

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 8, 2025

## Celebrating the Nation's Semiquincentennial

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

### Fairfax County begins the 250th birthday party at Mount Vernon.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

With the Declaration of Independence signed on July 4, 1776, this year starts a planned year-long celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial anniversary. The United States will turn 250 years old next year. It is also the United States Army's 250th anniversary following the creation of the Continental Army. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association held a kick-off of county celebrations the first weekend in May which will culminate in July 2026.

George Washington, who left his Virginia estate on May 4, 1775 to attend the Second Continental Congress, would be appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, and later elected the first President of the newly formed United States of America. This week's May 4 event at his Mount Vernon estate noted Washington's historic departure for Philadelphia with a march to the front gates, with musicians, and revolutionary soldier re-enactors. George Washington's Mount Vernon estate was turned into a military encampment

for its revolutionary war weekend. The event marked the opening of the historic estates' new Patriots Path and military encampment installations which will be open to visitors year-round.

The organization's president and CEO, Dr. Douglas Bradburn, a historian, told the crowd of assembled visitors that four important lessons can be learned from Washington's actions in history: duty, resilience, humility and unity. Washington had sacrificed over eight years of privation to serve his country in the face of a powerful monarch and other obstacles, Bradburn said. He showed resilience, a critical character element, to survive despite hardship and early defeats. He exhibited humility, listening to others, and ceding his power at the end of the war; which Bradburn emphasized was a "powerful trait in leadership." And Washington was able to unite a diverse group by helping them understand "their shared values and a way forward."

Chairman Jeffrey McKay and Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck noted the role early Virginians of Fairfax County played in establishing the new nation. Storck said: "The first shots were fired in Lexington, but the ideas were planted in Fairfax County, ... the power that sustained the patriots ... liberty, democracy, all [people] created equal."

McKay described Virginians' "spark" to the Congress which "helped to shape the nation."

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 12



Colonial soldier re-enactors stand to attention as George Washington speaks at Mount Vernon.



Mount Vernon event portrayed Washington's departure on May 4, 1775 for the congress convening in Philadelphia.



Silas Miller, of Buffalo NY, and Grenadier Gregory Pohorecki of Whitestown NY portray British troops in His Majesties 64th Marine Regiment, wearing traditional bearskin hats, saying they wanted to wear the hats, and also tell the story of the losing side.



Chairman Jeff McKay, Mount Vernon Association. President/CEO Dr. Douglas Bradburn, and Supervisor Dan Storck (not pictured) addressed visitors during Fairfax County's first semiquincentennial celebration event.



Enactor George Washington before a replica of his field tent.



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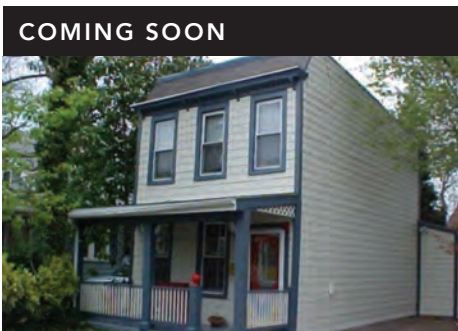


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# Huntley Meadows Park Turns 50

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

**Celebrating  
a \$1.00 deal.**

GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**S**unday morning, May 4, at Huntley Meadows Park was damp and drizzly and by 12 noon, when the park's 50th anniversary event began, drippy. It was appropriate weather for Wetlands Awareness Day – wet.

Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, dubbed the event a “big anniversary” because 2025 marks 50 years since the park's creation and 75 years since the origin of the Fairfax County Park Authority. McKay called Huntley “his favorite park,” noting that he has always lived nearby. The park is an “escape from the urban jungle. It's important to our mental health to enjoy nature,” he said. He saluted the late Norma Hoffman for her “tenacity and passion” in preserving the park and fighting its threats.

## More Information

The visitor center has an exhibit recounting the park's history until June 1. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park>

Franconia Supervisor Rodney Lusk said Huntley Meadows is his favorite park too. He and McKay presented a Board of Supervisors resolution commending the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park for their “commitment to the environment, community engagement and partnership.”

“Huntley Meadows Park is a vital part of our regional ecosystem, demonstrating the power of collective action to bring about thoughtful conservation,” said Lusk. “The Park is not only an example of natural beauty and biodiversity, but also an escape into nature where visitors learn about the importance of environmental stewardship. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Huntley Meadows Park and 200th anniversary of Historic Huntley in 2025, I am grateful to the Friends groups who have preserved

SEE HUNTLEY MEADOWS, PAGE 14



Youngsters colored birds at the Friends of Dyke Marsh table.

The Police Department's wildlife tent was popular, especially the animal pelts.



A taxidermied gray fox was an attention-getter.

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Using “decoys,” Laurie Dodd discussed insects like the rosy maple moth and the rolypoly bug.



County foresters urged people to help control the invasive spotted lanternfly.





FY2026 Budget Timeline

CHAIRMAN JEFF MCKAY NEWSLETTER, MAY 6, 2025

# Supervisors Reverse Proposed Real Estate Tax Increase

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

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

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

SEE BUDGET MARKUP, PAGE 5



SCREENSHOT: SOURCE FACEBOOK FCPD VIDEO

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid of Fairfax County Public Schools and Chief Kevin Davis of the Fairfax County Police Department

## FCPS Student Stabbed Inside West Potomac HS

County authorities prohibit parents from signing students out afterwards.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Chief Kevin Davis of the Fairfax County Police Department joined Superintendent Michelle Reid of Fairfax County Public Schools at a press conference early yesterday afternoon to address a stabbing that occurred at about 9:40 a.m. that morning inside West Potomac High School in Mount Vernon.

Three students got into a physical fight, police say, which resulted in a 16-year-old student stabbed and being transported to the hospital in a life-threatening condition. A 15-year-old student was taken into custody and charged with malicious wounding. Viral videos document dozens of students witnessing the sudden violent altercation that left the victim collapsed and bloodied on the hallway floor.

Worried parents rushed to the school after getting texts and videos from their teens who were still inside, only to find that officials wouldn't let students leave or be signed out.

"For the students who had to endure this today, it's tough. They're teenagers; they're kids. They need their parents. They

want to talk to their parents," Davis said. "But their presence in such a traumatic scene like this is worthy of our attention."

"The last thing we want as responsible adults, whether we're

FCPS or FCPD, is to release emotional groups of students, and something retaliatory in nature happens down the street this way or down the street that way. So it's always a measured, calculated decision. ... I'm sorry your children had to endure what they had to endure today," Davis said.

The suspect and the victim were known to each other, police say, and the victim's condition has since been upgraded to stable. Police have recovered the knife and are interviewing a third person. The school implemented a modified lunch schedule and brought in counseling teams; classes remained in session.

Davis, Major Elizabeth Melendez and Brian Lambert of the Fairfax County Police Department and Reid provided an incident overview and initial response.

"The perpetrator is in custody. A third person, whom we are questioning, we are not describing him as a person in custody because, at the moment, we don't anticipate any criminal charges on this third person. He was close enough to the altercation that we want to

SEE STABBING, PAGE 5



Stabbing

FROM PAGE 4

interview him to figure out what he knows,” Davis said. He stressed that the department has a video of the altercation, just like others do. “But the video doesn’t tell the entire story. So we’re interviewing that third person.”

Reid said they have counseling support to work with the students and provide on-site services before they leave. “To answer the gentleman’s question to our decision around the tape put inside, it’s also a crime scene. And so we also have to take direction from law enforcement in terms of the use of certain parts of the building.”

One parent told Reid that this incident has multiple victims, and his daughter is one because she witnessed it. “She’s telling me, ‘Dad, get me out of here.’ [If] everything is safe, like you’re saying, why can’t I check my daughter out of school right now?”

Reid replied that their leadership team’s paramount responsibility is to ensure our campus is safe. “At this moment, they’re also making sure that our four lunch periods happen in a calm and orderly and safe manner. ... As soon as the administrative staff is not focused on the current students in front of them, they’re going to be able to have an orderly dismissal before school ends for parents that

want to have their students, but they do need to take care of first things first.”

When asked about security measures, Reid said they are currently “in the middle of a pilot structure this spring.” “They were not in place at this school this morning, but they were at another school in Fairfax County.”

The system Reid referenced is the Weapons Detection Pilot program.

“The weapons detection scanners are more sensitive than traditional metal detectors. The technology in the system can more accurately identify metal sources that may be potentially harmful rather than sounding an alarm for all types of metal, such as coins,” reports FCPS in online FAQs. “Beginning the week of April 21, 2025, the system will be deployed at least once a week by the Office of Safety and Security. The system will be deployed at a randomly selected high school during morning arrival. The system may be in place for one day or several days .... The safety screening technology can detect assorted items, including but not limited to knives, firearms, handguns, long guns, and materials and components used to construct an explosive device.”

View the FCPD video at <https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyPD/videos/1403252414367994/>.

Budget Markup

FROM PAGE 4

Herrity said in a release after the meeting that while he was glad to see the board not cutting critical 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 Operational 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.

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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ MAY 8-21, 2025 ♦ 5



# Handmade Art in Hospital Lobby Serves as Inspiration to Cancer Patients

Positive vibes are homemade at the Schar Center at Inova Fairfax.

By MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

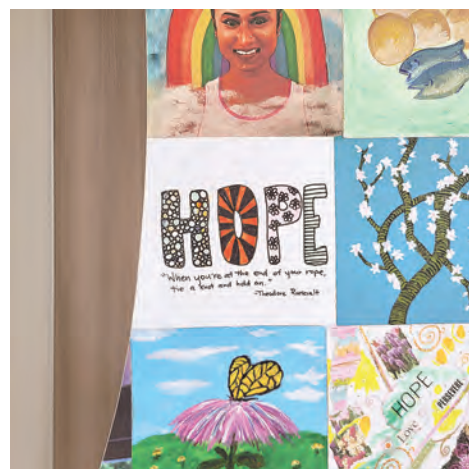
At the Schar Center at Inova Fairfax, there is hope for cancer patients not only in the medical breakthroughs and technology at the center to fight cancer, but hope also comes in the shape of a sign in the lobby constructed of inspirational pictures and messages from patients who passed through the center.

Members of the Artist-in-Residence worked with patients, staff, family members and caregivers to put together a large collage on the HOPE letters. Participants were able to take materials home or work on-site to express themselves. Tinu Prakash is one of the Artists in Residence who contributed to the project with a portrait of Jennifer Bires, a leader who recognized the value of the arts to reduce burn-out amongst the staff at the Schar. Another square of art was by Kailey, age 13, who drew a nurse with a Superman shirt, saying that the medical and essential workers were the “unsung heroes.”

Another picture called “Lemons, Oranges, and Limes, Oh My!” was a still-life painting of fruit in a bowl but this idea came from a visitor who brought a backpack of fresh fruit from his yard in California. His father was a patient at Schar that loved going to the



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION  
It's a bird, it's a plane ... it's Supernurse!  
Drawn by Kailey, age 13.



Quotes, drawings, paintings and color make up the inspirational collage.

yard and picking the fresh fruit when he was visiting. “All that good fruit must have done something, the surgeon said they got all the



The HOPE sign helps spring enthusiasm at the Schar Center at Inova Fairfax.

cancer - no chemo needed,” he said.

It all started at the Smith Center Artists in Residence Program at Inova Schar Cancer Institute where everyone affected by cancer in some way created this sculpture “intended to focus on gratitude, hope and healing. They invite everyone to participate, no art skills needed.

The HOPE sign does get noticed too. Many times when patients see their own art-

work or the artwork of others incorporated into this larger symbol, it provides comfort and reminds them they’re not alone in their journey.

Inova continuously adds new pieces based on patient needs, newly acquired works, and evolving ideas about creating healing spaces so the art program ensures the environment at the center remains fresh and responsive to the community.

## Burke & Herbert Donates \$28,800 to Support Local Families

Goals for Good Recipient, NVFS, receives record high contribution.

Burke & Herbert Bank representatives presented Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) with a check for \$28,800 at the conclusion of the Bank’s annual Goals for Good Program. The amount is the highest presented to an organization in the program’s ten-year history. NVFS amassed this sum by receiving \$100 from the Bank for each goal scored by the Washington Capitals during the 2024-2025 National Hockey League (NHL) regular season.

“Thanks to a great hockey year, we’re delighted to provide our highest donation in our Goals for Good program’s ten-year history to Northern Virginia Family Service,” said David Boyle, Burke & Herbert Bank Chief Executive Officer, “NVFS is doing the heroic work needed to build self-sufficiency

and empower our local neighbors in need. Our historic bank remains committed to supporting the communities where we do business.”

Through this partnership with Monumental Sports, the Bank has raised awareness and funds for a variety of worthy not-for-profits in the DC Metro area since 2014 including Capital Youth Empowerment Program, Willing Warriors, GrandInvolve, Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, Homestretch, Inc., Rebuilding Together DC-Alexandria, Connect our Kids, Inc., Alice’s Kids, Inc. and Most Valuable Kids, Inc. In all, the bank had donated over \$225,000 to support children, housing and veterans in our community.

Burke & Herbert Bank’s Goals for Good program supports NVFS in reaching over 40,000 families in the past year. “Every day, NVFS is at the forefront serving our community, creating pathways to health and economic wellbeing for our neighbors,” said Stephanie Berkowitz, president and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS).



Burke & Herbert Bank presents NVFS, the Bank’s Goals for Good recipient, with a \$28,800 donation. From the left: Angie Zirk, Burke & Herbert Bank; Kathleen McMahon, NVFS; Phil Quintana, Burke & Herbert Bank; Sara Kreitzer, NVFS; Yvette Golladay, and Jane Petty, Burke & Herbert Bank.

“We are grateful for this partnership and for Burke & Herbert Bank’s dedication to making a real difference in the lives of so many.”

Northern Virginia Family Service’s (NVFS) works to empower more than 40,000 individu-

als to achieve self-sufficiency. With these essential resources, our community is better equipped for future success and engagement among all of our neighbors. NVFS celebrated 100 years of service in 2024. Learn more at nvfs.org.

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# The Mondloch House

## Multiple Generations Give Back.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**G**iving back to the community is a family affair for three generations of Mondlochs who came out on a sunny Saturday, April 19, to plant plants, paint the kitchen and spruce up the Mondloch House and grounds.

Rick Mondloch, son of Mondloch House founder, Bob Mondloch, for whom the complex is named, said that helping others is ingrained. Growing up, his parents took him and his seven siblings to the former Lorton Prison to conduct Bible study. "We were brought up to give back to the community," he said.

Shane Mondloch and Joe Bynum, adult grandsons of Bob, helped clean out and organize the shed. "Giving back's a no brainer," Shane said.

The Lockheed Boulevard complex has two buildings, one that provides shelter for eight chronically homeless single adults with mental health needs and the second with efficiency apartments for 20 single adults who have experienced homelessness. Apartment residents have leases and pay rent.

Bob Mondloch was also the first treasurer of New Hope Housing, an organization started in 1977 to end homelessness by providing homeless people services to succeed. New Hope Housing now manages shelter programs in Northern Virginia providing 160 beds year-round, an additional 80 to 100 beds in the winter and permanent housing for over 100 single adults.

Bob Mondloch, a soil conservationist, and his wife, Mary, moved to the Mount Vernon area from Minnesota for his job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1967. That same year, Mary tragically died of a cerebral hemorrhage at age 30, leaving Bob to raise six boys and two girls, the youngest three years old. He placed an ad in a local newspaper seeking help in his home and Joyce Redding, age 24, replied. Romance eventually blossomed and they married. Joyce, now 82, helped out on April 19.

### A Family Team

Among the 16 family members cheerfully doing chores was another son of Bob and Mary, Greg Mondloch, a Clifton resident who has a company, Mondo Improvements. He and his nephew, Nick, painted the gazebo russet red. Why? Greg answered, "Because this is what we do as a family. We love helping out where we can,"

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Evan Vahouny and Dan Mondloch tiled and painted the kitchen.



Family members and other volunteers organized the shed.



Fernando, a resident and on-site gardener, advised volunteers who planted plants in raised beds.



Greg Mondloch and Nick Bynum painted the gazebo.



adding, "It's awesome when the next generation gets involved."

Dan Monloch and his nephew, Evan Vahouny, put new white tiles in the shelter's kitchen and painted the walls.

Lindsay Lesko, whose father, Roger, is another son of Bob and Mary, and several others planted black-eyed Susans, phlox, coreop-

sis, tomatoes and peppers in raised beds. The Merrifield Garden Center donated the plants, soil and timber for the beds. Fernando, the home's onsite gardener, supervised nearby. Lesko shared a flyer she made which says, "Because taking care of the Earth means taking care of each other and even small actions, like reducing waste or growing a

garden, help create a better more stable future for all of us."

### The Mondloch House

The two Mondloch buildings blend compatibly into the neighborhood, resembling many suburban homes in Northern Virginia, unlike some shelters which are dormitory-like, explained Roger

Bowman, Program Director for New Hope Housing.

The apartment house has a breezy, wrap-around front porch, a common area, food pantry, computers and staff onsite. Each apartment has a bedroom, dinette, kitchen and bathroom. On the

SEE THE MONDLOCH, PAGE 12  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ MAY 8-21, 2025 ♦ 7



# 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 usual 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 18

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# A Budget That Reflects Our Community's Values

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK  
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

**T**hank 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 ap-



Storck

preciate 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 recom-

mendations, 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.

## Stroke Awareness Month

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

**M**ay is recognized as National Stroke Awareness Month. It is a time dedicated to raising awareness about strokes, their symptoms, prevention, the importance of swift treatment, and support for survivors and their families.

A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, happens when blood flow to an area of the brain is blocked or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. Blood carries oxygen to cells in the body. When brain cells are starved of blood, they die. There are two types of strokes: Ischemic, caused by a clot, and Hemorrhagic, caused by a rupture. A Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or "warning stroke" is caused by a temporary blockage.

Each year, approximately 800,000 people in the U.S. suffer a stroke. Even though some people are at higher risk for stroke, like stroke survivors and people with unmanaged AFib or high blood pressure (hypertension), strokes can happen to anyone, at any age. In fact, stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and a lead-



Krizek

ing cause of serious, long-term disability in the U.S. Women face a higher risk of stroke, with risk factors such as pregnancy, preeclampsia, and birth control use, especially if they also smoke. In the United States, 1 in 5 women between the ages of 55 and 75 will have a stroke. Among women, Black women have the highest prevalence of stroke.

A helpful acronym to remember the symptoms of stroke is F.A.S.T., which stands for face drooping, arms weakening, speech difficulties, and time to call 9-1-1.

My late mother had a stroke before she later passed away in 2021, and our ability to quickly identify these symptoms allowed us to get her to the emergency room at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital, where there is a dedicated Stroke Medical Director, for the emergency treatment she needed as soon as possible.

Some treatments for stroke work only if given within the first 3 hours after symptoms start. A de-

### Acting F.A.S.T. is Key to Stroke Survival

**FACE**

Does one side of the face droop when smiling?

**ARMS**

Does one arm drift downward when both arms are raised?

**SPEECH**

Is speech slurred or strange when repeating a simple phrase?

**TIME**

If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

lay in treatment increases the risk of permanent brain damage.

There are many ways to reduce your risk of stroke. Don't smoke or vape and avoid secondhand smoke. Eat healthy foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium, and reduce your intake of sugary drinks. Do regular physical activity. Keep a healthy weight and take your medications as prescribed. Lim-

it alcohol to one drink a day for women and two drinks per day for men. Get your blood pressure checked regularly and work with your health care professional to manage it if it's high. Make sure to get adequate sleep and reduce stress levels when possible. Talk to your doctor about what plan is best for you.

When you spot a stroke warning

sign, it is important to act fast. Recognizing the stroke warning signs and calling 9-1-1 immediately may make the difference between a strong recovery for the patient or long-term disability, and ultimately between survival or death. Remember, time lost is brain lost. Visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) for more information and resources.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA



The banding station



Janet Martin and Brian Rademacher head out to check the nets.



Suzanne Miller adjusts one of the 17 nets.



Banders use a cloth bag to take the extracted bird to the station.

# Banding Birds Brings Satisfaction and Data

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The 1.4-ounce female Northern cardinal was squawking and squirming between Brian Rademacher's fingers and then bit his hand, leaving a red mark, as he prepared to release her after putting a tiny metal band on her leg.

"The bite was like a severe pinch," Rademacher said calmly. The agitated bird was what he called a "recapture." She had been caught and banded there three weeks ago.

During spring migration's height, in April and May, from 6 a.m. to noon, volunteers catch and band birds in the Occoquan National Wildlife Refuge near Marumsc Creek three mornings a week, a project undertaken there every spring since 2001, except 2020, the "covid year."

They typically catch on average 20 to 30 birds in mist nets per six-hour stint, 500 per season. Their most commonly-banded bird is



Banding tools

the white-throated sparrow.

Birdcast.info shows that by April 27, 45 million birds had crossed the region since early March. Birds migrate to find food and favorable climates, and to breed.

Factors like weather, wind, human disturbances and habitat, including conditions in their wintering grounds, can affect the numbers. "A calm, cold night without rain or a big headwind is ideal for migration," said Su-



Brian Rademacher uses the bander's grip to hold this female northern cardinal.

zanne Miller, the project's leader. "Songbirds migrate at night, up high. Hawks migrate on thermals."

## Next Steps: Recording Data

The team follows Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship protocols. They do not use seeds or audio lures. They check the black, very fine, barely visible nets every



Brian Rademacher put a metal band on the cardinal.

30 minutes and if a bird is snared, carefully extract it. "It comes out of the side it went in on," explained Miller, "to prevent breaking a wing or leg."

Once in hand, they put the bird in a cloth bag and take it to the banding station where they measure the wings and tail length, weigh it and determine age and sex. The goal is to process the bird in around five min-



Bev Arnold showed a visitor the bander's grip on a white-throated sparrow.

utes to minimize stress on the bird.

One step is to blow on the bird's breast and belly to check three things, Paul Napier explained: (1) the brood patch where naked skin indicates the stage of the egg incubation cycle; (2) a cloacal protuberance that indicates breeding condition; and (3) fat, a sign of energy reserves.

The cloaca is the rear orifice or vent for the digestive, reproduction and urinary tracts. In male birds, if it is bulging like a pimple, the bird is in breeding condition. If a female has a protuberance, she likely has eggs. Minimal fat in birds could mean they spent a lot of energy traveling. Fat accumulation could in-



Banders blow on birds' bellies to study their anatomy.

dicare a healthy habitat, abundant in insects, grubs and inchworms, for example.

Among other data, volunteers record recaptures. Miller said that since 2001, out of 652 cardinals, they have recaptured 74 or 11.3 percent. Cardinals are non-migratory, resident birds in Northern Virginia.

"They don't go far from where they hatched," Miller said. The recapture statistics can help determine a bird's age. All data go to the U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory. Scientists use data to analyze bird behavior, population, distribution, survival rates and other factors.

Napier, a Falls Church resident, heads the Cape May (New Jersey) Raptor Banding Proj-



ect and says that every time he bands a bird he learns something new. He has banded raptors since 1988 and songbirds since 2005.

Beverly Arnold drives up from Fredericksburg to band. "It's a labor of love. I'm contributing to citizen science," she said.

Janet Martin from Springfield said, "It's so cool."

Banding is controlled by federal and state laws that require permits because it involves capturing and handling birds. All of this team's banding, marking and sampling is conducted under a federally-authorized bird banding permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey. The refuge also has a Virginia and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit.



Suzanne Miller uses a fake stuffed bluebird to train people on extracting birds from mist nets.

The one-square-mile Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge at the mouth of the Occoquan River on Belmont Bay has tidal marshes, grassland and forest, and four miles of trails. Observers have documented over 650 plant and 200 bird species.

The banding station is open to the public from 7 a.m. to 12 noon until Memorial Day weekend. Groups larger than 10 people need a permit. Visit <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/occoquan-bay/about-us>.

To learn how many birds migrated through an area last night, visit [www.birdcast.info](http://www.birdcast.info).



Brian Rademacher said the unhappy cardinal's bite was like a "severe pinch."



Bev Arnold explained to a visitor that she should make a "platform" with her hand for the bird to stand on before flying away.



Suzanne Miller records bird species captured each day.



Marumsc Creek is filled with spatterdock, a wetland plant, in the spring.



# Fairfax County Begins the 250th Birthday Party at Mount Vernon

FROM PAGE 1

The weekend event is the first of several planned throughout the county in 2025 and 2026 by Fairfax 250th Celebrations; part of many nation-wide celebrations. For up-coming events, see <https://www.fxva.com/fairfax250/events>.

On the national level, Congress originally established the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission in 2016 to promote and coordinate the celebrations, with members appointed by Congress. Elements are expected to include a commemorative coin and postage stamp, and a new liberty bell.

The U.S. Army is celebrating its 250th anniversary on June 14, 2025. The celebration will include a military parade in Washington, D.C., coinciding with President Donald Trump's 79th birthday. Plans for the parade, reported by other media last week, call for more than 6,000 soldiers, 150 vehicles and 50 helicopters to follow a route from Arlington to the National Mall.

**General George Washington addresses modern visitors to his Mount Vernon estate, citing the colony's grievances with the British crown, "Grievances so great we can be silent no longer."**



Russell Reed, part of an enactment group, portrays native people of the area who assisted the colonials in their war with the British



Revolutionary patriot enactor Tom Belote of Charles County, Maryland, takes a rest from camp activities.



Henry Saliva, of Alexandria, and Evy Petteway of Maryland, give a show of young mischief in a period encampment.

PHOTOS BY  
SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION



This home has 20 apartments, permanent housing for single adults.

## The Mondloch House

FROM PAGE 7

grounds are a gazebo, picnic area and raised garden beds.

Case managers help residents with many life skills, like hygiene, meal preparation, budgeting and getting and storing their social security number and birth certificate.

Bowman sees working there as "the most amazing job I could ever think of," he said. "It is rewarding knowing you are helping people. They are so grateful just for food. It is wonderful. Getting food and a blanket bring joy."

How do people end up there?

"Many have been abandoned," he says, some kicked out of their home because of family conflicts or difficulty coping with certain expectations. He cites a woman with mental health challenges

who was living in her car and could not hold a job. Mondloch's team helped her get appropriate medications, a housing voucher and a part-time job.

The first Mondloch House opened in 1978, by Route One Corridor Housing, a local organization that eventually became New Hope Housing. It was the first homeless shelter in Fairfax County.

New Hope Housing's Executive Director, Ashley McSwain, stopped by the event and said that people can help by donating money, food and time, including conducting workshops on topics like life skills and financial literacy.

To donate, visit <https://www.newhopehousing.org/get-involved/donate/>.

To get help for someone in crisis, call the Fairfax County Community Services Board at 703-559-3000.



This home has eight beds for homeless single adults.



Desire T. Christian has lived at Mondloch House for 10 years.

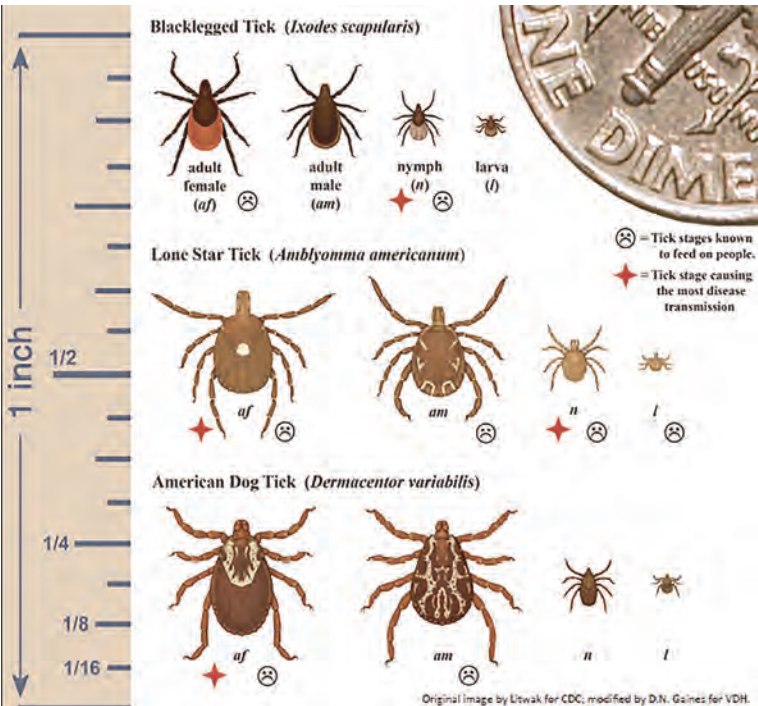
A sign inside  
Mondloch House

PHOTOS BY  
GLENDA BOOTH





# Don't Panic But Do Avoid Tick Bites



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

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,

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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.

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 disinfect 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 bacteria), 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

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Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay said that parks can foster good mental health.



Celebrants enjoyed an anniversary cake featuring a photo of park defender Norma Hoffman.

# Huntley Meadows Park Turns 50

FROM PAGE 3

these resources for generations through their dedicated vision.”

Virginia Del. Paul Krizek presented a resolution that he and Delegates Mark Sickles, David Bulova and Rozia Henson shepherded through the legislature recognizing that Huntley at almost 1,500 acres is the county’s largest park with more than 200,000 annual visitors. “I am proud to support policies that protect our environment, like banning invasive plants like English ivy, because we owe it to our children and grandchildren to safeguard places like Huntley Meadows,” Krizek said. “Together, we’re making real progress on protecting our environment.”

## Much to See and Learn

Over four hours, around 460 people vis-

ited 16 exhibits staged by county agencies and nonprofits that introduced all ages to nature’s wonders, from skunks to scat to spotted lanternflies.

Officers Earit Powell and Alicia Demilio with the Police Department’s Wildlife Section coached youngsters on how to be a friend to wildlife, as the children stroked wildlife pelts, including a skunk, fox and opossum. One lad named Asher declared a light brown pelt to be that of a lion. Snickering, Powell said it was a fox and commented, “We are lucky to have the open spaces that we have.”

Casey Pittrizzi, a Park Authority employee, touted a taxidermied great horned owl and said the event was a “great opportunity to learn the benefits of wetlands.”

Aniti Stromayer told visitors that gray fox-

es, like the one displayed, are “very shy and hard to see.”

Laurie Dodd and Tami Entabi displayed often unappreciated insects. At the Plant NoVa Natives table, Maryam Dudkhah promoted native plants as a key way to restore biodiversity.

Volunteers set up spotting scopes on the boardwalk for viewing birds and other wildlife.

## The Park

Huntley Meadows Park, one of the most biodiverse natural areas of the county, has over 1,500 acres freshwater wetlands, meadows and forests. Surrounded by suburban development, it is home to over 300 species of wildflowers, 200 birds and many mammals, reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife. The park has 3.8 miles of trails,

including a popular boardwalk through the wetland and a favorite of photographers.

Before European settlement, Indigenous people lived and foraged throughout the area. In the 1700s and 1800s, George Mason’s descendants owned and farmed the land. In 1941 the federal government bought it and tested asphalt for roads. Between 1950 and 1959, the Virginia National Guard provided anti-aircraft protection for Washington, D.C., on the site, and from 1958 to 1971 the Naval Research Laboratory conducted radio communication research on two circular fields. In 1975, President Gerald Ford authorized the donation of 1,261 acres “exclusively for public park or public recreation purposes in perpetuity.” Fairfax County paid \$1 for it and later added 165 acres.



Del. Paul Krizek (right) discussed his legislative work with volunteers Michael Wilson (left) and Charles Smith (center).



Maryam Dudkhah advocates for native plants.



# 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 GAZETTE

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. Bastan. There is no Republican primary for lieutenant governor because on April 21, Pat Herrity dropped out for health reasons, leaving John Reid as the Republican nominee.

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, Char-niele 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-election.

## Locations and Hours for June 17, 2025, Democratic Primary

<b>Fairfax County Government Center</b> 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Conference Rooms 2/3, Fairfax, 22035 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>May 2 – June 14</b> 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)
<b>Mt. Vernon Governmental Center</b> 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria, 22306 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>May 2 – June 14</b> 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)
<b>North County Governmental Center</b> 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, 20190 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>May 2 – June 14</b> 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)
<b>Burke Centre Library</b> 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke 22015 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Centreville Regional Library</b> 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville 20121 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Franconia Governmental Center</b> 6121 Franconia Rd, Alexandria 22310 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Great Falls Library</b> 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls 22066 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Jim Scott Community Center</b> 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax 22031 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Herndon Fortnightly Library</b> 766 Center Street, Herndon 20170 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Lorton Community Center</b> 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton 22079 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Mason Governmental Center</b> 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale 22003 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>McLean Governmental Center</b> 1437 Boll's Hill Rd, McLean 22101 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Sully Governmental Center</b> 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard, Chantilly 20151 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Thomas Jefferson Library</b> 7415 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church 22042 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library</b> 7564 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church 22043 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> Monday – Friday: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturdays (June 7, June 14): 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
<b>West Springfield Governmental Center</b> 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield 22152 <a href="#">Open Google Maps</a>	<b>June 7 – June 14</b> 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/>

**Commonwealth of Virginia, Sample Ballot**  
County of Fairfax  
Democratic Party Primary Election  
Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Estado de Virginia, Boleta de Muestra  
Condado de Fairfax  
Elección Primaria del Partido Demócrata  
Martes, 17 de junio de 2025

Tiểu Bang Virginia, Lá Phiếu Mẫu  
Quận Fairfax  
Bầu Cử Sơ Bộ Đảng Dân Chủ  
Thứ ba, ngày 17 tháng 6, 2025

Virginia 주, 전보 투표지  
Fairfax 카운티  
민주당 예비 선거  
2025년 6월 17일, 화요일

**To Vote / Para Votar / Để bỏ Phiếu / 투표 방법**

Completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice.  
Rellene completamente el óvalo a la izquierda de su preferencia.  
Xin điền kín hình bầu dục bên trái chỗ bạn đã chọn.  
선정 후보 왼쪽의 라운드를 완전히 채웁니다.

**Lieutenant Governor**  
Vote for only one  
Vicegobernador  
Vote solamente por uno  
Phó Thống Đốc  
Chỉ bỏ phiếu cho một ứng cử viên

부지사  
와 당명 투표하십시오:

Levar Marcus Stoney  
Babur B. Lateef  
Aaron R. Rouse  
Victor R. Salgado  
Ghazala F. Hashmi  
Alexander J. Bastani

**Attorney General**  
Vote for only one  
Procurador General  
Vote solamente por uno  
Luật Sư Tiểu Bang  
Chỉ bỏ phiếu cho một ứng cử viên

법무 장관  
후보명 투표하십시오:

Shannon L. Taylor  
Jay C. Jones

**Authorized by the Fairfax County Electoral Board**  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035

Notice: The authority statement printed above must be removed and replaced with the appropriate authority statement for the committee, individual or group using this ballot for their own purposes. The authority statement used for this ballot must comply with the requirements of both federal and state law. Va. Code: §24.2-956.

Aviso: La declaración de autoridad impresa arriba debe ser removida y reemplazada con la declaración de autoridad apropiada para el comité, individuo o grupo usando esta boleta para sus propios propósitos. La declaración de autoridad usada para esta boleta debe cumplir con los requisitos de la ley federal y estatal. Va. Code: §24.2-956.

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**End of Ballot**  
Final de la Boleta  
Kết Thúc Lá Phiếu  
투표지 끝

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

Sample ballot

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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ❖ MAY 8-21, 2025 ❖ 15



# FCPS Wants it All

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

By Mercia Hobson  
The Gazette

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

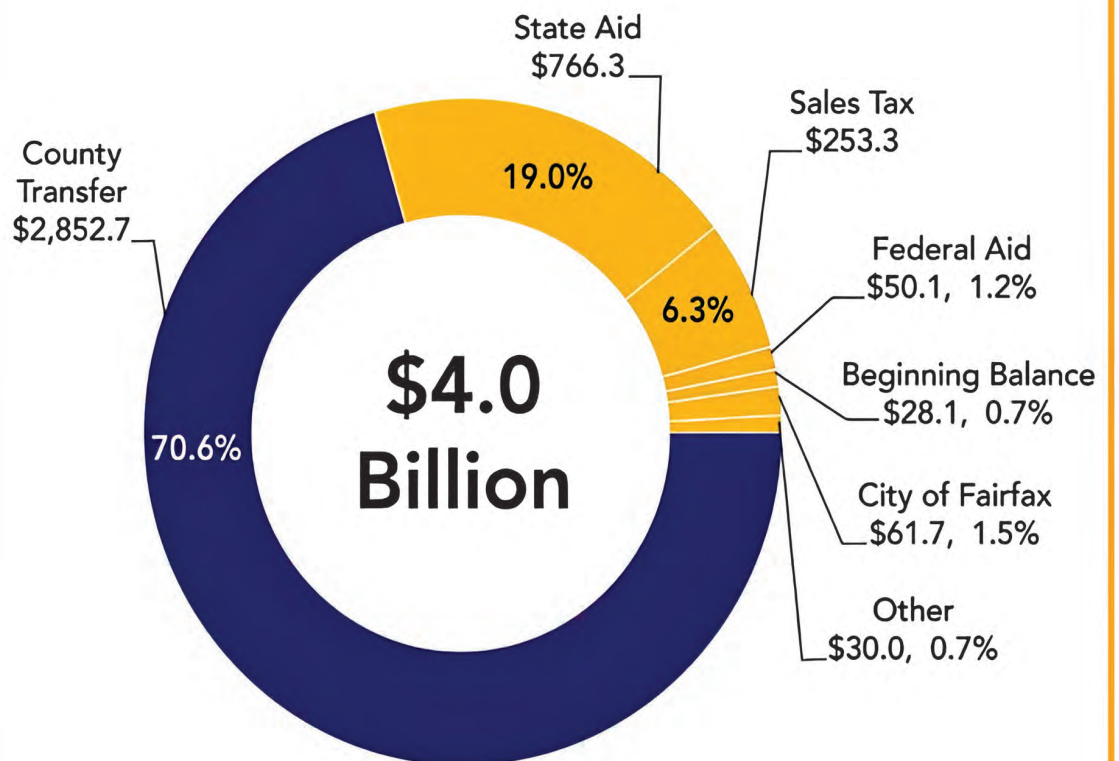
Reid said: "So right now in our budget, we didn't plan to reduce or eliminate any programs. We've worked on efficiencies. But in your example of a middle school after-school program, the county actually funds that program, not the school division. And they've chosen to cut that. So that wasn't a cut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

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



## Where Does FCPS' Revenue Come From?

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 bargaining 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.



# ENTERTAINMENT

## SPECIAL TOUR

### All Lit Up Like a Japanese Lantern



The Japanese Aesthetic in Frank Lloyd Wright's Pope-Leighey House

All Lit Up can be seen on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope Leighey House in Alexandria.

#### NOW THRU JUNE 1

**Enduring Roots by David Myers.** At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. Featuring a visual meditation by David Myers on resilience, time, and the relationship between people and the land they tend. Alongside the collection of more than 30 photographs in the exhibition, Myers' book *Wandering Among Them* offers further depth, featuring 13 images, some of which are exclusive to the book and not part of the gallery display. The limited edition book will be available for viewing and purchase at the gallery throughout the exhibition.

#### NOW THRU MAY 24

**The Alexandria City High School Titan Student Art Exhibition.** At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Join for the Opening Reception on Friday, May 2, from 7-9 p.m., and enjoy ACHS Performing Arts students' live chamber music performances and the ACHS Visual Arts Award Ceremony. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (closed May 25). Details: DelRay-Artisans.org/exhibits.

#### THURSDAYS, MAY 8 & 22

**Spring Garden Tour & Tea.** 1-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Take a tour of the beautiful demonstration gardens with an Extension Master Gardener docent. Find inspiration in our horticulturists' plant choices and garden bed designs. Hear about our 18th century origins and our mission today, then step inside for afternoon tea. Garden tours run rain or shine. \$42 (lecture + tea).

#### FRIDAY/MAY 9

**Wright at Twilight.** 6:30-9 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, at twilight! Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, as you watch

the changing light bring out the beautiful architectural details of the house. Play games in the yard, listen to period music, and tour the house at your leisure as the sun slowly sets. Tickets are \$30, with one drink included in the price of your ticket. Call (703) 780-4000 or email woodlawn@savingplaces.org. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

#### SATURDAY/MAY 10

**Watercolor Workshop – Botanical Watercolors.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) For the beginner or advanced student, artist and instructor Dawn Flores will share watercolor techniques through exercises that help you understand color, composition and improve brush control. Learn about the history and types of paper used in botanical art. Basic drawing skills are helpful for drawing the plant specimen from which to paint an elegant botanical portrait. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 6CZ.1HHF

#### SUNDAY/MAY 11

**Mother's Day Tea.** 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) Celebrate mothers everywhere with a festive, art-themed bingo game presented by Historic House interpreter Karen Heyda Jackson. Explore artistic depictions of motherhood by well-known artists from around the world while playing an entertaining game of bingo. Prizes and teatime favors included. \$48 (lecture + tea); \$23 (lecture only).

#### WEDNESDAY/MAY 14

**Northern Virginia Bird Alliance Birdathon.** At Monticello Park, Alexandria. Please consider joining anytime Wednesday, May 14 (Rain date May 15) – you don't have to



The Old Town Festival of Speed & Style will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2025 in Old Town Alexandria.

commit the whole day! Birders of all skill levels are welcome. They are hoping to see more than the 58 species (18 warblers) they saw last year. And whether or not you can join – consider donating. This is a fundraiser – and the contributions will go to Stretch Our Parks program – in Monticello Park and at the other sites - and to other NVBA activities. Visit the website: <https://donorbox.org/birdathon-2025/fundraiser/libby-lyons> Contact Libby: email (libbylyons99@gmail.com) or text/call (202-415-4946.) Russ: email (russell.bailey@gmail.com) or text/call (571-606-5534.)

#### SATURDAY/MAY 17

**Spring Garden Day - The Big Plant Sale!** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (All ages) Local garden vendors descend on Green Spring Gardens with beautiful and unusual plants to fill your spring gardening needs. Growers and Extension Master Gardeners are on hand to help with plant selection and offer gardening advice. Home-baked goods and treats will be available at the bake sale at the Horticulture Center. There will also be a used book sale. This annual event is sponsored by the Friends of Green Spring (FROGS). Free. No registration needed.

#### SATURDAY/MAY 17

**All Lit Up.** 12-1 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Discover how Frank Lloyd Wright incorporated his love of Japanese art, architecture, and philosophy into Usonian homes, and how this East Asian influence shines in Wright's Pope-Leighey House. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

#### SUNDAY/MAY 18

**Dvořák Side-by-Side.** 3 p.m. At the GW Masonic National Memorial.

Featuring the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic & Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra.

#### SUNDAY/MAY 18

**Old Town Festival of Speed & Style.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Old Town Festival of Speed & Style, presented by Burke & Herbert Bank, celebrates its sixth year in Old Town Alexandria. This high-profile event features an impressive lineup of rare supercars and vintage motorcycles, a live fashion demonstration at noon, live music, family-friendly fun, and a judged car awards presentation. The Festival draws thousands of visitors, boosts local business, garners media attention, and donates all proceeds to local nonprofits: ALIVE!, Community Lodgings, and the National Breast Center Foundation. Visit [www.festivalofspeedandstyle.com](http://www.festivalofspeedandstyle.com).

#### TUESDAY/MAY 20

**Saving Pope-Leighey House.** 7-8 p.m. Virtual/Online. Join virtually at 7 p.m. on May 20th to learn more about the efforts of Marjorie Leighey and how she saved her Frank Lloyd Wright home from demolition. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents/2025/5/20/virtual-program-saving-pope-leighey-house>

#### SATURDAY/MAY 24

**Drawing Workshop – Trees and Leaves.** 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Use your basic drawing skills to accurately render realistic drawings of trees and their leaves. Artist and instructor Caroline Hottenstein shows you how to use the media of your choice - a micron pen, watercolor, graphite, or colored pencils to capture and highlight details. Previous drawing experience encouraged. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

[fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code T2H.4J73

#### SATURDAY/MAY 24

**Inalienable Rights.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Woodlawn welcomes Joe McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project for a day of free programming with living historians and storytellers sharing the lives and history of people enslaved in Virginia. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

#### SUNDAY/MAY 25

**I Like Coffee, I Like Tea.** 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) Tea and coffee are the most popular beverages in the world, and both have legendary pasts. Learn about the history, provenance and health benefits of these flavorful, and competing, brews as we compare and contrast them. Regardless of your preference, you may change sides in the battle of the cup. \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

#### THURSDAY/MAY 29

**Jane Franklin Dance.** 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance and Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association at the Athenaeum Present Farewell Athenaeum. Tickets: \$23 thru May 27 (a ticket purchase supports JFD & NVFAA); \$25 starting May 28, \$28 at the door. Visit [www.janefranklin.com](http://www.janefranklin.com) or call 703-933-1111.

#### SATURDAY/MAY 31

**Watercolor Workshop - Using Grids Creatively.** 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) In this class you will use a grid to turn your drawings

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19



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## Morrill

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(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](http://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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## NEWS

# Ticket Sales and Donations Down for GLOBAL's Annual AcceptAbility Gala May 21

## NIH Funding Cuts Loom for Down syndrome research.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ichelle Sie Whitten, president and CEO of the non-profit organization Global Down Syndrome Foundation (GLOBAL), fears the impact of two impending financial blows to the foundation. Their annual AcceptAbility Gala on Wednesday, May 21, is seeing a decrease in gala table and ticket sales this year, as well as donations. There is a reported drop in philanthropy in part due to eliminating thousands of positions in the federal government and economic uncertainty.

"We want people to support the gala. We want people to donate, buy tickets, and buy tables, however they can support it. We even need volunteers," Whitten said.

Whitten said that this situation coincides with the second potentially imminent financial setback. That is, federal cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for Down syndrome research, despite the recent enhancements in funding due to the INCLUDE Project (Investigation of Co-occurring Conditions across the Lifespan to Understand Down Syndrome), according to Whitten. NIH launched its INCLUDE Project in June 2018 to support a Congressional directive in the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Omnibus Appropriations. The directive called for a new NIH research initiative on critical health and quality-of-life needs for individuals with Down syndrome.

David Egan and Frank Stephens are self-advocates for Down syndrome. In sep-

arate interviews with The Connection, they discussed their involvement with the GLOBAL, which focuses on research and advocacy.

Egan highlighted the importance of NIH funding for improving healthcare for individuals like him with Down syndrome, citing his near-death personal experience with COVID-19 and long COVID. Egan noted Virginia's lack of Down syndrome clinics and the need for better healthcare support. He is the author of *More Alike Than Different: My Life with Down Syndrome*.

Egan served on Capitol Hill as a Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation Public Policy Fellow with the House Ways and Means Committee, testified before the Senate HELP Committee, and spoke at the United Nations. Egan is a Special Olympics athlete, received the Quincy Jones Award, and advocates for improved research and care for people with Down syndrome.

Frank Stephens emphasized funding research, public education, and the importance of the Gala, held on May 21.

He shared his emotional connection to the event, honoring his mother, who died in January from Alzheimer's. He also mentioned his participation in the Special Olympics, particularly in golf, basketball, track, and horseback riding.

Stephens has had notable speaking engagements and media appearances, advocating against the use of the term "retard." He expressed his desire to contribute to society.

"I don't need to be cured or pitied. I need to be given the opportunity to be the best person I can be and contribute my talents to making this a better world for everyone. I want what everyone wants, to make my life a good one. I'm very grateful to my mother."

The 2025 AcceptAbility Gala by GLOBAL recognizes Stephens' mother, Cornelia "Corny" Stephens, in loving memory on its

fundraising page.

The AcceptAbility Gala is at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C. It starts at 6 p.m. with a reception and red carpet, followed by a three-course dinner, a live auction, and performances by local dancers with Down syndrome, and multiplatinum artist and actor, Phillip Phillips.

The gala emcees are Chuck Todd, host of The Chuck ToddCast and former moderator of Meet the Press, and Autria Godfrey, Emmy Award-winning former WJLA ABC News anchor.

Whitten stated that a significant shift in NIH funding took place in 2017. Advocacy efforts by the GLOBAL transformed Down syndrome research at NIH from being the most underfunded genetic condition to a well-supported research priority.

"We worked with Congress, and we were just so honored and relieved. It's kind of like finally finding somebody who listens to you or believes in you," she said. "So, the leading cause of developmental delay in the U.S. and in the world is the least funded genetic condition at the NIH? And it was like, yep," Whitten said. Funding dramatically increased.

Whitten said that while the average lifespan for a person with Down syndrome has doubled from 30 to 60 years, individuals with it deserve better care through medical research, especially as they age.

Gala tickets start at \$700 and can be purchased online at [www.globaldownsyndrome.org](http://www.globaldownsyndrome.org). GLOBAL leverages the Gala to raise awareness and funding for Down syndrome research. This year, bipartisan congressional members and celebrities stand poised to champion Down syndrome research. Two U.S. representatives, Republican Robert Aderholt (AL-4) and Democrat Diana DeGette (CO-01), are to receive GLOBAL's highest honor.

At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street on the Potomac River. Presented by Volunteer Alexandria, the fair features local and regional artisans who showcase their pieces across various mediums including pottery, stationery, fabrics, paintings, jewelry, photography and more. Over 90+ vendors joined us last year, including food and drink to purchase. For more information, visit Volunteer Alexandria | Arts and Crafts Festival

### THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com).

### MAY

Wed. 7: Madeleine Peyroux: Let's Walk Tour \$25 \$59.50  
Thu. 8: UK Folk Legends Martin & Eliza Carthy \$29.50  
Fri. 9: Countess Cabaret with Luann de Lesseps \$69.50. SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 10: BoDeans \$39.50  
Sun. 11: A Tribute To Frankie Beverly featuring Junie Henderson & Paul Bumbry \$39.50  
Mon. 12: Living Colour \$49.50  
Tue. 13: Sara Evans "Unbroke Tour" \$69.50  
Thu. 15: Stella Cole \$35.00

## 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.

## ENTERTAINMENT

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and/or photographs into a creative composition with the direction of artist and instructor Marni Maree. Then you will use watercolor to paint it! A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 01X.L4GY

### SATURDAY/MAY 31

**Architecture of Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey.** 12-1:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House provide a unique opportunity to put two American styles of architecture - separated by over a century - in conversation with one another. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawn-popeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

### MAY 31 TO JUNE 1

**Armed Forces Cycling Classic.** The weekend kicks off on Saturday, May 31, with the Amazon Armed Forces Cycling Classic's Challenge Ride. The Challenge Ride offers a 21km closed course that welcomes cycling enthusiasts of all skill levels, and will now start and finish in our Nation's Capital. Participants will enjoy the opportunity to ride against the back-

drop of Washington, DC, and Arlington's most iconic landmarks. Participants can aim for gold, silver, or bronze medals, awarded based on the number of laps completed during the three-hour event. The weekend's activities also include two days of races, featuring the nation's top Pro/Am men's and women's cycling teams. Saturday's race will be held on a short, spectator friendly course in DC, utilizing the same start/finishing area as the Challenge Ride. On day two, the racing moves to Arlington, VA, for the 27th edition of the Clarendon Cup Pro/Am bike races. [cyclingclassic.org](http://cyclingclassic.org).

### SATURDAY/JUNE 7

**First Saturday Used Book Sale:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

### SATURDAY/JUNE 7

**Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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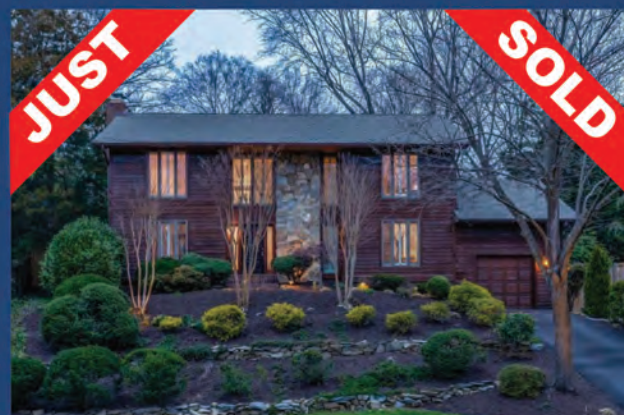
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