

CONNECTION

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Christopher Zimmerman,
director of the Fairfax
Symphony Orchestra,
celebrates 15 years.

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MAY 8-21, 2025

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Director with ‘Kind, Witty and Insightful Leadership’

Zimmerman celebrates 15 years as Fairfax Symphony Orchestra’s conductor.

BY CAROLINE HEANEY
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

As the longtime conductor of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO), Christopher Zimmerman has made his mark on the local music scene. And at the orchestra’s May 31 concert, he’ll celebrate 15 years as its music and artistic director.

Over the years, he’s prioritized connection – not just with the musicians comprising his orchestra – but also with today’s leading composers and Fairfax County residents. Audiences look forward to Zimmerman’s British-accented commentary at every concert he conducts, with his witty remarks providing additional knowledge about the music they’re hearing and elevating their concert experience.

“Sharing both historical context and current insights about the music and composers takes the listener deeper into the music,” he said. “It connects them more specifically to the music and to our musicians to create a unique experience beyond simply hearing the notes played.”

Via his preparation, pre-concert talks and words from the stage, said Zimmerman, “I’ve tried to bring people into the world of symphonic music – not only through passion and love for the pieces we perform – but also through curiosity and a desire to place music in a context beyond just entertainment.”

The May 31 concert will be held at 8 p.m. at George Mason University’s Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive in Fairfax. It’ll showcase Zimmerman’s winning formula for balancing tried-and-true, classical masterpieces with exciting, new works by important voices in today’s musical scene. For ticket information, go to <https://www.fairfaxsymphony.org/may-31-chee-yun-kit-zimmerman-violin>.

Featured works will include Edward Elgar’s “Introduction and Allegro for Strings” and Dmitri Shostakovich’s “Symphony No. 10” – both works that Zimmerman conducted in his debut concert with the FSO in 2009.

The orchestra will also debut the East Coast performance of “Concertante for Two Violins and Orchestra” by Baltimore-based composer Jonathan Leshnoff. Among the performers will be violin soloists Chee-Yun – a longtime collaborator of Zimmerman’s – and Kit Zimmerman, Maestro Zimmerman’s son and a member of the first-violin section of Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Switzerland.

Said Chee-Yun, “From the very first time working with Chris Zimmerman a couple of decades ago, I was deeply inspired by his kind, witty and insightful leadership and musicianship.”

In his time with the FSO, Chris Zimmer-



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIEL COREY
Conductor Christopher Zimmerman leads his musicians.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACI BROOKS
The maestro and the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra

man has both commissioned and debuted seven new works and conducted 22 premieres by diverse and dynamic composers. During the current concert season, he and the orchestra have presented the U.S. premiere of “Force Majeure,” a piano concerto by Elena Kats-Chernin; the regional premiere of “She Dreams of Flying” by Quinn Mason; and the Virginia premiere of Clarice Assad’s concerto for guitar and cello, “Anahata.” These pieces were performed alongside well-known, classical works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Gustav Mahler and Leonard Bernstein.

“Chris Zimmerman brings such great energy and zest to his leadership of the FSO,” said the orchestra’s concertmaster, David Salness. “Not one to shy away from challenges, Maestro Zimmerman spurs the orchestra to intrepidly take on big projects – demonstrating the trust, respect and appreciation he has for the players’ collective talents and abilities.”

In March 2024, Zimmerman conducted the orchestra in the world premiere of Syrian-American composer Malek Jandali’s “Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra,” featuring soloist Anthony McGill, principal clarinetist of the New York Philharmonic.

In his review of that concert for The Washington Post, classical-music critic Michael Brodeur wrote, “The FSO routinely does more than most regional orchestras dare,

and that counts as its own type of heroism.” The performance received a 10-minute, standing ovation from the audience at the GMU Center for the Arts. It was later broadcast nationally on American Public Media’s “Performance Today” and is now available online.

“Conductor Christopher Zimmerman exemplifies visionary leadership and artistic excellence, continually elevating orchestral performance through his passionate commitment to musical innovation,” said Jandali. “His unwavering dedication to championing living composers enriches our symphonic repertoire and inspires both audiences and performers alike.”

For Zimmerman, providing audiences with a variety of orchestral music is key to the orchestra’s success. “[The FSO has] increasingly attracted more diverse attendees, both in terms of age and ethnicity,” he said. “I think this is due to the wide palette of symphonic music that we offer, from the blockbuster music of history’s greatest composers with renowned soloists, to new music and emerging artists.”

Presenting such varied repertoire requires deep levels of trust between an orchestra’s musicians and its director, and Zimmerman has cultivated it during his tenure. “An ever-deeper knowledge of and relationship with the music is a necessary component to creating a powerful and meaningful perfor-



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOCK & CO.

Christopher Zimmerman

mance,” he said. “I think the same can be said of my relationship and knowledge of the musicians I lead, as well.”

Zimmerman also credits “a wonderful blend of seasoned professional musicians,” many who’ve played with the FSO for decades, alongside newer musicians at the beginning of their careers, both serving in leadership positions.

For example, the symphony’s principal double bass player, Aaron Clay, recently retired after a prestigious career in the same position in The President’s Own Marine Band, while the principal cellist, Natalia Vilchis, recently graduated from The Peabody Conservatory, where she studied with cellist Amit Peled.

“In rehearsal, Chris is dedicated to pushing the orchestra to new heights, helping musicians grow both technically and emotionally,” said Vilchis. “His leadership creates an atmosphere where everyone feels supported, and this is key to the FSO’s consistent excellence.”

Additionally, through its Fellowship program, the symphony hires – via competitive audition – college-level students and recent-graduate string players from backgrounds underrepresented in orchestras today.

“This program provides a unique opportunity for talented and qualified students, plus recent graduates, to perform in the Fairfax Symphony during each of our concerts in one season,” said Zimmerman. “And with the coaching and mentoring, it’s a gateway to advance their future careers.”

Zimmerman’s favorite moments of his time with the FSO are when the connections he’s cultivated with musicians and audiences all come together. “It’s when you can tell the audience is on your wavelength from the start, and the orchestra and I have really connected, both with the listeners and each other,” he said. “Realizing, after the final note is played, that the audience loved it is deeply satisfying.”

Fairfax City Council Calls Timeout on Trails

New members upend plans with pauses and a cancellation.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It was obvious to anyone watching the April 22 Fairfax City Council meeting and work session that two of the new Councilmembers had worked behind the scenes to drastically change a major trail the City had already approved. And what came later on was equally stunning.

In a move catching most residents by surprise, Councilmember Tom Peterson added a new item about that trail and two others to the regular meeting's agenda, at the last minute. Then – rapidly and without further Council comment or a public hearing – he and his colleagues paused two trail projects and killed another in matter of minutes.

In short, they halted the George Snyder and Pickett Road Connector trails and terminated the Country Club Commons Connector Trail. All three projects have been in the works for years, were adopted by previous Councils and have received funding from outside sources.

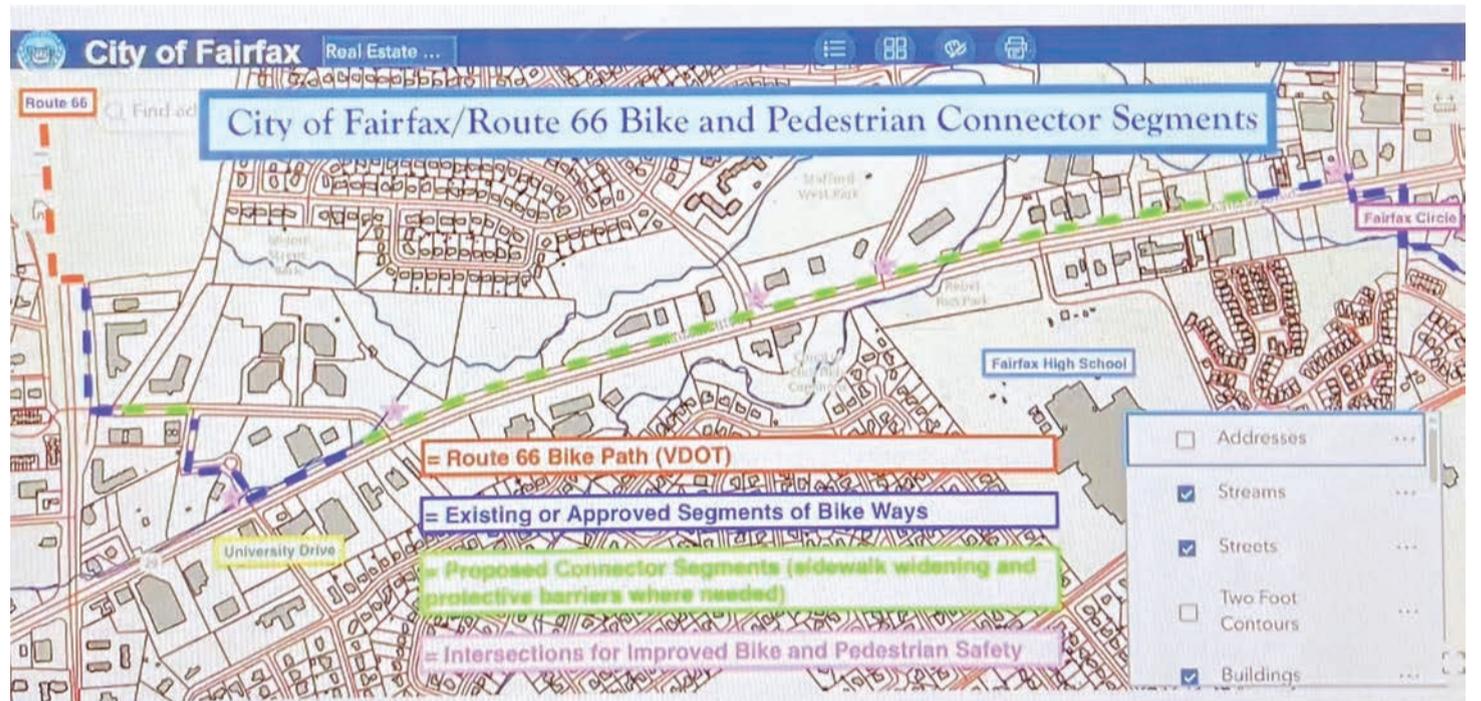
This Council had recently requested an update on these projects. So during the evening's initial work session preceding the regular meeting, Transportation Director Wendy Sanford and Urban Forester Anna Safford did so. Sanford said all three trails had moved from Parks and Rec to Fairfax's CIP (Capital Improvement Program) and then to its Comprehensive Plan.

❖ The Pickett Connector Trail would complete an off-road, 1,260-foot, missing link of trail between Thaiss Park and Fairfax Boulevard. It's funded by FY18 Smart Scale money, and construction is expected to start this year or next.

The City's Parks and Rec Advisory Board (PRAB) called it an opportunity to improve City/Fairfax County connectivity. It also offers a safer alternative to walking/biking on busy Pickett Road. "There's overlap with the county's waterline-replacement project, so some trees are being removed because of it," said Safford. "And it would allow easier access to remove invasives."

❖ The Country Club Commons Connector Trail would build 650 feet of trail between Country Club Hills Commons and Fairfax Boulevard. Its purpose is to improve access to Old Town and Fairfax Boulevard for residents north and south of the boulevard. Without that connection, it would be a 1.4-mile drive. Pedestrians could use the existing traffic signal at Fairfax Boulevard/Fair Woods Parkway to cross the boulevard. It would also connect to existing bike facilities on Fair Woods Parkway, George Snyder Trail and Blenheim Boulevard. Some \$5 million from FY20 Smart Scale funding was already received.

❖ The fully funded, \$20 million George Snyder Trail has been in Fairfax City's plans for more than a decade. Spanning almost



Green dashes depict a proposed new alignment for the George Snyder Trail.



Tom Peterson



Stacy Hall

two miles – and including asphalt and concrete boardwalks – this ADA-compliant, shared-use path would join Chain Bridge Road to the Wilcoxon Trail at Draper Drive, south of Fairfax Boulevard.

Although many residents like this plan, many others don't because of the hundreds of trees that would be removed to construct the trail. VDOT must receive the City's 100-percent-completed design by Dec. 31.

After the presentation, Peterson said a revised alignment of the Snyder Trail had been drawn, and he wanted it presented to VDOT as a possible alternative to the City's already-approved trail plan. Acting City Manager Bryan Foster then showed a sketch of this alternative that he said he'd received the day before. (See photo).

Peterson said this route (in green) would connect to other existing or approved bike paths (in red and blue) for a "continuous connection from Eaton Place/University Drive into Fairfax Boulevard, past Fairfax High and along Fairfax Boulevard's entire length." He also said the sketch was "the product of community input and consideration from Council members."

However – in a departure from normal Council protocol – this action was taken without the prior knowledge or approval of Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. And when she then asked, "So who, exactly, on the dais was involved with input" into the sketch, only Councilmember Stacy Hall raised her hand.

Read then said, "This doesn't seem like a shared-use path – it looks like a bike path

using existing sidewalks and already-paved paths. This seems like a totally different project to me."

Hall said the route would be accessible day and night, well lit and "wouldn't have tree devastation, unlike the trail in the woods. This would encourage people to stop and shop, would be safer for children to use and would bring people to where they need to be."

But Sanford saw huge problems with this proposal. "This involves a significant amount of right-of-way acquisition and evaluation – which we probably couldn't do within the time limit," she said. "And it would entail overcoming a lot of difficult engineering issues to build it."

Such a major change from the project Fairfax originally submitted to VDOT for funding also could cause it to be rejected altogether, leaving the City on its own to build it. As a result, Sanford said she didn't know if this proposal would be acceptable to VDOT in this altered form.

She explained that the funding Fairfax already received for the Snyder trail project might not be applicable to this new alignment. And placing it further in jeopardy, she added, is the fact that the new route would be "an on-road vs. an off-road trail – which is what VDOT approved."

Later, when Council moved into its regular meeting and was about to adopt its agenda, Peterson made his motion to add a trails action item to it, seconded by Hall, and approved by their colleagues. He then made three motions. The first was to submit the new sketch of the Snyder Trail concept to VDOT to consider as a substitute for the one it already approved. It passed unanimously.

The second was to pause and do no further work on the Pickett Road Connector Trail so alternatives could be examined. It passed 4-2, with Councilmembers Anthony Amos and Stacey Hardy-Chandler voting no. The third was to cancel the Country Club Hills Trail, and this motion passed unanimously.

Then during the meeting's public-comment time – after these votes were taken – some residents spoke about what had happened. Former National Park Service employee and past Council member Tom Ross said he was "deeply disappointed" by Council's action on the trails.

"It was done at the last minute – and without public comment or the opportunity for a public hearing," he said. "I believe in trails' availability to all people of all ages and abilities. I encourage you to reconsider the actions you took tonight. You have an obligation to consider why previous decisions were made to support these projects and the benefits they'll bring to our community in the long run."

But Phil Latasa, representing the Friends of Accotink Creek, said he approved of Council's votes "pausing [both] the George Snyder Trail for reconsideration and the Pickett Road Connector Trail – a redundant duplication of existing connections." Likewise, Kate Johnson of Country Club Hills said she, too, was pleased with Council's trail actions.

Neighbor Patrick Walker said he initially liked the idea of a paved trail through the forest so Country Club Hills residents could use it to reach Fairfax Boulevard. But, he added, "Four years ago, I found someone passed out on my sidewalk, and police told me it was a normal occurrence because 'people come through the woods.'"

"Two years later, I get home to find that my wife was on a walk along Spring Lake Terrace, paralleling the woods where this trail would be paved. Someone had followed, sexually harassed and scared her until she ran home, and she said he'd come through the woods where the trail would have ended up. Such people would have a much easier time going through there if the trail were paved, so I'm against this trail."

However, another City resident, Mike Fabio, also asked Council to reconsider its trail decisions. "Trails are treasures to be passed

Supervisors Reverse Proposed Real Estate Tax Increase

Some programs saved from proposed cuts; FCPS request not fully funded.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Facing a budget shortfall of \$292.7 million, on Tuesday, May 6, in the next-to-final step of the annual budget process, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors eliminated the 1.5 percent tax increase as proposed in the advertised budget, and reduced the tax rate by an additional quarter of a penny, to \$1.1225 per \$100 of assessed value. However, since home assessments have risen, the average tax bill for homeowners will increase by \$499, but less than the \$638 average in County Executive Bryan Hill's first proposed budget.

The board approved the final "marked up" version of their FY 2026 budget by a vote of 9-1, with Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) opposing.

According to Chairman Jeff McKay, the budget aims to balance fiscal constraints while preserving essential community services. "This budget can best be described as responsive and prudent," McKay said at the start of the meeting.

Key elements of the marked-up FY 2026 budget include setting aside a \$12.6 million reserve to address potential impacts of the continued uncertainty the region and Virginia are facing as a result of federal government actions.

The budget provides a \$119 million increase in school transfer funding to Fairfax County Public Schools. Still, it is lower than the \$248 million Superintendent Michelle Reid requested for the division's \$4 billion Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed School Operating budget.

The Board's marked-up budget raises the transient occupancy tax from 4 percent to 6 percent, maintains full funding of the county's compensation plan, and addresses potential economic challenges resulting from federal workforce reductions.

To address the nearly \$300 million shortfall in the first version of the budget, the board considered

proposed budget cuts totaling \$60 million. After hearing public testimony, the board ultimately decided to preserve several services. Among them is restored funding for four critical ambulance services: ambulance 416 (Clifton), ambulance 420 (Gunston), ambulance 441 (Crosspointe/Fairfax Station), ambulance 439 (North Point/Herndon). Funding was reinstated for crossing guards at high schools for 2026, while encouraging the Police Department to explore a cost-saving plan to provide the service.

The FY 2026 marked-up budget restored funding for post-secondary education services specifically aimed at students with developmental disabilities. The board restored full funding of \$34,000 for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and funding for county parks maintenance. The board kept \$3.93 million funding proposed to be cut for the middle school after-school program, with the directive to find ways to cut costs, such as a fee-based program for those who can afford to pay.

"The CERT program, while a relatively small item in the budget, provides significant value to both the volunteers who serve and the broader community," said Supervisor Andres Jimenez (D-Mason). "I strongly have advocated for its continued funding, recognizing the vital role it plays in the community's preparedness and resilience."

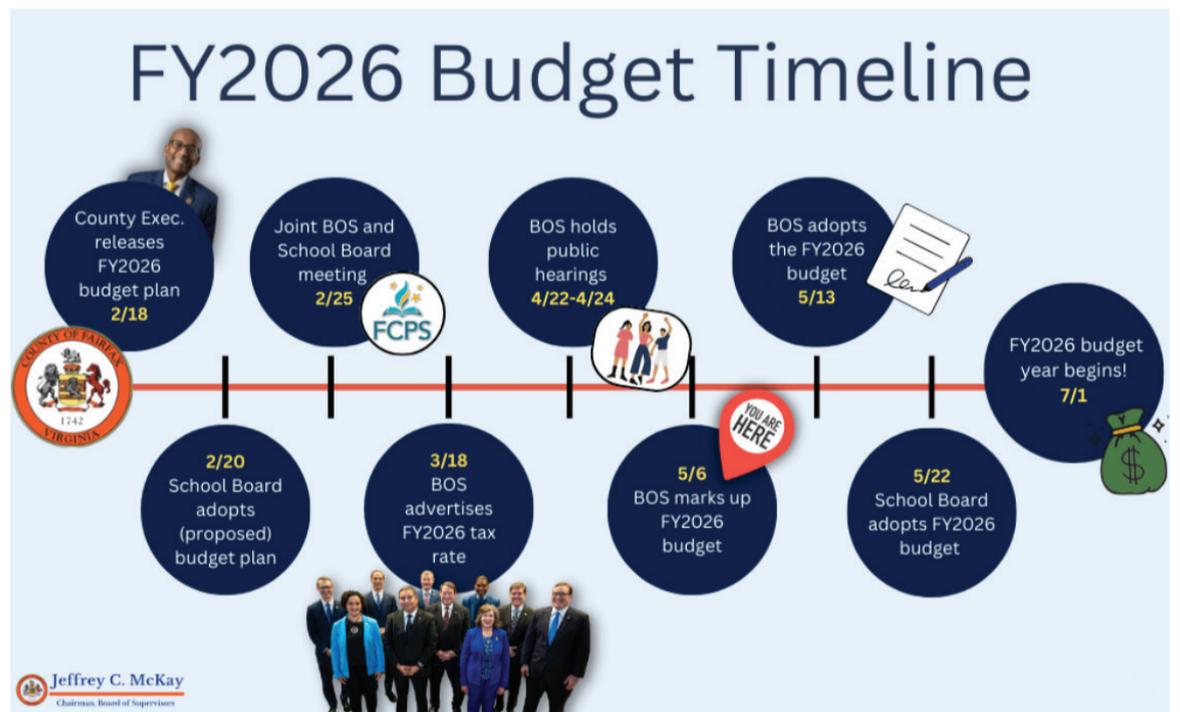
Herrity proposed to amend the budget guidance and suggested, among other things, forming a group of citizens and consultants with budget expertise to provide recommendations on cost-efficient service delivery, review revenue diversification options, and benchmark with other jurisdictions. The board did not support Herrity's proposal.

Supervisor Alcorn commented on Herrity's ideas. "There have been a lot of good suggestions put out here. I do want to point



FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV LIVE STREAM

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, at the May 6 meeting for the FY 2026 Budget Markup.



CHAIRMAN JEFF MCKAY NEWSLETTER, MAY 6, 2025

FY2026 Budget Timeline

out some of them. We need more discussion at these committees, including some of the ideas put forward by Supervisor Herrity."

Herrity said in a release after the meeting that while he was glad to see the board not cutting criti-

cal services, he was "disappointed that spending continues to be out of control."

He cited "collective bargaining, prevailing wage and project labor agreements, the Sustainable Development Policy, and our Opera-

tional Energy Strategy," as areas of concern.

The supervisors will formally vote to adopt the FY 2026 budget on May 13, but there are typically no changes between markup and adoption.

FCPS Wants it All Superintendent says she can't cut \$150M from her \$4B budget.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The 2026 Fairfax County Advertised Budget underfunds the public schools by \$150 million,

according to FCPS. Dr. Michelle Reid, superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools says she cannot manage the \$150 million gap in the division's \$4 billion district budget.

Over 96 percent of FCPS' budget is funded. The shortfall of \$150 million is 3.75 per-

cent of the \$4 billion budget.

On April 9, Chantilly High School's Advik Sood, student journalist, asked Reid what happens if the FCPS doesn't get 100 percent of its request. Reid said that FCPS is at a crossroads — the division cannot cut its

budget without impacting the classroom experience. Reid invited student journalists from 24 FCPS high schools to a roundtable discussion on the budget.

County and state revenue combined

SEE FCPS, PAGE 14

NEWS

Fairfax City Council Calls Timeout on Trails

FROM PAGE 3

down from generation to generation,” he said. “Our Councils and PRAB have recognized this for years. I was looking forward to walking with my grandchildren from Old Town, through Van Dyck Park and Country Club Hills, to the George Snyder Trail. That dream seems to be coming to an end.”

“How did these good ideas get so bad so quickly?” asked Fabio. “Getting from Point A to Point B is only half the equation. The

journey must be safe, accessible for all and pleasant – and not thrust us into busy highways. The vision has always been to have these trails off-road. A trail is a walk in the woods; a trail along a major highway is a sidewalk.

“We need recreational trails. These trails were planned, approved and funded – get them done. In these times of raising taxes, it seems unreasonable to give back any of the \$41 million of hard-won funding that’s been awarded to these trails.”

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor’s appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum

driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd’s Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or

email contact@scmafc.org.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE WISH LISTS

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer organization that partners with several Title 1 elementary schools across the region. These schools have a high percentage of low-income students whose families have a difficult time providing basic necessities. Assistance League helps fulfill basic needs by providing

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



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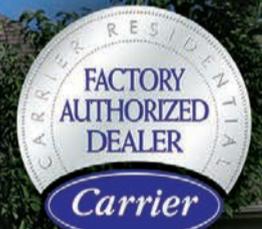
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Flanking Anita Light (with flowers) are some of the past Women of Influence, (from left) Susan Barborek, Carolyn Sutterfield, Janet Jaworski, Jennifer Passey, Janice Miller and Kelly O'Brien.

Posing with Anita Light (with bouquet) are Commission for Women members (from left) Chair Johnelle Brown, Taylor Geaghan, City staff liaison Lesley Abashian, Mena Crawford, Fairfax High student rep Isabella Benavides and Brenda Kuhlman.

Anita Light Honored as 2025 Woman of Influence

She's improved the lives of people of all ages.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Each year, the Fairfax City Commission for Women presents its Women of Influence Award to one or two outstanding women who live in the City and have made a significant impact on the lives of their fellow residents. This year's sixth annual award went to Anita Light.

Before her family, friends and colleagues, April 8, in City Council Chambers, she was honored as the 2025 Woman of Influence and received a crystal statuette from Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. Light has lived in the City since 2001 and has a long history of helping others.

"She's got years and years as a leader, and we're really lucky to have her in this area," said Commission for Women member Brenda Kuhlman. "I'm so happy that we're able to use and recognize her talents today."

Presenting Light's biography, Kuhlman said, "She's principle and vice president of Light Leadership Group, a consulting group that helps for-profit and nonprofit [organizations]. Before that, she was deputy director of the American Public Human Services Association for 18 years. And before that, she dealt with public child-welfare and juvenile issues."

Light was also in a leadership role with the American Assn. of University Women, has 12 years' experience working in human resources and was a volunteer appointed by City Council to its Human Services Committee and Fairfax County's Long Term Care Committee.

"Currently, she chairs the Fairfax Village in the City Advisory Board and has been there



Anita Light

since the beginning," said Kuhlman. "They help older people be able to stay in their homes and age in place. And before that, she spent four years on the Coordinating Council on Aging and Adults with Disabilities to decrease [this group's] feelings of isolation."

Speaking next, Read said, "People who are drawn to human services are built to care for others." Directly addressing Light, she said, "First, you cared for children and juveniles, and now you're here working so hard to make sure that those at the other end of their life's journey are also cared for. You ensure that they're safe, can stay in their homes and are supported by their community."

City residents previously named Women of Influence were: 2020, Susan Barborek and Janet Jaworski; 2021, Jennifer Passey; 2022, Hildie Carney and Carolyn Sutterfield; 2023, Janice Miller and Katy Malesky; and 2024, Kelly O'Brien and Lorraine Koury. And Read also acknowledged them and their contributions to the City.



Anita Light (center) is celebrated by (from left) City Councilmembers Anthony Amos and Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Mayor Catherine Read, and Councilmembers Tom Peterson, Stacy Hall, Billy Bates and Rachel McQuillen.

"So often, women expend their time, talent and energy in their communities without recognition," said Read. "And I applaud the Commission for Women for starting this Women of Influence award to actually call out the women who've invested so much into making the City what it is today."

"They don't do the hard work every day expecting an award. They do it because it needs to be done – and because they care, and they know they can make a difference. That's what drives these people." Read noted as well that Light's supportive husband, Mark, also helps enable her to "take on so much here in the City."

Read also praised the commitment of those like Light who've moved to Fairfax and done all they can to make it even better. For example, "The Village in the City is remark-

able, and what Jason [Scadron, Village coordinator], you and the advisory board have done is amazing." City Council appoints the board members and, said Read, "It says something that our City said, 'We want to invest in keeping our residents in their homes for as long as possible.'"

So, she concluded, "I want to recognize your efforts and give a nod to all the Women of Influence who've been recognized and all those who will be. With every generation, we step into the work done by those before us."

It was then Light's turn to speak, and she said how much she appreciated Read's remarks, plus her selection for this award. "It's quite an important thing in my life, and

SEE WOMAN OF INFLUENCE, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OPINION

A Budget That Reflects Our Community's Values

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT



Thank you to all the residents who participated in this year's budget process — whether you wrote to me, attended one of my budget town meetings or testified before the Board of Supervisors over three days of hearings. Your voices were heard, and your input helped shape the decisions we made.

I also want to thank County Executive Bryan Hill, our County staff and Chairman Jeff McKay for their leadership in bringing stakeholders together to reach a balanced and forward-looking budget. This was not an easy year, and the work they did to build consensus was critical.

Locally, I'm proud of the services we've restored and protected. Ambulance service has been reinstated in the southern part of the County at Gunston and Crosspointe — something critical to our public safety, where minutes can make the difference in an emergency. We also reinstated CERT and appreciate the essential community-based programs they provide, as well as our school crossing guards.

On education, I remain concerned. For the second year in a row, Fairfax County Public Schools asked for more than a 10% increase, which was only partially funded. Going forward, FCPS must take a hard look at its administrative costs and identify opportunities to redirect funding toward the classroom and teachers. I am proud that we were able to continue support for middle school after-school programs, an initiative I championed while serving you on the School Board.

We've continued funding for services that support seniors, survivors of domestic violence and our park system. I also continue to advocate to fully staff our Lorton Police Station, including a community outreach officer in the near term. We continue to build on our commitment to affordable housing, with programs that are not just symbolic but successful in expanding access to safe, stable homes for all residents.

Environmental sustainability remains a core priority. This Board has adopted a meaningful climate strategy and we are backing it with real investments to drive down carbon emissions and progressing toward our goal of net-zero, while saving far more funds than we invest.

That said, we are facing growing financial headwinds. New federal tariffs imposed by President

Trump are expected to increase costs across our economy, for families and businesses alike. These national challenges are especially poignant in Fairfax County and only reinforce how important it is that we diversify our revenue sources.

One avenue we've consistently discussed, and that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) and many of you supported, is the implementation of a meals tax. This will help us offset the reliance on property taxes while funding essential community services. I opposed raising the real estate tax rate, and in fact we reduced it by ¼ cent to \$1.1225 per \$100 of assessed value and instead supported diversifying our revenue base by implementing a 4% food and beverage tax. This approach will ease the burden on homeowners while preserving the services our community relies on.

Similarly, the Transient Occupancy (Hotel) Tax revenue is crucial to support tourism in Mount Vernon. Our marketing budget for tourism is significantly lower than those of neighboring jurisdictions, including our neighbor, the City of Alexandria. We know that increasing investment in tourism brings long-term returns to the County.

This was a difficult budget year, and it's only going to get tougher. The financial impact of federal policies is compounded by Virginia's ongoing underfunding of Fairfax County. The recent JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission) report showed that if the state met its own funding recommendations, Fairfax County would receive an additional \$600 million annually. Today, we only receive about 50 cents back on every dollar we send to Richmond. If we received just one cent more (51 cents) on the dollar, we could cut our tax rate by 25 cents. It's frustrating and unfair that our residents are substantially subsidizing the rest of the state. The Northern Virginia Delegation understands this, and I urge them to continue to push for a fairer return of our tax dollars.

Looking ahead, I'd like to see the Board initiate earlier and deeper discussions about service improvements and cost-saving strategies, giving us more time to involve residents. We need to modernize where possible, streamline our approaches and better align our spending with the evolving needs of our residents.

Fairfax County is known for its excellent services and quality of life. Let's keep it that way by being strategic, forward-thinking and grounded in the values of the people we serve.

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and grocery shoppers. If you can give the gift of your time, consider providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email 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 deci-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

food and clothing. The series of monthly wish lists helps Assistance League expand the scope of what can be provided. The May Wish List "Tushies and Toes" focuses on new underwear and socks - basic clothing items that are greatly needed and frequently requested by the schools the organization serves.

Please help Assistance League provide these important necessities for the students we serve by making a contribution from this month's wish list. There is a variety of colorful multi-pair underwear and sock packages for boys and girls in all sizes. Use this link: tiny.alnv.org/tushies-toes to make your selection

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Youngkin Fails to Collaborate

Youngkin's four-year total of vetoes: 437; surpasses McAuliffe prior record of 120.

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



Last week, Gov. Glenn Youngkin completed action on the state budget and legislation from the General Assembly after we took action on his first round of proposed amendments and vetoes. The actions bring a conclusion to four years of an unusual style of dealing with the General Assembly and a disappointing end to this budget cycle.

Governor Youngkin vetoed an additional 38 bills bringing this four-year total to 437 vetoes which broke the prior record of Governor McAuliffe by 317. None of Governor Youngkin's budget vetoes were discussed with the General Assembly in advance and the pure number of vetoes and amendments was unprecedented. Prior governors such as Mark Warner and Tim Kaine governed with legislatures controlled by the other party and typically vetoed less than 10 bills per session.

This behavior is contrary to the Governor's campaign promises to work towards bipartisan compromise. For example, he vetoed many bills that passed unanimously and one of my procedural cleanup bills that received just two negative votes after four committee hearings and six floor sessions. Most of these vetoes came with no notice or dialogue prior to announcement.

The Governor also made 37 "line item vetoes" to our state budget and claimed it was necessary because the Commonwealth needs to reduce spending and reserve funds due to

economic uncertainty. While I appreciate the Governor's recognition that the Trump Administration has created extraordinary risk to the Virginia economy, his line item vetoes were unusual in many respects.

First, the Governor vetoed \$900 million of capital spending – most of which he proposed in his December budget. This is the second year that Governor Youngkin has rejected

budget proposals that he initially proposed. It is impossible to cooperate with someone who cannot agree with his own proposals.

Second, the Commonwealth currently has the largest combined revenue reserves we have ever held in the history of the Commonwealth — \$4 billion. These are a combination of constitutionally required "Rainy Day Fund" deposits and a General Assembly established revenue reserve fund we created consistent with our conservative budgeting which maintains our triple A bond status that keeps borrowing costs low for taxpayers.

He also gave no notice that he wanted to cut this spending and engaged in no dialogue. In addition, construction spending is exactly what economists recommend in economic downturns because of the broad impact it has on various sectors. The Trump Administration's tariffs are also likely to make these projects more expensive if the Commonwealth delays them even six months.

The Governor also cut much needed and merited spending including a new first time

homebuyer program and renter's assistance to help young people with affordable housing.

Governor Youngkin also rejected our proposal to lower the body mass index required to obtain new weight loss drug regimes funded by Medicaid. The General Assembly proposed a BMI of 35 or more or 30 if someone has diabetes. A BMI of 30/35 equals about 200/235 lbs. for a 5'10" person. His rejection of the lower BMI proposal saves taxpayers only \$7 million while forfeiting \$40 million in federal matching funds, and will cost taxpayers millions more in obesity-related healthcare expenses. He also vetoed additional investments in Geriatric and Dementia services for elderly in nursing homes.

We also saw line item vetoes for community violence reduction grants and over \$20 million towards our \$400 million state park deferred maintenance needs. He also vetoed tens of millions in storm water mitigation, Hurricane Helene relief money, and environmental education programs.

Other than actions we will likely have to take this fall to triage The Trump Administration's proposed massive cuts to Medicaid, education funding and climate change policy, this was Governor Youngkin's last chance to reach bipartisan compromise in our regular budget cycle before his term ends. He has continued to attempt to govern as a partisan candidate and make decisions based on his next Republican primary or act unilaterally like a business executive rather than work with the legislative branch of government to reach consensus. I am hopeful our next Governor will not make the same choice.

Sen. Scott Surovell is Virginia Senate Majority Leader & State Senator from 34th District of Virginia

Your Actions, Our Climate: Fairfax Needs You Now

Bold goals for Fairfax County: cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

BY JOHN MORRILL,
DIRECTOR, OEEC



2024 was the hottest year ever recorded in Fairfax County. Extreme weather and high energy bills are hitting many households hard. From prolonged heatwaves to higher utility costs, it's becoming increasingly clear that climate change and economic strain are affecting us all.

In response, Fairfax County is taking steps to reduce the emissions that drive climate change and helping our community adapt to its growing impacts. A community-led climate action plan in 2021 set bold goals for Fairfax County: cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

While your local government is taking steps to reduce its emissions, most of Fairfax County's carbon footprint comes from everyday community activities—meaning we all have a role. We can only get there if everyone does their part.

That's why we've launched the Sustain Fairfax campaign — an important initiative designed to empower everyone in Fairfax County to be part of the solution.

Why Every Resident's Action Matters

Community-wide participation isn't just helpful; it's necessary. With the county government's impact limited to a fraction of total

emissions, collective individual actions are critical. Every small step you take at home or in your daily commute adds up significantly.

Simple but impactful actions you can take right now include:

- ❖ Conserving energy at home, such as adjusting your thermostat and using energy-efficient appliances.
- ❖ Choosing electric vehicles

SEE MORRILL, PAGE 9

Submit a Letter to the Editor

To submit a letter to the editor, email editors@connectionnewspapers.com or via the following form <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/>

Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy. Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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LETTERS

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

Fairfax County Must Stick to Trust Policy

To the editor:

I want to remind our county Sheriff and Board of Supervisors that Fairfax County must stick to our Trust Policy. They must not make any voluntary exceptions to work with ICE because doing so puts innocent people at risk.

As a Reston native and educator with more than 15 years of experience in public and private schools in northern Virginia, I have built countless relationships with immigrant students and families. It's been devastating to see parents unable to take their kids to school or participate in parent events, for fear of being permanently taken away from their families and homes. It's awful to see children trying to function while living in fear of losing parents or siblings to an unnecessary politics.

We cannot allow others to criminalize the rich contributions that immigrants make in our community. The simple act of relocating or merely existing should never be "wrong" or "dangerous." In fact, immigrants are less dangerous and

statistically less likely to commit crimes than those of us born in the USA.

Elisa Jácome, an economist and professor at Northwestern University co-conducted a study showing that immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than those of us who were born here. The American Immigration Council analyzed crime data against demographic data and found that between 1980 and 2022, immigration had doubled but crime had fallen more than 60%.

Our neighborhoods are safer and more beautiful when we have immigrant neighbors. Being surrounded by other languages, cultural arts, cuisines, religious practices, fashions, and more helps us grow our perspective on the world and our place in it.

We need to focus our attention legislatively and as a community on protecting and partnering with immigrants in our community, not with threatening, disparaging, or detaining them — nor deliberately tearing apart their families.

Bethany Davis
Reston

Morrill

FROM PAGE 8

(EVs) or reducing car dependency by choosing public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking.

❖ Using solar energy not only reduces emissions but also enhances energy independence.

❖ Composting food waste and adopting sustainable waste practices.

Introducing the Sustain Fairfax Challenge

Fairfax County developed the Sustain Fairfax Challenge — a user-friendly, interactive online platform to make these actions easy, enjoyable, and impactful. This resource provides Fairfax-specific information, rebates, and tips to help you cut carbon emissions and save money.

Participants can track their impact, earn badges for their achievements, collaborate with neighbors, and join community-wide sustainability challenges. This interactive approach creates a powerful sense of collective accomplishment, transforming individual efforts into community-wide victories.

Simple Changes, Significant Benefits

Your participation isn't just good for the environment—it's great for your wallet, health, and community well-being. By adopting sustainable practices, you can immediately see benefits, including:

❖ Lower utility bills from straightforward energy-saving measures.

❖ Better comfort and health thanks to cleaner air, reduced pollution from EVs, and less traffic congestion due to increased use of public transportation.

❖ Enhanced safety, preparedness, and resilience through targeted initiatives aimed at storm preparedness, flood mitigation, and cooling centers during heatwaves.

These actions also support smart energy choices. Improving your home's efficiency helps reduce emissions and energy costs while making your space more comfortable and future-ready.

Join Us Today—Your Actions Matter

The Sustain Fairfax Challenge is accessible, easy to use, and designed for immediate impact. You'll join your neighbors and actively help shape the future of Fairfax County by participating. I invite you to visit sustainchallenge.fairfaxcounty.gov today and sign up. Let's prove our actions can create a healthier, more resilient Fairfax County. Our climate goals are ambitious, but they're achievable if we collaborate. We can build a greener, healthier community, one action at a time.

John Morrill is Director, Fairfax County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)

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sion-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

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

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

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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

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

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

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

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

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

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

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

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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Cultural Celebration Via Food, Fun and Entertainment

Fairfax City's annual Asian Festival on Main is May 18.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City's Asian Festival on Main is a true street festival, filled with delicious food, talented artisans and live entertainment in a party atmosphere of bright colors, joyful sounds and people everywhere. And this year's fifth annual event is set for Sunday, May 18, from noon-6 p.m., in historic Old Town Fairfax.

Free, fun and family-friendly, the festival is a celebration of Asian heritage through food, arts and crafts, education, songs and dances. It's held on Main Street in the downtown area, between Chain Bridge Road and Blenheim Boulevard, and on University Drive between Sager Avenue and North Street. It also includes Old Town Square. And there's something for attendees of all ages to enjoy.

The event features a full lineup of live entertainment and cultural performances, more than 60 Asian food vendors and food trucks, more than 60 non-food vendors and exhibitions, children's activities, a cosplay contest, beer garden and karaoke stage. And the ever-popular Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe, with its crowd-favorite lion and dragon dances, will be there to celebrate the Lunar Year of the Snake.

This extravaganza celebrates Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, along with the City of Fairfax, which is an integral partner of the festival. And Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read is thrilled to have it in the City.

"Fairfax City is delighted to host this event each May, and we welcome people from around the DMV to join us," she said. "It's an opportunity to celebrate the many Asian cultures, traditions and cuisines that make our City and region so vibrant."

Indeed, the Asian Festival on Main was created by the Old Town Fairfax Business Association (OTFBA) in 2021 to bring people together and highlight cultural diversity through food and entertainment. And with attendance topping more than 25,000 people in each of the past two years, it's rapidly grown to become one of the largest Asian showcases in the Washington, D.C.

SEE FAIRFAX CITY'S ANNUAL, PAGE 11



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS

Members of the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe carry what became a large dragon during last year's event.



Liza Israni and son Brendon offer Filipino spring rolls and crispy pork belly.



Janet Lam with colorful croissant creations by the returning Toimoi Bakery.

Fairfax City's Annual Asian Festival on Main is May 18

FROM PAGE 10

Metropolitan area.

"We're extremely proud of what we've accomplished in just a few short years," said festival Co-Chair Jinson Chan. "As the event grows in popularity, there's an increasing need for support and sponsorships to help make this festival happen. We're thankful for our many sponsors, as well as the Old Town Fairfax business community and volunteers who work together to welcome our many festivalgoers."

Kicking off the festivities at 11:45 a.m., the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe will lead the crowd from the intersection of Main Street and University Drive to Old Town Square for the official opening ceremony. And 2015 Mrs. District of Columbia, Elaine Espinola – who co-hosts "Great Day Washington" on WUSA TV-9 – will return as the event hostess and emcee.

ESKM, a Korean-American R&B sensation based in Seoul, will take



The Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe entertained last year in Old Town Square.

BONNIE HOBBS

the stage as a featured performer. Originally from the Washington

Metropolitan area and a graduate of the Berklee College of Music,

he's made his mark globally with bilingual tracks blending emotional

storytelling with energetic K-Pop beats.

Another entertainment highlight will be rising star, Toshi, known for his boundary-breaking creativity and fearless stage presence. Born in Brooklyn of Japanese-Chinese heritage, Toshi brings bold artistry and charisma to every performance. He'll also serve as a judge for the cosplay contest.

Event proceeds benefit the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe and AALEAD, a nonprofit that supports low-income and underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander youth with educational empowerment, identity development and leadership opportunities through after-school, summer and mentoring programs.

For sponsorship, vendor and volunteer opportunities, plus further information about the festival – including a complete list of the food vendors and entertainers – go to www.asianfestivalonmain.com.



Big Announcement for Fairfax County Golfer Michael Long

FACEBOOK.COM.FAIRFAXCOUNTY/PD

Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis, a bagpiper, and others are about to surprise Fairfax athlete Michael Long on the golf course. Davis said, "This is a big announcement for you, and you worked so hard to make this happen."



FACEBOOK.COM.FAIRFAXCOUNTY/PD

Davis tells Long that all the people there, his family, friends, police officers, and onlookers, are there for him. "You must be wondering what's going on with bagpipes and a bunch of cops. But we're very proud of you, and we want to read you something."

"Dear Michael," Davis reads. "On behalf of Special Olympics Virginia, we would like to congratulate you on being selected as a unified golf candidate for Team Virginia attending the 2026 USA Games in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in June of 2026."

— MERCIA HOBSON

Fairfax County Sheriff's Office Bike Team Graduates

The latest Fairfax County Sheriff's Office Bike Team graduates, a dedicated support team of deputies, will offer law enforcement services at the Judicial Complex, during special events, and in partnership with other jurisdictions. They will assist residents, manage traffic, and engage with the community at events, bike safety demonstrations, and fairs, according to the Sheriff's Office.



SCREENSHOT SOURCE FACEBOOK.COM FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

The free Fairfax County Girls Fire and Rescue Academy returns. The camp is from Tuesday, June 24, to Friday, June 27, 2025, and is open to female students in grades 9-12 in the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. Participants must be Fairfax County residents. Apply by May 16 at <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/fire-ems/Girls-Academy>.

— MERCIA HOBSON

SENIOR LIVING

Knowledge, Care, Help and Lifelines for Senior Citizens

The Home for Life Expo was April 4 at Fairfax City's Sherwood Center.



Technology coach Amy Burk of TechWise Coaching teaches technology skills to older adults.

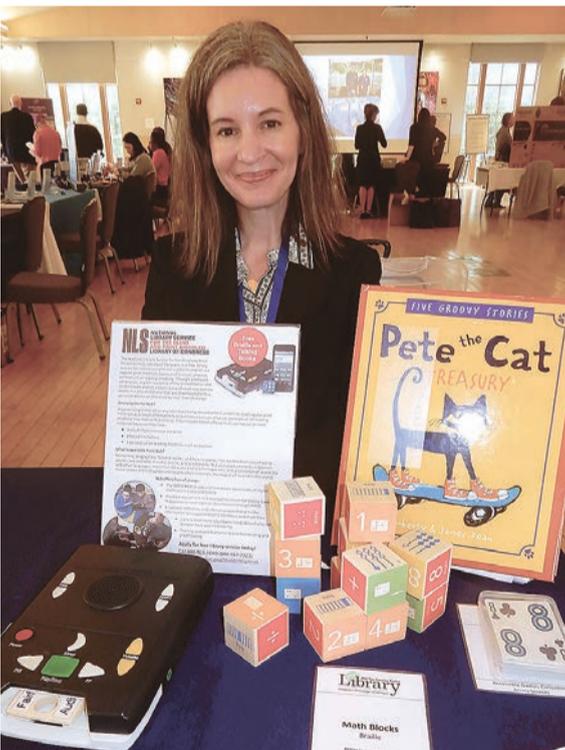


Jane Hughes represents Woodbine Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center, offering post-hospital rehab care, plus respiratory care, inpatient dialysis and memory care.



From left, Chris Cohen and Melissa Pennett promoting Fairfax City community information, activities and transportation options for seniors.

PHOTOS BY
BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION



Ginger Hawkins represents the Access Services branch of the Fairfax County Public Library. It provides specially recorded books, magazines and players to Fairfax City and County residents of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or have reading or physical disabilities.



From left, Leslie Stefanik and Leyna Batta, of FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers, specializing in balance and pelvic-floor therapy.



Veronique Coker, of Seniors Helping Seniors, which offers in-home care for older adults.



Shannon Bishop, of Goodwin Living at Home, an aging-in-place program that provides care coordination and payment.

SENIOR LIVING

The Home for Life Expo

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Representing RAFT (Regional Older Adults Facility Team) are (from left) Caitlin Stauffer, Sara Cochran and Sydney Palinkas. RAFT supports seniors living with dementia and serious mental illness.



From left, Belen Eshetu and Sonia Gatling, of Independent You, providing seniors with advocacy, home-care services and aging life-care management.



Promoting the City of Fairfax Regional Library's programs for adults is Gabi Huesca.



Green Acres Senior Center staffer Daniel Novoa and volunteer Debra Sparkman promote the center's trips, game room, fitness center and membership opportunities.



Esther Lee, of nonprofit NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), providing free support groups, education and advocacy for people with mental-health conditions, their family members and the community.



Inside Fairfax City Fire Department's Life Safety Education Trailer are (from left) Maleka Walters and fire Lt. Jay Davison, both with the City's Community Response Team. Walters is a community-response clinician with the Department of Human Services, and Davison is a community paramedic. Both demonstrated home safety.

FCPS Wants it All

FROM PAGE 4

provide 95.8 percent of FCPS' operating revenue, according to the published FCPS budget. The Fairfax County FY 2026 Advertised Budget includes a requested transfer of \$2.9 billion.

Projected state funding totals \$1.019 billion for FY 2026 or 25.2 percent of FCPS' operating revenue, including sales tax revenue.

Fairfax County Schools receive \$168 million in federal aid for free and reduced-price meals, special education and student support programs. If that money is cut, the county may have to fill the gap, potentially diverting funds from other priorities like teacher salaries and other services.

As the \$150 million gap remains, students voiced their concerns — from potential cuts to programs to teacher pay and class sizes. The gap could mean impacts across the board.

FCPS' FY2026 advertised budget totals \$4.0 billion, with instruction, salaries and benefits accounting for most of it, 85.2 percent according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

According to board documents, to address Fairfax County's \$300 million budget shortfall, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is considering implementing a four percent food tax, a two percent transient occupancy tax on the hospitality industry, plus \$60 million in spending cuts.

Like school districts around the country, FCPS must, as of March 28, figure out how to pay some bills after the Department of Education announced it won't pay out hundreds of millions of dollars in promised Covid-19 relief funds.

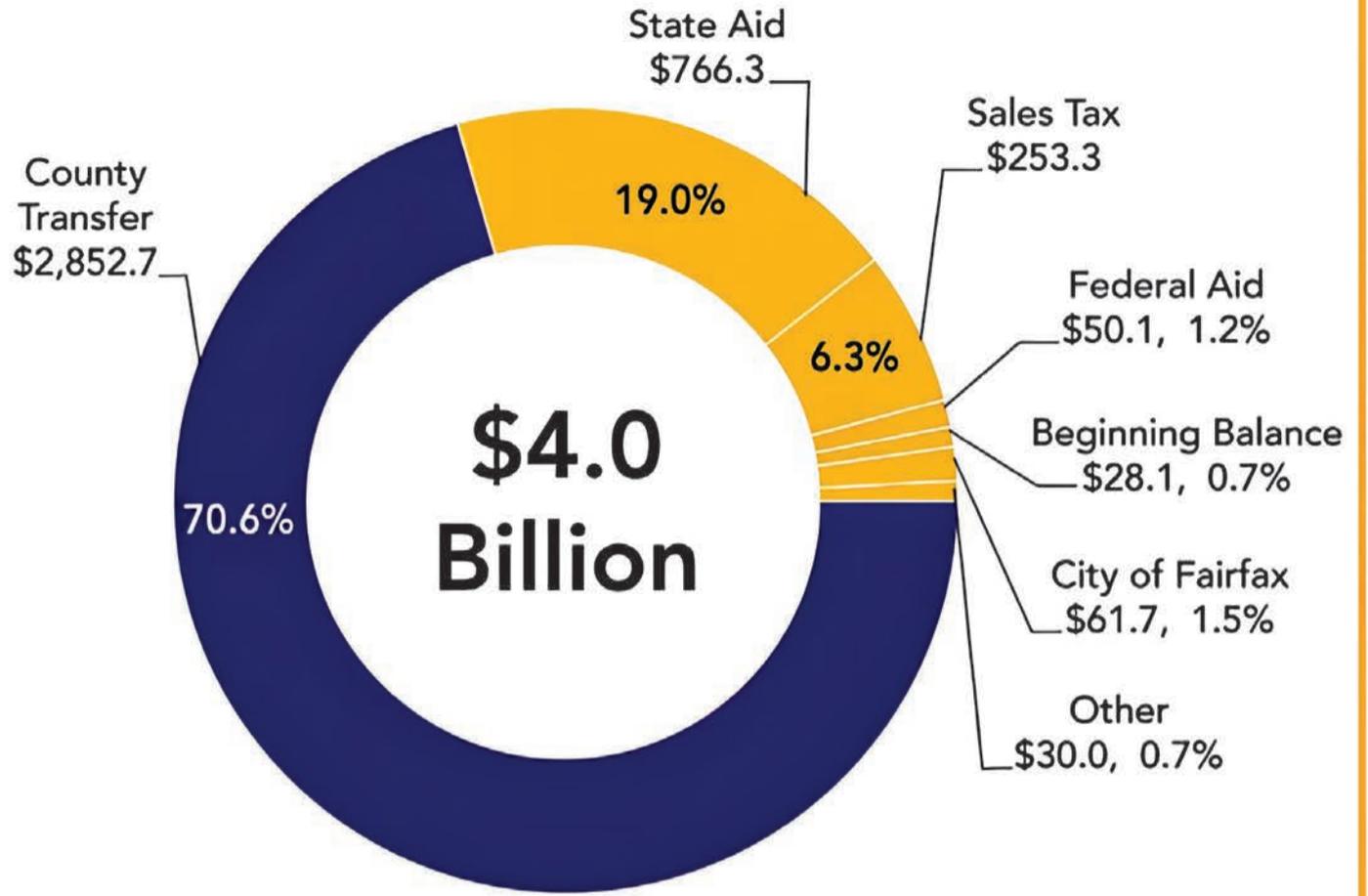
In April of this year, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin said that once his budget amendments are adopted, increased education funding to school districts "will pump about \$1 billion annually to Fairfax County Public Schools, the highest allocation to any school district in Virginia." An aggregate of Direct Aid to Public Education if the governor's amendments are adopted indicate that state funds to Fairfax County Public Schools were \$689.1 million in FY19, rising to \$1.048 billion in FY25, and proposed at \$1.059 billion in FY26, according to Governor.virginia.gov/newsroom.

FCPS is the ninth largest school division in the U.S. with 199 schools and centers. According to FCPS by the Numbers, the division serves a diverse population of nearly 183,000 prekindergarten through grade 12 students, speaking more than 200 languages.

Reid urged the students at the roundtable to "read these reports and hold your elected officials accountable. ... These are our tax dollars and your parents' tax dollars, and soon to be your tax dollars. And we want to make sure that they're spent in a way that really shapes and lifts up future generations. Because the budget, while it's not the most glamorous topic, drives everything you do," Reid said.

One student said that she read online

Where it Comes From - Revenue FY 2026 Advertised School Operating Fund (\$ in millions)



Where Does FCPS' Revenue Come From?

that the middle school after-school program might be cut. "What criteria does FCPS use to determine what programs are reduced?" she asked.

Reid said: "So right now in our budget, we didn't plan to reduce or eliminate any programs. We've worked on efficiencies. But in your example of a middle school after-school program, the county actually funds that program, not the school division. And they've chosen to cut that. So that wasn't a cut we would have chosen to make."

On May 6, at the budget markup session, the Board of Supervisors reinstated funding for middle school after school programs and high school crossing guards, both of which had been on a list of likely cuts.

If FCPS does not receive a full transfer, it may have higher class sizes, and perhaps fewer services, in some places, Reid said. County officials frequently refer to FCPS as a "world-class school system."

"The schools here in Fairfax County are one of the biggest priorities for this county.

People move here because of the quality of our schools. We have amazing schools," Reid told the students.

Advik Sood, the student from Chantilly High School, asked Reid about the potential consequences if FCPS were to miss out on that funding or the extra financial support they were seeking. "The ramifications are that we aren't going to pay for the things that we budgeted to have," Reid said. FCPS is in a challenging position, she said, unable to cut its budget without jeopardizing the "quality of the classroom experience."

"We have heard teacher salary is very central to the reallocation of this budget," said Rebecca Paz from Marshall High School. "What have you seen from teachers?" Reid highlighted that through first-time collective bargaining, the budget included a 7 percent compensation adjustment for all staff. However, Reid emphasized that it was not "set in stone." Reid informed the students that if the school system lacks full funding, "that will likely require us to go back to the bar-

gaining table to talk about how we're going to respond to that."

Many Fairfax County residents are increasingly worried about their property tax bills supporting increased funding requests by Fairfax County Public Schools. Home values in Fairfax County are high, pushing property taxes higher. Fairfax County has mailed over 357,000 updated 2025 real estate assessment notices to all property owners.

"Based on equalization changes [market-driven value increases or decreases], countywide residential real estate assessments are up an average of 6.65 percent, with the average assessment for all homes at \$794,235. In 2024, the countywide average home assessment was \$744,526," reports the county. On average, home prices increased, "due to demand exceeding supply."

See story on budget on page 2 for more details on what the Board of Supervisors included in the final markup, including a cut in real estate tax rate.



Anita Light (with flowers) celebrates with her family, including husband Mark (beside her).



Village in the City Board members (from left), Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Mary Agee, Janice Miller, Jason Scadron, Anita Light, Taylor Geaghan, Susan Jacobson, Carolyn Sutterfield and Tom Ross.

Anita Light Honored as 2025 Woman of Influence

FROM PAGE 6

I'm grateful," she said. "But this [honor] isn't just for me; it's really recognizing all the work I get to do with the other people around me for the Village and the Human Services Committee.

"When I saw the information about all the past winners, it struck me that this City is very fortunate to have women like that in this community. There's so much work that's been done by women here, and we're a great community because of that. So I'm honored to be part of the Women of Influence club."

Light said that, when she began her career, she focused on children, families and direct service as a social worker. She then moved to the national level, involved in "policy and practice, which was very rewarding." Then, as she started getting older and nearing retirement age, she watched her mother navigate her home, health and social life.

Doing so made Light understand that "We need to pay more attention to older folks in



Catherine Read

our community and to what will help keep them in their homes for as long as they possibly can." She then volunteered on the Human Services Committee and, said Light, Human Services Director "Lesley Abashian got hold of me and, next thing I know, I'm deployed to the Coordinating Council on Aging and Adults with Disabilities.

"Then I went to other committees, and she said, 'How about the steering committee for Village?' and I couldn't say no to her. Being able to do the work with that advisory board has helped me realize important things about aging in our community."

Furthermore, said Light, "I also want to give a shout out to Carolyn [Sutterfield] and Janice [Miller]. If it hadn't been for their vision to begin with – to emphasize the Village and encourage City Council to support developing it – I wouldn't be here today, nor would the Village or our 120 members and 60 volunteers. And we also had support from a professional staff with Lesley and Jason."

She noted, as well, the transportation

Village volunteers provide to the members – taking them to and from doctors' appointments, the grocery store, bank, beauty salon, etc. They also do tasks including raking leaves in the fall, shoveling snow in the winter and helping seniors navigate their computers.

"Our members' appreciation is so powerful," said Light. "And it's heartwarming to hear that in their voices when they say thank you. One member said they wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the Village. We're doing good work and it's very important."

Lastly, she praised her husband for supporting her in all her endeavors, being a "listening ear and, for the most part, giving good advice." She also said her children, Joseph and Meg, their spouses and her four grandchildren influence her every day with their insightful observations about life. Then, before receiving her award, she told her friends, neighbors, colleagues and co-workers, "It's been an incredible journey – thank you for going on it with me."

OLLI at George Mason University Appoints Lisa Mariam as New Executive Director

Lisa Mariam, a seasoned nonprofit leader, is the new Executive Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University, effective June 2, 2025. Selected from over 70 applicants after an extensive national search, Mariam will succeed Jennifer Disano, who is stepping down after 12 years to pursue her collaboration with George Mason University's Watershed Lit Radio Literary Podcast at UpstartCrow.org and serve as a consultant for nonprofits. Disano will provide transition support during Mariam's first week to ensure a smooth handover.

Jennifer Disano led OLLI Mason for 12 years, driving significant growth by expanding the educational program from 250 to over 500 diverse, college-level

courses annually, covering literature, science, technology and the arts. She grew the staff to support this expansion, adopted hybrid learning models during the COVID-19 pandemic, and strengthened OLLI's affiliation with George Mason University for enhanced member benefits. Disano's focus on fiscal stability and volunteer empowerment fostered a vibrant, inclusive community, leaving a lasting legacy of lifelong learning.

Lisa Mariam brings extensive experience from her current role managing the Challenge America Program at the National Endowment for the Arts, administering grants to underrepresented communities. Previously, as Senior Director of Grants and Services at ArtsFairfax, she launched the Arts for Life initiative, expanded the Grants Program, and forged public-private partnerships. Her



Lisa Mariam

career began at the National Gallery of Art, organizing traveling exhibits. Mariam is also an active volunteer, serving on the Fairfax Master Arts Plan Task Force, Fairfax 50+ Plan, and the Board of the McLean Community Center.

"Lisa's strategic vision, collaborative lead-



Jennifer Disano

ership, and alignment with OLLI's mission make her the ideal choice to lead us forward," said Board Chair Debbie Engelson, who led the search committee. "Her community connections and expertise in growing membership and partnerships will guide OLLI into its next chapter."

ENTERTAINMENT

FREE GUIDED WALK AT MEADOWLARK

Enjoy free garden admission and a refreshing one-hour walk through Meadowlark's beautiful 95 acres located at 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct., Vienna. Each walk will cover hilly terrain, feature a positive focus, and include a silent, meditative portion — plus a few fun facts from the docent along the way.

MONTH OF MAY

Fairfax City Celebrates Small Businesses During Small Business Month. In honor of national Small Business Month in May, Fairfax City Economic Development is celebrating its many unique small businesses. Fairfax City Small Business Month invites the community to explore the city's diverse retail and small business offerings, take advantage of special promotions and experiences, and support local entrepreneurs and charitable causes. Participating businesses are offering a variety of specials and promotions, including:

- Romp n' Roll: \$5 off a trial class; \$25 off 10-20 class pass (in-store); and \$25 off in-store birthday parties
 - Gaming Giant: 5% off single item with donation
 - Smiley Skin: 25% off waxing services and a \$25 bonus gift card with a \$100 gift card purchase
 - Lucy Loves: Raffle entry with a \$10 purchase
 - OSA Martial Arts: Waived registration fee for tae kwon do, judo, bon kuk gum bub and hapkido classes
 - Kaizen MMA: One-week free trial
 - BE2 Pilates: Five sessions for \$150
 - Ace Hardware: Buy three, get 10% off rubs and spices
 - Fairfax Pilates: Buy one class, get one at half price
- Other participants include Bond's Escape Room, Fran's Cake and Candy Supplies, Joylife Spa, Mode on Main by Mara, Paradise Games and Gifts, Cinema Arts Theatre, DIY Scent Studio, Omni Wellness & Performance, eXurb Fitness, Weber's Pet Supermarket, and more.
- On Saturday, May 31, Fairfax City will host a retail fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Old Town Square (10415 North St., Fairfax) where shoppers can browse select products and services from multiple local businesses, all in one place. Participating businesses will have demonstrations including fashion shows, pilates classes, etc.

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



The Wellness and Safety Expo will take place on Friday, May 9, 2025 at the Vienna Community Center.

Washington's original five farms and is now the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society. George Washington's Mount Vernon, the home to America's first president, features four bountiful gardens to explore and enjoy. In addition, experience wide-open spaces, wooded landscapes, and a quarter-mile-long forest trail — not to mention the vast educational resources available on site.

SOFTBALL PLAYERS WANTED!

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Women over 40 and all skill levels welcome. They play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit goldengirls.org.

PLANT A TREE

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

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>

WEDNESDAY/MAY 7

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

WEDNESDAY/MAY 7

360 Allstars. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Inglewood Ave., McLean. Spinning circles around the competition, 360 Allstars showcases a dream team of sensational champs in a supercharged physical performance celebrating street culture—BMX, basketball, breakdancing, beatboxing, acrobatics, drumming and more. Boasting a stellar international cast of world champions and world record-holding athletes and artists, the show has had sold out runs on Broadway and at Sydney Opera House and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

MAY 8-9

Mid-Atlantic Masters Seminar. At McLean Bible Church in Tysons Corner. The Mid-Atlantic Masters Seminar is a regional event designed to explore how hope can be intentionally taught and sustained in young people and communities. Founded by Rick Miller, creator of Kids at Hope and professor of practice at Arizona State University, the seminar draws on nearly two decades of work through the national Master's Institute. This year's theme, Creating & Activating Hope, brings together professionals from education, behavioral health, juvenile justice, recreation, and child welfare sectors to examine how hope-focused practices can transform outcomes for youth and families.

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The Workhouse Arts Center Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser will take place on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at Laurel Hill Golf Course in Lorton.

MAY 8-10

"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 Talebnejad/Evie Richardson), but the problem is Hope is engaged to the wealthy Lord Evelyn Oakleigh (Joan Alfarro/Shahrad Valizadeh). Performances are:
 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)

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

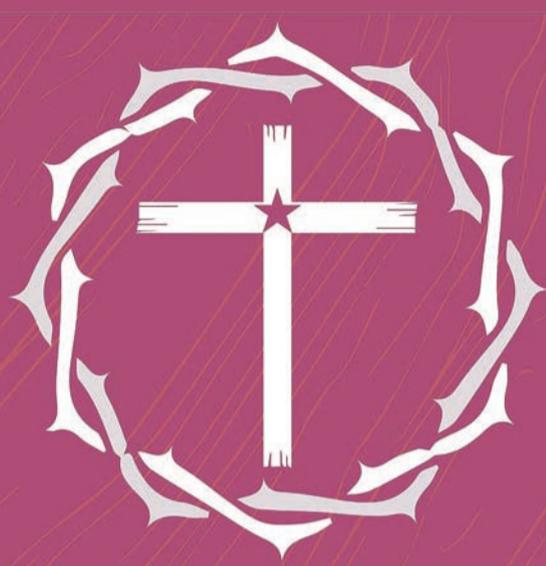
ArtReach, which extends these exhibitions into the community through gallery tours and workshops for FCPS Title I elementary schools and other underserved groups. Co-chaired by Cindy Green and Christine Wang, the May 8 sunset party will feature festive fare from Windows Catering, music, and much more. Visit www.mpaart.org or call 703-790-1953.

FRIDAY/MAY 9

Wellness and Safety Expo. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. More than 50 local vendors, including government agencies, nonprofits, and local businesses will be on hand to provide a wide range of resources designed to help attendees enhance their physical and mental well-being. Exhibitors will offer information on health and wellness topics such as exercise, independent living, health and life insurance, hypnotherapy and more. Visit www.viennava.gov/wellness.

MAY 10-JUNE 15

"Jesus Christ Superstar." 8-10 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Produced



JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

Tickets: \$25-\$40
Student & Military
Discounts Available

Show Times
May 10 - June 15, 2025

Check out “Jesus Christ Superstar” May 10-June 15, 2025 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, this groundbreaking musical has captivated audiences for over 50 years. Set against the backdrop of the final days of Jesus Christ’s life, the story is uniquely told through the eyes of Judas Iscariot. Explore the personal relationships, struggles, and betrayals between Jesus, Judas, Mary Magdalene, and others, all told through a powerful rock score.

Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/jesus-christ-superstar>

SATURDAY/MAY 10

27th Annual Eagle Festival. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Mason Neck State Park. This festival highlights the importance of eagles and their habitats as well as the natural history of Northern Virginia and combines fun with educational activities that encourage guests to gain a new appreciation for the environment. Park staff will be joined by various exhibitors on the visitor center lawn for a full day of animal shows, live music, hands-on activities and outdoor recreation clinics. Parking for the event is offsite at George Mason’s Gunston Hall located at 10709 Gunston Rd, Mason Neck, Va. Shuttles will provide free transportation to and from the festival at Mason Neck State Park and will be running about every 15-20 minutes from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Virginia Touch-a-Truck. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Stone Springs Hospital Center, 24440 Stone Springs Blvd., Dulles. Horn free hour 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. for sensitive ears. Admission is \$5. First 300 kids receive a free diecast car/truck.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Masterpiece Mini-Golf at the Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Launching during the Second Saturday event, Masterpiece Mini-Golf is a fully artist-designed, 18-hole mini-golf course that fuses fine art, interactive education, and family-friendly fun. The first nine holes debut this May, with the second nine set to open in June.

Each hole pays tribute to a legendary artist or movement—think Monet, Kahlo, Banksy, Michelangelo—with imaginative design, interpretive signage, and hands-on engagement. It’s art history reimagined as a vibrant, participatory game—where every putt is a brushstroke of discovery.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Stamp Out Hunger Postal Food Drive. Stamp Out Hunger is the largest one-day food drive in America, and letter carriers are proud to deliver for every food bank counting on us — over 1.9 billion lbs of food collected since 1993. All you have to do is leave your donation by your mailbox on May 10. Neighbors served by the West Springfield, Burke, Central and North Springfield post offices can help stock the ECHO Food Pantry with donations to the Letter Carriers’ Food Drive.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Asian American & Pacific Islander Festival. 12-4 p.m. At Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike in Annandale. This free, family-friendly event promises to be a day of culture, community and fun, with activities and entertainment for all ages. Event Highlights: Cultural Performances: Enjoy captivating dance and music performances

from local AAPI artists, bringing traditional and modern expressions to life on stage.

Interactive Workshops: Participate in hands-on workshops, including calligraphy, origami and martial arts demonstrations, perfect for all ages.

Culinary Delights: Savor delicious AAPI cuisine with food vendors offering a variety of authentic dishes and treats.

Art Exhibits: Explore stunning art displays featuring works by AAPI artists, celebrating heritage and creativity.

Children’s Activities: Kids can enjoy face painting, storytelling sessions and engaging crafts designed to teach and entertain.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Craft and Vendor Faire. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Woman’s Club of Springfield Craft and Vendor Faire – Shop unique craft and vendor items!

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Terrapin Puppet Theatre: “The Paper Escaper”. 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. At first, the world of the Paper Escaper exists only in white, blacks and greys—but then, the Illustrator reveals a vividly colored pop-up book and the book’s newest character, Benny. The plucky puppet protagonist has aspirations that take him off of the page and he is eager to explore the world beyond the book. This non-verbal work uses striking visuals and puppetry, as well as dynamic original music and cartoon-like sound effects, to tell a story of determination, friendship and the power of following your own path.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

Annual Spring Faire. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Craft and Vendor Show. Proceeds benefit the Bethany House.

SATURDAY/MAY 10

44th Annual Spring Civil War Mosby Bus Tour, “Mosby and the End of the War.” Sponsored by the Stuart - Mosby Historical Society. Tour Leaders will be Kevin Pawlak and Rob Orrison. Follow Mosby’s Rangers during the closing acts of the Civil War, from the final fights to the disbandment at Salem. Cost is \$80 members of the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society \$90 for non-members. Tour does not include lunch. To sign up contact Rob Orrison at 703-431-2869 or email mosbytours@gmail.com or send your check to Rob Orrison (make checks payable to Rob) at 102 Melody Lane Stafford, VA 22554. Venmo: @Robert-Orrison. No refunds after May 1, 2025.

MONDAY/MAY 12

Our Man in Moscow – In-Person. 1-2:30 p.m. At Reston Library, Reston. International trade lawyer Steve Creskoff shares some amusing and revealing experiences he had while working on a project for the World Bank in Moscow in the early 2000s, along with insight into today’s US-Russia relations. Visit Our Man in Moscow - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home

TUESDAY/MAY 13

NARFE Chapter Meeting. 1 p.m. At Vienna Community Center. Guest speaker Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert. Free. Members and guests welcome.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 14

“The King of Masks” (China; directed by Wu Tianming) in Mandarin with English subtitles. 6:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. In 1930s China, Wang is an aged street performer who practices the change-mask opera art of bian lian. He laments that he has no male heirs to carry on his mysterious and complicated art and trade. At an illegal child market, Wang buys what he believes to be an orphan boy to become his adopted grandson and apprentice.

THURSDAY/MAY 15

“Ki Ho’alu: That’s Slack Key Guitar”. 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This compelling look at Hawaiian slack-key guitar unveils a cultural richness that is uniquely Hawaiian. The story is told not by a narrator but by the artists telling their stories in their own words so that the spirit and feeling of the Hawaiian people emerge.

THURSDAY/MAY 15

Military Mental Health and Transitions. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With Facilitators: Robyne Davis, MA, LPC; Mimi Miller, Military Wife, mother and daughter; Katie Altman, M.Ed., FCPS School Counselor. They will discuss common stressors faced by service members and their families during times of transition. Strategies will be provided to help relieve stress while navigating these transitions. Primary topics will include support for children who move schools, support for families to connect with new communities and support for families regarding stages of development. Military and civilian resources will be shared, including Blue Star Families, Military OneSource and other relevant organizations.

THURSDAY/MAY 15

Workhouse Arts Center Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser. 12-5 p.m. At Laurel Hill Golf Course, 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton. This exciting event brings together arts supporters and golf enthusiasts for a day of friendly competition, networking, and philanthropy. Proceeds benefit the Workhouse’s arts education programs, exhibitions, and community outreach initiatives. Registration & Sponsorship: Sponsorships and foursomes are available now. Visit www.workhousearts.org/golf to register or become a sponsor.

Schedule:
10:30 a.m. - Registration Opens
11:00 a.m. - Box lunch
11:45 a.m. - Mega Putt Contest
12:00 noon - Shotgun Start
4:45 p.m. - Awards/Reception

THURSDAY/MAY 15

Vienna Economic Summit. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Vienna Community Center. This free event brings together local officials and regional economic experts for a morning of insight and recognition. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding

of Vienna’s current economic outlook, upcoming development projects, and trends affecting the region—particularly the impact of federal workforce changes on Northern Virginia. In addition to expert panels, the summit will include Legacy Business Awards, celebrating Vienna businesses that have been operating for 20, 30, 40, 50, and 60 years. Visit the website, www.explorevienna.com.

THURSDAY/MAY 15

Bike to Work Day 2025. More than 100 Pit Stops Located Across the Metropolitan Washington Region. Join thousands of area commuters for the free 24th annual event celebrating bicycling as a fun, low-cost, healthy, and environmentally friendly way to get around. Riders can find Bike to Work Day pit stops around the metropolitan region in DC, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. The first 18,000 to register and attend one of the pit stops will receive a free commemorative red Bike to Work Day T-shirt. Pit Stop information is available at <https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/find-your-pit-stop>
Website: <https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/>
Registration: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4886950>

FRIDAY/MAY 16

Art Guild of Clifton Art Show. 9-5 p.m. At the Clifton Presbyterian Church, Manse, located at 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. Fine Art Original Paintings in oil, acrylics, and watercolor along with exquisite jewelry, quilting (not quilting) demonstrations and live painting en Plein Air. All welcome, admission free.

FRIDAY/MAY 16

McLean Day Friday Night Carnival Rides. 2-10 p.m. At Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Rd., McLean. Come enjoy carnival rides and games the afternoon and evening before the McLean Day festival! Ride wristbands and tickets are sold onsite and online. Advance purchase is available at qrco.de/McLeanDay25. Patrons can also vote for their favorite candidates running for seats on the MCC Governing Board from 4-8 p.m. in the voting tent.

FRIDAY/MAY 16

Clifton Homes Tour. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. CCWC’s 48th Homes Tour for charity. Four homes and Cloverleaf Equine Center will be open. Clifton Presbyterian Church will have a Vendor Fair, Silent Auction, etc. Tickets \$35 in advance. Website: <https://cliftoncwc.org/>

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Civil War & Militaria Show. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Vendors welcome. Admission is \$5 per person. Contact dhakenson@verizon.net, 703-785-5294

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Spring Fest. 6-10 p.m. At Lansdowne Resort. Presented by EMS Studios. This year’s event aims to raise awareness and funds for the local charity Reset180, an organization

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19



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Don't Panic But Do Avoid Tick Bites

Source: Fairfax County Health Department

Ticks are active in Fairfax County almost year round, including warm winter days.

Lyme disease is still the best known and most common disease spread by ticks in Virginia, but there are others such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever and ehrlichiosis. Factors like weather, habitat and the availability of host animals can affect the tick population from year-to-year and make it hard to predict their numbers.

Here's what you can do to prevent tick bites and avoid getting sick from the bite of a tick.

8 Tips to Avoid Tick Bites

Before You Go Outdoors:

1.) Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, fishing or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.

2.) Use permethrin on clothing and gear. Clothing can be treated with 0.5 percent permethrin, an insecticide that repels and kills ticks. It can be purchased from the outdoors section of several retailers. Follow the label instructions. This is not for use on skin and must dry thoroughly before you can wear clothing that has been treated with permethrin.

3.) Use a repellent. Repellents can be applied to exposed skin and clothing to help repel ticks. Follow the label instructions. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents that are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) They will contain one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, 2-undecanone, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE) or para-menthane-diol (PMD). EPA's search tool can help you find the product that is right for you.

4.) Avoid contact with ticks.

After You Come Inside:

5.) Check your clothes for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.

6.) Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine animals, coats and backpacks.

SEE ALL ABOUT TICKS, PAGE 19
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 17

dedicated to combating human trafficking in Northern Virginia. P20 was introduced to Reset180 through its membership with the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, which allowed the studio to learn more about the significant impact the organization has in the local community.

SATURDAY/MAY 17

McLean Day 2025. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. At Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Rd., McLean. McLean's biggest annual festival is celebrating its 110th Birthday! Enjoy rockin' music, beer and wine garden, gourmet food trucks, exhibitors and sponsors, giveaways, balloon animals, games, a magician, petting zoo, amusements, large and small carnival rides, and much more! This event draws approximately 10,000+ patrons throughout the day. Ride tickets sold onsite and online. Advance purchase is available at qrco.de/McLean-Day25. Patrons can also vote for their favorite candidates running for seats on the MCC Governing Board from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. in the voting tent.

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Photography Exhibition. 12-4 p.m. At St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 6320 Hanover Ave., Springfield. Photography Exhibition by Veterans Behind the Lens Collective and a Juried Show of Fairfax County High School Students. Donations and proceeds from sales

benefit FACETS (<https://facetscares.org/>).

SATURDAY/MAY 17

Spring Civil War & Militaria Show & Sale. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Featuring books, relics and memorabilia from all wars. Admission: \$5 per person. All vendors are welcome! For additional information contact Don Hakenson at dhakenson@verizon.net, or call 703-785-5294 or contact Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net or call 703-389-1505.

SUNDAY/MAY 18

Asian Festival. 12-6 p.m. In Historic Old Town Fairfax, Fairfax City. Sponsored by the Old Town Fairfax Business Association, this year celebrates the "Year of the Snake" and is shaping up to be one of their biggest and best events to date. This fun, free, family-friendly event features a full line up of live entertainment and cultural performances, 60+ Asian food vendors and food trucks, 60+ non-food vendors and exhibitions, kids activities, cosplay contest, beer garden and karaoke. The Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe, with its crowd-favorite Lion Dance, will return to celebrate the Lunar Year of the Snake. Visit the website: asianfestivalonmain.com.

SATURDAY/MAY 18

3rd Annual Northern Virginia Tea Festival. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza in Reston.

Hosted in partnership with the RoSige Foundation and Reston Community Center, this vibrant, family-friendly outdoor festival brings together tea lovers, small businesses, and culture enthusiasts from across the region for a one-of-a-kind celebration of all things tea. This year's festival will feature:

- A curated marketplace of over 40 tea vendors, artisans, and wellness brands
- Live cultural performances and tea ceremonies
- Educational talks and demos from tea experts
- A Kids' Tea Tent with activities for families
- Live music, food vendors, and more!

SUNDAY/MAY 18

N Gauge Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will have N gauge model trains on display and running. 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/MAY 18

Open House. 1-3 p.m. At Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center, 10800 Belmont Blvd., Lorton. Enjoy free pony rides, tours, and an ice cream truck! Visit <https://simplechanges.org/>

events/open-house/

MAY 29 TO JUNE 1

Tyson's Library Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Thursday, 29 May, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Friday, 30 May, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday, 31 May, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday, 1 June, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less <https://www.tysonslibraryfriends.org/>

SUNDAY/JUNE 1

Night of the Stars Annual Homecoming Concert and 25/26 Season Kickoff. 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center. Join in a festive evening featuring dynamic performances by returning artists and a special reveal of the upcoming season. After the concert, guests can stay for music, dancing, and light refreshments. Admission is "Pay What You Will," and all proceeds support the Workhouse Performing Arts Program. Event Details: Sunday, June 1 | Doors 5:30 PM | Concert 6:00 PM McGuireWoods Gallery (Bldg. 16, 2nd floor), Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton, VA Free onsite parking | Casual purple-and-gold attire encouraged More info: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/homecoming-concert>

Vegging Out in Print



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

During my "formative years," childhood to now, other than baby food vegetables my late mother no doubt fed me (they didn't/don't have cream cheese and American cheese sandwiches - my go-to food staple, in a jar), other than Green Giant corn niblets and/or seasonal corn on the cob, I never, and I mean never, ate vegetables. Now whether it was my maternal grandmother's Eastern European cooking or my mother's need to clean up the kitchen by a certain time, I was never made to eat or even exposed to many vegetables while eating at home. (When my mother did cook a vegetable - primarily for my father, she used a pressure-cooker. Whatever life those vegetables had going into that pot, they came out limp and lifeless.)

As my eating habits have evolved (even cavemen and women evolved), I have occasionally had vegetables on my plate. Never a large portion but enough that I wasn't the object of ridicule. Mostly I have come to semi-tolerate green vegetables, even spinach believe it or not, Popeye cartoons notwithstanding. Apparently, vegetables, as I learned later in life, are not necessarily supposed to be cooked in a pressure-cooker or squeezed/eaten out of a can. And when prepared properly, some vegetables actually taste okay.

In summary, I've become mostly civilized when it comes to food. Nothing to brag about and nowhere near normal. If the dinner was not prepared/selected, off the children's menu, it's likely most choices I won't eat for any number of reasons: name, look, smell, texture, country of origin, et cetera. I don't own any big-boy pants, so yours truly is more often than not, yours stupid/stubborn.

Recently however, I crossed the line between me and normal. Inadvertently, due to availability, I bought some pre-packaged French green beans. After eating them I found their "pencil thin mustache" width appealing in taste and appearance and not because they reminded me of Ricky Ricardo, as sung by the late, great Jimmy Buffett. As with Mikey, from those old Life cereal television commercials, Kenny likes it.

Unfortunately, ever since that first unintentional purchase and subsequent serving for dinner, in repeated trips to our local Sprouts supermarket where I originally bought these fancy green beans, I have been too late. The beans are all gone. After my third unsuccessful venture into their store/produce section, I did the first of two actions I've never done before. First, I asked a produce employee about a vegetable's availability, since during my mid-afternoon arrivals, the beans were always gone. Her answer was that the French beans are popular, and they usually run out. She then suggested I return in the morning.

This brings me to the second action. Never, ever, have I made a special trip - in the morning no less, to a supermarket/produce stand, whatever, to buy a vegetable. This kind of "special" action typically is reserved for an Entenmann's or a Ben & Jerry's ice cream sale, but a vegetable? To invoke one of my wife Dina's favorite quotes: "Hardly." I can't say I'm proud of my behavior, but neither am I embarrassed. As my father-in-law so often says: "It is what it is."

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

All About Ticks

FROM PAGE 18

7.) Shower soon after being outdoors. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.

8.) Check your body for ticks after being outdoors. Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks: Under the arms; In and around the ears; Inside belly button; Back of the knees; In and around the hair; Between the legs; Around the waist

How To Remove a Tick

Checking for ticks after outdoor activities will help prevent infection. It usually takes several hours for diseases to be transmitted from a tick to you.

Here are five steps to successfully remove a tick:

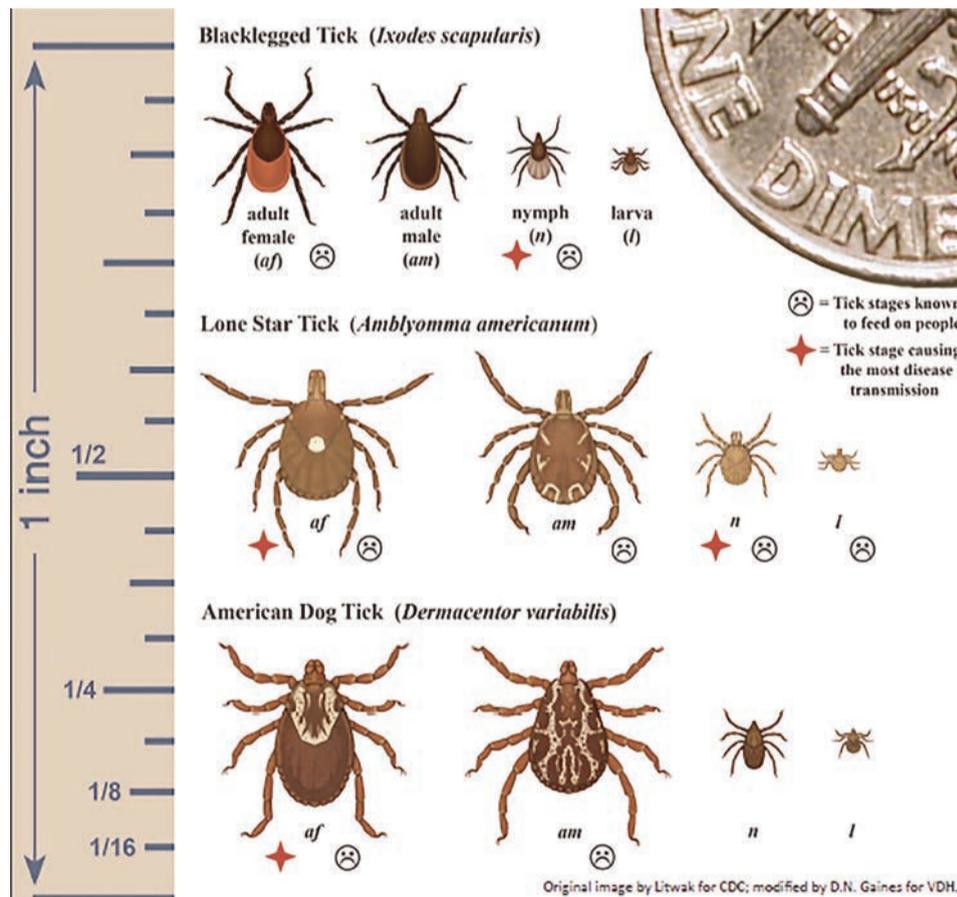
Use fine-tipped tweezers or shield your fingers with a tissue, paper towel, or rubber gloves when removing the tick.

Grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure.

Do not twist or jerk the tick; this may cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin.

Do not squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick because its fluids may contain infectious organisms.

After removing the tick, thoroughly disin-



There are three types of ticks found in Northern Virginia that bite people.

fect the bite site and wash your hands with soap and water.

Tick Identification Service

Fairfax County Health Department offers a free tick identification service to provide you with information about the type of tick that bit you.

This service does not test ticks for disease-causing agents (e.g., Lyme disease bac-

teria), and staff do not provide medical advice. This identification can be useful should you need to speak to your medical provider.

The Health Department does not remove ticks. To have a tick identified, first remove the attached tick, and then choose one of the following options: Submit a photo; Bring it in; Mail it in.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/fightthebite/tick-identification

Primary Voters Head to Polls for Early Voting

There are no GOP candidates for 8 of 15 House of Delegates seats representing Fairfax County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Early voting started Friday, May 2, at some locations in Fairfax County for the June 17 Democratic primary. Fairfax County is one of the 133 Virginia counties and cities with Democratic primaries this year. A party primary occurs only if two or more candidates of the same party qualify.

According to the Virginia Department of Elections, the last day for primary candidates to file for statewide and House of Delegates offices was April 3. Political parties choose candidates for the November general elections through either a primary or a caucus.

The June 17 Democratic primary determines which Democratic candidate who sought the party's nomination will have their name on the official Virginia Department of Elections ballot for the General Election on Nov. 4. Candidates for office must have met certain qualifications and were required to file specific ballot access documents to qualify to appear on the ballot.

Only 31 counties and cities in Virginia are holding both Demo-

cratic primary and Republican primary elections on June 17. Fairfax County is not among those with a Republican primary.

Who's on the June 17 Democratic primary ballot in Fairfax County?

The June 17 Democratic Primary Election in Fairfax County is for statewide offices, including Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Virginia House of Delegates members. There is no June 17 primary for Virginia governor because the Democratic and Republican parties nominated their candidates, who will appear on the ballot in November. The Republican candidate for governor is Winsome Sears. The Democratic candidate is Abigail Spanberger.

For Virginia's lieutenant governor, there are six Democratic candidates in the primary: Levar Marcus Stoney, Babur Lateef, Aaron Rouse, Victor Salgado, Ghazala Hashmi, and Alexander J. Bastani.

There are two Democratic can-

didates for attorney general in the June 17 Democratic primary: Jerrauld "Jay" Jones and Shannon Taylor. The winner will face off against the Republican candidate, Jason Miyares, who has served as attorney general since 2022.

Fairfax County voters will cast their ballots for Virginia House of Delegates members this November. Delegates are elected for two-year terms. The Virginia House of Delegates has 100 members, 15 of whom represent constituents in various areas of Fairfax County.

Katie Gorka, chair of the Fairfax County Republican Committee, said the committee seeks House of Delegate candidates to run in the November general election. Non-primary individuals for the Nov. 4, 2025, House of Delegates have until 7 p.m. on June 17, 2025 to file the required documents.

"If you are unhappy about the high taxes in Fairfax County, declining safety, and falling school test scores, running for delegate is a great way to get involved and make a difference. If you are interested, please contact nfo@fairfax-gop.org," Gorka told The Connection.

No incumbent member of the House of Delegates representing Fairfax County is facing a Democratic challenger, and so there are no primary races. There are no elected Republicans representing Fairfax County in the General Assembly at this time.

Status of current candidates for the Virginia House of Delegates Districts within Fairfax County, according to the Virginia Department of Elections:

- ❖ District 4 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent, Charniele Herring, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 6 (Fairfax part): Kristin Hoffman (R) is challenging the Democratic incumbent, Rip Sullivan, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 7 (Fairfax part): Cassandra Aucoin (R) is challenging the Democratic incumbent, Karen Keys-Gamarra, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 8 Fairfax (part): Indira Massey (R) is challenging the Democratic incumbent Irene Shin, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 9 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging Democratic incumbent Karrie Delaney, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 10 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent, Dan Helmer, who is running for re-

Locations and Hours for June 17, 2025, Democratic Primary

Fairfax County Government Center 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Conference Rooms 2/3, Fairfax, 22035 Open Google Maps	May 2 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Closed Monday May 26 (Memorial Day)
Mt. Vernon Governmental Center 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria, 22306 Open Google Maps	May 2 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Closed Monday May 26 (Memorial Day)
North County Governmental Center 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, 20190 Open Google Maps	May 2 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Closed Monday May 26 (Memorial Day)
Burke Centre Library 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke 22015 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Centreville Regional Library 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville 20121 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Franconia Governmental Center 6121 Franconia Rd, Alexandria 22310 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Great Falls Library 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls 22066 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Jim Scott Community Center 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax 22031 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Herndon Fortnightly Library 768 Center Street, Herndon 20170 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Lorton Community Center 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton 22079 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Mason Governmental Center 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale 22003 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
McLean Governmental Center 1437 Balls Hill Rd, McLean 22101 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sully Governmental Center 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly 20151 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Thomas Jefferson Library 7415 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church 22042 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church 22043 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
West Springfield Governmental Center 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield 22152 Open Google Maps	June 7 – June 14 Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

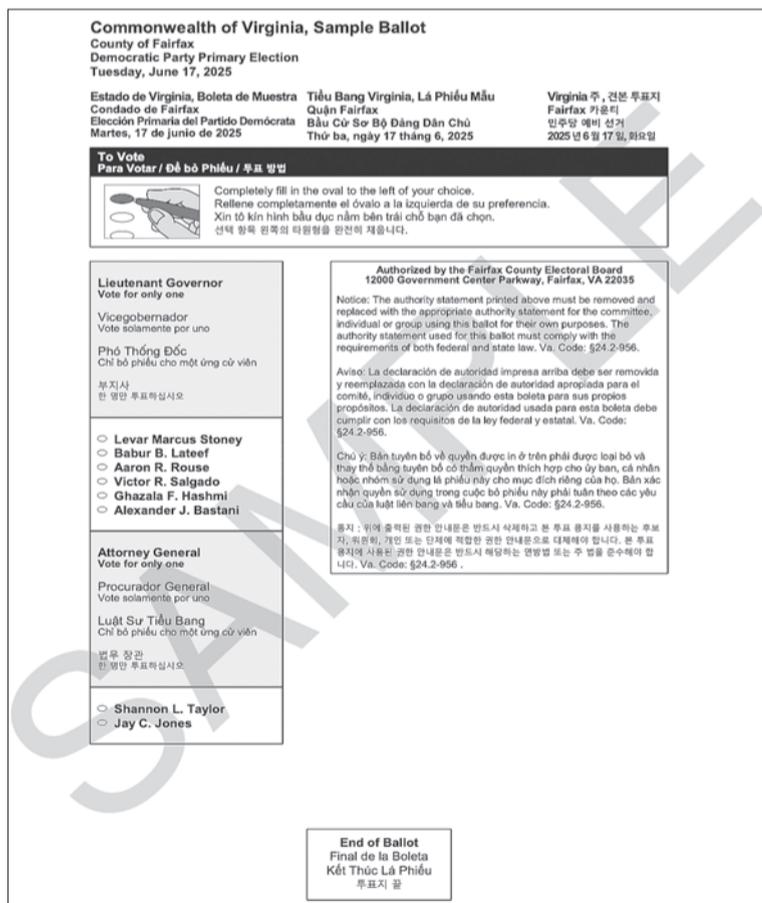
FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV.

Locations and Hours for June 17, 2025, Democratic Primary

- tion.
- ❖ District 11 (Fairfax part): Adam Wise (R) is challenging Democratic incumbent David Bulova (D), who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 12 Fairfax part: No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent, Holly Seibold (D), who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 13 Fairfax part: No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent, Marcus Simon, who is running for re-election.
- ❖ District 14 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent, Vivian Watts, running for re-election.
- ❖ District 15 (Fairfax part): Sandra Davis (R) is challenging Democratic incumbent Laura

- Cohen (D), who is running for re-election.
 - ❖ District 16 (Fairfax part): Richard Hayden (R) is challenging Democratic incumbent Paul Krizek (D), who is running for re-election.
 - ❖ District 17 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging the Democratic incumbent Mark Sickles, who is running for re-election.
 - ❖ District 18 (Fairfax part): Ed McGovern (R) is challenging Democratic incumbent Kathy Tran (D), who is running for re-election.
 - ❖ District 19 (Fairfax part): No GOP candidate is yet challenging Democratic incumbent Rozia Henson, who is running for re-election.
- For more, see <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/june-17-2025-statewide-and-house-of-del--dem/>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

Sample ballot