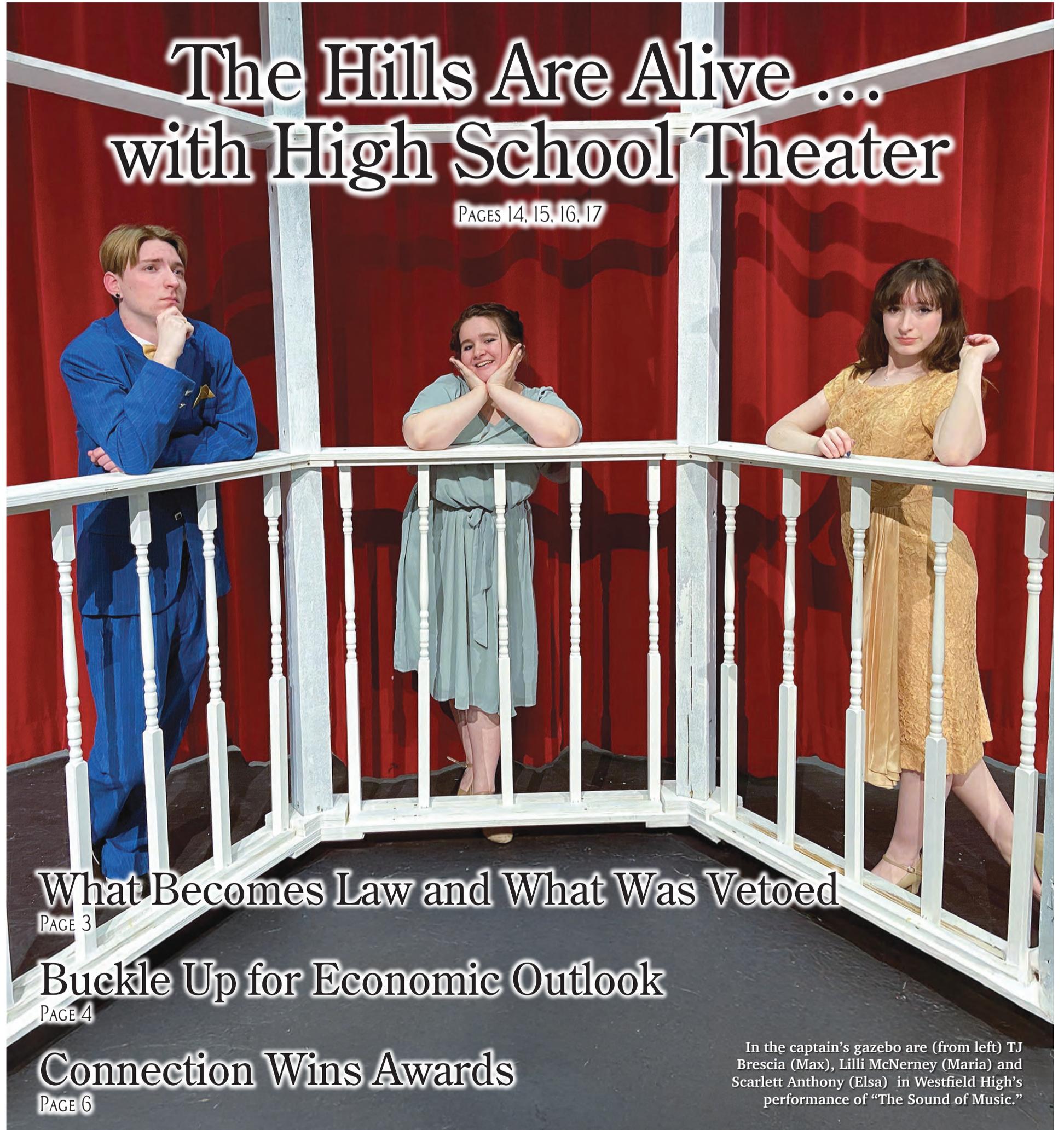


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## The Hills Are Alive ... with High School Theater

PAGES 14, 15, 16, 17



What Becomes Law and What Was Vetoed

PAGE 3

Buckle Up for Economic Outlook

PAGE 4

Connection Wins Awards

PAGE 6

In the captain's gazebo are (from left) TJ Brescia (Max), Lilli McNerney (Maria) and Scarlett Anthony (Elsa) in Westfield High's performance of "The Sound of Music."

OPINION, PAGE 6 ❖ SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 8 ❖ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 20

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

APRIL 16 - MAY 6, 2025

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# Awaiting Governor's Action on Legislation, Deadline May 2

## Status update on bills introduced by local delegation.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Virginia's state legislators have returned home to their districts after reconvening on April 2 for the 2025 legislative session. But action on some of their House and Senate bills is not complete. Twenty-five Senate and House bills chief patroned by members of the Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly are "Awaiting Governor's Action." The governor's action deadline is slightly over two weeks away, at 11:59 p.m. May 2, 2025.

Among the delegation's legislation awaiting governor's action are:

- ❖ SB780 Health insurance; coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices introduced by Sen. Jennifer D. Carroll Foy, (D-33) representing parts of Fairfax;

- ❖ SB1449 Data centers; site assessment for high energy use facility, introduced by Sen. Adams P. Ebbin, (D-39) Alexandria, \* HB1725 Medical Debt, Protection Act; created, prohibited practices, penalties, introduced by Karrie K. Delaney (Chief Patron). These are part of the 160 House and Senate bills awaiting the governor's action, as of Sunday, April 13, according to reports by the Virginia State Legislative Information System (LIS).

In a release after the 2025 reconvened session on April 2, Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) said, "Over the next 30 days, I will review and take final action on the bills and budget amendments that have been sent back to my desk."

LIS reports that for the 2025 session, as of Sunday, April 13, there are 677 approved or enacted bills, "Acts of Assembly Chapter." They are all the house and senate bills enacted into law from this session. The report is available here.

Vetoed bills number 158, including HB1600, the state Budget Bill. They are available here.

The 160 House and Senate bills "Awaiting Governor's Actions" are available here.

Before the governor's deadline on March 24, he acted on 916 bills sent to him during the 2025 General Assembly session and presented his Budget Bill, HB1600, with recommendations. The governor signed 599 bills and vetoed 157 bills that he thought would "take the Commonwealth backward by raising the cost of living, hurting our strong job growth, stifling innovation, undermining our All-American All-of-the-Above Power and Energy Plan, or making our communities less safe," according to a release by the Office of the Governor.

The Democratic-controlled General Assembly reconvened in Richmond on Wednesday, April 2, for a one-day session. They considered Youngkin's vetoes and amendments to bills they introduced during the session, the governor's eight-item vetoes, and 205 amendments to the state Budget Bill. Ultimately, the General Assembly sustained Gov. Glenn Youngkin's veto actions on the 157 bills, and did not override them. Democrats maintain a narrow majority in both chambers but would require a two-thirds supermajority to override Youngkin's vetoes.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ,  
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GLENN YOUNGKIN

**Welcoming school-age children to the capital on March 21, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed two bills banning seven food color dyes for public elementary and secondary school food.**

Like most bills introduced by other Virginia General Assembly members, the majority patroned by the Fairfax County Delegation did not succeed in becoming law. Legislators from across Virginia introduced a total of 3,512 bills during the 2025 General Assembly session. The independent Richmond Sunlight, which has been following the Virginia General Assembly since 2007, says that the number of bills introduced to those that become law is like sea turtle hatchlings. "Out of dozens and dozens of eggs, only a few make it safely past the seagulls to the water, and of those, only one is likely to grow to adulthood."

For bills introduced by the Fairfax Delegation that progressed through the Senate and House and were passed, the governor vetoed much of the proposed legislation. Passage of the bills could have impacted the state's firearms regulations, healthcare policies, and labor laws.

Here are some examples of bills chief patroned by members of the Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly that the governor vetoed and the reasons why. Vetoed bills include:

- ❖ HB1607 Purchase, sale, transfer, etc., of assault firearms and certain ammunition feeding devices prohibited, penalties. Introduced by Dan I. Helmer (Chief Patron); Governor's Veto Explanation: "The Constitution precludes the Commonwealth from prohibiting a broad category of firearms widely embraced for lawful purposes, such



SOURCE @FAIRFAXTV16

**The Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly listened to residents and county leaders on Jan 2, 2025, as they shared issues, concerns and positional statements.**

as self-defense."

- ❖ SB1013 Neurocognitive disorder, etc.; affirmative defense to prosecution. Introduced by Jennifer B. Boysko (Chief Patron). Governor's Veto Explanation: "The proposal also significantly reduces the protections afforded to law enforcement and erodes the Commonwealth Attorney's discretion in evaluating cases, needlessly introducing logistical and procedural challenges that further burden our strained court system. This bill sends the wrong message at precisely the wrong time."

- ❖ SB917 Collective bargaining by public employees; exclusive bargaining representatives. Introduced by Scott A. Surovell (Chief Patron). Governor's Veto Explanation: "The legislation represents a fundamental shift in employment policy in the Commonwealth of Virginia that would threaten the funding and delivery of critical state and local services and will collectively cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year."

- ❖ SB880 Assault firearms; carrying in public areas prohibited, penalty, introduced

by Sen. Adams P. Ebbin (D-39), Alexandria. Governor's Veto Explanation: "Such a prohibition is unconstitutional as it attempts to restrict widely embraced firearms used for lawful purposes like self-defense."

- ❖ HB2037 Land development; solar canopies in surface parking areas, introduced by Del. David L. Bulova (D-11), Fairfax. Governor's Veto Explanation: "Mandating the construction of these facilities not only undermines the economics of new development opportunities but also limits flexibility."

- ❖ HB2485: Cannabis control establishes a framework for creating a retail market and penalties, introduced by Del. Holly M. Seibold (D-12), Vienna Governor's Veto Explanation: "The current illegal cannabis market in Virginia is pervasive and dangerous ... decriminalizing marijuana by establishing a safe and regulated marketplace is an unachievable goal. The more prudent approach would be to revisit the issue of discrepancies in enforcement, not compounding the risks and endangering Virginians' health and safety with greater market availability."

*The Senate and House Bills (SB# and HB#) detailed below are limited solely to those introduced by the legislators of the Fairfax County Delegation as "chief patron." Data does not include bills with the status "Failed/ Awaiting Action" (i.e., continued to next session), "Incorporated," and Resolutions (SR#) (HR#s), such as those commending a person or group. The report provides the status of bills and where they are in the legislative process, as of Sunday, April 13, 2025, referencing the Virginia State Legislative Information System. Three status options are reviewed: Acts of Assembly, Governor's Veto, and Awaiting Governor's Action.*

**Sen. Jennifer Boysko, (D-38) Herndon, Chief Patron**



### Acts of Assembly Chapter

SB1002 Campaign finance; prohibited personal use of campaign funds, etc.

SB1004 Trailer franchise requirements; applicability to certain trailers.

SB1005 Sexual assault patients; services, provision of information.

SB1127 Animal testing facilities; public notification of inspection report.

SB1137 Data Governance and Analytics, Office of; changes oversight of office to VITA.

SB1237 Medical Assistance Services, De-

partment of; appeals of agency determinations.

### Vetoed by Governor

SB1013 Neurocognitive disorder, etc.; affirmative defense to prosecution.

SB1124 Driver education programs; classroom training may be administered in-person or online.

SB1125 Propagation of mammalian wildlife; unlawful without a permit, premature separation.

SB1132 Prospective employees; prohibiting employer seeking wage or salary history.

SB1134 Firearms; storage in residence

SEE NEWS, PAGE 17

# The Economic Outlook

## Sobering Economic Messages for Northern Virginia.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

**O**n April 3, one day after U.S. President Donald J. Trump announced sweeping tariffs on imports from over 60 countries, several Northern Virginia officials gave a pep talk to 75 business leaders who gathered for a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon and hope.

On April 4, the day of the event, stock market indexes tumbled. “Tariffs Torpedo Markets around the World,” screamed an Associated Press headline.

## “We will have a period of real pain.”

— Dr. Terry Clower, Director of GMU Center for Regional Analysis

The speakers did not utter the U.S. president’s name, but the changes and proposals, coming largely from the Trump administration hovered like an ominous, gray cloud over the room. Chamber Chair Roberta Tinch said that the new administration in Washington “brought a lot of change.”

Bank of America economist Stephen Juneau warned that these are “difficult, uncertain times.”

## “No better place to be than here in tough times.”

— Chairman Jeff McKay, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Dr. Terry Clower, Director of George Mason University’s Center for Regional Analysis, predicted, “We will have a period of real pain.”

### Spotlighting the County’s Strengths

One of the event’s sponsors, Kathy Taylor with the Walsh Colucci law firm, touted, “Our com-

munity is strong, dynamic and resilient.”

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay sang the praises of Fairfax County, saying that there is “no better place to be than here in tough times,” that the county has a “strong backbone and a strong economy. I am optimistic about our ability to get through this.”

Listing some plusses, McKay commended the public school system and noted that Fairfax County is home to ten Fortune 500 companies and “a great place for small employers.” Recovering from the Covid pandemic crisis, more people are working and more businesses than ever are operating, he said.

McKay refuted reports that Fairfax County’s population is declining, asserting, “That is completely false.” In 2023-2024 Fairfax County grew by 14,000 people, the highest of all Northern Virginia jurisdictions, he said. “We are in growth mode.”

He singled out plans to redevelop U.S. 1 in Mount Vernon. The stretch between Fort Belvoir and Huntington “is ripe for redevelopment and investment,” and will be an economic driver, like Metro’s Silver line, he said, adding, “Never before has Fairfax County had a \$1 billion infrastructure investment in U.S. 1.”

Alex Iam, Executive Vice President of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (EDA), also spotlighted local assets, citing “world class talent” and strong aerospace, information technology and satellite communications industries. “We have a great aggregation of intelligence resources in the region,” he said, showing a slide reporting 500+ cybersecurity companies in Fairfax County, and noting that Virginia is the “top state for digital infrastructure.”

Iam reported that some of the largest tenants in the county like Northrop Grumman retained their leased office space over the past two years and some, like Bechtel, expanded.

But Iam tempered his upbeat

SEE THE ECONOMIC, PAGE 5



MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Participants in the 2025 Economic Outlook hosted by Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber and SFDC were Stephen Juneau, Bank of America Securities; Alex Iam, Fairfax County EDA; Roberta Tinch, chair, Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber and CEO of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital; Jeff McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; Dr. Terry Clower, Center for Regional Analysis, GMU.



Dr. Terry Clower, Center for Regional Analysis, GMU, told the audience to prepare for anticipated challenges in the local economy.

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email [calendar@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:calendar@connectionnewspapers.com)



Roberta Tinch, chamber chair and President of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, facilitated questions and answers between the audience and the panel.

# The Economic Outlook

FROM PAGE 4

report by acknowledging that the federal government has a big presence with 80,000 federal employees in Fairfax County. "Federal contracting is huge," he observed, totaling \$41 billion in federal procurement in 2024.

There are six major federal headquarters in Fairfax County, including the Transportation Security Association and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Current actions to shrink the federal government through workforce cuts, contract cancellations and real estate space reductions is a "very serious situation," he soberly asserted.

EDA seeks to help displaced federal employees and contractors, with steps like job fairs and encouraging retraining.

## Adjusting to Economic Shifts

"The federal government will still be big, but it will be smaller," Clower predicted. He estimated that 125,000 federal workers "will be lost" and said that federal spending is typically "worth another 1.4 jobs, so in the next few years, we could see 250,000 jobs gone. It's sobering," he said.

Clower said that Northern Virginia's economy is "shifting, ... changing into a data driven economy."

"We must rethink the way we are doing things," he challenged. If the federal govern-

ment abandons office space, public-private partnerships could step in. "We have a basis to compete for new industries," he said.

Clower expressed optimism that the region could retain former federal employees, capitalizing on "the sheer brain power in this region. Get them to stay while we restructure," he urged.

He stressed that the region needs "to be more open to development," to incentivize businesses to come to the area, by speeding up permitting, for example.

On population trends, he attributed the county's growth to net international migration, contending that domestic migration is "negative" because people ages 30 to 40 cannot afford a house here. "The housing stock is still a real challenge," he said.

Evan Kaufman, the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation's Executive Director, said, "We must be nimble and turn this negative into a positive."

Tinch closed by urging attendees to be positive and innovative "in a changing environment. ... Be ready for uncertainty," she advised. "We are a resilient county."

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation hosted the event at the Belle Haven Country Club. Sponsors were Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley and Walsh; IMEG; and Bean, Kinney and Korman.

## VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

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

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html). The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Sup-

port Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) or [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).

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

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

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

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

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



Stephen Juneau, Bank of America Securities, discussed recent developments with interest rates and the national anticipated forecast for inflation.

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# Semiquincentennial!

## Fairfax County Kicks off 250th Celebrations with George Washington's Mount Vernon.

By SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

I am thrilled to invite you to join the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association and the Fairfax 250th Commission as we kick off the Nation's Semiquincentennial Celebrations here in Fairfax County! Sunday, May 4, is the 250th anniversary of the day George Washington departed his beloved Mount Vernon to attend the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where he was ultimately appointed commander in chief of the newly created Continental Army.

For the duration of the war, he only briefly returned to his estate

for a day or so in September 1781, prior to the Yorktown campaign and ultimate victory.

At 1:30 p.m. on May 4, as part of Revolutionary War Weekend at George Washington's Mount Vernon we will be recognizing this moment with remarks from "George Washington," as well as myself and Mount Vernon President & CEO Doug Bradburn. US Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll and Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay have also been invited.

Following the remarks, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at the Patriots Path, Mount Vernon's brand-new installation of a military encampment for guests to SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL!, PAGE 7



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION  
George Washington.

## Connection Papers Win Awards

Each year the Virginia Press Association (VPA) holds a competition to select the best published material from newspapers and news sites from across the state. This is one of the largest competitions in the country and judged by journalists from outside the commonwealth.

The Connection and Gazette newspapers received thirteen awards for their work in 2024. The awards were announced at the Omni Richmond on April 12 where the Virginia Press Association "celebrated the talent, dedication, and impact of those shaping the media landscape."

### In the Fairfax County North Connection

Bonnie Hobbs, Second Place, Feature Writing Portfolio. Judges comment "Your writing and interviews were so thorough. I appreciated the perspective you gathered for the Chantilly High job fair in particular and your coverage of Maj. Jane Russell's career was clear and informative."

Bonnie Hobbs, Second Place, In-depth or Investigative Reporting, "Senior Housing Approval" Judge's comment "Lots of deep diving here on airport issues re: noise and how it could affect a senior housing project. I liked the "side bar" story on the misrepresentation of a sub-committee's decision. Thank

you!

### In the Fairfax County South Connection

Bonnie Hobbs, Third Place, Investigative-Government. Judge's comment "Thorough recap and coverage of unusual decision by local city to part ways with city manager. Reporter hit bases with all sides told and what is possibly next as new council prepares to take office shortly after outgoing council left them with no city leader."

### In the Mount Vernon Gazette

Glenda Booth, Second Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story. Judge's comment: "It's a tough assignment to tackle stories of critical importance but with an overarching theme that in less competent hands might be overlooked. In this case each story was well researched and written and succeeded in holding the reader's attention."

Glenda Booth, Second Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing

Susan Laume, Third Place, Picture Story or Essay, "Washington's Birthday"

Judge commented there were



Bonnie Hobbs



Eden Brown



Glenda Booth



Jeanne Theismann



Shirley Ruhe



Susan Laume

several events submitted in this category but this rose to the top for the variety of angles and events depicted. "I really liked the smoke rising over the costumed soldiers. Good work!"

Susan Laume, Third Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing

### In the Alexandria Gazette Packet

Jeanne Theismann, Third Place for Column Writing, "Legends of Alexandria" Judge's comment: "An extremely elegant way to present spotlight stories. Each story was informative and well presented. Good solid writing by Jeanne Theismann highlighting a lifetime of

achievements by each individual."

Jeanne Theismann, Third Place for Education Writing.

### In the Arlington Connection

Eden Brown & Shirley Ruhe, First Place for Headline Writing. Judge's comment: "Cute-ly conveys the squirrel's success, with a nod to the A-team. Love it."

Eden Brown & Giovanni Flores, Second Place for Combination Picture and Story, "Memorial Day." Judge's comment: "Wonderful photos and variety of quotes that hit hard. Very well done coverage for an annual event."

Shirley Ruhe, Second Place, Personality or Portrait Photo, "Way Too Long." Judge's comment: "The musician in the foreground and background each bring a different feeling to the photo."

Shirley Ruhe, Second Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story, "Food Insecurity Series." Judge's comment: "Lovely writing on an important subject that focused on issues affecting so many communities in the country beset by widening levels of poverty in what we think of as a land of opportunity."

OPINION

# Semiquincentennial!

FROM PAGE 6

visit year-round. George Washington, along with musicians and re-enactors will march down the Patriots Path and out the front gates to “head to Philadelphia.”

This rich visual display is befitting the ceremonial kick off of the Fairfax 250th Celebrations which will include hundreds of events throughout the County over the next two years.

This significant anniversary is a celebration of not only how our country began, but also the first steps of the journey we have been making over the last 250 years. This is not only just a celebration of our history, but of our movement toward greater justice and equity, and the journey to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence that all people “are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is a time to commemorate what defines us as a nation and the values that we hold most dearly. We have come far, but we have more work to do to ensure

these values for all Americans.

I am proud to be a leader in the County’s Semiquincentennial planning, starting in 2020 with the unanimous support of my Board colleagues, by directing the Fairfax 250 Commission be established to

create and host appropriate events and celebrations. We look forward to you joining us on May 4 and throughout the next two years.

To learn more about the Fairfax 250th Celebrations, visit: <https://www.fxva.com/fairfax250/>.

## Library: Freedom to Learn

Dear editor at Fairfax Connection,

I visit my library every week. It’s full of people using the resources there. The meeting rooms are booked for community meetings, children are there with their parents picking out books, people are working on their own laptops using the WIFI, and people use the library’s computers because they don’t have their own. In general there is a lot of life in the library. I save money by checking out books rather than buying them. I’ve made friends there by volunteering my time to keep library services running. We need libraries because they help support people of all ages and backgrounds. A library is central to a well informed public. We need to protect the library and what it stands for. The freedom to learn is priceless!

LETTER TO  
THE EDITOR

Karen Moore  
Fairfax Station, 22039



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## McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER 2025 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTION



# Absentee Voting

Wednesday, April 2–Friday, May 9

Residents of Dranesville Small District 1A are encouraged to vote for members of the MCC Governing Board. In-person voting takes place at McLean Day on May 16–17. In addition, absentee voting is available.

**TWO WAYS TO VOTE ABSENTEE:** 1. At MCC. Come fill out a ballot at McLean Community Center. 2. By mail. If you prefer to vote by mail, simply phone, send an e-mail or fill out the online request form to request ballots for members of your household. The requested ballots will be mailed to your home.

**DEADLINE:** Completed Absentee Voting ballots must be received in the ballot box or by mail at MCC by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 9.

### TO REQUEST A BALLOT:

CALL: 703-790-0123, TTY: 711

E-MAIL: [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org)

ONLINE FORM: [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)



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## SENIOR LIVING

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE



Six-months-old today Miles Martin attends the Easter egg hunt at Sunrise Arlington with his mother on Sunday, April 13.



Ready, set, go!



The Easter bunny has taken a moment off to take a picture with Leilani Choi who says next week she is also headed for the White House Easter egg roll.

# Hopping Down the Bunny Trail at Sunrise

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION

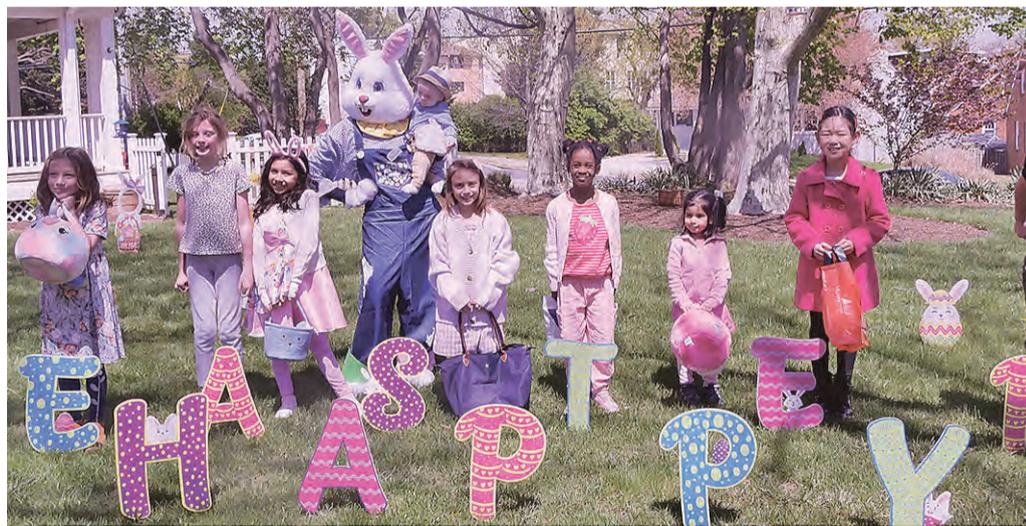
**T**he Easter bunny is hopping, the children are running, the parents are cheering and everyone is having a good time at the Sunrise of Arlington at 2000 N. Glebe Road on Sunday, April 13.

As children gather in the yard in front of Sunrise, they discuss egg hunting strategies. "I found one over here."

"There are a lot of them under the bushes." Parents tell their children, "Don't take all of them; if you get too many, share with someone else."

The plastic eggs have been filled with tiny toys and candies, and Jensen has pulled out the leftover orange Halloween bags in case someone forgot to bring a basket. Some eggs are hidden under the porch while others are high up on the bird feeder.

Rachel Jensen, Executive Director of Sunrise Arlington, tells the assembled children, "There are 100 eggs so if two of you reach for the same one, don't have a fight; there



Children line up at Sunrise on Sunday ready to fill their Easter bags with eggs hidden around the yard.

are plenty of eggs for everyone! Hands on your hips, hands on your head. Ready, set, go." Jensen adds some of the Sunrise residents just finishing brunch will come out on the porch to watch the festivities.

This adds multigenerational benefits of the community activity.

Several residents of Sunrise have come out on the porch after brunch to watch the

festivities. Ari McSherry is there visiting his mother Marlene. They walk around the yard watching the children scampering to load their baskets and remembering the Easter egg hunts at their house when he was growing up.

Six-month-old today Miles Martin,

SEE SUNRISE EASTER EGG HUNT, PAGE 9



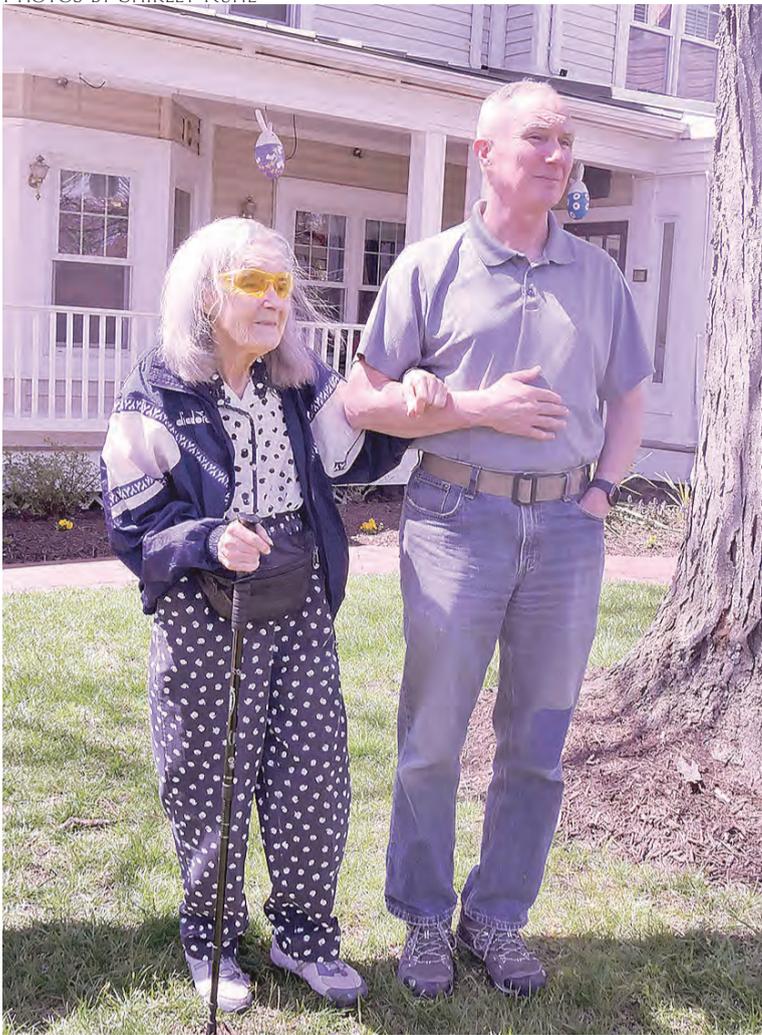
Lina Djebbour heads for the Easter egg hunt at Sunrise Arlington.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# SENIOR LIVING

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

## Sunrise Easter Egg Hunt



Ari McSherry from Arlington and his mother Marlene, a resident of Sunrise, have come out after brunch to watch the festivities.



Seven-year-old Noelle Skeete says she is really fast and enterprising, too, as she reaches up for two eggs on a bird feeder in the yard.

FROM PAGE 8

dressed in his holiday finest, is attending with his mother. “I think we’ll wait until next year,” she tells him. Miles’ mother says she came today because her 94-year-old grandfather lives in a Sunrise just outside of Philadelphia. “I know how much they love little babies so I brought Miles here today so he could say hi to all of the people.”

Noelle Skeete says this is her first time at this Easter Egg hunt but several years ago when she was four years old she attended a different event. All of the older kids grabbed the eggs before she could get there. “It was a very, very sad day.” But she says now she is really fast. “I’m the fastest in my school at Glebe Elementary just over there.”

Sunrise Arlington offers assisted living, memory care and short-term stays.

Sunrise Senior Living has headquarters in McLean, Va. and more than 270 locations around the region and the United States and Canada offering differing services. [www.sunriseseniorliving.com](http://www.sunriseseniorliving.com)



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# Hayfield High Gym Was Big Enough for Big Names

In the 1970s, celebrity events were common at Hayfield.

By MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

There was a time in the early 1970s where Hayfield High School had one of the biggest gymnasiums around so they used it for all kinds of things, like a country music concert featuring Dolly Parton.

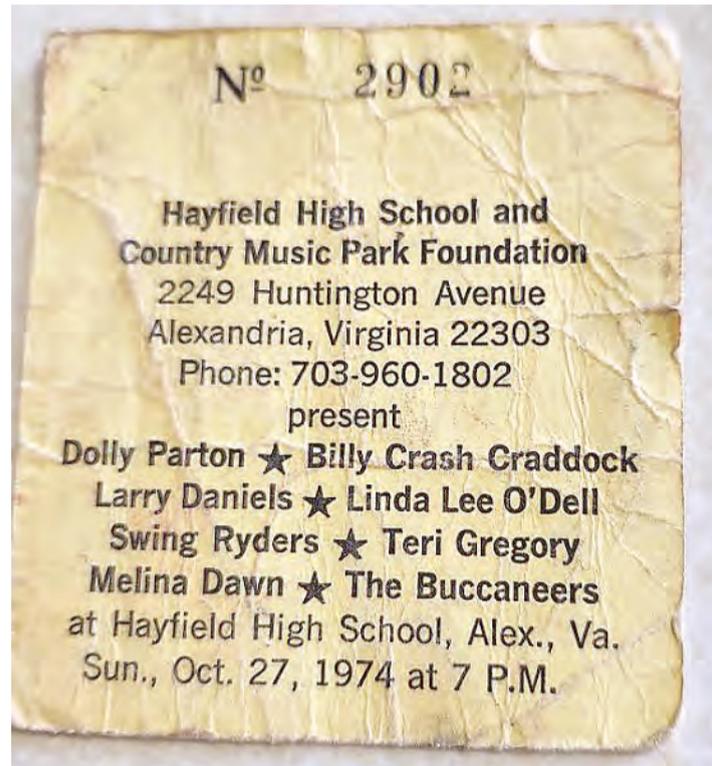
She wasn't quite the name she is now, but the country music crowd knew her, and there she was on the stage in the gym at Hayfield alongside other country musicians such as Billy Crash Craddock, Larry Daniels, Linda Lee O'Dell, Swing Ryders, Teri Gregory, Melina Dawn, and The Buccaneers.

Hayfield resident Patti Derflinger remembers being a 9-year-old at the show and somehow got in the autograph line afterwards where she got many of the performers to sign. Dolly seemed to have a short show, Derflinger remembers. Recently she was digging into some old family papers when she found the ticket stub and autographs, bringing back the memories. "When they were doing autographs, I remember I just kind of got in the line and dug the stub out of my pocket for them to sign," she said.

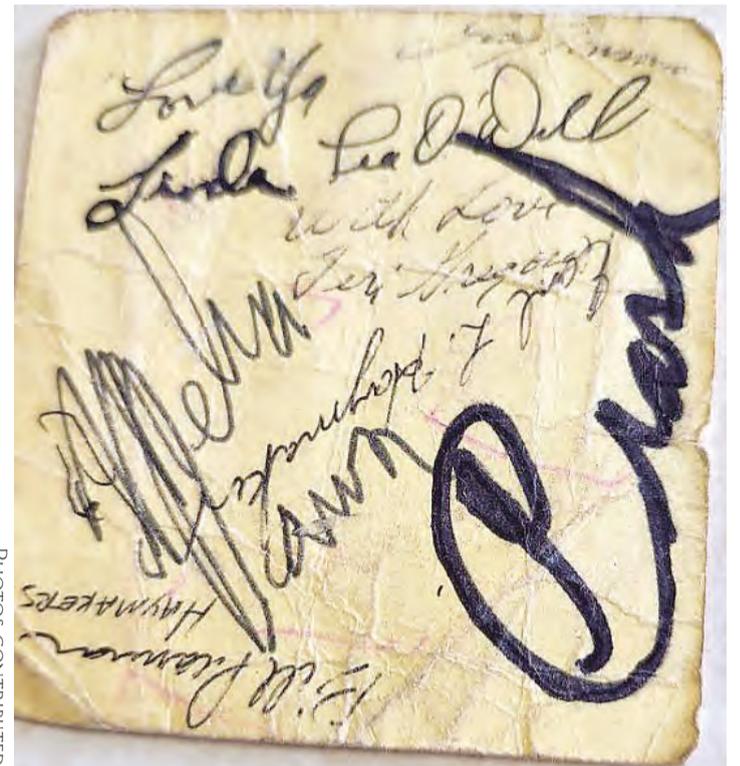
It was a big deal for the little community of Hayfield Farm.

The area was more "country," then it is now. Kingstowne was a bunch of dirt bike trails, the 7-11 was the only store around, and Nixon just resigned.

Billy Crash Craddock was a country star



If ticket stubs could talk.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Country music stars of the 1970s signed autographs at Hayfield.

**"When they were doing autographs, I remember I just kind of got in the line and dug the stub out of my pocket for them to sign."**

— Patti Derflinger remembers being a 9-year-old at the show

with all sorts of top tunes for that time and when he was on stage at Hayfield, his big hit was "Rub It In", a top 20 pop hit. At the time, he was signed with ABC Records. Craddock did a cover of the Tony Orlando and Dawn pop hit "Knock Three Times" in 1971. Crad-

dock was inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2011. Country star Linda Lee O'Dell played a few times at Hayfield.

One of her shows in 1975, a ticket was \$5 in advance or \$6 at the door.

## Big Gym of Big Names

Other well-known celebrity events at Hayfield included a pro wrestling match featuring "Haystack Calhoun," a celebrity on that circuit, and a Jerry Lewis muscular dystrophy event reportedly featuring Jerry himself, though he never appeared on stage, disappointing audience members. After the then-named Washington Redskins appeared in their first Super Bowl in the early 1970s against the Miami Dolphins, stars from both teams were in a basketball game at Hayfield, as were the Harlem Globetrotters. Also on the courts, the Washington then-named Bullets played against the 76ers in an exhibition NBA game at Hayfield.

## SENIOR LIVING

# Virginia Ranks 14th State for Older Workers

A new study shows Virginia is the No. 14 best state for older workers based on the criteria chosen. Seniorly released the study on the Best States for Older Workers after analyzing data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, and Federation of Tax Administrators.

Metrics included labor force participation, business growth rate, and age-related workplace discrimination. Six factors specific to seniors in each state were analyzed: median income, income tax, remote work, labor force participation, business growth rate, and age-related workplace discrimination. Cost of living was apparently not considered.

Among the findings, Virginia has a median household income of \$64,938 for seniors (No. 10), 18.4% of older workers are working from home (No. 14) and 32.3%

of older adults are in the labor force (tied for 15th). Maryland ranked No. 4. DC ranked No. 1.

A record 11.2 million seniors continue working in the U.S., Seniorly says, and 14.8 million seniors are projected to be in the workforce by 2033. As healthcare and living costs continue to rise, a growing number of seniors cannot afford to retire, while others opt to work, encouraged by better health, longevity and the flexibility of remote work.

The 10 best states for older workers are Washington, New Hampshire, Alaska, Maryland, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, South Dakota, Utah, and Vermont.

<https://www.seniorly.com/resource-center/seniorly-news/best-states-for-older-workers-2025>

Washington	1	Utah	9
New Hampshire	2	Vermont	10
Alaska	3	New Jersey	11
Maryland	4	Wyoming	12
Colorado	5	Idaho	13
Connecticut	6	Virginia	14
Massachusetts	7	Arizona	15
South Dakota	8	Hawaii	16
Texas	17		

# You Could Become a Puppy Raiser for the Blind

BY ANN VERNON  
THE CONNECTION

**O**ur family's incredible journey in puppy raising began the day that I saw the ad in the Alexandria Gazette: volunteer raisers needed for Guiding Eyes for the Blind puppies. They had me at puppies. As I continued reading further in the volunteer section of the Alexandria Gazette almost 20 years ago, I found that it might be possible to be a volunteer home raiser for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, an organization with the mission to train and place dogs as guides for visually impaired individuals. I was to find that these special dogs were raised in homes like mine to learn social skills, house manners, polite behavior, how to handle new experiences and how to interact with other dogs and people in a polite and calm manner.

There was another motive for this particular endeavor which was to have a service project for one of my teenage sons, Scott, that we could do together. Plus I did love dogs, already having two golden retrievers in our Alexandria home.

Fast forward another year, and we had almost completed the raising of our first guide dog in training, Lawrence. We enjoyed him since the age of two months and worked with him in lots of situations and classes that this organization provides locally throughout Alexandria, Mount Vernon, Fairfax County, Arlington and other metro locations.

At 18 months, he returned to the campus of Guiding Eyes in Yorktown Heights, New York, and passed his next step to be in for training. This meant that this beautiful black lab was probably going to be a bona fide guide dog after just another six months of harness training by the professionals.

Although parting with a handsome and well-trained dog that we'd come to love is not the easiest on the emotions, the reward is experienced when your dog's success becomes your success at graduation six months later, and when you meet the lucky individual who gets your dog as their guide. Lawrence moved to Kansas City and guided Ron until retiring after seven years of service. How wonderful to hear from that human-dog team from time to time about how well they worked together.

And, you could get another puppy ....

There have been four more dogs that our family has trained and helped graduate since then. All have been a joyful and expansive learning and life experience because of the organization of people we have met. As we've trained our pups, gone to classes, shared puppy play dates sponsored by other raisers with fenced yards, puppy overnight swaps, and problem solved with more experienced raisers and regional instructors along the journey, we made many enduring friendships. And sometimes you even see your pup again!

One of our pups, Tilly, retired early and came back to our household at age four, and became a trusted therapy dog at the private special needs school where I worked in Alexandria as a nurse. Another dog, Parsley, became a police dog upon graduation because she had the profile and work ethic for that career. The next dog, Star, successfully began guiding a busy, young professional man last year near Boston.

Most recently our family raised Mia, now an 18 month old yellow lab just accepted in for harness training in April. This was the first time we have co-raised with another family, Tim and Kathleen McQuade. It was a very good choice at this time, benefitting Mia



**At the celebration for MIA, raised by the Vernon family, now an 18 month old yellow lab just accepted for harness training in April, Guiding Eyes for the Blind Training Center in Yorktown Heights New York. From left, front row: Tim McQuade, Margie Weinreb, MIA, Kathleen McQuade; back row: Scott Vernon, Ann Vernon, Will Warchol, Jerry Vernon.**

to have so many humans invested in her success, and sharing the responsibility of training. Included in this village of raisers were grandchildren, children, neighbors, and the NoVa region's extensive volunteers, co-raisers, and regional managers — so much support. Behind the scenes are financial sponsors like Margie Weinreb who named

Mia after her granddaughter and whom we met at Mia's testing this month; another special human piece of this guide dog training.

Raisers are always being sought for these amazing pups: check out this link to see if you might look back one day and see how much you loved it.

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

## May Is Foster Care Month

Fairfax County Foster Care and Adoption is planning two special events in recognition of National Foster Care Month.

One event is Tuesday, April 29, 5-7 p.m. at the Lorton Library and the second is Tuesday, May 20, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Burke Centre Library, to encourage community involvement in supporting children in foster care.

According to the Virginia Department of Social Services, in February 2025, there were 5,482 children in foster care in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 247 in Fairfax County. These children need the caring support of the community to overcome their challenges.

Fairfax County Foster Care and Adoption is dedicated to ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in need. Through comprehensive support and community engagement, we strive to provide stable and loving homes for children who are unable to live with their families of origin.

Foster parents play an unmatched role in providing loving, temporary homes for children. There is a need for more dedicated foster parents.

Attend an event and find out about the foster care system, the critical needs, and the life-changing rewards of becoming a foster parent. You'll hear from Fairfax County Foster Care social workers, current foster parents, and community partners eager to share ways to get involved.

Whether you are simply curious about what foster care is like or you are seriously considering becoming a foster parent, these meetings are the perfect chance to get your questions answered, find out steps to become a foster parent and how to get involved.

Drop in or register online to let us know that you are planning to come. For general questions, call 703-324-7639 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption>

**The New Columbarium**  
at Walker Chapel Historic Cemetery  
Circa 1842

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4102 N. Glebe Road, Arlington VA 22207  
[www.TheColumbarium.org](http://www.TheColumbarium.org)  
Email: [Cemetery@WalkerChapel.org](mailto:Cemetery@WalkerChapel.org)

# Going Solar

Gain energy self-sufficiency and cost protections.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**H**ave you ever considered going into the energy business? Starting your own production facility and selling energy through a contracted broker? In today's clean energy reality, it no longer requires sitting on a fossil fuel deposit and an oil derrick. Producing your own energy for sale, albeit on a small scale, is possible in Virginia. Or it's possible merely to produce all your own energy for personal use, and virtually eliminate your electricity bill. Solar energy production, without reliance on the grid, is now within many homeowners' reach. If your goal is only to protect the planet by lessening the impact of fossil fuel use and carbon release, going solar is an achievable residential project.

Do you recall the extended period of power outage after the Derecho storm in June 2012? It was multiple days without electricity for large numbers of us. When food in the refrigerator was in danger of spoiling and summer's high temperatures drove us all to wonder how long the power would be out.

Anticipation of more frequent and stronger storms in years to come due to climate change motivated me to look into possible temporary power solutions including whole home generators and solar energy. Back then, siting and the required monthly testing protocol of a large generator, though less costly, seemed too intimidating to me. And being in a modest-sized single family home, heated with natural gas, with a low electricity usage history, I was not considered a prime candidate for solar energy by most potential installers. At that time, a single solar battery would not handle all of my house systems; a further drawback to making a major change and investment.

## INCENTIVES TO GOING SOLAR

Fast forward, now ten plus years to conditions today. While Dominion rates had remained fairly constant since 1992, the utility recently asked state regulators for an increase in their fuel and base rates. That would raise customer power bills by about 15 percent over the next two years, beginning in July 2025 for the fuel rate, and

January 2026 for the base rates. Higher temperatures and more violent storms are commonplace. Added are fears that high energy users, such as data centers, could overburden Dominion's systems, leading to rolling energy blackouts.

On the plus side, home solar energy has gotten less expensive; down about 31 percent, according to Energy Sage, a marketplace link between potential solar energy users and vetted installers. Federal tax credits of 30 percent are in place for solar equipment and Fairfax County offers property tax exemptions for solar. Another improvement: solar back-up batteries have evolved with improved efficiency to handle more home systems. Virginia has banned most HOA solar panel restrictions, codified residential net metering, and selling Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) is easy, though moderately profitable. Self-sufficiency provides protection from utility rate increases. And, a big motivator for me, reducing my carbon footprint, remains possible. I was ready to reconsider solar energy.

I began researching system information and gathering estimates in July 2024. My system was installed in late February 2025. March became my first month of total self-sufficiency, with no electricity usage from the grid. I'm able to anticipate my first sales from sending my excess power back into the grid system. In March, my 5.8kW system with 14 solar panels, sized at 136 percent of my historic usage, produced 577 kWh, 722kWh YTD, and reduced CO2 emissions 923.1 lbs; the equivalent offset of seven trees.

Make no mistake — this is still a time consuming and expensive change to make. The cost of home systems in Virginia averages just over \$37K, according to Energy Sage; or about \$2.84 per watt. The size of your system of course impacts the cost. The cost of the solar panels themselves is only about a third of the total cost. Other component costs to add in include solar inverters, racking equipment, electrical wiring, and design and installation labor. Further, to become fully energy self-sufficient, though net metering helps, requires a back-up battery to store energy for periods when the sun is not shining. A single back-up bat-



Solar energy panels are a more accepted aesthetic than their clunky predecessors, as on the front roof of this Springfield home

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Solar panels have become smaller, lighter, and more efficient, easily maneuvered onto racking rail equipment



Installer adds a recommended "critter guard" to prevent small mammals from chewing wires, or birds from nesting

tery costs around \$13,500 on average, according to Solar.com; significantly adding to the total cost of the system.

Finally, Dominion Energy's agreement with Virginia to allow net metering, has a capacity cap. "A Net Metering Customer shall be allowed to install a Renewable Fuel Generator, which is capable of generating no more than 150 percent of the Net Metering Customer's previous 12 months of usage history." (<https://www.dominionenergy.com/-/media/pdfs/virginia/terms-and-conditions/vatc25ra.pdf>)

Prospective system owners must apply to Dominion Energy for system design approval to assure limit compliance. Net metering can assist Dominion by helping them avoid facility upgrades as energy demands increase. The State-wide net metering allowance for Dominion is six percent of their peak load from the prior year. Home solar systems will help Dominion meet its requirement under Virginia's 2020 Clean Economy Act to

## What Is Net Metering?

Net metering is a policy that allows homeowners with solar energy systems to receive credit on their electric bills for excess energy they generate and feed back into the grid. In Virginia, regulated under VA Code §56-594. Capacity limit for residential: up to 25kW, with no more than 150% of customer's previous 12 month usage history. Homeowners now are credited at the full retail rate for the solar energy they send to the grid. Utilities have proposed to decrease the credit rate.

supply 30 percent of power from renewables by 2045, but without toppling Dominion's place as the public utility provider.

Solar is viewed as a home upgrade. Just like other home improvements, such as kitchen or bath remodels, owners are unlikely to achieve a 1:1 increase in home resale value. As solar panels have improved in efficiency and become smaller and more lightweight, their aesthetic appeal has improved and is considered more attractive to buyers than when initially available. Real estate professionals estimate an \$8-10K increase in home value with solar, depending on home location and visibility of roof placement. Installation expenses typically may take

7 to 20 years to recoup in electricity savings. Installers typically offer financing plans.

## PREP AND GETTING STARTED ON YOUR PROJECT

Before you take any major steps, you can use a solar generation calculator to check your home's site position and energy generation potential, given shading and sunlight hours. A south facing orientation is best, but east and west-facing can also work. To see your roof's potential, see: <https://sunroof.withgoogle.com/>; <https://pvwatts.nrel.gov/index.php>; Northern Virginia Solar Map <https://www.novasolarmap.com/>; or Maps in satellite view to check for shading and obstructions.

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Back-up batteries to hold energy when the sun is not shining have also improved



An installer electrician connects a back-up battery adjacent to the installed solar panel controller



System control panels can be mounted outside, or in a garage with recommended bollard protection

Before you start your solar project, experts recommend you check the condition of your roof. You don't want to need to remove your new solar panels to replace your roof anytime soon. You might need to consider roof replacement.

Trimming or removing trees can help optimize solar collection. Selective panel placement on the available roof surface is another optimization strategy. Your electric systems panel must be at least 200 amperes or might require upgrading or supplementing. Your installer will inspect the roof for structural integrity and your electric panel capacity as part of their virtual and on-site inspections before the system design is finalized. Solar panels have a life expectancy of 25 - 30 years.

#### SELECTING AN INSTALLER

Likely your most important decision will be one of your first, selection of your installer. Your contractor can handle most of the steps in the project for you, including equipment purchase and permit applications; even filing for county tax exemptions. An internet search will identify dozens of experienced installers servicing northern Virginia. Determine if you need a contractor who installs panels alone or who also installs backup batteries. As you collect multiple estimates, you can expect to see a variety of possible designs for panels on your available roof space, with varying size and wattage of the panels; along with varying panel and battery brands. Installers typically work with their preferred equipment manufacturers. Solar energy interest groups and federal and county governments provide information to help you make sense of all the options, putting you in a better position to evaluate potential contractor suggestions and make your installer selection. See <https://solarunitedneighbors.org/locations/virginia/>; and

[www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

<https://switchtogether.com/en/solar/fairfaxcounty/info/how-does-it-work-acceptation>; and

[https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/homeowners-guide-going-solar?nrg\\_redirect=364432](https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/homeowners-guide-going-solar?nrg_redirect=364432)

The industry suggests planning on a six-month project period. After selecting your installer and working together on the design elements, much of which can be done virtually, your contractor will seek the utility's initial approval of the design. Before actual work begins, you'll need a county building permit, followed later by their installation inspection. Then you'll need final okay from your energy provider before you are allowed to turn on and begin operation of the system. The installer will require a percentage payment of the total system cost at stages along the process. A few things extended the time for completion of my project to seven months: the multiple permission requirements, with their extended process times, plus my intention to keep installers off my steep roof in summer's very high temperatures, a battery equipment supply interruption, and multiple icy weather reschedulings.

#### SOLAR RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATE

A state-supported incentive program provides an additional way to get paid for going solar. A Solar Renewable Energy Certificate provides proof of how much renewable energy is produced by a system. System owners work with an aggregator or broker to trade the value of their renewable energy production commodity.

SRECs are sold separately from electricity and may be bought by energy suppliers to meet their requirements to secure a portion of their electricity from solar generators.

One SREC is equal to 1,000 kilowatt-hours. Virginia's SREC market price over the last six months

was about \$40. A 10kW system is estimated to produce about 12 SRECS annually.

#### HELP AVAILABLE FROM COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Fairfax County has two initiatives to assist residents in going solar: Switch Together and Solarize Virginia. See <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/more-opportunities-fairfax-county>

ty-residents-go-solar These programs include free assessments, bulk discounts, and access to the winning installer of a reverse auction process. Registrants can compare the group discounts available to other individual installer estimates. Current registration for Switch Together ends June 4th; and for Solarize Virginia ends July 15th.

The county's Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination,

OEEC, indicates Solarize Virginia, now in its eleventh year, has supported 450 installations in the county since 2014; 23 installations in 2024. According to the Department of Tax Administration, there are currently 1,057 property owners in Fairfax County taking advantage of the real property tax credit. This is a five-year tax exemption [based on the installation cost] so

SEE GOING SOLAR. PAGE 22



## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
WYTHE	19757	681	BRUSHY MOUNTAIN ROAD	BR REED CREEK	3/25/2025
FRANKLIN	7914	703	AYERS ROAD 703	POPLAR CAMP CREEK	3/19/2025
ALBEMARLE	746	680	BROWNS GAP TURNPIKE	LICKINGHOLE CREEK	3/13/2025
SCOTT	23815	812	RED STONE DRIVE	STREAM	3/11/2025
DINWIDDIE	6037	619	COURTHOUSE ROAD	HORSEPEN BRANCH	3/10/2025
FLOYD	7503	221	FLOYD HWY SOUTH221	BRANCH HOWELL CREEK	3/7/2025

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

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

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

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

## HIGH SCHOOL THEATER

# Singing, Dancing, Roller Skating, Romance and Joy

Get ready for the musical, 'Xanadu,' at Centreville High.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Featuring a cast and crew of 40, Centreville High's upcoming musical is the funny and fabulous "Xanadu." And in today's serious and uncertain world, it may be just the good time that audiences need.

It's 1980 in Venice Beach, Calif., and a beautiful Greek muse, Kira, descends from Mt. Olympus to inspire a struggling artist to create his dream – a roller disco. She's not supposed to fall in love with him – so, of course, she does – while her jealous sisters create havoc.

"It's a family-friendly show that explores finding love and celebrates sisterhood and family," said Director Patrick McGee. "We want people to come, have fun and even feel a sense of nostalgia for the '80s."

The curtain rises Thursday-Saturday, May 1, 2 and 3, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, May 4, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15, adults; \$10, students, military and senior citizens at the door or via [www.theatrecentreville.com](http://www.theatrecentreville.com). There's a free skating event before the May 3 show; see Website for details.

"The cast members are really embracing the comedy, making bold acting choices onstage and dancing their hearts out," said McGee. "And two brave souls are even dancing on roller skates. This year's theater theme is 'A Mythical Season,' so the show is a twist on a 1980 cult film and also ties into our Greek theme."

"I have lots of strong, comedic actors, and there's a memorable pop score that'll appeal to people of all ages," he continued. "I just want audiences to have fun and laugh. This show is based on the Broadway musical that pokes fun at the movie that came before it."

Scenes take place on Venice Beach, at an office building and, said McGee, "At a rundown roller rink that's eventually transformed into something amazing for all to enjoy." Costumes combine Greek styles and 1980s flair. The muses wear long, flowing, Greek gowns, while the 1980 characters sport bright, neon colors and legwarmers.

Playing Kira is sophomore Macee Schmidt. "Her goddess name is Clio, but she goes undercover as an Australian named Kira to inspire artist Sonny Malone to paint a mural and open his roller disco," said Schmidt. "She's the history muse, and after hearing Sonny saying he's not good enough to be successful, she wants to make him believe in himself."

"Kira's quirky, silly, eccentric and a bit of a girl boss and leader. She loves people and is passionate about her craft of inspiring them. But her father, Zeus, gave her three rules she must follow, or else he'll banish her to the Netherworld. She can't fall in love with a mortal; can't create art herself; and can't say she's a muse or reveal her real identity."

Schmidt loves her role, saying, "I'm sil-



The seven sisters and muses are (from left) Antonella Foschi, Makena Nelson, Madelyn Regan, Macee Schmidt, Kylie Henryhand, Amelia Loht and Jules Couch.

ly like her when I'm around my friends, and she's that way, too, when she's around her six sisters [her fellow muses]. They also came to Venice but mainly stay in the background. Xanadu was a kingdom on the Silk Road. It represents the higher world, and Zeus will grant it to her if she inspires Sonny without breaking the rules. I really enjoy showing this through Kira's mannerisms and sarcasm."

Her favorite song is "The Fall," sung when the audience realizes how much Sonny cares about Kira and how much she's changed him. "It's an ensemble number and is beautiful and catchy," said Schmidt.

Calling the show a "witty and campy musical," she said it's also funny, silly and easy to understand. "Audiences will like the jokes, vocabulary and trends from the '80s, plus the clothing and celebrity references," said Schmidt. "And they'll just love the vibe – it's so comedic and will have them laughing throughout the entire thing."

Sophomore Kylie Henryhand portrays Calliope, one of the sisters. "She's kind of crazy, whimsical, not too bright and gets distracted easily," said Henryhand. "But she's loyal to her sister Melpomene. We're the evil ones – haters who don't want Kira to succeed. Melpomene was supposed to be the leader of the muses because she's the oldest sister, but Kira took it over."

Henryhand's enjoying her part because "I get to be as weird as I want through strange expressions and body movements. I try to give 110 percent in what I do, and this char-



Asher Galbis-Doulcette (as Sonny Malone) talks inside a phonebooth while Macee Schmidt (as Kira) eavesdrops.

acter lets me do that. Playing a villain is fun because you get to be campy and do stuff you normally wouldn't in real life. And villains are also some of the most memorable characters."

She especially likes the song, "Evil Woman," which she sings. "It's funny, and I'm singing about Melpomene," said Henryhand. "The song doesn't take itself seriously and the dance number goes really well with it."

She said audiences will like how "random and silly" this show is. "It's very funny, with lots of jokes and moments that make you

laugh," said Henryhand. "It's not like anything I've ever seen before. It plays into the stereotypes of musical theater and poses fun at it, but in a comedic way that makes you want to get up and dance with everybody."

Portraying Danny McGuire is senior Sean Evans. "He's a rich businessman who owns lots of real estate in Los Angeles," said Evans. "He's old and cranky but also has a silly side to him. He'd previously been inspired by Kira to build the Xanadu Theater, and Sonny wants to buy it and turn it into a roller disco. He's fun to play because he's both a comedic and mean character, and I get to yell onstage."

"His songs are also really fun to sing," continued Evans. "My favorite number is 'Whenever You're Away from Me,' that Danny sings in the first act. It's got this jazzy vibe to it and is really pleasing to listen to."

Regarding the show, Evans said, "Audiences will enjoy the singing and dances and the funny jokes. They'll like seeing a non-serious, campy and goofy show. And people will also like the way the set's life-sized portraits of the muses spin around and then Kira and her six sisters step out from behind them."

Junior Jules Couch plays Thalia, the goddess of comedy. "She's one of Kira's sisters and one of the main muses," said Couch. "We came to Venice Beach to inspire Sonny because he painted the mural of us before he even met us. Thalia is like a mixture of Pixy Stix and Pop Rocks – she's sweet and bubbly but also has a comedic spark. She believes a funny story can fix anything and brighten someone's day. She doesn't speak for herself much but, when she does, it's for the good of her sisters."

Couch called portraying Thalia "one of the best experiences I've had on stage. She has this joy in her when it comes to comedy; and when given the chance, she jumps on it. And as a person, she's really kind and loves her sisters a lot."

Couch especially likes the number, "I'm Alive," sung by her and all the other muses. "It's the show's first song and introduces the audience to all of us," she explained. "People get to know who the sisters are and see their singing and dancing talents. And it ties to the beauty of 'Xanadu' in general.

You get to see the muses truly shine and be themselves onstage. And we each wear different-colored gowns that show how each of the muses has her own personality."

Overall, she said, what audiences will like most is the music. "We pour our hearts into the songs," said Couch. "Each song is different and involves unique perspectives of the show. And the choreography adds such a beautiful spin to each song. It's just a fabulous show, with amazing singers, dancers and actors."

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## HIGH SCHOOL THEATER



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Striking a pose are (from left) TJ Brescia (Max), Lilli McNerney (Maria) and Scarlett Anthony (Elsa).

# 'The Hills Are Alive with the Sound of Music'

**Classic musical is Westfield High's Cappies show.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**A** beloved, Academy-Award-winning musical, "The Sound of Music," will soon burst upon the Westfield High stage as its 2025 Cappies show. Based on the powerful, real-life story of the von Trapp Family Singers in Salzburg, Austria, the story unfolds in 1938, as Nazi Germany's about to take over that country prior to WWII.

Capt. Georg von Trapp, a retired naval officer, has raised his seven children with strict military discipline after their mother died. But things change when free-spirited Maria – who's studying to become a nun – becomes their governess. She teaches them to sing and, along the way, falls in love with their father – who must decide whether to stay in Austria or leave.

With a cast and crew of more than 80 – plus a 25-piece, student orchestra – this show takes the stage Thursday-Friday, May 1-2, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday-Sunday, May 3-4, at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$15, adults; \$10, students, at the door or via [www.westfieldtheatre.com](http://www.westfieldtheatre.com).

"Besides the actors, we have a lot of choir, band and orchestra students who also act in this show," said Director Christine Maxted. "So all aspects of the Performing Arts Department are collaborating to put it on together."

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There's a two-level, rotating set, with scenes taking place inside and outside the von Trapp home, at a gazebo in their garden and at the church abbey. And projections will be used to show the outdoors scenery. Students designed and created the costumes, including military uniforms and play clothes for the children, full habits for the nuns, plus tuxedos and gowns for the adults at a party.

"I grew up with this show, and it was one of the first I ever watched," said Maxted. "It's special to me because I was taught by nuns, so a lot of the religious elements – and even the Latin the nuns chant – is accurate. A great deal of work also went into the set, plus research into the architecture and costumes [of 1938 Austria]."

She said audiences will be able to relate to the characters, as well as to "the challenges of family dynamics. They'll also enjoy the live, pit orchestra; the dances designed by our two student choreographers, Alyssa Staton and Karli Powell; and the nuns' beautiful a capella choral music. This story offers a message of hope for the future – which I think everyone needs to hear and be reminded of."

Portraying Maria is senior Lilli McNerney, who's also been in choir for four years. "Maria's a ball of energy and happiness," said McNerney. "She wants to lift up the people around her. But sometimes, she gets the feeling that her actions might be a little impulsive. She loves the children with all her heart and soul and only wants what's best for them. And as the story progresses, she falls in love with the captain [played by Peter Dalton], too."

McNerney called it "great fun" playing Maria because – "as someone who's also high energy – she reacts to things like I do.

And she loves to sing – which, as a choir kid, myself, is really nice. It's my first lead; but everyone's been so helpful to me so I can do all the cool stuff Maria does. It's hard work, but I get to interact with lots of different people. And seeing all the hard work pay off – and all the complexities of her character – is freeing and rewarding."

"The Lonely Goatherd" is McNerney's favorite song. "It's my most challenging piece because it takes a lot of air to sing it," she said. "And I had to learn how to yodel for it. The song also has a bunch of my favorite high notes in it, where I get to sing up into the stratosphere. And our talented choreographers took what was originally a boring scene and turned it into a beautiful dance number. This has been the most fantastic musical experience I've had to date, with the most amazing cast."

"Audiences will enjoy watching the captain and Maria fall in love," she continued. "And they'll be blown away by the little kids because they sing and act so well together. You can see them coming into their own and helping move the plot along. They'll also get a kick out of Max and Elsa [the captain's brother and fiancé]. They're the best comedy duo and are hilarious together."

Senior Scarlett Anthony plays Elsa. "She's rich and knows her worth as a person," said Anthony. "She's not a mean character, just confident in herself. But she's not great with children because she has no experience with them."

She enjoys portraying Elsa because "she's older than me and more mature than a lot of the characters. So it's a cool contrast from the younger characters I usually play. And it's nice playing a fancy, elegant person; it makes me feel like a queen."



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

In the captain's gazebo are (from left) Lilli McNerney (Maria), TJ Brescia (Max) and Scarlett Anthony (Elsa).

Anthony especially likes the song, "So Long, Farewell" because "each character gets their own, little cameo – and some even have solos or duets – as they're saying goodbye [during a performance]. It's such a pretty piece and the song is so wholesome. And at the end, the captain and Maria sing a beautiful duet."

She said audiences will love this show because "it's a classic – a more traditional musical, compared to today's modern musicals. And they get a look inside the time period they lived in and see what they had to go through. They'll also watch this loving family come together through music and grow even stronger."

Portraying Liesl, 16, one of the captain's daughters, is senior Jacqueline Larsen. "Liesl is mostly friendly, but a little bossy and protective when it comes to her siblings," said Larsen. "She's definitely a boy-crazy teenager who loves her family and is worried about what will happen to them going forward."

Larsen likes playing this role because "Liesl is a relatable character. I see a lot of my 16-year-old self in her. It's also just a fun part. And I enjoyed working with the choreographers a lot – they created great scenes."

Her favorite song is the show's iconic number, "Climb Every Mountain," especially the reprise at the end with the whole cast. "Julia Leonard, who sings it as the Mother Abbess, sounds amazing."

Larsen said the show will appeal to people of all ages. "Kids will enjoy it, as well as adults," she said. "Now playing in this production as a teenager, I can see the historical depth in the script and the fun songs that I'd missed as a child. There's a lot more to

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## HIGH SCHOOL THEATER

# Saving Humanity via Pop Culture after Apocalypse

## Chantilly High presents 'Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play'

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

It's the apocalypse meets "The Simpsons." In Chantilly High's upcoming show, "Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play," a plucky group of survivors uses acting to keep their pop culture – symbolized by "The Simpsons" – alive in an apocalypse-devastated world.

"I picked this show because it's so different," said Director Andy Shaw. "The story examines what would happen if our culture and way of life were destroyed and people tried to rebuild it. I'm super proud of my actors; this is unlike anything they've ever seen or heard before."

"It goes quickly from ridiculous comedy to serious, dramatic moments, and they're really embracing it and doing such a great job with their performances. They're an incredibly mature group of actors to handle this difficult text."

With a cast and crew of 40, show times are Thursday-Saturday, May 1, 2, 3, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, May 4, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15, adults, and \$10, students, at the door or via [www.chantillydrama.org](http://www.chantillydrama.org).

Shaw said his students are really excited about this show, and the script allows them to create their characters' personalities and backstories. "The dialogue is written conversationally, so you feel like you're just overhearing people talking," he explained. "Then it morphs into a performative style – all in the same play. And we keep finding unexpected things in the script that match up with the backstories the students created, so that's been cool."

Act I takes place in the woods; act II is in an abandoned warehouse where the group has built a makeshift stage; and act III is set in a decorated, outdoor amphitheater. Act II happens seven years after the modern-day act I; and act III jumps 75 years into the future, so the costumes go from contemporary clothing to a brand-new style of attire. In addition, although only the last act contains songs and dancing, a small live band will play background music throughout the show.

"At first, you see the members of this group having a witty and funny connection to each other, retelling 'The Simpsons' stories to distract them from what's going on in the world," said senior Matthew Garback, who plays a member called Sam. "Then act II is nostalgic, showing how today's pop culture would be depicted later on as a way of remembering it and reflecting what was happening at the time. Eventually, this group of friends that's been together for seven years goes from place to place, talking about 'The Simpsons' episodes, as do other, similar groups."

Garback said Sam is "always thinking about how, specifically, he can protect the others in the group. He's very cautious about other people; and when he sets his mind on something, he doesn't let go and can get wrapped up in his own mind. He does so much and is willing to do even more to help other people. But he gets frustrated when others don't do their share."

"I like that – even though he doesn't have a lot of lines – he's always reacting to what other people do and say," continued Garback. "He's always thinking and even gets to tell some jokes. One of the show's most important messages is how special are our connections to the people around us – because you never know when they'll go away."

Since most audience members will be familiar with "The Simpsons," said Garback, "They'll be able to connect with the characters and see how they're integrated into pop culture. One of our songs, 'Chart Hits,' is a mashup of pop songs from the past decade, such as 'Espresso,' 'What



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY SHAW

Group members listening to Zach Topscher (as Matt) telling the stories of "The Simpsons." On couch (from left) are David Garcia and Zach Topscher. Standing (from left) are Elle Galhouse, Lily Payne, Matthew Garback, Isabelle Cong and Camille Dausch.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY SHAW

Rehearsing a scene outdoors are (from left) Lily Payne, Elle Galhouse and Isabelle Cong (standing).

Makes You Beautiful,' 'Toxic,' 'Lose Yourself,' 'HOT TO GO!' and 'You Belong with Me.' They're done a cappella with a choreographed dance, and it's been exciting to put it together."

Portraying group member Colleen is senior Isabelle Cong. "She's volatile and has gone through a lot of trauma in her past;

and as a result, she's involuntarily mute," said Cong. "She had a daughter who died at age 12, and that was the shock she suffered. She's self-dependent but cares a lot about the people she's closest to and is willing to put her life on the line for others. And she only interacts with the women in the group."

Loving her role, Cong said, "I respect Col-

leen as a whole and how she strives to look out for other people. In act two, she's regained her voice and directs the group acting out 'The Simpsons.' And I think it's really admirable that she can step up and take on a leadership position, even after all she's been through."

She said audiences will enjoy seeing Chantilly's thespians reenact "The Simpsons" and "They'll also like the live musicians onstage in act III. The message of the show is the importance of putting trust in others and forming strong relationships with them, despite any challenges or difficulties."

Senior Lily Payne plays Jenny, 24, from Baltimore. "She's friendly and is like an older sister to fellow group member Maria, after Maria's whole family died," said Payne. "We're still in the midst of the apocalypse – nuclear-power plants have stopped functioning, and many people are dying of radiation exposure and other illnesses after the world ended. This group is surviving by putting on good shows and selling enough tickets to buy food to eat."

"In real life, my best friend's name is Jenny, and I like my character because she's engaging, keeps conversations going and is strong and able to step up for the group. I love this show a lot and feel lucky to be part of it. And I'm proud to have people see what we've been working on. It's unexpected and

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where minor or person prohibited from possessing is present, penalty.

SB1135 Crystalline polymorph psilocybin; regulations for prescribing, etc.



**Sen. Jennifer D. Carroll Foy, (D-33)** parts of Fairfax (and Prince William) counties, Chief Patron

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB781 Retired Or Former Law-Enforcement Officers; Publication Of Personal Information.

SB847 Reckless Driving; Improper Driving As A Lesser Included Offense.

SB965 District Courts; Recording Of Proceedings.

SB966 Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission; increase membership.

SB968 School Boards, Support Services Personnel, And The Annual Collection Of Certain Staffing Data Are Required.

**Vetoed by the Governor**

SB897 Overtime For Certain Employees; Domestic Service Workers And Live-In Domestic Workers.

SB962 Va. Public Procurement Act; Additional Public Works Contract Requirements.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

SB780 Health insurance; coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices.

SB963 Discovery materials or evidence; allows accused to request the Commonwealth to copy or photograph.



**Sen. Adams P. Ebbin, (D-39)** Alexandria, Chief Patron

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB877 Post-release job search assistance services; DOC, et al., to provide.

SB878 Unemployment Compensation, Commission on; increases membership, powers and duties.

SB1042 Certified public accountant; educational requirements to qualify for CPA licensure.

SB1043 Va. Residential Landlord & Tenant Act; terms and conditions of rental agreement, renewal notice.

SB1051 Boarding establishments; work group to consider whether to propose state license, etc.

SB1053 Synthetic digital content; definition, penalty, report, effective clause.

SB1056 Unemployment compensation; increases weekly benefit amounts, report.

SB1057 Unemployment insurance; weekly benefit amount, increasing threshold for deduction of wages payable.

SB1058 Electric utilities; distribution cost sharing program established, etc.

SB1060 Retail tobacco and hemp products; smoking by a person younger than 21 years of age, prohibitions.

SB1280 Gaming; posting of problem gambling helpline information.

SB1283 Correctional facilities, state and regional; private management prohibited.

SB1416 Pedestrians; drivers to stop when crossing highway, etc., penalty.

**Governor's Veto**

SB880 Assault firearms; carrying in public areas prohibited, penalty.

SB1052 Virginia Human Rights Act; definition of "employer."

SB1450 Firearm industry members; standards of responsible conduct, civil liability.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

SB879 Teachers; career and technical education, alternative pathway to provisional licensure.

SB881 Plastic firearms or receivers, unserialized firearms, etc., transfer, etc., prohibited, penalties.

SB1449 Data centers; site assessment for high energy use facility.



**Sen. David W. Marsden, (D-35)** Burke, Chief Patron

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB1332 Towing and storage of certain vehicles; limitation on charges.

SB1335 Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund; loan and grant program, eligible recipients.

SB1338 Carbon-free energy or clean energy; definition of fusion energy.

SB1339 Virginia Telephone Privacy Protection Act; telephone solicitations by text message, effective date.

SB1340 Commissioner of Hwys.; prequalification program for self-bonding program removes certain reports.

SB1376 Virginia Consumer Protection Act; food labeling.

**Governor's Veto**

SB1329 Carrying concealed weapons; secured storage of firearms in unattended vehicles, penalty.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

SB1336 Electricity consumption tax; rate adjustments.



**Sen. Stella G. Pekarsky, (D-36)** Centreville, Chief Patron

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB738 Public elementary & secondary schools; bell-to-bell student cell phone & smart device possession.

SB1030 Public middle and high schools; student athletes, pre-participation physical examination required.

SB1034 Students who need or use augmentative and alternative communication; documentation of needs.

SB1035 Opioid antagonists; dispensing and administration by person acting on behalf of an organization.

SB1036 Seizure rescue meds.; administration by certain school employees, possession by certain students.

SB1037 School boards; school-based telehealth and mental health teletherapy services, accessibility.

SB1038 Telehealth visits for patients with disabilities; best practice educational training.

SB1039 DOC and State Board of Local and Regional Jails; policies on inmate participation in telehealth.

SB1188 International licensure and certification; regulations.

SB1210 Va. Residential Property Disclosure Act; required disclosures for buyer to beware, aircraft noise.

SB1215 Health insurance; required pro-

visions regarding prior authorization for health care services.

SB1269 Surplus lines broker taxes; certain insurance policies.

**Governor's Veto**

SB1032 Public school teachers; written notice of noncontinuation of continuing contract.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

SB1048 School board policies; parental notification, safe storage of prescription drugs and firearms, etc.

SB1212 Virginia Consumer Protection Act; prohibited practices, mandatory fees or surcharges disclosure.



**Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, (D-37)** Merrifield, Chief Patron

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB920 Workers' compensation; presumption as to death or disability from throat cancer.

SB939 Mail theft; definitions, penalty.

SB1011 Affordable dwelling unit program; adds City of Falls Church to list.

SB1165 Virginia Public Procurement Act; solar photovoltaic equipment and facilities.

SB1166 Invasive plant species; retail sales, penalty, delayed effective date January 1, 2027.

SB1169 Marine Resources Commission; encroachment on subaqueous beds, permitting requirements.

SB1406 Children's Ombudsman, Office of the; foster youths right to receive information.

**Governor's Veto**

SB848 Firearms, certain; age requirement  
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**HIGH SCHOOL PLAYS**

## Sound Of Music

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it than I realized, including some funny jokes I didn't pick up on then."

Senior TJ Brescia plays the children's Uncle Max. "He's the comic relief in this mostly dramatic show," said Brescia. "A showbiz producer, he wants to get the von Trapp family to participate in a choir festival. He's fun-loving, energetic, funny and charismatic. He cares deeply about the family, the show going right and his reputation.

"It's the biggest role I've ever done. Taking on a major part in such a prestigious show is intimidating, but I'm also very excited to do it. I especially like the song, 'Edelweiss.' It's powerful but also relaxing, and I love how it's used in the show. It helps carry the emotion of the story and relates to von Trapp's love of his country."

He said audiences will really love this

show's music and story. "We've put a ton of passion and hard work into this musical and it's going to pay off," said Brescia. "The costumes are beautiful and unique. Everyone in tech is doing a great job and the actors are having a good time – and that'll all be reflected onstage."

## Mr. Burns

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shocking, and people won't be able to predict where it'll go. And the characters have real depth in their interactions and relationships."

Portraying group-member Matt is senior Zach Topscher. "He's enthusiastic, loves 'The Simpsons,' is adamant about entertaining people and is very deliberate in his storytelling," said Topscher. "Although he sometimes gets sidetracked by the characters' comedic bits, he likes to hammer home the point of the story. He's also intelligent and knowledgeable about current events relating to the apocalypse. And he's agreeable and quick to make friends."

Topscher enjoys his role because "Matt has some difficult lines and does a little rambling because he talks more like an average person than the others do. He thinks and stops and starts while he speaks, as he's remembering things. And in the second act, he also gets to be a tech person for their shows."

He said audiences will like "the reality and entertainment of everybody working together to remember and recreate 'The Simpsons' stories. All the music is very fun, with silly dance moves and funny character voices of 'The Simpsons' in general. And the actors will be in 'The Simpsons' costumes during their plays."

"For 2,000 years, people have been saying theater is dying," added director Shaw. "But this play shows how, throughout the ages, people have used theater to tell their stories and to help better understand themselves, each other and the world. The audience will enjoy how the story goes in unexpected directions and keeps surprising them. And despite the tragedy that's unfolded, the show ends on a hopeful note for the future."

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for purchase, penalty.

SB891 Firearms; five-day waiting period, penalty.

SB919 Private companies providing public transportation services; employee protections.

SB1009 Elections; conduct of election, ranked choice voting, report.



**Sen. Scott A. Surovell, (D-34) Mount Vernon, Chief Patron**  
Surovell is Senate Majority Leader

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

SB774 Essential health benefits bench-

mark plan review; members of stakeholder work group.

SB850 Water & wastewater utilities; eligible infrastructure replacement and enhancement.

SB999 Appeals; procedure on appeal, payment of expenses.

SB1006 Driving while intoxicated; pre-conviction ignition interlock for certain offenders.

SB1010 Subpoenas duces tecum; financial records of nonparty, report.

SB1402 Transient occupancy tax; administration.

SB1413 Public school buildings; indoor air quality, inspection and evaluation.

SB1465 Virginia State Crime Commission; designating review panel, cases involving Mary Jane Burton, report.

SB1466 Criminal records; expungement and sealing of records, repeals Sealing Fee Fund.

**Governor's Veto**

SB775: Political campaign advertisements; synthetic media, penalty.

SB893: Renewable energy portfolio standard program; geothermal heating and cooling systems, report.

SB917: Collective bargaining by public employees; exclusive bargaining representatives.

SB1008: Contractors, Board for; licensing examinations.

SB1021: Electric utilities; integrated resource plans, Phase I or Phase II files updated plans, etc.

SB1324: Obstructing health care facility access; penalties.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

SB805: Child support; updates amounts in the schedule of basic support obligations.

SB940: Elections; candidates for office, challenges to candidate qualifications.



**Del. David L. Bulova, (D-11) Fairfax), Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1703 Alcoholic beverage control; tied house exceptions.

HB1704 Resale Dis-

closure Act; resale certificate, responsibility for payment of insurance deductible.

HB1705 Virginia Retirement System; disability benefits for certain emergency dispatchers.

HB1706 Va. Residential Property Disclosure Act; required disclosures for buyer to beware.

HB1707 Virginia Contractor Transaction Recovery Fund; claim limits; license threshold amounts.

HB1948 Abandoned Mine Land Grant Retention Fund established.

HB2036 Reckless driving; definition of "exhibition driving," penalties.

HB2050 Occoquan Reservoir PFAS Reduction Program; established.

**Governor's Veto**

HB2037: Land development; solar canopies in surface parking areas.

Awaiting Governor's Action

N/A



**Del. Laura Jane H. Cohen, (D-15) Burke, Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1682 Surplus lines broker taxes; certain insurance policies.

HB1800 Persons with disabilities; rights to the full and free use of public playgrounds.

HB1804 DMAS; application for medical assistance, eligibility for Medicaid Works.

HB1805 Individuals with disabilities; postsecondary transition planning & services, documentation or evidence.

HB1806 Students with disabilities; individualized accommodations and supports during emergency evacuations.

**Governor's Veto**

HB1802 Small Business and Supplier Diversity, Department of; powers and duties.

HB1803 Human Resource Management, Department of; establishing a career group for licensed behavior analysts.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

HB1678 School board policies; parental notification; safe storage of prescription drugs and firearms in the household



**Del. Karrie K. Delaney, (D-9) Centreville, Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1727 Establishment of parent and child relationship; persons who committed

sexual assault.

HB1728 Child victims and witnesses; using two-way closed-circuit television.

HB1729 Sales and use tax; exemption for aircraft components, extends sunset.

HB1731 Services for sexual assault patients; provision of information for sexual assault patients; Task Force on Services for Survivors of Sexual Assault; work group; report.

HB1734 Sex Trafficking Response Coordinator; name change.

HB1968 Victims of crime; compensation, extends time for filing a claim.

HB2258 Bureau of Insurance of SCC; step therapy protocols for health benefit plans, report.

HB2260 Child in need of services; expands definition.

HB2261 Trailer franchise requirements; applicability to certain trailers, definitions.

**Governor's Veto**

HB1724 Prescription Drug Affordability Board; established, drug cost affordability review, report.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

HB1725 Medical Debt Protection Act; created, prohibited practices, penalties

HB1730 Personal injury or death by wrongful act; liability of employer to vulnerable victims.



**Del. Dan I. Helmer, (D-10) County of Fairfax (part), Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1798 Agricultural commodity boards; Agricultural Council, appointment and

membership

Terms.

HB2618 Public school buildings; indoor air quality, inspection and evaluation.

**Governor's Veto**

HB1607 Purchase, sale, transfer, etc., of assault firearms and certain ammunition feeding devices prohibited; penalties.

HB1608 Firearm industry members; standards of responsible conduct, civil liability.

HB1794 Elections; primary dates, presidential year primaries.

HB1797 Concealed handgun permits; reciprocity with other states.

HB2619 Private companies providing public transportation services; employee protections.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

HB1609 Essential health benefits benchmark plan; Commission to consider coverage for infertility treatment.

HB1796 Corporations; creates a regulatory framework for decentralized autonomous organizations.

HB1957 SOL assessments & related student assessment methods; assessment development, etc., reform.



**Del. Rozia A. 'J.R.' Henson, Jr., (D-19) County of Fairfax part (and Prince William part), Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1659 Local Foundation and Soil Man-

agement Fund.

HB1874 Retired or former law-enforcement officers; definition, publication of per-

sonal information.

HB2468 Advanced registered medication aides; administration of drugs.

HB2476 Public officers; death, resignation, or ceasing to hold office, automatic substitution.

HB2489 Physician assistants; Department of Health Professions to study expansion of scope of practice.

HB2640 Virtual or online learning; development of guidelines and information, public health emergencies.

**Governor's Veto**

HB1657 Voter registration; regular periodic review of registration records.

HB2469 Overtime for certain employees; domestic service workers and live-in domestic workers.

HB2477 Property under common ownership; creation of easements.

HB2555 Marijuana-related offenses; modification of sentence, sunset.

HB2781 Affordable housing; counties with executive form of government.



**Del. Charniele L. Herring, (D-4) Alexandria, Chief patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB2111 Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission; increase membership.

HB2723 Criminal records; expungement and sealing of records, repeals Sealing Fee Fund.

**Governor's Veto**

HB2113 Solar Interconnection Grant Program; established, sunset, report.

**Awaiting Governor's Action**

HB2109 Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures, Task Force on; State Health Commissioner to reestablish

HB2724 Automatic license plate recognition systems; use, reports, penalty



**Del. Karen A. Keys-Gamarra, (D-7) Fairfax, Chief Patron**

**Acts of Assembly Chapter**

HB1628 Fire insurance; assignment of claims prohibited.

HB2115 Summonses of a juveniles; custody, visitation, and support proceedings.

HB2116 Driver's licenses and identification cards; indication of non-apparent disability.

HB2117 Experiencing or reporting an overdose or act of sexual violence; arrest and prosecution.

HB2130 Juvenile respondent in protective order proceeding; other dispositions.

HB2475 Motor vehicles; use of safety belt systems.

**Governor's Veto**

HB2136 Public Utility Ombudsman, Office of the; established, effective date.

# NEWS

HB2647 Restorative housing and isolated confinement; restrictions on use, effective date.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB1630 Discovery materials or evidence; allows accused to request the Commonwealth to copy or photograph.



**Del. Paul E. Krizek (D-16) Alexandria, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB2058 Alcoholic beverage control; delivery of mixed beverages.

HB2077 Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund; loan and grant program, eligible recipients.

HB2493 Gaming; fantasy contests, age restrictions.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2482 Va. Public Procurement Act; additional public works contract requirements.

HB2485 Cannabis control; establishes framework for creating retail market, penalties.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB2134 American Indians, Va. recognized tribes, and federally recognized tribes; definitions, sovereignty.



**Del. Holly M. Seibold, (D-12) Vienna, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB2058 Alcoholic beverage control; delivery of mixed beverages.

HB2077 Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund; loan and grant program, eligible recipients.

HB2493 Gaming; fantasy contests, age restrictions.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2482 Va. Public Procurement Act; additional public works contract requirements.

HB2485 Cannabis control; establishes framework for creating retail market, penalties.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB2134 American Indians, Va. recognized tribes, and federally recognized tribes; definitions, sovereignty.



**Del. Irene Shin, (D-8) Herndon, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB2083 Pregnant qualified individuals; Va. Health Benefit Exchange to establish special enrollment period.

HB2084 Public utilities certain; SCC shall determine if using reasonable classifications of customers.

HB2085 Health insurance; carrier business practices, method of payment for claims.

HB2088 Va. Forensic Nursing Advisory Council; established.

HB2742 Hospitals; urine drug screening to include testing for fentanyl.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2090 Multi-family shared solar program; amends requirements for a shared facility, etc.

HB2341 Culturally responsive & language-appropriate mental health support & services; guidance & policies.

HB2743 Public service companies; prevailing wage rate for underground infrastructure works.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB2087 Electric utilities; transportation electrification, definitions.

HB2779 New Americans Advisory Board, Office of; increases number of nonlegislative citizen members.



**Del. Mark D. Sickles, (D-17) Franconia, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB2302 Real property tax; exemption for religious buildings, rebuilding structure.

HB2319 Drug and controlled paraphernalia; creates exception for drug checking products.

HB2372 Health Care, Joint Commission on; duty to study proposed health insurance mandates.

HB2375 Prescription drug price transparency; pharmacy services administrative organizations.

HB2392 Health insurance; pharmacy benefits managers, definition of "covered entity."

HB2473 Long-acting injectable or extended-release prescription drugs; correctional facilities.

HB2644 Electric cooperative subsidiaries; customers exceeding 90 megawatts demand.

HB2738 Health insurance; coverage for mental health and substance abuse disorders.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2479 Political campaign advertisements; synthetic media, penalty.

HB2744 Electric utilities; energy efficiency upgrades, report.



**Del. Marcus B. Simon, (D-13) Falls Church, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB1871 Transfer on death deeds; inter vivos deed conveying real property to another.

HB1888 Tort actions; immunity of persons based on statements made at a Title IX hearing.

HB1889 Notarial act; definition.

HB2110 Resale Disclosure Act; resale certificate, prohibition on requiring purchaser's name.

HB2137 Affordable dwelling unit program; City of Falls Church.

HB2396 Deed fraud; VHDA to evaluate prevalence, develop recommendations for prevention, etc.

HB2430 Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; fee disclosure statement.

HB2660 Subdivision ordinance; shortens timeframe for local approvals.

HB2675 Retail Sales and Use Tax; media-related exemptions, sunset.

HB2680 Ear-piercers and ear-piercing salons and schools; licensure by the Board of Barbers and Cosmetology.

HB2783 Placing Nazi symbols or emblems on certain property with intent to intimidate; penalty.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2039 Encrypted telecommunications; DCJS, et al., to establish a model policy on use.

HB2668 Elections; procedures for removal of electoral board members and general registrars.



**Del. Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan Jr., (D-6) Arlington, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB1776 Relief; Grimm, Marvin Leon, Jr., compensation for wrongful incarceration.

HB1777 Children's Ombudsman, Office of the; foster youth's right to receive information.

HB1778 Insurance agents; appointments and terminations.

HB1779 Carbon-free energy or clean energy; definition of fusion energy.

HB1780 Relief; Merritt, Gilbert, III, compensation for wrongful incarceration.

HB1781 Foreign protective orders in cases of family abuse; enforcement.

HB1782 Newborn screening requirements; federal Recommended Uniform Screening Panel, evaluation, report.

HB1914 Compensation for wrongful incarceration; compensation for certain intentional acts.

#### Governor's Veto

HB1775 Divorce; adultery, filing, parties living separate and apart.

HB1791 Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Program and Fund; established and created.

HB2550 Noise abatement monitoring systems; counties in Planning Districts 8 and 16 to place & operate.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB2537 Energy storage requirements; Department of Energy, et al., to develop model ordinances, reports.



**Kathy K.L. Tran, (D-18), county of Fairfax part, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB2218 Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; rental payment methods.

HB2219: Students who need or use augmentative and alternative communication; documentation of needs.

HB2265 Teachers; certain individuals to be licensed with an endorsement in special ed., early childhood.

HB2266 Electric utilities; distribution cost sharing program established, etc.

HB2269 Hospitals; reports of threats or acts of violence against health care providers.

HB2541 Information Technology Access Act; digital accessibility, definitions, procurement requirements.

#### Governor's Veto

HB2241 Firearms, etc.; possession, etc., by person convicted of hate crime.

HB2264 Taxation, Department of; repealing Virginia Free File Tax program.

HB2746 Incapacitated persons; finding of lack of capacity to understand act of voting.

HB2764 Collective bargaining by public employees; exclusive bargaining representatives.



**Vivian E. Watts, (D-14) Annandale, Chief Patron**

#### Acts of Assembly Chapter

HB1712 Law-enforcement agencies and officers; establishing training curriculum on certain arrests.

HB1715 Mail theft; definitions, penalty.

HB1743 License tax, local; work group to review deduction for receipts attributable to out-of-state.

HB1970 Tax-exempt property; nonprofit institutions of learning, provisions are declaratory of existing law.

#### Governor's Veto

HB1713 Jurisdiction of district courts in felony cases; specialty dockets; Behavioral Health Docket Act.

#### Awaiting Governor's Action

HB1721 Condemnation of conservation or open-space easement; compensation, Uniform Easement Relocation Act.

# 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](http://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>.

## NOW THRU MAY 3

**Investigating Identity – A Student Exhibit.** 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Work-



**A Life in Art Exhibit by Sandra Dovberg can be seen now through April 27, 2025 at Reston Art Gallery.**

house Way, Lorton. What happens when young artists turn the mirror inward? Investigating Identity invites you into a deeply personal and powerful exhibition of work from emerging artists at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College. From painting and mixed media to sculpture and photography, the exhibition reflects the complexity of identity in today's world—touching on themes of race, gender, belief, and belonging, while also exploring personal journeys of artistic growth and transformation. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/investigating-identity-exhibition>

## NOW THRU APRIL 27

**A Life in Art Exhibit by Sandra Dovberg.** At Reston Art Gallery, 11400 Washington Plaza W # B, Reston. From realistic paintings to abstract compositions, sculptures, ceramics, three-dimensional wall hangings, art objects, and one-of-a-kind handmade jewelry designs, Sandra Dovberg has done it all. Her exhibit, A Life In Art, is currently on display at the Reston Art Gallery through April 27. Visitors are invited to a special "Meet the Artist" event on April 27, where art lovers can connect with Sandra, explore her work, and hear about her prolific life dedicated to the arts. Visit [www.sandraccovbergart.com](http://www.sandraccovbergart.com)

## 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>

## THURSDAY/APRIL 17

**"The SpongeBob Musical: Live On Stage!"** 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. SpongeBob fans young and old, join the spring break fun at Bikini Bottom! Catchy songs and fun characters create a theatrical party full of heart and humor, where the power of optimism really can save the world. Rated TV-G, runtime 114 minutes. Family friendly. Specially designed for families with young children.

## APRIL 18 TO MAY 4

**"Decision Height."** 8 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. This award-winning show explores the essential role that Women Army Service Pilots (WASP) played in World War II and the camaraderie they shared. Show times are 8 p.m. on the following Fridays and Saturdays: April 18-19, April 25-26 and May 2-3. Matinee performances begin at 2 p.m. on Sundays, April 27 and May 4. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.viennava.gov/webtrac](http://www.viennava.gov/webtrac) or in person at Vienna Community Center.

## FRIDAY/APRIL 18

**Learning at Lunch: Workhouse to ARC.** 12-1 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. How Did the Workhouse Become ARC? A Lunchtime Look at Arts, Community & Transformation in the DMV. Join them for an engaging session discussing the transition from Workhouse to ARC. Learn about the transformative journey, gain valuable insights, and connect with like-minded individuals. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/learning-at-lunch-workhouse-to-arc>

## SATURDAY/APRIL 19

**Spring Community Parking Lot Sale.** 9 a.m.–1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Shoppers will find bargains galore at this community sale of more than 50 sellers, including a limited number of commercial vendors and flea market dealers. The sale offers a



**Learning at Lunch: Workhouse to ARC can be seen on Friday, April 18, 2025 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.**

wide variety of new and gently used household goods, electronics, furniture, clothes, appliances, "attic treasures" and other items suitable for every budget. Check out the Kids' Corner, a special area of the sale where children ages 3-15 can increase their math and entrepreneurial skills while selling toys, clothes, games and other items.

## 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. 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](http://georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com) or call 703-813-6616.

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 23

**The Hot Lanes.** 7 p.m. At Centreville High School, Centreville. Join The Hot Lanes at the Centreville Jazz Ensemble concert.

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 23

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

## THURSDAY/APRIL 24

**Green Expo.** 7-9 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. More than three dozen local exhibitors will be on hand to offer resources and information on everything from sustainable landscaping, composting, recycling, and water conservation to raising chickens, bee keeping, and more. Favorites returning include an outdoor exhibit of sheep and lambs sponsored by Lamb Mowers, and wildlife experts from the nonprofit volunteer group Secret Garden Birds & Bees who will show live birds of prey, such as owls and hawks. Visit [www.viennava.gov/GreenExpo](http://www.viennava.gov/GreenExpo).

## FRIDAY/APRIL 25

**Family Fun Bingo.** 7-9:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Due to construction at the Old Firehouse, this event will be held at MCC. Join in an evening of fun and excitement! Everyone can enjoy free

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# ENTERTAINMENT



**Vienna's Green Expo takes place on Thursday, April 24, 2025 at the Vienna Community Center.**



**Vienna's Walk on the Hill takes place on Sunday, April 27, 2025 along Windover Avenue in Vienna.**

popcorn, and winners will take their pick of prizes! Preregistration is recommended.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 26

**Town of Clifton's 123rd Birthday Celebration.** 4-9 p.m. At The Red Barn, Clifton. Good eats and good times around the fire pit; cornhole, wiffle ball and games for the kids; acoustic guitar music provided by Dave Nemetz.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 26

**RA's Community Yard Sale.** 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 12010 Sunrise Valley Drive (Near the Reston Wegmans).

## SATURDAY/APRIL 26

**Park Clean-Up.** 10 a.m. – noon. At Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Join MCC's youth board members and Youth Ambassadors for a cleanup at Lewinsville Park. Whether you're looking to earn volunteer hours or simply want to give back to your community, this is the perfect chance to help. Meet up on the porch of the house at the back of the park. Follow the main path from the parking lot to the tennis courts. Presidential Volunteer service hours will be available.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 26

**DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Initiative.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Vienna Police Department, 215 Center Street, South, Vienna. The Vienna Police Department will have a collection site for old, expired, unused, or unwanted medications. Prescription medications, controlled or non-controlled substances, and over-the-counter drugs may be turned in anonymously at the collection point in front of the Vienna Police Department.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 26

**Sensory Day.** 1-4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Due to construction at the Old Firehouse, this event will be held at MCC.

Challenge your senses! This unique and fun event, supporting Autism Awareness Month, will provide ALL who attend a sensory exploration through taste, smell, sound, sight and touch.

## 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. [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

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.southcountypotso.org](http://www.southcountypotso.org) for more information. Questions about the event can be emailed to [SCHScraft-show@gmail.com](mailto:SCHScraft-show@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

**Tutti Frutti Productions: "Under-**

**neath a Magical Moon."** 4 p.m. at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Through her open window, Wendy Darling normally gazes out at the night sky dreaming of blue lagoons, magical moons and the imagined stories she can tell. But tonight, like no other, has magic in the air... underneath a Magical Moon set in the backyard where Wendy and her brothers are camping out. There's a full moon and Wendy just can't get to sleep so she begins to tell her brothers a story.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 27

**Walk on the Hill.** 2-5 p.m. The event along Windover Avenue between Lewis Street and Lawyers Road, Vienna, is free and is presented by the Town of Vienna in partnership with Historic Vienna, Inc., and the Windover Heights Historic District. Some of the town's most beautiful historic properties and colorful lawns and gardens will be featured during this leisurely, "at-your-own-pace" walking event. Since 1974, residents and visitors have made the lovely pilgrimage to this historic neighborhood to participate in self-guided tours through dozens of participating yards and gardens offering inspiring views of glorious spring flowers, budding trees, live entertainment, exhibits and refreshments. Visit [www.viennava.gov/walkonthehill](http://www.viennava.gov/walkonthehill) or call 703-255-6360.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 27

**Planet Virginia.** 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Wilkins Plaza on the campus of George Mason University, Fairfax. Co-sponsored by Sodexo, this family-friendly festival will bring together 5,000 attendees exploring how plant-based choices improve human health, combat climate change, and save animal lives. 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. Attendees will enjoy delicious plant-based food, discover sustainable products, and hear from experts and advocates on the benefits of shifting toward a plant-forward future as well as an appearance by Virginia Congressman Suhas Subramanyam.

## 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

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 23

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## Obituary

## Obituary



**Martha Gail Conner**, longtime resident of Reston, Virginia and devoted daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, passed away on April 7, 2025. She was 92.

Though she put down roots in Virginia—and deep ones at that—Gail was, undeniably, a Texas girl at heart. Born in Brady, Texas on January 13, 1933 to Edward McGregor Simpson, an insurance salesman, and Marjorie Jane Simpson, a second grade teacher, she was raised in Dallas to be independent and self-reliant. She was the eldest of three children and the only girl. Her brothers, Michael Duff and Edward Simpson, Jr. (Mack), never under-estimated her. Nor did anyone else.

After high school, Gail was told she could spend one year attending college away from home. For the rest of her life, she remained close to the friends she made at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta before returning, as her family requested, to finish her studies at Southern Methodist University (SMU). But things in Dallas weren't so bad. In time, she pledged her mother's sorority, Tri-Delta, graduated with a Master's in education, met her future husband, Dr. John Douglas Conner (Doug), and—as those who knew her then liked to recall even decades later—won the prestigious title of "SMU Beauty." Gail and Doug were married in Dallas in 1953.

After Doug was offered a new job in Washington, D.C., Gail, Doug and their children moved to Reston where the next chapter of their life began. In 1966, they bought their house on Stirrup Road. Together, they raised five children, a few dogs, and some cats. After Doug's untimely passing from leukemia in 1989, Gail remained on Stirrup Road for the rest of her life, maintaining their house as a central place for all to gather. She was often seen walking the road and doing her rounds. Checking on neighbors. Sharing news. Organizing the weekly Bridge club.

After Doug's passing, Gail bought a beach house in Nags Head, North Carolina for the family to enjoy. The extended family spent many happy summers there together, cooking crabs, playing board games, and climbing sand dunes with Gail's beloved golden retriever TJ. The thing Gail loved most was having her family around. She had five children, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Each of them received a card on their birthday. In later years, the cards were sometimes a day or a week late. But she never forgot to send them.

Throughout her life, Gail was a busy woman—or, an industrious one, as she would surely have preferred to be called. She raised five children, taught algebra and geometry, and for a time worked as a professional accountant. A talented seamstress and the mother of many daughters who loved to perform, she made hundreds of costumes for the South Lakes High School swing choir, the Northern Virginia Youth Ballet, and the Reston Players. She hosted holidays—all of them—and loved seasonal decor. In recent years, she took to decorating a neighbor's door for Christmas and other events. She never asked permission, she just got it done—to their surprise each time it happened. She was a prolific emailer. She was happy to do your taxes. She weeded yards. She assembled furniture. She cleaned her own gutters well into her 80s. Her children begged her to stop, but why should she?

She will be deeply missed but always remembered, for her energy, for her enthusiasm for life, and for her unending devotion to her family.

Gail is survived by her brother Mack Simpson; her children Caroline Parrish (Jimmy Parrish), Chris Middaugh (Brian Middaugh), Larry Conner, Courtney Conner (Paul McKibbins), and Cammy Bryce (Daniel Bryce); grandchildren Cody Parrish (Jordan Parrish), Delaney Parrish (Ivan Ivanov), Clarissa Parrish Short (Aaron Short), Rory Parrish, Tucker Bryce (Natalie Bryce), Savannah Bryce Cotter (Zachary Cotter), Cassidy Bryce, Sawyer Bryce, Julia Conner, and Ollie Conner; and great-grandchildren Renly Parrish, Rylynn Parrish, Rexie Ivanova, and Aleksandar Ivanov.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Lost Colony or to The Reston Community Players.

**CALENDAR**

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<b>Announcements</b>	<b>Yard Sale</b>
<b>The Murder of RFK</b> by Michael Calder Barnes&Noble-Amazon-jfkvsca.com	<b>HUGE COMMUNITY YARD SALE</b> Sat. April 26th, 8am - 2pm Pleasant Valley Community Pool 4347 Cub Run Rd, Chantilly (rain date Sun. April 27)
<b>Obituary</b>	<b>Obituary</b>



**Louis Michael Larson, Sr., 84**, passed away peacefully on March 28, 2025, in Reston, Virginia. Born on September 20, 1940, in Chester, Pennsylvania, Lou lived a full and vibrant life defined by resilience, love for family, and an unshakable zest for living. Lou grew up in Rutledge, Pennsylvania, a small community outside of Philadelphia. After losing his mother, Elizabeth Alice Larson (née Cassidy), at the age of seven, he was raised in a multigenerational household with his father Roland Christian Larson, his brother William Roland Larson, his grandparents, and two bachelor uncles. He attended St. Clements of West Philadelphia before transferring to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Morton. He began high school at St. James High School in Chester in 1954 and graduated from Swarthmore High School in 1958. Lou studied at East Carolina and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969. After graduation, he accepted a sales position with Brown Shoe Co. in St. Louis, Missouri—a move that would lead him to meet the love of his life, Frances Marie “Robin” Larson (née Barrett). The couple married in 1970 and eventually settled in Northern Virginia where they raised their five children. Lou was a devoted husband to Robin and a loving father to Louis Larson Jr. (and wife Pranisa), Chris Larson (and wife Melissa), Jeff Larson, Ann Corcoran (and husband Jim), and Mary Abboud (and husband Khalil). He was also a proud grandfather to Barrett Larson, Luke Larson, Thomas Corcoran, Frances Corcoran, Jack Corcoran, Lily Larson, Murphy Abboud, Luna Larson, and Marie Abboud. A wake will be held on Thursday, April 3, 2025, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at Adams-Green Funeral Home located at 721 Elden St., Herndon, VA 20170. A Funeral Mass will be conducted on Friday, April 4 at St. Neumann Catholic Church located at 11900 Lawyers Rd., Reston, VA 20191 beginning at 11:00 AM. Family and close friends are invited to attend the graveside service at Chestnut Grove Cemetery (831 Dranesville Rd., Herndon, VA 20170) following the funeral mass. A celebration of life reception will be held in the afternoon at Midtown at Reston Town Center (11990 Market St., Reston, VA 20190). Start time is estimated to be around 2:00 PM. Louis Michael Larson Sr.'s legacy lives on through the family he loved so dearly and the many lives he touched along the way. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him—and may we all remember to stir our martinis and dance when the music plays. In lieu of flowers please donate to Ursuline Sisters Retirement Fund 353 S. Sappington Rd. St Louis MO. 63122

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# Going Solar

FROM PAGE 13

these thousand-plus systems were placed in service over the past five years. The value of the current solar credits equates to \$36.7 million in assessed value.

“We are pleased to see an increasing number of residents installing solar energy on their homes,” said OEEC director, John Morrill. “Every new solar installation helps lower a resident’s utility costs, eases the strain on the electricity grid, and brings our community closer to achieving our goal of a carbon-neutral Fairfax County by 2050.”

Fairfax County residents can learn more about the benefits of solar, including the tax exemptions on solar equipment, by visiting Going Solar in Fairfax County.

Once your system is up and running, apps for the components allow you to easily track production, storage, and usage, allowing you to become more conscious of your home energy use. The apps allow you to control the system from your cell phone or computer. Those with battery back-up can use the system to set the amount of energy returned to the grid versus stored, thus preparing for rainy days and possible storm-related grid outages.

If you are motivated to find energy savings without the expense of going solar, visit the county’s new Sustain Fairfax Challenge. The online site suggests many actions to become more sustainable and save money. The site outlines easy actions and provides helpful resources, including rebates and how-to guides. Visit [sustainchallenge.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://sustainchallenge.fairfaxcounty.gov).

Those going solar take advantage of the pioneering work of immigrant Hungarian-American Maria Telkes, dubbed the “Sun Queen.” Telkes gained entry into the National Inventors Hall of Fame for her groundbreaking work in solar heating, ovens, and use of solar power in water distillation. She built the first solar powered house in the 1940s, called the Dover Sun House. While we think of solar technology as a relatively new science, it has, in fact, been around longer than most are aware.

*Note: This article describes the author’s personal journey into going solar. The writer is a homeowner, not a solar energy expert. Not affiliated with the renewable energy industry beyond described residential net metering and SREC sales, she often writes on environmental subjects.*

FROM PAGE 21

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 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](mailto:sponsor@alnv.org) for information about sponsorship options. Visit the website: [alnv.org](http://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 1-2

**The Music Man and Circus Olympus.** 7 p.m. At Capital Baptist Church, 3504 Gallows Road, Annandale. Two plays: The Music Man, Jr. by Meredith Willson. Get ready for a toe-tapping, heart-thumping good time with this 6-time Tony Award-winning musical that's been making audiences smile since 1957! It's a musical, it's a comedy, and its pure fun from start to finish! Circus Olympus by Lindsay Price. Step right up, folks! The circus has rolled into town! Meet the Greek Geeks, and boy, do they have a wild ride in store as they



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

dive into a re-telling of some of their favorite Greek Myths.

781-2460 or email [contactus@aarfp.org](mailto:contactus@aarfp.org)

## MAY 1-10

**"Anything Goes."** 7:30 p.m. At George C. Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. "Anything Goes is set aboard the ocean liner S. S. American, where nightclub singer/evangelist Reno Sweeney (Saniya Desai) is en route from New York to England. Her pal Billy Crocker (Jacob Lee) has stowed away to be near his love, Hope Harcourt (Dena Talebnjad/Evie Richardson), but the problem is Hope is engaged to the wealthy Lord Evelyn Oakleigh (Joan Alfaro/Shahrad Valizadeh).

Performances are:  
Thursday May 1st, 2025 at 7:30pm  
Friday May 2nd, 2025 at 7:30pm  
Thursday May 8th, 2025 at 7:30pm  
Friday May 9th, 2025 at 7:30pm  
Saturday May 10th, 2025 at 2pm  
Saturday May 10th, 2025 at 7:30pm (Senior Night)

## MAY 2-4

**Spring Book Sale.** At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centreville. Fiction and nonfiction for all ages, DVDs, audiobooks and more. Friday, May 2, 1-5 p.m. Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, May 4, 1-4 p.m. Bag sale on Sunday. Fill a grocery bag with books and DVDs for \$10.

## 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 nonfiction 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-

## 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](http://feedfairfax.com).

## SATURDAY/MAY 3

**Community Shred.** 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Antioch Baptist Church, 6525-B Little Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Lambda Kappa Omega Chapter will partner with Antioch Baptist Church to host a Community Shred celebrating Earth Day. Plastics (no bottles) can also be brought for NextTrex recycling. Contact Denni Cravins (202-361-0571) for additional information.

## SATURDAY/MAY 3

**Taste of Tysons Corner.** 1 p.m. Indulge in 40-plus delicious bites from top eateries, sip on beer and wine, and enjoy live music and cooking demonstrations. The General Admission portion of this event is FREE to attend. Please RSVP and let us know you're attending! VIP tickets are on sale now. VIP Tickets include seating and access to the VIP tent, one alcoholic beverage, and exclusive lux tastings from Earls, Seasons 52, Barrel & Bushel, and Nordstrom Cafe: <https://tasteoftyson2025.eventbrite.com>

## MAY 3-4

**Virginia Opera: Loving v. Virginia.** At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Saturday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, May 4 at 2 p.m. Virginia Opera and Richmond Symphony present the highly anticipated world premiere of Loving v. Virginia. A young couple's interracial marriage in 1958 sparks a case that leads to the Supreme Court and a victory for civil rights in the United States. This operatic retelling is based on the true story of Mildred and Richard Loving.

## MAY 3-4

**Great Falls Studios Spring Art-fest.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At The Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Sandy Buffie, a very creative Great Falls jeweler and artist will be displaying her eclectic jewelry.

## SUNDAY/MAY 4

**Tiny Music Festival on Main.** Noon to 5 p.m. At The Shoppes at Main Parking Lot, 10409 Main Street, Fairfax. Mark your calendars for The Tiny Music Fest on Main, a free outdoor concert series happening every first Sunday from May through September, Noon - 5 p.m. Enjoy incredible live acoustic performances while sipping on craft beer from High Side and munching on delicious pizza from Old Dominion Pizza. Seating is limited, so bring your own chairs and get ready for good vibes!

## SUNDAY/MAY 4

**Tour de Hunter Mill bike ride.** It's a community bike ride for people of all ages and abilities, including families. Explore the scenic, bike friendly areas in Hunter Mill District. Register now: <https://tinyurl.com/tdhmride>

## 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@llinova.org](mailto:admin@llinova.org).

## THURSDAY/MAY 8

**MPA Spring Benefit.** 7:30-9:30 p.m. At the McLean home of Reggie and Dharini Aggarwal. Sponsored by McLean Project for the Arts, which relies on the funds raised at Spring Benefit to further its mission to educate and inspire the community through contemporary visual arts exhibitions and arts education programs. Those include MPA ArtReach, which extends these exhibitions into the community through gallery tours and workshops for FCPS Title I elementary schools and other underserved groups. Co-chaired by Cindy Green and Christine Wang, the May 8 sunset party will feature festive fare from Windows Catering, music, and much more. Visit [www.mpaart.org](http://www.mpaart.org) or call 703-790-1953.

## Doggone It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well, that wasn't much fun at all. What fun that wasn't was those 45 minutes when Burton, our adolescent, two-and-a-half-year-old golden retriever went missing, his first such unsupervised and very unapproved sojourn off-leash this morning. (It might have been fun for him, but it was anything but for us.) Though he has his identification/who to call on his dog tags, as well as a chip embedded (with his owner's name and contact information on it); as any dog/pet owner knows, one of the least guaranteed outcomes in dog ownership is that your dog will return home on his own, some good Samaritan will act amazingly on your behalf and actually call you or that your dog will survive the ordeal (or that you will).

As it happened, Burton was out for his morning walk (his first since his last outing before bedtime) with his mother/my wife Dina as per usual (she does first-thing-in-the-mornings, I do the rest of the day). Typically, Burton's morning walk occurs in the miles of woods directly behind our house ("Belly Acres," I call our house). Never off leash despite the privacy (our house is also at the end of a dead-end street); still, sometimes (how about all the time) Burton likes to play tug of war. And if one isn't careful/doesn't have a secure hold of his leash, he may squirm away and off he'll go. Which is exactly what happened this morning between Dina and Burton. It has likewise happened to me.

What happened after Burton got loose is that I, as co-owner/father received a frantic phone call from Dina (co-owner/mother). Actually, there were multiple calls (I was in the shower at the time and didn't hear a ring). When I finally answered the phone, Dina said those words that dog owners everywhere dread hearing. For me it was: "Burton's gone." I asked her what had happened. After learning the circumstances and timeline, I said I was still wrapped in a towel, but I'd be outside as soon as possible.

Within 10 minutes or so, I was outside looking and listening for Dina. When I heard her yelling Burton's name, I walked in the opposite direction (to cover more ground). We live on two acres as do most of our neighbors. With woods all around us and a four-lane state road a quarter mile away, the places for Burton to go to get lost or hurt are numerous. Not finding him in the usual acreage, I got in my car and drove north up our street to the state road (shaking all the way fearing the worst that he might have been hit/killed by a car on it) and with the windows down, I started calling his name and looking all around. Fortunately, when I reached the state road, there was no sign of Burton (thank God, if you know what I mean?) so I turned right and drove a few hundred yards ahead and turned down the next road which sort of borders our property thinking Burton might have wandered through the woods attracted to the sounds of cars. Again, no luck so I drove the minute or two back home.

Just before I was to turn left onto our street, my cell phone rings, and when I answer, I hear the words that all pet owners in a similarly panicked state hope to hear: "I got him," said Dina. Can you say sigh of relief with an exhale to match and of course a verbal: "Thank God" by me. A dog on the loose with woods that go on for miles protecting above-ground power lines and a below-ground gas pipeline), animals everywhere, flowers blooming, people dirt biking and some locals even shooting guns and the potential for dog distractions with sounds and scents is everywhere, and the sooner we find Burton the better. Well, we did find him, or rather he found us. We were lucky. Heck, he was lucky - and smart. He knew where he lived, and we hoped we knew where he might be. Sure enough, he was coming home at the same time we were out looking for him.

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



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