emon translates her voice into a new visual language. This collection as a whole is born from Emon's personal and artistic growth, as she embraces the complexities of her cultural identity as an immigrant from Thailand in the United States.

In addition to the April 17 Opening Exhibition Reception, MPA will host an Artist Talk on Saturday, May 10 at 11am, and a Tea & Talk on Wednesday, June 4 at 11am. All events are free and open to the public.

The MPA Atrium Gallery is available for viewing during McLean Community Center operating hours. The Emerson Gallery is open for visitors Mondays through Saturdays from 10am – 4pm.

MPA's 2025 Spring Solo Exhibitions are funded in part by an ArtsFairfax Project Grant.

Less About Me Than It Used to Be



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having been a cancer patient now for 16+ years, I speak with some experience on the subject. Though hardly an authority on the matter, I have been there and done that, including surgery in my many years living on the presumptive edge/slippery slope that comes with a "terminal" diagnosis. For me, that diagnosis was originally heard at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist when I was given a "13 month to two years" prognosis, "non-small cell lung cancer stage IV." As Maurice Chevalier so famously sang – and I invoke it here: "I remember it well." And as much as I've tried to make light of it, make a joke about it, compartmentalize it/lock it in the vault, the reality is that cancer is the opposite of the gift that keeps on giving. It is in fact the bomb that keeps on ticking. (With apologies to John Cameron Swayze.)

How you adjust/react/respond to all that ticking is quite simply, the rest of your life. You must take the highs and the lows and the in-betweens in some kind of stride. A stride which enables you to still put one foot in front of the other, literally and figuratively, and "get busy living," to quote Morgan Freeman from the Oscar-nominated film of his: "Shawshank Redemption;" and live as if you have a future rather than bemoaning that you don't. As my close friend Lynne advised me at the beginning of this journey: "Being a cancer patient is the hardest thing you'll ever do." Of course, she was right. Moreover, one can never be prepared for being a cancer patient. The real problem is that your brain has a mind of its own and once cancer infiltrates your conscience – and/or sub conscience, it is, as we say in Boston: "Katie bar the door." Which means – in effect: Look out. Trouble is coming. And cancer is trouble with a capital "C."

Aside from the obvious physical toll cancer inflicts on your body, it is the unseen and nearly unpredictable effect it has on your brain. Suddenly, or so it seems, you become a different person. Familiar certainly, but one whose opinions, interests, tolerances, initiatives, and follow-throughs change compared to the person you used to be. And its way more complicated than a bucket list that now takes on more of an urgency to complete. It's more about your attitude.

For me, at least, it became very difficult to do things I didn't/don't want to do. That includes being told what to do and/or being motivated to do things that don't benefit you (household/domestic-type-should-be-shared-responsibilities). When you're told you're "prognosed" to die in two years – or less, your focus in life narrows to include what you want to do, not what others want you to do. It's not exactly being stubborn but certainly you become set in your ways. And really, how do deny a dying man his last wish – or a reasonable facsimile thereof? This attitude/lack of tolerance permeates your brain. It's as the cancer has completely rewired your brain – without your permission.

Fighting back against this self-preservation type instinct is the parallel, but not nearly as obvious, universe, that cancer patients – certainly ones with "terminal" diagnoses including me, inhabit. Like it or not. It's an emotional reaction as instinctive as the knee-jerk when your pediatrician hit you in the knee with the mallet thing when you were a kid. I imagine it applies to similarly diagnosed non-cancer patients as well. When your world/mortality shrinks, it's impossible to act normal. ('Normal' left the barn when the doctors told you the tumors biopsied were malignant.) When this news is finally absorbed/processed/understood – and it doesn't quite happen at moment of impact, the three most important people in your life become me, myself and I. Maturing beyond this narrow but inevitable perspective is as much the goal in one's treatment as is the reduction in your cancer markers as measured by your monthly lab work. And not that you can necessarily feel a decrease in those markers, but if they come down, you sure do feel it emotionally. Moreover, if one is fortunate to experience some positive results along this cancer way, it seems to clear a path for you to become the pre-cancer-diagnosis person you used to be rather than the post-cancer-diagnosis you sort of became. This return-to-normal transition happens as seamlessly as the attitude changes that manifested when you first began coming to grips with this cancer diagnosis/abbreviated mortality. Your focus begins to broaden again and you're not always the most important person in the conversation. And in a way, it helps to not be consumed with self anymore. It's not an indication of remission, nor is it a guarantee/predictor of anything, it's more an acceptance of reality. "Cancer sucks" for sure as the motto so simply states. It's certainly a blip on the radar, but it doesn't have to be a life's sentence. Instead, it can become your life's work, one you're redefining every day.

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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feature PG-13 content but may include adult situations and language. Recommend that children under 16 be accompanied by a trusted adult. Tickets are available at [Resonance.betterworld.org](https://www.resonance.org/betterworld).

SATURDAY/APRIL 26
RA's Community Yard Sale. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 12010 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston (near Reston Wegmans).

SATURDAY/MAY 3

Feed Fairfax 5K. At Greenbriar Town Center, Chantilly. Looking for a family-friendly way to support Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) weekend meal programs for students in Fairfax County Public Schools? Registration is now open for the Feed Fairfax 5K set for Saturday, May 3, at the Greenbriar Town Center in Chantilly. All proceeds from the race entry fees and do-

nations will support WFCM's and Food for Others' weekend meal programs for students. For more information and to register, go to [feedfairfax.com](https://www.feedfairfax.com).

SATURDAY/MAY 10

44th Annual Spring Civil War Mosby Bus Tour, "Mosby and the End of the War." Sponsored by the Stuart - Mosby Historical Society. Tour Leaders will be Kevin Pawlak and Rob Orrison. Follow Mosby's Rangers during the closing

acts of the Civil War, from the final fights to the disbandment at Salem. Cost is \$80 members of the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society \$90 for non-members. Tour does not include lunch. To sign up contact Rob Orrison at 703-431-2869 or email mosbytours@gmail.com or send your check to Rob Orrison (make checks payable to Rob) at 102 Melody Lane Stafford, VA 22554. Venmo: @Robert-Orrison. No refunds after May 1, 2025.

ROUNDUPS

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Public Schools. Registration is now open for the Feed Fairfax 5K set for Saturday, May 3, at the Greenbriar Town Center in Chantilly. All proceeds from the race entry fees and donations will support WFCM's and Food for Others' weekend meal programs for students. For more information and to register, go to [feedfairfax.com](https://www.feedfairfax.com).

Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration on March 29

A ceremony commemorating Vietnam Veterans Day will be held Saturday, March 29, at 11 a.m., at the Veterans Amphitheater outside Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St., in Fairfax. This community program will honor all Vietnam veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, and their families, and individually remember the Fairfax County residents who died in Vietnam by reading their names.

Hosting this event are the Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; the Fairfax County Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution; VFW Post 8469; and American Legion Post 177. It's free and open to the public.

Attention Seniors:

Home for Life Expo is April 4

The third annual Home for Life 2025 Expo will be held Friday, April 4, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax. This free event will provide valuable information to senior citizens in both Fairfax City and County.

There'll be 36 exhibitors, plus speakers on four topics – decluttering, technology support, estate planning and dementia care. The Welcome Café will offer refreshments and a place to catch up with friends and neighbors. And the City of Fairfax Fire Department will have its fire-simulator trailer in the parking lot.

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

911 Focus Groups

Fairfax County's Department of Public Safety Communications (the 9-1-1 Center), in partnership with George Mason University, is seeking your help to improve emergency services.

Focus groups are being formed to talk about how community members and first responders work together. Your input will help: Spot challenges in emergency response; Identify what communities need; Find ways to make services better; Share your thoughts on how AI tools could support emergency services

Why It Matters

These meetings will help emergency teams better understand what you need during a crisis and help you feel more prepared if an emergency happens.

Three upcoming sessions are scheduled:

- ❖ Culmore Library
Saturday, March 22
3-6 p.m.
Meeting Room 2
6101 Knollwood Dr., Falls Church
- ❖ Centreville Regional Library
Friday, April 4 (Updated date/time)
4 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Meeting Room 1
14200 St Germain Dr., Centreville
- ❖ Richard Byrd Library
Saturday, April 5
3-6 p.m.
Meeting Room 2
7250 Commerce St., Springfield

What to Expect

Each focus group lasts about 2-3 hours; Food and refreshments will be provided; Your ideas will help shape the future of emergency services

If you're interested in being part of a focus group to help improve emergency communications in Fairfax County, you can register online.

Your voice matters in making emergency services work better for everyone in Fairfax County.



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