

CONNECTION

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Celebrating Vietnam Veterans, Remembering Those Lost

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At Vietnam Veterans Day in Fairfax City, Army veterans (from left) Eugene Roberts, Richard Robinson, Ray Howard, Al Smith and Martin Doyle.



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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Celebrating Women Who Make a Difference in the MVD

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

Women are... strong, resilient, visionary and empowering. These four words frequently describe the many influential women who have shaped our country. During Women's History Month, we often focus on national figures who have made history, but what about the women making a difference every day right here in the Mount Vernon District?

Our office works closely with many dedicated and strong female leaders in local civic associations. Katherine Ward, Co-Chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA), is a powerhouse advocate and resident who has served on the Council since 2007.

You'll often find her juggling responsibilities at both the MVCCA and Potomac Riverkeeper Network tables in our Town Meeting exhibit hall, while championing important community needs. The MVCCA board is also led by many incredible women like Judy Harbeck (Co-Chair), Tamara Srader (Secretary), Cathy Hosek (Education Chair), Bindu Mathur (Planning & Zoning Chair), Ellen Young (Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation Rep) and Marty Lowery (Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations Rep). Marty also



dedicates her time in our office, assisting with events and helping to research information for special projects throughout the District. In Lorton, Wendy Henley, President and Education Committee Chair of the South County Federation, works tirelessly to improve the quality of life for all residents and to help create a sense of community in South County. Her longtime commitment to community service continues to have a lasting, positive impact across the region.

Then there are the many women we see day in and day out during election season. If you've ever voted early at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center or visited our farmers market, chances are you've met Jessica Nichols (Mount Vernon Dems) and Valerie Wohlleben (Fairfax GOP). Whether it's raining, snowing or a perfect sunny day, they're outside talking to voters, registering new ones, answering questions and ensuring that every voice is heard.

Beyond these amazing women are countless federal workers, teachers, social workers, stay-at-home and working moms, small business owners and CEOs who are shaping our community, lifting others up and inspiring those around them. If you would like to read more stories of local women making a difference, the County has highlighted several female leaders, including my Chief of



Jessica Nichols



Wendy Henley



Katherine Ward



Cathy Hosek



Judy Harbeck



Tamara Srader



Valerie Wohlleben



Marty Lowery

Staff, Christine Morin. Check out their stories here: Women's History Month 2025.

But women's history isn't just for March. I encourage you to visit the Suffragist Memorial at Occoquan Regional Park or the Lucy Burns Museum at the Workhouse Arts Center to honor the women who fought for the right to vote. Explore George Washington's

Mount Vernon and see firsthand the remarkable preservation efforts of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

However you choose to celebrate, there are countless ways to recognize and appreciate the contributions of women throughout the year. Learn more: <https://www.fxva.com/herstory/>

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Veterans pose for a group photo at the end of the ceremony.



Sons of the American Revolution Color guard members (from left) Jim Cordes, Darren Schmidt and Larry McKinley.

Vietnam War Veterans Honored in Fairfax City

147 of the fallen came from Fairfax County.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Few Americans realize the significance of March 29, but all those touched by the Vietnam War do. It's National Vietnam War Veterans Day; and last Saturday, it was commemorated with a remembrance ceremony in Fairfax City.

Gathering at the Veterans Amphitheater outside City Hall were the Fairfax County Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR); Fairfax Resolves Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR); VFW Post 8469 and American Legion Post 177.

"We're privileged to honor all Vietnam veterans and their families today," said Lori Vintilescu, regent of the Fairfax County DAR chapter. "And we want to individually remember the 147 Fairfax County residents who died in Vietnam and are named on the plaque on the Veterans Monument on the lawn of the Fairfax County Courthouse."

Larry McKinley, chaplain, Fairfax Resolves SAR chapter, gave the invocation, asking God to hear his prayer for the Vietnam War veterans who sacrificed so much. "Those who we lost are in your loving embrace," he said. "We ask that you bless their families and meet all their needs. God, we pray you give our veterans peace if they suffer from past trauma. We acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe them for our country's freedom."

David Peters, president, Fairfax Resolves SAR Chapter, said, "Our veterans' profound sacrifices in the jungles and rice paddies in Vietnam were a testament to their courage, resilience and dedication to duty. They faced

unimaginable horrors and hardships, yet they never wavered in their commitment to defend our freedoms and the ideals upon which the country was founded. Many of our Vietnam veterans returned home to a nation divided and torn by the war. They faced prejudice and misunderstanding, but they carried on with dignity and honor. Their experiences forever shaped their lives, and they continue to serve their communities and our nation in countless ways."

"We stand in awe of their bravery and sacrifice," continued Peters. "We're eternally grateful for their service, and we pledge to never forget the lessons learned from that tumultuous era in our history. Let us use this day to honor Vietnam veterans – those who returned home and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Let us also reaffirm our commitment to supporting our veterans and their families and ensuring they receive the care and respect they so richly deserve."

SEE VIETNAM VETERANS, PAGE 4



Eric Parkhurst explains the significance of the table and the items on it. On the chair is the POW/MIA flag.



Bowed heads during the opening prayer.



Attendees included Army veterans (from left) Eugene Roberts, Richard Robinson, Ray Howard, Al Smith and Martin Doyle.

Personal Remembrances of Lives Lost and Changed

Agent Orange linked to many veterans' deaths.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

During last Saturday's Vietnam veterans' commemoration ceremony, various community members spoke about people close to them who'd served in that war. Below are the speeches of a few of them.

Linda Thompson with the DAR said her ex-husband, Roger Stollings, served as a Marine corporal in Vietnam and still suffers from multiple health problems because of his exposure there to Agent Orange. She then talked about her brother, Walter Duncan, who was drafted at age 18.

"He had a good job and was engaged to be married," said Thompson. "But he was sent to Vietnam, where he was a sharpshooter. His platoon was trapped by a nest of Viet Cong shooters. He left his group and lobbed a hand grenade at them, wiping them out and saving his entire platoon.

"But he was then mortally wounded and

died in action. He was awarded the Bronze Star with V for valor. He left a grieving fiancé who still – every Memorial Day – leaves a red rose on his grave."

Fairfax resident Mary Claire Hess thanked everyone for attending and thanked the hosts for "giving us the opportunity to celebrate all these great lives. My father loved the Marine Corps. He had a four-year scholarship to Princeton and, instead, he joined the Marines at 17 to fight.

"He died after serving in Vietnam. He and his men were forward observers with the 3rd Marine Division, just north of the Demilitarized Zone. Before he went there, he swore me into the Air Force, and I'm proud of that. But he came home a different person. He died after serving as a battalion commander at Parris Island, S.C. They found a tumor in his brain from Agent Orange in Vietnam. My mom is now 100; but every day, she remembers my father, and so do my siblings and I."

DAR member Corinne Keyes of Fairfax honored her dad, Maj. Jerome Keyes. "He served three tours in Vietnam," she said. "He came back but never spoke about it, and



Linda Thompson



Mary Claire Hess



Corinne Keyes



Catherine Read

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

we regret that we never heard his stories. So I'd encourage all veterans, please, talk about your experiences. Let people know what you went through over there. My father also died of a malignant brain tumor related to Agent Orange. He was 48."

Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read remembered D.R. Butler, a Rotary Club district governor who served multiple tours in Vietnam. "He also taught at the honors college at GMU, well into his 80s," she said. "He's emblematic of the sacrifices made by people called to service."

She also acknowledged her former husband, Ron Read, who served in Vietnam with the Royal Australian Navy. He's now in Melbourne, lecturing and writing books

about military history. "It's important to know, over a dozen countries were in Vietnam with our American soldiers," she said. "In fact, our allies have been with us in every war where Americans served – including the American Revolution – where Gen. Lafayette was instrumental in us achieving independence from Britain. To all those who stood with our American soldiers, I give gratitude to them, as well."

After the ceremony, Thompson said it was important to have it. "Our Vietnam veterans are still suffering and feeling unappreciated," she said. "They're in pain – they just hide it. You saw tears in people's eyes today. They were hugging and comforting each other, so this was good."

Vietnam War Veterans Honored in Fairfax City

FROM PAGE 3

VFW Post 8469 Commander Mac McCarl said the national Vietnam War commemoration was established in 2012 to thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families. Then in 2017, the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act set March 29 in perpetuity as "a national day [and holiday] to recognize the previously unsung patriotism of our Vietnam veterans."

American Legion Post 177 Commander Eric Parkhurst said that date was chosen for several reasons. "March 29, 1973, was the day U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished," he explained. "It was also the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam and the day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war.

"Our national commemoration honors the 9 million who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. No distinction is being made between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during that time. All were called to serve; and all were seen in the same way by a country that could not separate the war from the warrior. Each person serving then earned and rightly deserves our profound thanks."

Janice Dixon, honorary regent, Fairfax County Chapter, NSDAR, said all 147 county residents who lost their lives in the Vietnam War would be remembered by reading their names. "As they say at Arlington National Cemetery when you lay a wreath for Wreaths Across America, 'When you say their names, they are never forgotten,'" she said.

Although no Vietnam veterans were in the audience, their family members attending the ceremony were acknowledged and applauded. Dixon then noted that, "Sadly, as of today 1,573 Vietnam War veterans are still considered missing in action, and their families await word of their fate as we continue our diligent work to fulfill our promise and bring them home."

Parkhurst then led a ceremony remembering America's POW/MIA from that war. He said former and current U.S. military members are "ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice. We're compelled to never forget that, while we enjoy our daily pleasures, others have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment."

Pointing at a table beside him, he said it occupies a place of dignity and honor and was set for one, symbolizing military personnel "missing from our ranks. They're the POWs and MIAs. They're unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we pay humble tribute to them and bear witness to their continued absence. The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors."

Parkhurst said the white tablecloth stood for their pure intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. And a single rose in a vase signified the blood they shed to protect America's freedom. "This rose also reminds us of our missing comrades' families and friends who keep faith while awaiting their return," he said. "The red ribbon on the vase represents an unyielding determination for a proper accounting of those who aren't



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left, Janice Dixon and Suzy Mulligan, both with the Fairfax County DAR chapter, with the wreath of remembrance.

among us."

In addition, a lemon slice on the plate symbolized their bitter fate, and salt sprinkled on the plate stood for the countless, fallen tears of their families. An inverted glass reminded others that the POW/MIA can't raise a toast with them, and an empty chair was because they're not here. But a candle and small flag were also on the table.

"The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, and into the open arms of a grateful nation," said Parkhurst. "The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom. Let us pray that all our comrades will soon be back within our ranks. Remember and never forget their sacrifice. May God

forever watch over them and protect them and their families."

Jim Cordes with the Fairfax Resolves then spoke about a Pennsylvania family's sorrow after being notified in 1966, three days before Christmas, that their son, 21, was reported missing in Vietnam. Marine Cpl. John Keiper was a helicopter-repair expert returning from a helicopter-maintenance mission Nov. 15, 1966, when the Army reconnaissance plane he was in disappeared 20-30 miles from his home base, Da Nang.

He was later promoted to sergeant but was never found. Nonetheless, while awaiting further news about him, his parents, Helen and Chuck Keiper, kept a bottle of champagne chilled in the refrigerator for his return. They and his siblings tried not to give up hope, even as the years passed.

But both parents died – Chuck in 1973 and Helen in 1999 – never learning the fate of their son. In 1978, John was officially presumed dead. Today, his name is on the headstone of an empty grave between those of his parents. It's also inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Next, as the names of Fairfax County's fallen Vietnam veterans were read, attendees each placed a yellow flower into a wreath in their honor. One of the names was Sgt. James W. Robinson Jr., the first Virginia resident to be awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War. In April 1966, at age 25, he was fatally wounded under heroic circumstances in South Vietnam, while serving in the Army infantry. Robinson Secondary School was named after him.

SEE VIETNAM VETERANS, PAGE 9
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Medicaid, What's At Stake

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Medicaid is a massive federal and state-funded program that provides health and long term care coverage to low-income people. It covers one in five people nationwide.

Democratic members of Congress are sounding the alarm about the impact of Medicaid cuts on Virginia and the nation. Republicans are saying there is no need for alarm. Both parties are clashing verbally after the U.S. The House agreed to H.Con. Res.14, on Feb. 25, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

Mary Lee Ruby of Fairfax is very concerned about the possible cuts or program changes to Medicaid. It "would be devastating," Ruby said. Ruby is a Medicaid-funded home care provider for her 24-year-old grandson, Austin, who is severely and permanently disabled after a brain bleed occurred during birth.

The House budget, which included \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts, would reduce federal spending by at least \$1.5 trillion.

The Senate passed its budget resolution the previous week, on Feb. 21. The House and Senate budgets are at odds, and legislation needs to agree on and approve the same budget framework.

The ranking member of the U.S. House Budget Committee, U.S. Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (PA-02), a Democrat, says that the "GOP [House] budget would force the largest Medicaid cuts in American history." Medicaid is a safety-net health care program for low-income adults and families, people with disabilities, older adults, and pregnant women. It provides free or low-cost health insurance to 150,000 people in Fairfax County, over 2 million in Virginia, and 72 million nationwide, including 2 million veterans.

U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Connolly (VA-11), a Democrat, serves the constituents in parts of Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax in Northern Virginia. Defunding Medicaid is unacceptable to Connolly, said in an email. "President Trump said during the campaign that he would not touch Medicaid, Medicare, or Social Security. That was simply not true. The Republican budget will cut Medicaid by \$881 billion to pay for tax cuts for billionaires," said Connolly.

Boyle wrote in his March 18 fact sheet that the House's adoption of the Republicans' budget (H.Con. Res.14) "requires deep, damaging cuts to Medicaid." The Republicans' budget "instructs the Energy and Commerce Committee to cut \$880 billion [over ten years]. ... Medicare and Medicaid make up more than 97 percent of the total spending overseen by the committee, so ... the math doesn't work without deep cuts to Medicaid," Boyle said.

The federal and state governments fund the program together. Federal and state Medicaid spending totaled \$880 billion in the 2023 fiscal year. The Republican House majority's aim to cut \$880 billion from healthcare and energy over the next decade would be detrimental to low-income Virginians.

The federal government's share of Medicaid spending varies by state, ranging from a minimum of 50 percent to 77 percent. Lower per capita income states receive a higher federal medical assistance percentage, meaning the government covers a more significant share of their Medicaid costs.



SOURCE X.COM/GOVERNOR VA

"Once adopted, the changes to our current biennial budget will ensure that all our obligations, including Medicaid, are fully funded," said Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, a Republican



SCREENSHOT: SOURCE

U.S. Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (D-PA)

What the Public Thinks about Medicaid

According to the latest KFF Health Tracking Poll, March 7, 2025, fewer than one in five adults (17 percent) want to see Medicaid funding decrease, and most think funding should either increase (42 percent) or be kept about the same (40 percent). KFF is an independent health policy research, polling, and news source.

Ruby's grandson, Austin, attends a Medicaid-funded daycare center, and she provides him with Medicaid-funded care outside of his daycare hours "to give his mother a break." Ruby said her son, Austin's dad, is a fire marshal in Fairfax County but "doesn't make a whole lot of money."

Ruby explained Austin weighs about 65 pounds, is blind, and sits in his chair all day. He can do nothing for himself, not even move his hands. "When you walk him through a door, you have to move his hands in because otherwise he'll get stuck in the doorway. He really requires total and complete care."

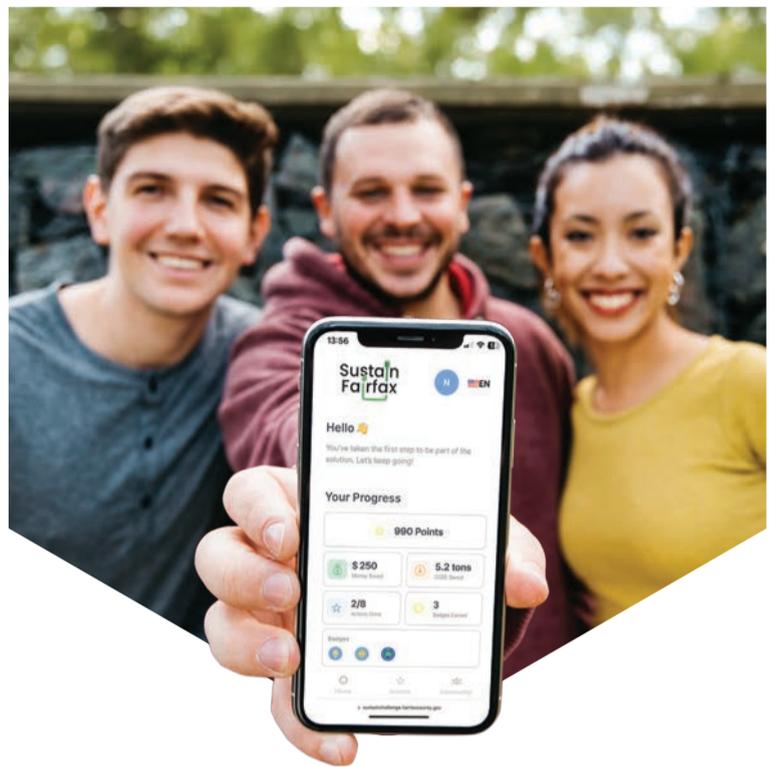
What Austin can do, though, is hear and he can smile. "He has a beautiful smile," Ruby said.

In the debate over federal Medicaid cuts, the KFF focus groups report that Medicaid enrollees emphasize the program's importance to people and their families. Although not part of the KFF focus groups and unaware of them, Ruby said, "It would be terrible if Medicaid were cut... devastating for him (Austin) to have to be without the care Medicaid covers."

What About Medicaid in Virginia?

Medicaid is a complicated health insurer. One reason is that each state, Virginia included, sets its standards for eligibility, how it addresses population health needs, and how it funds its share of the joint federal and state program.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, unveiled his 2025 Session Budget Amendments, HB1600 (Governor's Recommendations), to the House of Delegates on March 24. Youngkin said he had taken action to fund Medicaid. "Once adopted, the changes to our current biennial budget will ensure that all our obligations, including Medicaid, are fully funded." <https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/amendment/2025/1/>



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SEE MEDICAID, PAGE 10

City Council to Reconsider Controversial Project

Fairfax's George Snyder Trail is now in jeopardy.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The \$20 million George Snyder Trail has been in Fairfax City's plans for more than a decade and was approved by City Council more than a year ago. Spanning almost two miles – and including asphalt and concrete boardwalks – this shared-use path would join Chain Bridge Road to the Wilcoxon Trail at Draper Drive, south of Fairfax Boulevard.

It would also connect to VDOT's shared-use path being built along Route 123 as part of the I-66 Outside the Beltway improvements. Doing so would enable Snyder Trail users to travel east some 33 miles to Washington, D.C., or west about 20 miles to Haymarket along the I-66 corridor. (See plan sidebar for more specific details).

But the five new members on the six-person Council have greatly differing opinions about the trail than the previous Council that approved it. And by the end of their March 11 work session, they leaned toward only constructing the west side of it.

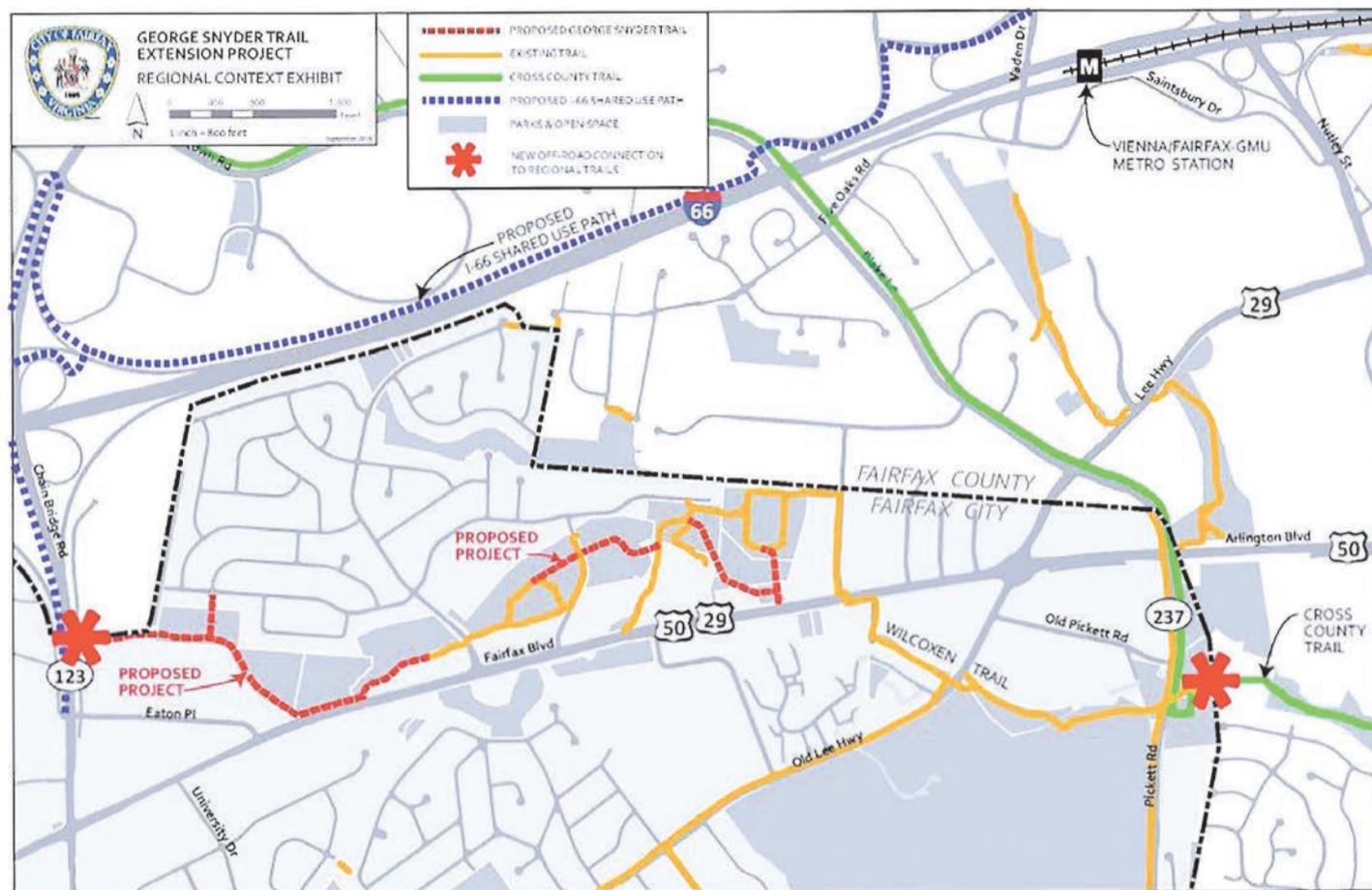
First, though, Transportation Director Wendy Sanford and the City's urban forester, Anna Safford, presented details about the project. Sanford also gave Council three options: 1. Continue with the project as proposed; 2. Cancel it; or 3. Just build the western half, as designed, and leave the eastern half (from Fair Woods Parkway to Draper Drive) alone.

If the project's canceled, Fairfax would have to repay from its General Fund some or all of \$3.7 million it's already spent on design, environmental review and right-of-way acquisition. It's received \$20.6 million total for this \$20 million trail from outside sources, but unused money can't be shifted to a different City project. Sanford also warned that cancellation will impact the City's reputation and ability to receive funding for its future projects.

"VDOT suggested Option Three to us last year, in response to the adverse reactions [from residents opposing the trail]," said Sanford. "The trail would go from Chain Bridge Road in the west to Fair Woods Parkway in the east. VDOT constructed a trail parallel to I-66, and one spur connects to Chain Bridge Road and a new traffic-signal there."

Option Three would entail building 8/10 of a mile of trail vs. 1.78 miles and one bridge instead of four. Since the terrain on that side is gentler than on the east side, less grading and fill dirt would be needed. The trail would also cause less tree, soil and root disturbance. It also preserves more than half of the impacted trees, removes fewer trees in good or excellent condition, and preserves the mature oak/hickory forest on the east side.

But the project would also require all-new plan reviews at the 30-percent and 60-per-



The approved design of Fairfax City's George Snyder Trail (in red).

3. Construct West Half (Segment A CBR to Fair Woods Parkway) as designed: Leave East Half (Segments B-D) in current/natural condition



What it would look like if only the trail's western half were done.

cent design stages and couldn't be readvertised for official authorization for one year. Furthermore, any of the unused \$13.6 million concessionaire funding received from VDOT would return to VDOT and wouldn't be available if the City decides to construct the eastern section at a later date. However, it wouldn't have to repay the \$3.7 million it's already spent.

Starting the discussion, Mayor Catherine Read, said, "I sit on the NVTA [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority] and vote on the funding for projects for the region. On Jan. 23, 2024, I broke the Council's tie vote to keep this project going. In November 2024, I was reelected and the two councilmembers not in favor of it weren't.

"When we received this money, we made a commitment to spend it – and it meant other regions didn't get funds for their projects. If we don't go ahead with it, it would be reneging on our commitment to NVTA and to VDOT." She also stressed that walkable greenways – shared-use paths separated

from roads – have been on the City's plan since 1992.

Councilmember Tom Peterson asked if another trail alignment could be studied for the half-trail option, but Sanford said other alignments were already examined before the final one was brought to Council. Besides, she said, "I asked VDOT if they'd wait two years while we looked at an on-road trail, instead, and a different alignment.

"The concessionaire funding was for projects expected to be open when the improved I-66 was done, and there's no assurance that our revised alignment would even be approved. And VDOT said we've already gone past the time when it could be flexible about waiting any longer. We would have had to decide to do this prior to the right-of-way purchases."

Councilmember Stacey Hardy-Chandler said it's important that a path has wheelchair and stroller access. She then asked what would be done to replace the trees removed, and Sanford replied, "We've iden-

tified re-planting locations, techniques and invasives mitigation. And we've also implemented strong, tree-protection measures." Public Works Director David Summers also stressed that, of the total 90 acres the trail would span, only 6.18 acres would be impacted.

"How long would it take for the [new] trees to regrow?" asked Councilmember Stacy Hall. Safford said trees in the eastern part would take 80-100 years because it's "old-growth" forest. Those in the western portion would take 20-40 years.

Councilmember Anthony Amos asked what the recurring, annual, maintenance costs for the trail would be. Summers said it would be about \$25,000/year for maintenance, the first five years, increasing to \$50,000/year afterward for the whole trail.

"I've received emails from residents on both sides of this issue," said Amos. "Considering the fiscal impacts, the schools, potential tax increase, tariffs and the federal situation, I'm leaning between Options Two and Three."

"I'm not against trails," said Hall. "I'm against roads in the woods – which I think this is. From a fiscally responsible standpoint, I support only the west half. From an environmentally responsible standpoint, I'm struggling with this and don't support a full build at all."

However, Hardy-Chandler said, "I believe cancellation of this project would be irresponsible. This is a multiyear project, and we have to move forward with decisions made by previous councils. From a policy

'Listen to the Citizens; Preserve the Woods'

Fairfax residents have their say about Snyder Trail.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When Fairfax City Council approved the George Snyder Trail project in January 2024, it seemed as if it was a done deal. City staff and consultants went forward with their plans to make it a reality.

Yet while many residents were happy about the trail, many others weren't. They objected to the hundreds of trees that would be cut down to make way for it, didn't want a paved path in the woods, and decried the disturbance of the birds and wildlife it would cause.

Indeed, following the trail's approval, an impassioned and stubbornly persistent contingent of people opposing this project spoke against it at nearly every Council meeting since then, hoping to get the members to change their minds.

Fast forward to 2025 – and five new members on the Council – and the opponents have these members contemplating making a drastic change to the originally approved plan. (See main story.) They're now considering only building half the trail or even canceling the project outright.

"Most of the emails I've received say that, if it's built, they'd like a different alignment," said Councilmember Tom Peterson during Council's March 11 work session. "I wonder if VDOT could help us find a better project than what we have before us."

The nearly 2-mile-long George Snyder Trail has been on the City's Comprehensive Plan since 2012. Currently, it's planned for construction along the southern side of Ac-



Judy Fraser



Douglas Stewart



Sophie McNeil

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

cotink Creek, running east-west between Chain Bridge Road (Route 123) and Fairfax Boulevard (Route 50).

During a Council work session in July 2023, John Gordon, who owns the WillowWood I and II office buildings, said having access to a bike trail directly from those buildings "will help attract more businesses and real-estate revenue to the City." And City Sustainability Coordinator Stefanie Kupka said since the trail will encourage people to bike and walk instead of driving, it would reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and pollution.

Still, although most of the project area would remain wooded, more than 500 trees would have to be removed so the trail – including boardwalks and bridges – could be built. So at that same work session, resident Katherine Johnson presented a petition with 1,577 signatures asking Council to preserve Fairfax's forests and "move the trail to a less ecologically damaging area."

Residents spoke out again at the March 11 Council meeting, with Marianna Fournier saying they want to know they're being heard. Phil Latasa, representing the Friends of Accotink Creek, said he didn't want the trail to cause "the clearing away of a swath of our few, remaining forests and precious, wetland habitats."

"Our forests and wetlands aren't improved by pavement," he continued. "Alternatives employing existing, paved infrastructure are there. It's time to cut our losses. We implore the City to forgo the George Snyder Trail."

Judy Fraser read a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) report stating there's been "no public opposition" to this project. "[But] yes, there's been substantial, public opposition to this project," she said. "This allegation should not be part of this [document]."

Furthermore, added Fraser, "It states, 'No substantial controversy on environmental grounds is anticipated.' That's also outdated. This project should not go forward with these documents in its portfolio." She then urged the councilmembers to "ask questions, demand answers. You have some colleagues who want to explore more creative options."

Douglas Stewart, speaking on behalf of Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth, said his group has "fully supported the George Snyder Trail since its inception because of the connectivity [it offers] and because it provides regional access [to other trails] for bicyclists, and also within Fairfax City to emerging areas, offices and shopping centers."

"This connectivity is lacking on the eastern side of the City," said Stewart. "We've

also heard the concerns; and we do support moving forward with [just] the western end of the trail. That has fewer impacts and will connect to WillowWood."

Also speaking was Sophie McNeil, who'll graduate from VCU this fall with a degree in environmental studies. She also worked for Research Environmental Solutions. "It's the country's largest environmental-consulting organization, and I learned a lot," she said. "I don't support the Snyder Trail plan or the Country Club Hills connection."

"I live in that neighborhood, and I and my friends grew up playing in there. And that's why I'm an environmental studies major and want to go into repairing our ecosystems. [Otherwise], how are kids supposed to learn to care about something if it's not there? We have already existing trail plans that need to be attended to, and we don't need this bike path straight through my backyard. This plan isn't in the best interests of the youth; we don't need it."

Jack Kull said this trail is in his backyard, too. "All we're asking is, give common sense a chance," he said. "If you're not going to kill this project, at least modify it enough that it will not be a financial burden and will not destroy the environment."

"The previous City Councils didn't consider the public objections to the trail," added Shelley Vance. "City residents have had repeated pushbacks and objections to this project since at least March 2020." But despite their outcry, she said, the trail's design kept marching on to completion. She also contended Fairfax didn't do an adequate job of notifying affected residents about this project.

"The City just kept bulldozing forward, without serious consideration for the concerns of City residents," said Vance. "This Council needs to step up and listen to the majority of the citizens who want an alternative that preserves the woods."

What's Planned for the George Snyder Trail

Named after a former Fairfax City mayor, the George Snyder Trail is planned to be a shared-use trail connecting Chain Bridge Road (Route 123) to the Wilcoxon Trail at Draper Drive, south of Fairfax Boulevard (Route 50). It's also intended to be ADA-compliant, with some sections porous asphalt and others, concrete boardwalk.

The goal is to improve regional trail connectivity both within and outside the City, with a design aimed at limiting impacts to environmental resources, right-of-way and utilities, as much as possible. This off-road trail should provide safe and comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities.

Part of the project would be constructed within Fairfax City parks. Five prefabricated, steel-truss bridges with concrete decks would span small tributaries and Accotink Creek. The trail itself would be 10 feet wide, with 2-foot-wide shoulders on each side and no blind spots at bridge approaches.

It would link to existing trail segments at Marketplace Boulevard, Stafford Park, Cardinal Park and Draper Drive Park, connecting to neighborhoods, as well as to the City's commercial corridor.

Disturbances to the Resource Protection Area and floodplain would be minimized.

Raised crosswalks and new signage would be added to neighborhood intersections. Dark-sky-compliant lighting is planned for just the intersections and trail junctions.

Boardwalk segments along the bridge approaches would have retaining walls and railings, and the bicycle/pedestrian bridges would be 14 feet wide, with concrete decks. Their purpose is to minimize floodplain impacts by eliminating the need for an embankment and to keep the trail above water.

Four retaining walls, ranging from 3-17 feet high, would be built between the trail and private properties and would also reduce grading impact to the forest. Viewing areas, educational markers and rain gardens are also included in the plans.

The \$20 million project includes more than \$13.6 million in Outside the Beltway I-66 Concessionaire funding, plus \$395,000 in federal, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality money. The City currently has \$20.6 million in available funding.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Snyder Trail Plan

FROM PAGE 6

standpoint, it would be a disturbing precedent to question [their actions]. So Option One is my preference; but I'd consider Option Three, with more information."

Councilwoman Rachel McQuillen asked about this project's public engagement and was told about past public hearings on it. "Prior to the past few years, there was not as much concern about the trees," said Sanford. "The project was moving along smoothly."

"It's clear from the testimony of residents and experts that this project would cause an increase in stormwater runoff and trail-maintenance costs, plus a huge environmental impact," said McQuillen. "I oppose it."

"There's a lot of conjecture about

who's opposing this trail," said Read. "In my neighborhood, most people don't even know about the George Snyder Trail. [But] everyone with expertise is trying to help us make the best decision possible."

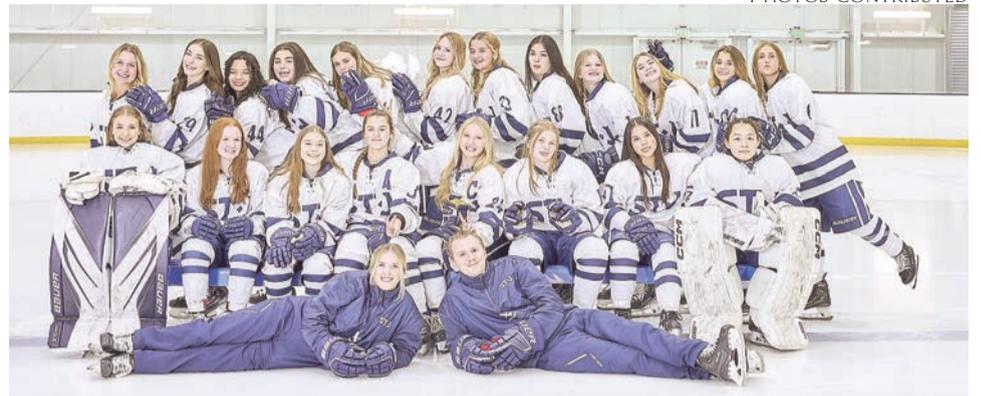
Noting that the NEPA study done for this project said there was no environmental impact or public opposition – and none was anticipated – Peterson said, "Both statements are clearly wrong. I find it very troubling. Council needs a new process for decision-making, going forward."

Advocating for an on-road trail instead, McQuillen said, "I've ridden bikes and pushed strollers on our sidewalks, where the speed limit on the [adjacent] road is 35 mph, and I felt safe."

SEE TRAIL PLAN, PAGE 9



On the ice at St. James.



The team is rallying behind their assistant captain who was diagnosed with kidney disease.

Local Girls Hockey Is Skating for Team Member's Illness

Upcoming tournament scheduled for area ice rinks.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

With the Washington Capitals leading the National Hockey League and their star, Alex Ovechkin getting ready to break an all-time goal record, hockey is hot in this area. The enthusiasm has spread to the team at St. James in Springfield where their slapshots are also in support of one their players who struggling with kidney disease.

Assistant Captain Payton Logothey was diagnosed with stage 4 chronic kidney disease in December 2023 and she struggled with treatments but was still a vital piece of the team's success. Despite the pain, she scored 25 points and 7 assists in 51 games during the 2023-2024 season until the pain became unbearable. Nonetheless, she plans to return to hockey in any capacity she can manage. Right now, the game is keeping her spirits up and the girl's on the team have found strength through Payton's determination.

The girls wear green ribbon stickers on their helmets and coaches wear green ribbon pins on their jackets to represent kidney disease awareness.

Drop the Puck

The play out on the ice is beneficial in other ways too. Matt Billman is the coach and guided the team to the finals last year before they lost in the semi-final match in 2024.



One of their trips took them to Notre Dame.

"A lot of our girls go on to the next level," Billman said, and although there isn't an NHL for the women in hockey, they could go on to college hockey or a job with an NHL team. Of the 20 players on this year's team, 11 of them played last year too.

In early April, the team is focusing on the 2025 Chipotle-USA Hockey Girls Tier II 16U National Championships where 28 teams

from 16 states will compete at rinks at The St. James in Springfield and the Ice House in Ashburn. Northern Virginia was one of 11 locations across 10 states selected to host a National Championship. Tournament games will kick off on April 2 at The St. James and the Ashburn Ice House.

This is part of a sports tourism effort by SportsNOVA and Visit Fairfax. According to

the information released by SportsNOVA, this hockey tournament is expected to produce an economic impact of \$1.2 million to the region.

Sports Tourism

Fairfax County assembled a "sports tourism task force," spearheaded by Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity and they focus on bringing some of these sports and their financial benefits to the county. Places they are looking to expand sports tourism is the Alpine-X indoor ski facility in Lorton (which has hit some bumps), the newly renovated Mount Vernon REC Center, Mountain Road District Park, Baron Cameron Park, Oak Marr REC Center and Braddock Park. Most of these are places where there is room for these initiatives.

Last year, the Solheim Cup golf tournament in Gainesville was part of the sports tourism plan and mountain bike races at Fountainhead Regional Park in Lorton. The Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts are in touch with things that happen with the Fountainhead Trail. Other upcoming sports tourism events include the large soccer tournaments such as The Virginian over Memorial Day Weekend and WAGS Tournament which takes place on fields throughout Fairfax County over Indigenous People's Day Weekend in October.

"She Got Game" Basketball Tournament is scheduled at The St. James in December, and Baseball Tournaments at Patriot Park North and other satellite fields throughout Fairfax County from March through November.

Also Sports Tourism: Mountain Bike Races

Riders from all over occasionally converge in Fairfax County, contributing to tourism dollars.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

There are two professional level mountain bike trails in Fairfax County where off-road races attract riders from all around, making it another as-

pect of sports tourism in this area. Just like the hockey tournament at St. James in early April, hundreds come into town for races at the Fountainhead Park mountain bike trail in Lorton and the Lake

SEE MOUNTAIN BIKING, PAGE 7



PHOTO BY FIRESPIRE PHOTOGRAPHY

Mountain bike racing at Fountainhead included women too.



PHOTO BY BRUCE BUCKLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Getting some air at a Lake Fairfax race.

George Snyder Trail Plan

FROM PAGE 7

Councilmember Billy Bates, though, favored a trail in the woods vs. a narrower on-road path. “Having an 8-12-foot-wide shared-use path accommodates all the uses on a path – runners, bicyclists, pedestrians, etc.,” he explained. “Forcing a bicyclist onto a 5-foot-wide sidewalk – and having him swerve to avoid a rock or a pedestrian – could throw him into traffic and cause a tragedy. I can’t, in good conscience, put people in a situation like that.”

“I fully favor doing only the western half,” he continued. “And I’ve heard from several people that they support the trail but have been afraid to come to Council meetings and say that because of other people in their neighborhood who oppose it.”

If Council eventually decides to only do half the project, it must make a formal resolution stating its intention. Then Sanford would talk to VDOT about it and there’d be opportunities for public engagement. But she warned Council that any change would still need the Commonwealth Transportation Board’s (CTB) blessing. Summers also noted that it would cost the City about \$50,000 to redo its plan and start again at the 30-percent design stage.

“And if we cancel the trail and have to repay the \$3.7 million, that would affect our budget,” stressed Read. “In 18 months and one week, early voting will start for Mayor, Council and School Board. And if we start this project again, we’ll be leaving what we did for the next Council.”

“I don’t support dragging this out beyond

May,” said Amos. “So many of us on the Council are new, so we need more time.” Hardy-Chandler then said having more information about Option Three would help them decide.

Acting City Manager Bryan Foster said Read would have to contact the CTB’s Northern Virginia representative about any proposed changes, and she agreed to do so. Amos then said Council could discuss the matter further in April.

But any change to the original plan comes with a huge risk. The bottom line, said Read afterward, is that “We signed a contract with VDOT to build the whole thing, not just half, because of that trail’s importance to the region. If we change it and they don’t agree, we’d lose the trail and all the money to build any of it.”

Info on Extending Express Lanes

VDOT is holding public meetings on its 495 Southside Express Lanes widening project.

VDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, is conducting an environmental study to potentially extend the express lanes system on the southern section of I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway), by approximately 11 miles from the Springfield Interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George’s County, Maryland. This location was identified in Virginia’s Commonwealth Transportation Board’s adopted I-95 Corridor Improvement Plan as an area for additional study.

VDOT will provide information at upcoming public meetings on the three alternatives under study to address identified transportation needs within the study area. These needs include extending and providing continuity of the express lanes system on I-495, providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion and improving travel reliability, improving safety, and providing consistency with local and regional plans. VDOT will also provide preliminary traffic analysis data and updates on study progress and ongoing coordination.



495 Express Lanes Proposed Project

<https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/northern-virginia-district/i-495-southside-express-lanes-study/>

Meeting times: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Meeting format: Open house with a presentation at 7 p.m.

❖ Tuesday, April 1, 2025

West Potomac High School (Cafeteria)
6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307

❖ Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium)
6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD 20745

❖ Monday, April 7, 2025

Thomas A. Edison High School (Cafeteria)
5801 Franconia Rd., Alexandria, VA 22310

❖ Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

The in-person meetings will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The meeting format will include an open house with a presentation at 7 p.m. VDOT representatives will be present at various stations to answer questions.

Vietnam War Veterans

FROM PAGE 4

Then people wishing to honor other veterans were invited to speak. (See sidebar).

McCarl said that, over the past 13 years, there have been more than 27,000 Vietnam War commemorations across the U.S., thanking and honoring the 4 million Vietnam veterans and their families. And Parkhurst presented specially designed lapel pins to each Vietnam veteran in attendance.

Linda Thompson, chaplain, Fairfax County DAR chapter, gave the closing benediction in gratitude for Vietnam veterans’ dedication to duty, endurance in hardship and commitment to one another and their nation. “Bless those who served, Lord,” she said. “May they find peace in knowing their sacrifices aren’t forgotten. Heal the wounds of body, mind, and spirit for those still bearing them. Grant them the honor and respect they deserve.

“For the families who endured separation, loss and the burdens of war, we ask Your comfort. May they find strength in the love of this grateful nation and assurance that their sacrifices, too, are recognized. And we entrust those who made the ultimate sacrifice to Your eternal care.

“May their names be etched not only in stone but in our hearts forever. Let us ensure that their bravery is never forgotten, and that peace is always pursued. May we walk in unity, ever committed to justice, freedom and the dignity of all who serve.”



PHOTO BY FIRESPIRE PHOTOGRAPHY

The finish line at Fountainhead in Lorton.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Mountain Biking Contributes

FROM PAGE 6

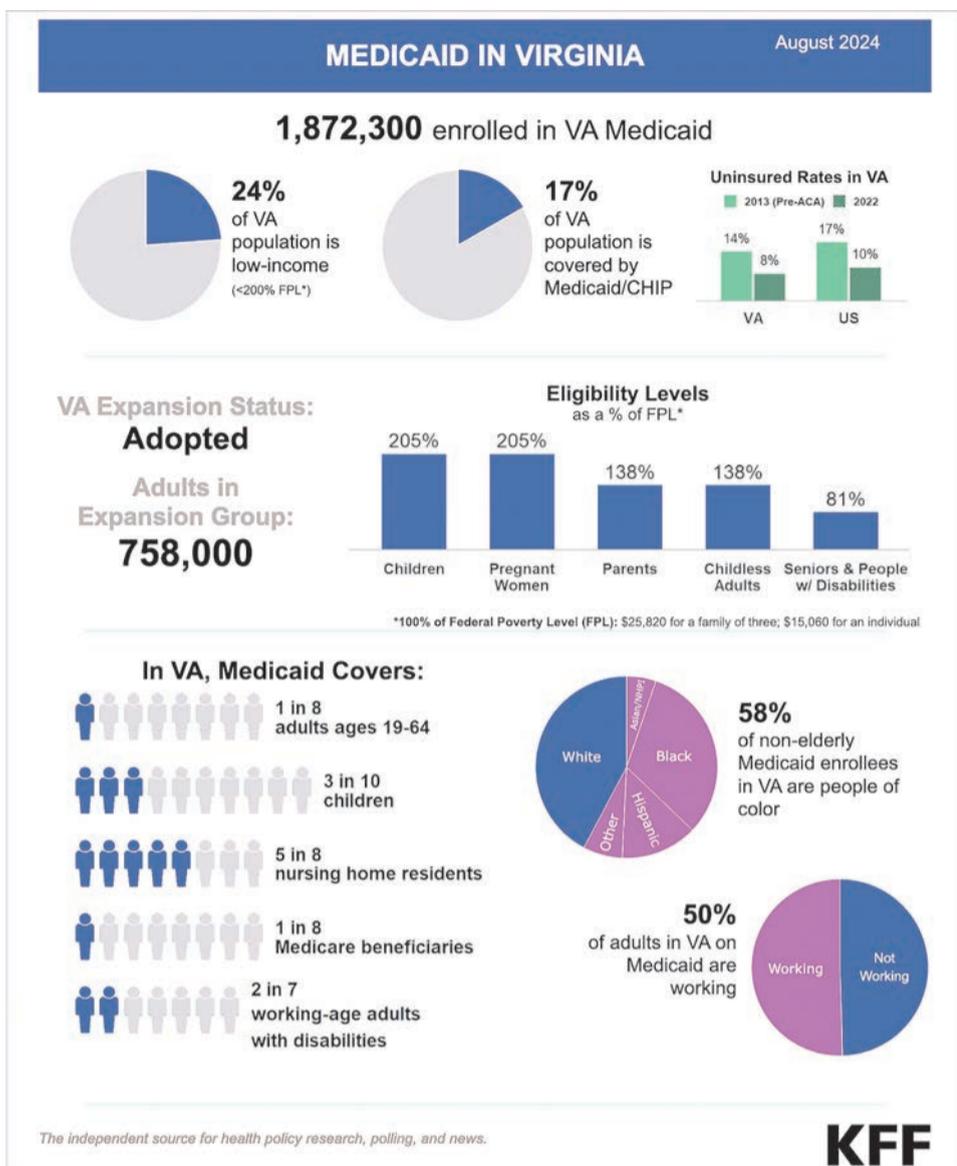
Fairfax trail in Fairfax, creating a sporting event and with it, the financial windfalls of events like this. Whether it’s hotel rooms for out-of-towners, restaurants, sporting goods shops or bike stores, there’s sure to be money spent on these races. And tax revenue too.

They’ve even got world-class names. The races at Fountainhead are called “Cranky Monkey,” and at Lake Fairfax, it’s the “Rails to River Races.”

EX2 Adventures is a force behind these mountain bike races. “Our events are more than races, they are carefully crafted experiences that leave you feeling alive and reinvigorated, with new friends, and a sense of

accomplishment that only comes from really challenging yourself,” read their description on the web. EX2 is a local organization that was founded in 2000 by Jim and Kimberly Harman to produce endurance events that fuel a passion for the outdoors; inspire a sense of belonging, community and social responsibility; and celebrate the achievement that comes from doing hard things, like mountain biking.

The next EX2 events scheduled include the Spring Backyard Burn at Lake Fairfax on Sunday, April 6; Spring Backyard Burn at Pohick Bay on Sunday, April 27; the Rails to River XC Mountain Bike Race at Lake Fairfax on May 4; and the Fountainhead Half Marathon in Lorton on May 18.



Medicaid in Virginia as of August 2024

Medicaid, What's At Stake

FROM PAGE 5

HB1600/Enrolled/GR/

“This budget provides an additional \$824.5 million for Health and Human Resources over the biennium. It meets and clears a significant hurdle by fully funding the Medicaid and SCHIP forecast increase with \$720.5 million in general fund, bringing us to a total of \$16 billion in general fund and \$53 billion in general and nongeneral fund support to those Virginians most in need,” Youngkin said.

Given what Youngkin said, Ruby’s stress about Virginia funding Medicaid may have lessened somewhat. Still, federal cuts and program changes, called by some “backdoor cuts,” have not been expressed clearly. Nothing is set about the actual dollar amounts committed by the federal government to Medicaid.

What About Virginia’s Trigger Law?

Connolly said that almost 90,000 of his constituents are “at direct risk of losing their health coverage. ... But that is just the tip of the iceberg. Medicaid is increasingly the tool that seniors use to access nursing home care, memory care, and assisted living facilities. Forty percent of all births in America are covered by Medicaid.”

The repercussions of cutting Medicaid, especially in the Commonwealth of Virginia, are

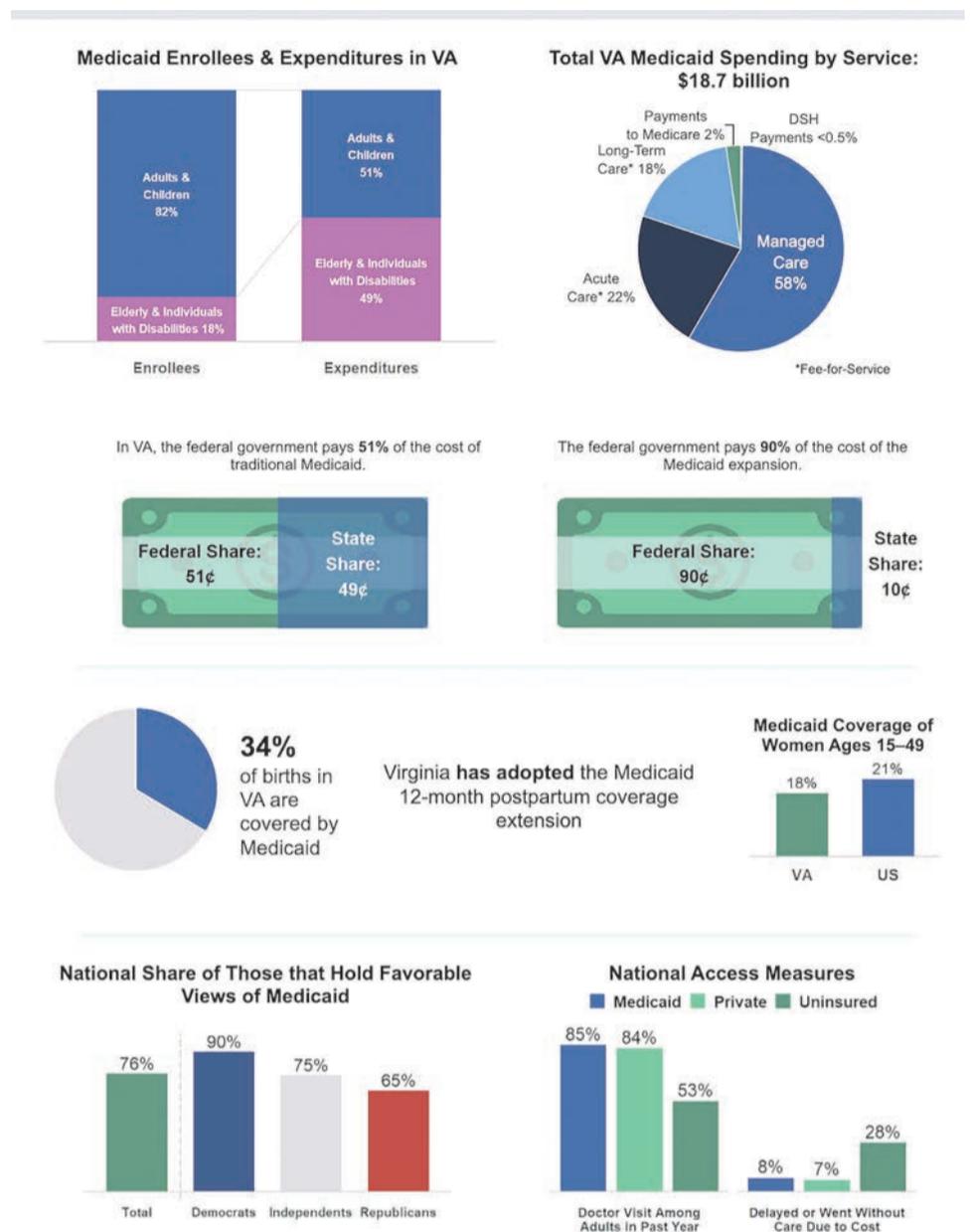


SOURCE X.COM/GERRYCONNOLLY

U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Connolly (VA-11), a Democrat, at his telephone town hall in March.

immense, given Virginia is one of nine states with “trigger laws.” Virginia law requires significant cuts to enrollment or benefits if the federal government reduces its contribution to the Virginia program due to its trigger law. Now, the state pays 10 percent, and the federal government pays 90 percent.

“The consequences of cutting Medicaid would be catastrophic, particularly in Vir-



SOURCE KFF.ORG

Additional facts about Medicaid in Virginia as of August 2024

“Virginia law mandates drastic cuts to enrollment or benefits if the federal government reduces its contribution to the Virginia program.”

— U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Connolly (VA-11)

ginia, where state law mandates drastic cuts to enrollment or benefits if the federal government reduces its contribution to the program. I fought hard against the Republican budget in the House, and I will continue to do everything in my power to prevent these unimaginably cruel cuts from ever taking effect,” Connolly said.

Nine states are poised to eliminate the Medicaid Expansion component of the Affordable Care Act, as they have some provision, a “trigger law” to eliminate Medicaid Expansion if federal funding is reduced, according to the Virginia Network of Private

Providers, Inc. “That would end coverage for the expansion population, resulting in some 3 million people losing their health care.” Most of the nine states’ triggers activate if federal funding falls below the 90 percent threshold currently funded by the federal government, as does Virginia’s. If funding falls below 80 percent, Arizona’s trigger will eliminate its expansion.

David Broder, SEIU Virginia state council executive director, said on March 27 that SEIU is holding town halls so constituents can be heard even if their Congressional members are absent. The union plans to continue mobilizing constituents to demand meetings and town halls from their elected officials, even if they refuse.

“We’ve held round tables with three members of Congress in Virginia. We co-hosted a town hall that over 400 people came to in Congresswoman Jennifer Kiggan’s district, even though she didn’t ... We know she heard us yesterday; care workers and people with disabilities were on Capitol Hill lobbying. So we will keep doing that. We are going to keep holding actions, rallies, and lobby days,” Broder said.

Ruby addressed her commitment to caring for Austin if Medicaid is not funded: “He’s my grandson. I would take care of him whenever they needed it, but it would be devastating.”

Springfield Gun Store Burglarized Again

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

In what's become a too frequent story, Dominion Defense, a gun store located on Fullerton Road in Springfield, was burglarized again on Sunday night, March 23. The theft was committed after the perpetrators smashed the glass front doors to gain entry to the closed store about 1:30 a.m. Two young men later were taken into custody, in Maryland, after police initially responded to the alarm alert and began searching for the perpetrators.

In a March 24 news conference, Chief Kevin Davis described a "quick apprehension" for a "brazen act" and reported that two 16 year old suspects had been located and apprehended after a coordinated response between Fairfax County and Maryland county police, the helicopter unit, and agents with the federal Bureau of Alcohol and Firearms. A third teen suspect remained at large at this writing.

Video surveillance shows the perpetrators used a truck, stolen on March 21, to bulldoze into the store's front glass door. The video then clearly shows them entering the store with bags, smashing gun cases; including with the use of hand gun butts, and filling the bags with guns; then retreating to the truck after an audible alarm begins sounding. Police arriving within five minutes of the initial alarm at the crime center began



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

After the investigation, a Fairfax County Police cruiser secures the crime location.

searching the area and found the stolen truck nearby. They detected evidence that a second vehicle had been stolen. Determining the model and license of that second vehicle allowed them to use license plate readers to follow the car's movement to Maryland's Gaithersburg area.

FCPD's helicopter unit, with heat vision technology, and voice links to police units on the ground, assisted police on the ground to hone in on the suspects and detect their hiding places in garbage containers. Police in the air were also able to note where the guns had been dropped in garbage containers in an attempt to hide them. The third suspect, who separated from

the two with visible gun filled bags upon exiting from the stolen car, was not found. Police gave priority to following the suspects with the stolen guns. Police were continuing their search for the third teen with a high likelihood of his apprehension.

The same gun store has been burglarized multiple times at night in the recent past. The Fullerton Road area of businesses and cafes, with its many car body shops and material suppliers, is fairly quiet at night. The gun store entrance is located out of sight from Fullerton Road, behind the multi-business building. Although the store has inside video surveillance and an alarm, there are no hardened en-

trance deterrents, such as bollards or steel reinforcements, to protect the glass entrance doors. Although the perpetrators in each case have been apprehended, not all the stolen firearms have been recovered.

On Dec. 20, 2024, police responded to an alarm at this store and arrested a 20-year-old man who had failed to gain entry to the store, but was found with burglary tools and wearing a mask. He is out on bond pending his preliminary hearing in April on felony charges.

Earlier, Cedric Minger, 21, and Victor Jones, 22, of Maryland were arrested for their April 29, 2023 break-in, when 53 firearms were stolen after breaking the glass door with a stolen Acura. Fifteen of those firearms were recovered. Their felony cases were nolle prosequi in August 2023.

In the most infamous of the Dominion Defense break-ins, five teenagers, the youngest just 13, and two adults were arrested in November 2024 for their Sept. 18 break-in and theft. In what police called a "brazen" crime, four teenagers were seen on surveillance footage breaking the glass door with a stolen Kia, and leaving with armfuls of guns. Their crime spree included multiple additional burglaries, shootings and an abduction, before their arrest. Eight of the 14 stolen firearms were recovered.

ATF Special Agent in Charge, Anthony Spotswood, said at the press conference, "What we do

know is that these firearms were not taken for use on a firing range. They were stolen to be used in criminal instances; to harm people in our local community." ATF statistics record that, in Virginia in 2023, 873 firearms were reported lost or stolen; 14,874 firearms were recovered and traced. The Bureau reports, "Stolen guns are often recovered at crime scenes, including at scenes of homicides or other violent crimes."

According to Everytown Research & Policy, an independent, non-partisan organization dedicated to understanding and reducing gun violence, "The US has nearly 78,000 licensed gun dealers, more than all post offices in the United States, and more than the number of McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, and Wendy's locations combined In 2022, federally licensed gun dealers reported over 17,000 firearms lost or stolen, averaging over 45 per day, highlighting a significant issue with gun theft and the potential for these firearms to enter illegal markets."

Chief Davis indicated the perpetrators are in custody in Maryland where State law dictates they will be charged as adults. Charges are pending in Fairfax County and will follow, along with possible federal charges.

Asked about possible security changes at the oft burglarized store, Davis responded, "We're here again. Something needs to change."

Local Dog Rescuer Memorialized Story tarnished at local park.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

This story was envisioned as one of a heart-stirring genre, often repeated, about how animals have a way of bringing people together. That it's not unusual for strangers to stop on a walk to share comments about love of dogs, over a dog. For admirers to soak up a bit of doggie enthusiasm for life or maybe collect a sloppy kiss; enjoying new social encounters, both canine and human.

The story is about one of the many dedicated animal rescuers who felt the pull to help animals, a rescuer who, sadly, died while pursuing that passion. His admirers, including strangers, sought to honor his memory with a bench and plaque commemorating his efforts. But then — the story took a dark twist.

Dedicated dog rescuer, Seuk Kim, of Springfield, died Nov. 24, 2024, while on one of his frequent Pilots N Paws flights to move homeless dogs to available shelters. In a flight intended to go from Manassas Regional Airport to Albany International Airport in New York, Kim's plane flew into a

Catskills mountain, causing Kim's death, and the death of one of the three dogs who were with him.

Kim, a former financial and marketing executive, had become an avid flyer, earning his private pilot's license. About four years ago he started flying dog missions; sometimes making as many as three flights a week. He helped dogs find homes and avoid euthanasia by moving them to shelters with available space.

Veterinary college student Rebecca Lynn Randell, who works with rescue dogs and got them to Kim for flights, described him as one who "never said 'no', and was always willing to help dogs." Admiration for the 49-year-old pilot and his passion for helping animals drew attention after the crash.

At his accidental death, the animal rescue community sorely felt the loss of one of their own. A coalition of animal rescue pilots



Seuk Kim is memorialized after his death in a crash during a dog rescue mission.

including Randell, donated funds to memorialize Kim. Wishing to honor him, but unable to travel to attend a gathering for him, instead their college Shelter Medicine Club used bi-annual fundraising sales of LMU logo sweaters, along with added donations from other students who did not know Kim

and volunteers, inspired by Kim, formed Seuk's Army. The group, based in Piedmont, SC, has carried on Kim's work to move animals on dedicated flights. They hope to establish a pet food pantry and mobile spay/neuter clinic, as well. The group recently celebrated National Puppy Day by transporting 64 dogs and nine cats to available shelters. Find more about the group's activities at

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61572439051565>

The group of veterinary college students at Lincoln Memorial University, including Randell, donated funds to memorialize Kim. Wishing to honor him, but unable to travel to attend a gathering for him, instead their college Shelter Medicine Club used bi-annual fundraising sales of LMU logo sweaters, along with added donations from other students who did not know Kim

directly, to sponsor a memorial bench and plaque. Working through Fairfax County Park Foundation's program, they sponsored a bench in the newly created dog park in Monticello Park in Braddock.

When a reporter visited the park to photograph the bench the memorial plaque was missing. In its place was a sign from the county park authority asking that the plaque be returned. Investigation revealed that in early March an anonymous person's on-line posting said the plaque "was not authorized and if not removed, I will take it down in three days." The plaque later disappeared. An unofficial spokesperson from the Foundation said, "We were shocked and angered by this action."

A replacement plaque is on order and will be reinstalled soon.

"We all love and want to work with animals and help shelters find a place for animals to go," said second year LMU veterinary student Randell. Randell talks of Kim's tirelessness in that desire, often logging long flights and even landing on snow covered runways to give animals a chance at a home. He surely will be remembered by many for his good deeds — plaque or no plaque.

ENTERTAINMENT

GARDEN TOURS

Visitors can plan self-guided tours of the region's most splendid gardens, including these not-to-miss sites (check with the individual gardens for hours of operation):

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, a 90-acre oasis featuring more than 100 cherry trees surrounding a lovely lake, plus an extensive shade garden, native wildflowers, gazebos, birds, butterflies, seasonal blooms and the very unique Korean Bell Garden.

Green Spring Gardens, an outdoor classroom, national historic site, and museum featuring a wooded stream, a valley with ponds, a native plant garden, over 20 thematic demonstration gardens, and a greenhouse filled with tropical plants.

River Farm, a historic 25-acre site on the banks of the Potomac River that was once part of George Washington's original five farms and is now the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society.

George Washington's Mount Vernon, the home to America's first president, features four bountiful gardens to explore and enjoy. In addition, experience wide-open spaces, wooded landscapes, and a quarter-mile-long forest trail – not to mention the vast educational resources available on site.

SOFTBALL PLAYERS WANTED!

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players.

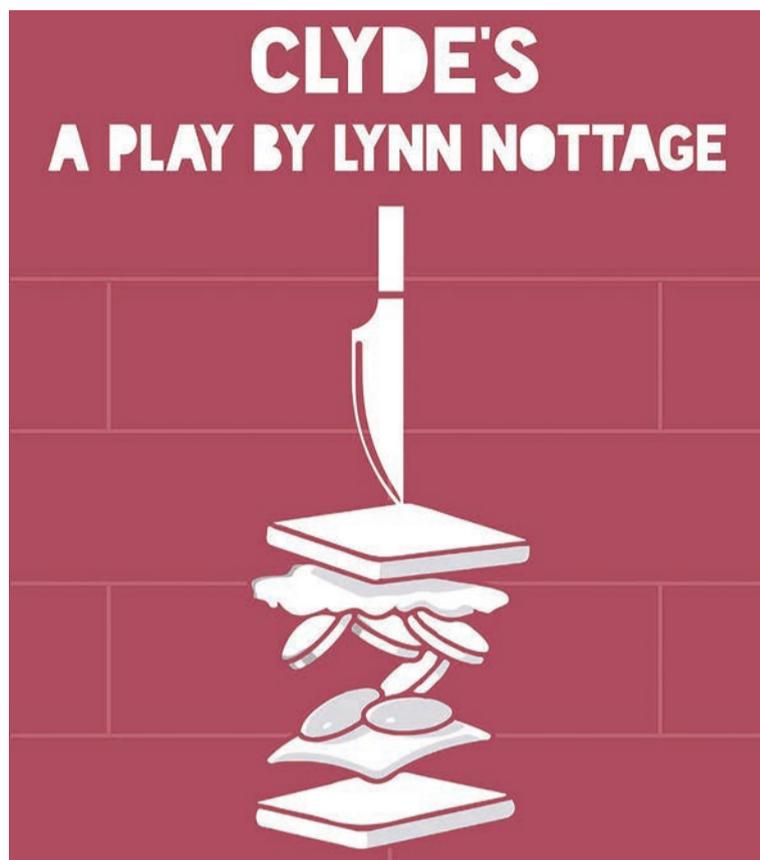
Women over 40 and all skill levels welcome. They play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit goldengirls.org.

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>.

CITY OF FAIRFAX EVENTS

Funday Monday, 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. This is a free program perfect for preschoolers, but children of all ages are welcome at the Stacy C.



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

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

April 11 – Bobby J and the Hot Lanes

NOW THRU JUNE 9

Required Reading: A Visual Poetry Exhibition on Language & Silence, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. "What happens when words are rearranged, erased, or transformed into something new? Required Reading is an exhibition that challenges the limits of language, bringing together eight artists who break traditional communication structures and invite the viewer into an unexpected dialogue. Visit the website <https://www.workhousearts.org/required-reading-exhibit>

NOW THRU MAY 3

Exhibition: Appearance, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Muse Gallery, Building W-16, Lorton. Reception: April 12, 6-8 p.m. What does it mean to appear? A fleeting reflection in the mirror, the way we present ourselves to the world, or something more mysterious—an idea surfacing, an object taking new form, a presence felt but unseen? Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/appearance-exhibition>

NOW THRU 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.

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.

FRIDAY/APRIL 4

Stop the Bleed, 10-11:30 a.m. At Reston Hospital Center, Pavilion II, 2nd Floor, Conf. Room A, 1850 Town Center Parkway, Reston. Learn lifesaving skills needed to prevent the No. 1 cause of death after an injury: bleeding. A presentation will be followed by a hands-on practice of steps to stop bleeding. Learn more and register at hcairvirginia.com/calendar

FRIDAY/APRIL 4

Home for Life 2025 Expo, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. At Stacy C. Sherwood Center-



Bobby J and the Hot Lanes will appear on April 11, 2025 at the Stacy C. Sherwood Center in Fairfax.

munity Center, 3740 Blenheim Boulevard, Fairfax. Hosted by Fairfax Village in the City, this free event includes 36 exhibitors and four guest speakers on these topics: decluttering, estate planning, how to be tech savvy, and dementia care. Free food and drink provided.

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

Art Blooms at Mosaic. Celebrate the arrival of spring at Mosaic District's two-day springtime festival, highlighting art, culture, and community at this popular shopping and dining district. (<https://mosaicdistrict.com>; 703-992-7832)

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 meetup, 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.

TUESDAY/APRIL 8

SPARK Movie Screening and Q&A (Virtual), 6-8 p.m. Join Insight Memory Care Center for a special viewing of the film SPARK - Robin Williams and his Battle with Lewy Body Dementia. This free event will be held via Zoom, with a live panel discussion after the movie screening. Register at insightmcc.org/getinvolved/events.

TUESDAY/APRIL 8

Red Cross Blood Drive, 2 to 6 p.m. At Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Christ the King is having a Red Cross blood drive. Register today at www.redcrossblood.org. Questions? Contact Melody Starya Moblely at 571-276-7356.

ENTERTAINMENT



Learn about Ageless Wisdom — Timeless Purpose: How Senior Sages Can Access and Use Your Life & Soul Wisdom on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at Reston Library.

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 jackiebottash@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 9
Journey Within: Self-Discovery Book Club (Virtual). 6-7:30 p.m. At Reston Library. A literary discussion that focuses on a character's

personal growth and how it relates to our own. Led by life coach Shabnam Curtis. Will be discussing The Women by Kristin Hannah. Visit Journey Within: Self-Discovery Book Club - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home

THURSDAY/APRIL 10
Northern Virginia Virtual 50+ Employment Expo. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Learn how to apply for a Fairfax County job, get tips for creating resumes for the private sector, and join presentations from employers who hire people aged 50+ and have openings. Register at Virtual-Expos.AccessJCA.org. For questions, email EmploymentExpos@AccessJCA.org or call 703-6562-1518.

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 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.

FRIDAY/APRIL 11
The Hot Lanes. 8 p.m. At Sherwood Community Center, City of Fairfax Town Hall Series, Fairfax. (FREE,

Indoors). The Hot Lanes is delighted to return to the City of Fairfax's Old Town Hall Concert Series for the 2024-25 season. This event will be celebrating the highest accolades accomplished by Northern Virginia's finest artists with two sets featuring our group and guest vocalist, Kristen Lee Sergeant! This concert is always sold out. To be assured of a seat, please arrive at least 20-30 minutes prior to the performance.

FRIDAY/APRIL 11
New Windows on the Sky: Cosmic Rays, Neutrinos, and Gravitational Waves— In-Person. 1-3:30 p.m. At Reston Library, Reston. Join in a discussion of these new astronomies and the methods by which scientists discovered them. Led by Professor Michael Albrow, Scientist Emeritus at Fermilab, the U.S. premier particle physics laboratory. Visit New Windows on the Sky: Cosmic Rays, Neutrinos, and Gravitational Waves - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home

SATURDAY/APRIL 12
La Fille Mal Gardée. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Virginia Ballet Company presents La Fille Mal Gardée, a charming, light-hearted comedy about two young lovers, a meddling mother, and failed attempts at making a "suitable" match, first presented in France in 1789. Visit the website: vaballet.org

SUNDAY/APRIL 13
Table Top N Gauge Model Train

Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5, \$6 for special events. Seniors, \$4; Military (active and retired) \$4. <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/APRIL 13
Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3 to 4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Prof. Meredith Lair (George Mason University) will discuss the History, Lessons and Legacies of the Vietnam War as the nation observes the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

SATURDAY/APRIL 19
Patriot's Day Event. 12 noon. At the grounds of Freeman House, 131 Church Street, NE, Vienna. The Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (VASSAR) and the Fairfax County Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) are co-hosting the annual Patriot's Day event. There will be a color guard and readings of accounts from both British and colonist sources of the skirmish at Lexington and Concord, MA that occurred exactly 250 years ago.

SATURDAY/APRIL 19
Easter at The Perch. At Capital One Center, Tysons. Guests can enjoy

the ultimate Easter Egg Hunt with 3,000 eggs at The Perch – a 3 acre sky park 11 stories in the sky with sweeping views of Tysons. Event activities will include a petting zoo with alpacas, bunnies and baby goats, a meet and greet with the Easter Bunny, and special experiences from Capital One Center partners — including free manicures from Nothing in Between, a pop-up of Flore Cafe serving festive hot chocolate, coffee, and artisan gelato, and Capital One Hall's pop-up box office offering fee-free tickets.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 23
Senior Safety Summit. 10 a.m.-Noon. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean. Join the McLean Citizens Association, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, and the Fairfax County Police Department to learn about public safety. Topics will include community risk reduction, search and rescue, financial crimes against senior citizens, crime prevention and safety, emergency preparedness, and the Silver Shield Anti-Scam Campaign. No registration needed.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 23
Ageless Wisdom — Timeless Purpose: How Senior Sages Can Access and Use Your Life & Soul Wisdom. 7-8 p.m. At Reston Library, Reston. Led by Patty Hagan, CEO of Lighthouse Coaching. Learn to see aging as a superpower, reclaim your right to dream, and step into your role as Wisdom Keeper.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

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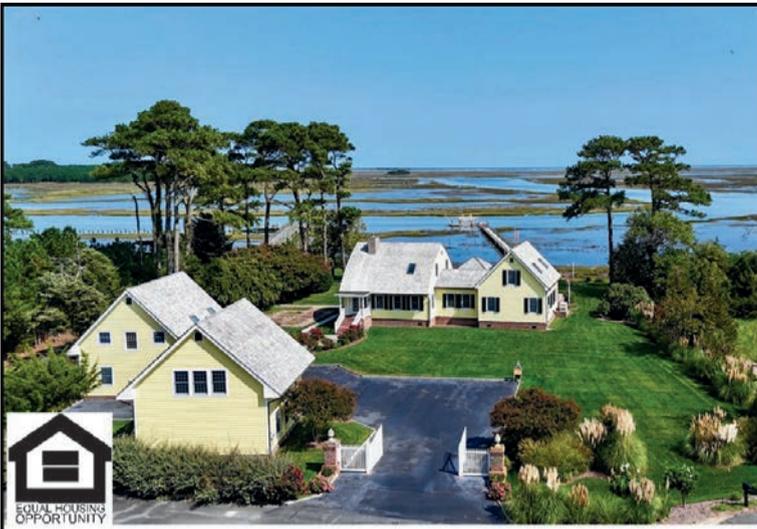
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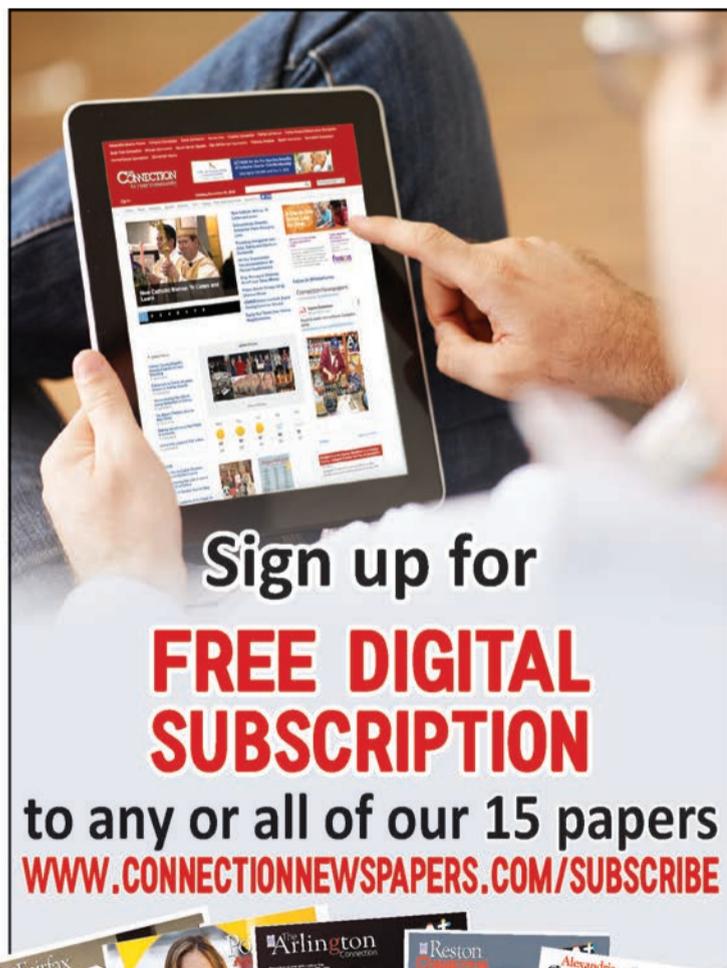
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ENTERTAINMENT



Saturday, April 26, 2025

The Lorton Spring Fling takes place on Saturday, April 26, 2025 at South County High School in Lorton.

FROM PAGE 13

Visit Ageless Wisdom – Timeless Purpose: How Senior Sages Can Access and Use Your Life & Soul Wisdom - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home

APRIL 23 TO 27

George Mason Friends Book Sale. At George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Preview sale, Wednesday, 5-8 p.m. Entry fee \$20/adult. General sale, Thursday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., free. Browse a wide variety of used books, CDs, and DVDs. For more details, visit georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com or call 703-813-6616.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Free Books for All. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Lorton Community Center, 9520 Richmond Hwy., Lorton. Reading opens the World Book Drive and Family Literacy Fair. Some 30,000 free books for families and educators. Books are available on a first come, first served basis.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Lorton Spring Fling. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. The outdoor festival features a handcrafted marketplace, food trucks, and kid's carnival of games and activities. There will be live entertainment sponsored by Potomac Music and local police and fire departments and the National Guard will have their vehicles and trucks on display. Trademasters Home Services will host a complimentary 'Fishpond' for kids. In addition to the handcraft vendors for shopping, there will be several food trucks, on hand. Go to www.southcountypso.org for more information. Questions about the event can be emailed to SCHScraftshow@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Earth Day Fairfax. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Here's just a few topics you can expect at this year's Earth Day Festival: Strategies to grow bigger, better plants
Information for identifying and

getting rid of invasive plants
Ways insects help the environment
Effect of erosion on archaeology
How to use a historic corn grinder
History through activities
Composting
With live music, outdoor ice skating, the popular touch-a-truck exhibit and more, this is a learning experience you don't want to miss. Admission to the event is free, but there is a parking fee of \$10 per vehicle.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

RA's Community Yard Sale. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 12010 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston (near the Reston Wegmans). Vendor space is sold out.

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).

APRIL 26-27

Two Day Weekend HO Scale Model Train Show. 12-4 p.m. Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday. At the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Potomac Module Crew will hold a two day weekend HO Scale Model Train Show. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5, \$6 for special events. Seniors, \$4; Military (active and retired) \$4. <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/APRIL 27

Planet Virginia: A Plant-Based Lifestyle Expo. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At George Mason University, Wilkins Plaza. Co-sponsored by Sodexo, this family-friendly festival will bring together 5,000 attendees to explore how plant-based choices can improve human health, combat climate change, and save the lives of animals. With nearly 50 vendors, insightful speaker sessions, and a Planet Play Zone for kids, Planet Virginia promises a full day of education, inspiration, and entertainment.

SUNDAY/APRIL 27

Britain on the Green. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10706 Gunston Road, Lorton. The 27th



Forest Bathing will be offered on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

Britain on the Green show will feature over 200 British cars and motorcycles, music, food trucks, and admission to historic Gunston Hall and grounds. Participant's Choice honors will be awarded in 25 or more classes of British cars and motorcycles. Additionally, the Nation's Capital Jaguar Owners Club will again hold their Concours d'Elegance during Britain on the Green. Visit the website: <https://www.britainonthegreen.org/>

TUESDAY/APRIL 29

Golf Tournament and Luncheon Fundraiser. At Westfields Golf Club, Clifton. Hosted by the Assistance League of Northern Virginia. Includes a continental breakfast, 18 holes of golf and a hot lunch buffet. There will also be raffle prizes and silent auction items available. All proceeds will help support ALNV's mission to assist area children in Title 1 elementary schools with food, clothing, books and other necessities. Contact at: sponsor@alnv.org for information about sponsorship options. Visit the website: alnv.org

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 30

Scam Jam 2025. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Northern Virginia Community College - Annandale, 8430 Center Drive, Annandale. Take part in Scam Jam 2025: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution. This event is dedicated to fraud prevention and the protection of older adults. Free event! Registration is required. Complimentary lunch. Watch HOAP: Heroes of Adult Protection, a short film from The Clowder Group, showcasing resilience of abuse victims and dedicated efforts of Adult Protective Services employees. Explore resource fair with exhibitors from local government agencies and non-profit organizations dedicated to fraud prevention and elder protection. Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-county-silver-shield-anti-scam-campaign/scam-jam>

MAY 2 TO MAY 4

Friends of Centreville Regional Library Spring Book Sale. Friday, May 2, 1-5 p.m., Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday, May 4, 1-4 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centreville. Shop fiction and non-

fiction for all ages, DVDs, audiobooks, and more! No electronic scanners allowed. On Sunday, fill a grocery bag for just \$10!

SATURDAY/MAY 3

Free Community Document Shredding Event. 9-11 a.m. (or until truck is full). At The Fairfax Community Center, 9140 Belvoir Woods Parkway, Fort Belvoir (located by the corner of Telegraph Road and Route 1, not on base). Sponsored by the Army Retirement Residence Foundation - Potomac. Max five boxes per person. Remove any plastic. For more information, call 703-781-2460 or email contactus@aarfp.org

SATURDAY/MAY 3

Forest Bathing. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Forest Bathing is a slow, mindful immersion in Nature. This practice is deeply grounding and has many health benefits. The total distance traveled is often less than a mile. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

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 donations will support WFCM's and Food for Others' weekend meal programs for students. For more information and to register, go to feedfairfax.com.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 7

Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia Forum. 10-11 a.m. Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Guest Speaker John Lechelt, Professor of Political Science, Northern Virginia Community College, will address the subject of Guns in America: A Complex National Dilemma. This program is free and open to the public without registration. Email any questions to admin@lilnova.org.

From One Kenny to Another



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It wasn't exactly earth-shattering. Nor was it heart-stopping (thank God!). But in its own way it was eye-catching. What was it, some of you may ask? It was the new/recent Dupixent television spot featuring "Kenny and Moseetta," identified as "actual patients." Kenny was into "martial arts," it was his "passion." Moseetta enjoyed "working out." Not that either of these users/spokespersons were known to me or were into routines with which I was familiar. But there was an interesting element of this ad that caught my attention. The male was named Kenny, "an actual patient." I am also named Kenny but not an "actual patient." But I took note of this commercial for two reasons: (1) My given name is shown front and center on Kenny's shirt (actually, it's more left of center) and (2) I am the son of a psoriasis (a condition for which Dupixent is offered up as a possible solution) sufferer: my mother, may she rest in peace.

I have childhood recollections of my mother's arms and legs covered red with psoriasis. I also remember, not in great detail, but enough to know that whatever she used to try and find any relief did not work (back in the 60s). And not that there's any possibility that any of the many psoriasis medications currently on the market could in any way have benefited my mother (she died early Dec. '08). Nevertheless, I find myself drawn to the psoriasis advertisements thinking of my late mother and wondering in arrears, if any of these new medications could have helped her. (I do the same for my father, deceased Dec. '06, when I see Claritin commercials. My father had allergies and was forever taking Claritin tablets. Still, I'm likewise wondering if today's medications/formulations could have offered him some relief.)

But the psoriasis advertisement really caught my attention because the first-person advocate for this product's (Dupixent) positive effect is someone named Kenny. And not that I knee-jerk/listen/believe what anybody named Kenny says but I will admit to sort of giving him the benefit of the doubt. Moreover, my thinking isn't that Kenny knows more than some other "actual patient" not named Kenny. It simply means that I'm more inclined to listen just to see what this Kenny is saying and whether this Kenny, meaning me, could ever see myself saying it. Almost as if there's some magic/positive effect in the words spoken because there being spoken by someone named Kenny. And yet again, nothing could be further from the truth. To invoke Sgt. Schultz from the long ago "Hogan's Heroes:" "I know nothing."

Not totally true. I know sports and chocolate, and after writing a weekly column for 27+ years, I know a thing or two about creating content (no comments from the peanut gallery, please?) And even though my columns are somewhat short on substance and long on "dribble," as my late brother, Richard (died Dec. '22) described them, I guess seeing my given name on a television spokesperson's shirt triggered some familial memories. For which I'm always grateful.

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



NPS Volunteer Coordinator Scott Hill and intern Alyssa Schaafer and the trash hauled in at one of three stations.



Michelle Black (left) recruited military families to help. Alyssa Schaafer staffed a check-in table.

Trash Cleanup Yields 2,505 Pounds

181 volunteers from all over the area converge for mega cleanup.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

They found bagged dog poop, a case of empty beer bottles, soiled diapers, soggy socks, combs, cigarette butts, cigarette lighters, a metal grill, a mattress, a shopping cart, lumber, a foam pillow, two tires, fast food debris and bottle caps. Plastic beverage bottles and aluminum cans seemed to self-multiply. Ayne Whitehead lugged out a rusted iron pipe. Her friend found a shapely bluish vodka bottle. These are just some of the items collected at the March 22 mega-trash cleanup sponsored by the National Park Service, the Friends of Dyke Marsh, the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail, the Potomac Conservancy and Blue Star Families Connect.

For two hours or so, volunteers ages 8 to 80 combed the Potomac River shoreline, the George Washington Memorial Parkway borders and the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

The grand totals: 181 volunteers from all over Northern Virginia collected 2,505 pounds, a ton and a quarter, of trash and provided more than 400 hours of volunteer work, said Scott Hill, Volunteer Coordinator for the Parkway.

Michelle Black, Outdoor Leader for Blue Star Connect Outdoors (BSCO), said, "Our families were truly honored to take part in the mega-trash event. This effort reminded us how important it is to give back, take care of our parks and come together as a community." BSCO connects military families with their local parks to promote well-being and strengthen community bonds.

The Most Common Litter

Jen Cole, Director of Clean Fairfax, says the most common trash items found in cleanups are cigarette butts and single use plastic items like bottles and food service items. Cigarette butts, most of which are made of cellulose acetate, a plastic, are the most frequently littered item in the state, nation and world, according to Clean Vir-



Collected trash at Belle Haven Park

PHOTO BY BOB VELTCAMP

ginia Waterways. Many are transported from outside buildings and parking lots into stormwater systems and ultimately end up in streams and rivers.

A September 2024 Associated Press article reported that 57 million tons of plastic pollution is created worldwide every year, enough pollution to fill New York City's Central Park with plastic waste as high as the Empire State building, wrote Seth Borenstein. After cigarette butts and food wrappers, plastic bottles and bottle caps rank third and fourth in Virginia's top ten debris list, Clean Virginia Waterways found.

Around 300 million plastic bags end up in the Atlantic Ocean, estimates Litter Free Virginia. In 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors enacted a \$.05 bag tax on single-use plastic bags, an action that many credit with reducing their use and presence in the environment.

Single-use foam cups and food takeout containers are a common type of plastic pollution. Styrofoam or polystyrene, used for coolers, cups, carryout "clamshells" and packaging breaks apart, easily blows around and floats in water. It usually breaks down into small pieces. Birds and other animals mistake the tiny pieces for food which can lead to their death.

Starting July 1, 2025, Virginia will require food vendors that are part of a chain with 20 or more locations to stop using polysty-

rene containers. On July 1, 2026, smaller food vendors must phase them out. Gov. Glenn Youngkin proposed delaying the effective dates. The state legislature retained the deadlines and on March 24, the governor proposed a budget amendment to again delay the deadlines to 2028 for large chains and 2030 for smaller firms.

More Harm

Some plastics take hundreds of years to decompose. Some contain toxic chemicals. Most plastics break down into smaller fragments, called microplastics, that can enter the food web and be ingested by aquatic organisms, fish, birds and other wildlife. Microplastics are ubiquitous, wrote Amundal Ajasa in the March 13 Washington Post. They have been found in human organs and bloodstreams.

Plastic and glass bottles and aluminum cans are approximately two and a half times more frequently littered in Virginia than in states with what are called "bottle bills," programs in which people pay a refundable deposit and return bottles for reuse or recycling. According to Wikipedia, the beverage container recycling rate is around 33 percent nationally, but states with beverage container deposit laws have a 70 percent average rate of container recycling. Despite some advocates' efforts in Richmond over the years, the Virginia General Assembly has not



NPS Volunteer Coordinator Scott Hill welcomed volunteers.



This Friends of Dyke Marsh display urged people to not ignore the small trash items.

passed a container deposit law.

The USA of Trash

The United States is the world's largest generator of waste, reported Forbes in January, the country that has less than five percent of the world's population but generates 12 percent of the planet's solid waste or garbage. Each American generates over 1,700 pounds a year. These numbers have earned the U.S. the title "trashiest country on the planet," one with "a throwaway culture."

The National Park Service has a motto: "Leave no trace, pack it in, pack it out." Apparently, given the 2,205 pounds of trash collected in just two hours in this small slice of Northern Virginia, many have not gotten the message.