

THE CONNECTION

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



'Bearly' Got to Know Him

PAGE 3

Mountain View Graduation

PAGE 6

See You Later, Alligator, Really

PAGE 19

Thousands
Turn Out to
Protest

PAGES 4, 12

OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 13 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 16

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

JUNE 18 - JULY 1, 2025

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PHOTOS NARRATED BY ELDEN, THE HERNDON BEAR

We ‘Bear’ly Got to Know Him

Black bear finds his way into the Town of Herndon’s heart.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Virginia is home to black bears. The year-old male black bear, wearing a Maryland tracking collar, is barely visible 12 feet up in the front yard tree of a home in the Historic District of the Town of Herndon. The base of the tree is only a few feet from Elden Street, a busy route through the suburban town. The bear’s black coat resembles the tree’s bark. It camouflages him as he lies still across one of the limbs in the dappled shadows.

The bear returned to the neighborhood, perhaps after eating cat food left out on a porch in the area the previous evening.

What followed that day became a 12-hour standoff between bear and humans that took the coordinated efforts of multiple agencies from different jurisdictions and their professionals to safely rescue and relocate him. They are the staff of the Herndon Police Department, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue: Herndon Station and Reston Station, and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

The day-long event kindled wonder and delight with the locals and, as later, as described in the Town of Herndon Proclamation, reminded all “of the importance of coexisting with wildlife and protecting the natural environment that surrounds us.”

Next-door neighbor Sarah Chervenak said she saw the bear running through their yard and up the tree. She estimated his shoulder height as waist-high to her. Black bears are four to seven feet from nose to tail and two to three feet high at the shoulders.

At 8:54, Herndon Police confirmed a sighting of a bear as it roamed nearby along Alabama Drive and Hillwood Court. “DO NOT APPROACH,” warned the Herndon Police Department on its Facebook page. Officers set up traffic and crowd control on Elden Street.

The tree branch provides the bear with a much-needed resting place, leaves to eat and escape from predators, the humans. Black bears see in color, and with their sharp vision, they can see as far as 200 feet away. The bear observes the gathering crowds and the endless traffic of automobiles cruising feet away. A black bear’s hearing exceeds human frequency ranges. Overhead, he hears an unfamiliar “wop-wop” sound and sees something big in sky. It is a news helicopter, Chopper 4.

According to Town of Herndon Mayor Keven LeBlanc, who was on site and lives behind the home with the treed bear, the

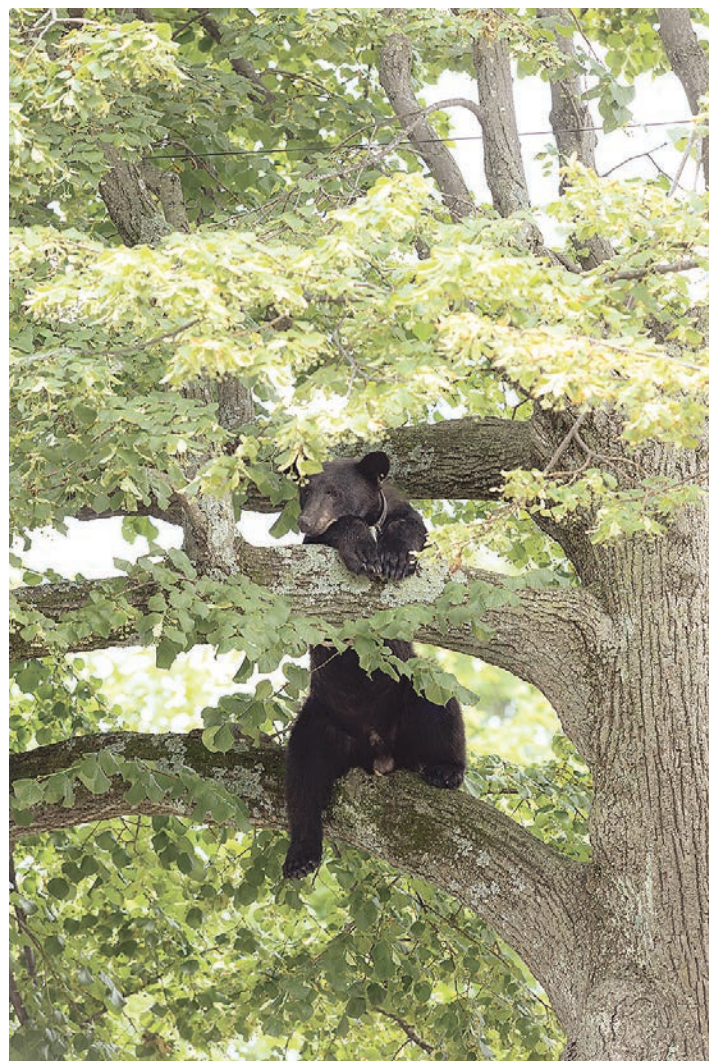


PHOTO BY ABBY GRACE SPRINGMANN

“I’m hanging out on Elden Street in the Town of Herndon.”



PHOTO BY ABBY GRACE STILLMANN

“I see you, Virginia Conservation Police Officer of Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and I’m not coming down. I’m shy and afraid of people.”

When You See a Bear

*Although it is not common, black bears occasionally move through Fairfax County, including residential areas. Visit Be Bear Aware – It’s the Season for Bear Sightings to learn more about it and what to do if you see a bear and the bear sees you. Among other things, do not run.

students at Herndon Middle School, located half a block away, were set to be released for early dismissal, but school staff is keeping them indoors, and families urged not to get them.

LeBlanc says the bear is equipped with

SEE WE ‘BEAR’LY, PAGE 14

According to the tracking collar, the bear crossed the Potomac River, made his way to Great Falls and McLean, wandered over to Vienna, then Reston, and ultimately arrived in the Town of Herndon.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

“Oh, black bear fans and the paparazzi; look but don’t come close.”

THE CONNECTION ♦ JUNE 18 - JULY 1, 2025 ♦ 3

No Kings Day Protests

“It was a powerful reminder of the strength of our community when we, the people, come together to make our voices heard.”

—Del. Irene Shin



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

More handmade protest boards in the Town of Herndon send personal messages opposing.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday, June 14, thousands of people from the very young to gray-haired seniors gathered at locations around Fairfax County to participate in the social justice demonstration known as “No Kings Day,” organized in opposition to the Trump administra-

tion and its policies. Protesters put their words on cardboard placards and posters; most will be voters at the upcoming elections.

The grassroots movement that created the “No Kings” was organized by more than 200 groups around the country including Indivisible and the 50501 Movement (pronounced “fifty-fifty-one”). It dubbed the nationwide demonstrations a “Day of Defiance” in

opposition to Trump’s policies and what they called a “militarization of the country’s democracy. ... They’ve defied our courts, deported Americans, disappeared people off the streets, attacked our civil rights, and slashed our services. The corruption has gone too far. No thrones. No crowns. No kings.”

In the Town of Herndon, children and adults lined the streets, holding up their signs. As vehi-

cles drove by, drivers honked in support, and passengers raised their clenched fists in gestures of solidarity, resistance, and empowerment. Virginia House Delegate Irene Shin (D-8) attended the local protest in the historic downtown district. Shin is also a candidate for the Democratic nomination to fill Gerry Connolly’s seat in Congress. An estimated 250 people attended.

“The most important thing I said

[is], ‘I could not be more proud to represent Herndon,’” Shin said that evening. “Our community came out in full force to reject the authoritarianism of the Trump administration and their blatant disregard for the rule of law. It was a powerful reminder of the strength of our community when we, the people, come together to make our voices heard.”

MORE ON PAGE 12



SCREENSHOT: VIDEO CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN LOVAAS

Reston: “Certainly over one thousand, how much more?” estimated John Lovaas. “Enthusiastic crowds of all ages waving all kinds of pics and chanting varied cheers you can imagine. A good deal of traffic with a large majority honking in enthusiastic support of delighted protesters.”



People of all ages participated in “No Kings Day” in the Town of Herndon. The phrase “Let’s Go TACO” is an acronym that means “Trump Always Chickens Out.” Wall Street workers coined it for Trump’s on-and-off approach to tariffs.

4 ♦ THE CONNECTION ♦ JUNE 18 - JULY 1, 2025



A protester in the Town of Herndon sends a message via her hand-printed cardboard placard.



Holding United States parade flags, children understand that this country is not a monarchy and has no kings.

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Former CIA Analyst from Vienna Sentenced

A former CIA analyst was sentenced June 11 to three years and one month in prison for unlawfully retaining and transmitting Top Secret National Defense Information to people who were not entitled to receive it, information which was publicly posted on social media platforms in October 2024.

According to court documents, Asif William Rahman, 34, of Vienna, was an employee of the CIA since 2016 and had a Top Secret security clearance with access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) until his employment was terminated after his arrest.

"Asif Rahman violated his position of trust by illegally accessing, removing, and transmitting Top Secret documents vital to the national security of the United States and its allies," said Erik S. Siebert, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. "This case should serve as a stern warning to those who choose to place their own goals over their allegiance to our nation."

On Oct. 17, 2024, Rahman accessed and printed two Top Secret documents containing National Defense Information regarding a U.S. foreign ally and its planned

actions against a foreign adversary. Rahman removed the documents, photographed them, and transmitted them to individuals he knew were not entitled to receive them. By Oct. 18, 2024, the documents appeared publicly on multiple social media platforms, complete with the classification markings. After Oct. 17, 2024, Rahman engaged in a deletion campaign of work product on his Top Secret work station.

In 2024, continuing through November, Rahman repeatedly accessed and printed classified National Defense Information, including documents classified up to the Top Secret and transmitted to multiple individuals he knew were not entitled to receive it.

Rahman was indicted by a grand jury on Nov. 7, 2024, and was arrested by the FBI as he arrived to work on Nov. 12, 2024. On Jan. 17, Rahman pled guilty to two counts of willful retention and transmission of classified information related to the national defense. He has remained in custody since his arrest.

The FBI Washington Field Office investigated the case.

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‘Building Something New from Pieces of the Past’

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Mountain View High grads praised, encouraged.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

For Mountain View High students, life has been a tough, uphill battle. But at this warm, welcoming alternative school, they find the support and opportunities they so desperately need.

Most come from other countries and often don’t speak English when they arrive. So when they graduate, it’s a deep source of pride for them, their families, teachers, counselors and administrators. It’s no wonder then that their June 3 commencement was so joyful.

“Today isn’t just a ceremony, it’s a moment of triumph – a milestone that wasn’t promised, but earned,” said Principal Erin Whatley. “Today’s the day where you can finally say, ‘We made it.’ And I say ‘we’ because the journey wasn’t just yours. It belongs to your teachers who helped you when you needed an

extra push, your family and friends who supported and showed up for you, and everyone who helped you get through the hard days.

“And let’s be honest, there were hard days – days when showing up felt impossible, when your goals felt unattainable, when you thought, ‘Is it even worth it?’ But here you are – proof that it was.”

Whatley told the grads Mountain View wasn’t just about credits and classrooms, but also about second chances. “It was about finding

SEE ‘BUILDING’, PAGE 10



Citizenship Award:
Mauricio Villalva.



Personal Achievement Award:
Joshua Ortega Caballero.



Faculty Excellence Award:
Kim Chau.



Natalie Gomez-Ramirez gets her diploma from Erin Whatley.



Mohammad Qadiry receives his diploma from Erin Whatley.



Deymar Medina Coca gets his diploma from Erin Whatley.

Student Speaker Thanks His School and Parents

Mountain View graduate shares his story.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Among the highlights of every Mountain View High graduation are the stories of the student speakers. And this year’s speech by graduating senior Mauricio Villalva was no exception.

Originally from Peru, he said many things he’s experienced have helped him become the person he is today. “My family has always been hardworking, fighting to get ahead,” he said. “We Villalvas are resilient; I think that’s a good characteristic I was born with.

“Since I was little, I’ve had great aspirations. Every time my father picked me up from school, he always asked, ‘How is the future president of Peru?’ or ‘How is the future NASA scientist?’ It was fun and interesting to know that my dad had high hopes for me from a young age. When I was growing up, I achieved several goals I’d set.

“For example, in primary school, my science team and I qualified for the Peruvian



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Student speaker Mauricio Villalva.

National Science Fair competition. Our project was an ecological, natural detergent that cost less and was healthier for the environment. In high school, I won first prize, two years in a row. This gave hope to my family; they knew I’d be a great student.”

But at age 8, an accident changed Villalva’s life. In 2015, his family spent New Year’s Eve at his uncles’ house. But when the uncles lit some fireworks, one fell to the



Grad Mauricio Villalva with (from left) dad Graciano Villalva; sister Zamira Villalva, 8; mom Vicky Asto; and aunt Norma Villalva.

ground and the sparks bounced everywhere, surrounding young Mauricio. One landed inside his hoodie, and he sustained third-degree burns to his back.

“I suffered through several operations and was hospitalized for four months,” he said. “Nine years and many operations later, at

17, I was finally able to overcome this ordeal. Throughout this trauma, I never lost interest in learning and continued studying. That enabled me to move on and continue with my life.

SEE MOUNTAIN VIEW, PAGE 11
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Credit Union Should Prioritize Workers

BY DEL. DAN HELMER
VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES, 10TH DISTRICT

On June 30, Navy Federal Credit Union is planning to replace their current union cleaning contractor with a non-union company at their Vienna, VA headquarters. The impact of their decision could not be more profound for the 61 office cleaners who will either lose their jobs altogether or be forced to reapply for their own position, but with no guarantee of the benefits, employer-paid health care, raises, and protections they were provided under a union contract.

Let's be clear - this attack on union jobs can't be separated from the larger attack on democratic institutions we are seeing across the country today. The erosion of voting rights, the attacks on freedom of speech and the press, and the stacking of the deck in favor of the richest corporations over working people, are part and parcel of a larger shift in our country away from our founding principles.

One union worker set to lose her livelihood as a result of Navy Federal Credit Union's actions is Gimena Torrico, a Woodbridge resident and a mother of three. She is battling type 2 diabetes and lives in fear of running out of her

insulin - a fear that will be made reality if she loses her job and her healthcare coverage. Not only does this cause debilitating headaches, shaking, exhaustion and fainting spells, but it's what recently killed her own cousin.

Without a job, Torrico would struggle to keep a roof over her family's heads, she would have to cut back on food and would no longer be able to afford to keep her son in afterschool activities and soccer.

NFCU's actions stand in stark contrast to the values of the military veterans who are their clients. As veterans, we know that democracy functions best when there's pathways to good-paying jobs and when our businesses choose to put the livelihoods of their employees over padding their profits.

NFCU's hiring of a non-union contractor does a real disservice to its membership, our country's multiracial military community, by threatening to exacerbate racial wealth disparities in this country. Union households have median wages three times that of their non-union counterparts for Black families and five times for Hispanic families. Unions are one of the most reliable ways to help close racial wealth gaps by increasing wealth for households whose wage earners are protected by a union contract.

If NFCU strives to help their members achieve financial success, why not include the men and women who do back-breaking work to provide NFCU a safe and clean environment? Instead, the credit union with over \$190 billion in assets is jeopardizing the livelihoods of over 60 janitors and their families. We strongly urge the NFCU to rethink their understanding of the principles and values that their own members and other members of the military served to protect, an equal opportunity at life, liberty, and happiness for all regardless of race. It's not too late for them to simply keep their current responsible union contractor.

Across the country, credit unions have been a community-based alternative to the multinational banks that many rightly fear put profits before people.

But if credit unions like NFCU won't live their values, the Virginia General Assembly will step into the gap. Repeatedly, Democratic majorities in the General Assembly considered legislation that would strengthen protections for working families in our Commonwealth - with the House of Delegates passing paid sick leave, guaranteed overtime pay for domestic service workers, requiring public utilities to pay their employees the prevailing wage, and passing collective bargaining for public employees.

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LETTERS

Clean Energy

Dear editor at McLean Connection,

I am writing you to express my concerns regarding the Trump administration's attacks on clean energy. These changes will have significant consequences for our community, and we must take action. Erasing clean energy progress would lock Americans into fewer and increasingly expensive choices to power our lives. According to the U.S Energy Information Administration, 12% of energy is provided by renewables. We can do better. I know you care about our future as much as I do.

Kristin Battista-Fraze
McLean

Blockchain Tech Offers Economic Diversity Opportunity for Fairfax

BY SUPERVISORS JAMES WALK-
INSHAW AND RODNEY LUSK

The Trump Administration's reckless actions to fire and force out dedicated federal workers, freeze or cancel federal contracts, and impose senseless tariffs that raise costs for American families, are already having a negative impact on our local and regional economy. The unemployment rate is rising and local families and businesses are tightening their belts, reducing economic activity. While we must continue to fight against federal job and budget cuts that harm our region, we must also accelerate our efforts to diversify our local economy.

One of the most promising areas of growth? Blockchain technology. Blockchain is, at its core, a secure, decentralized system for recording and verifying transactions that leverages tokens to compensate users and transmit value. Its applications range from supply chain management to digital identity to secure voting systems — technologies that can reshape entire industries and improve public services.

Blockchain startups offer Fairfax a unique opportunity to pivot toward a more resilient economic future. These startups can create high-wage jobs for software engi-

neers, cybersecurity experts, data scientists, and project managers — many with skill sets transferable from federal or contracting roles.

The sector's dynamism continues to attract venture capital, drawing in new investment and fresh talent. In fact, global blockchain venture funding reached over \$10 billion in 2023, with more than 1,000 blockchain startups launched that year alone. Large corporations headquartered here already rely on blockchain technology and can help foster an ecosystem of startups. Capital One, for example, has dozens of patents in blockchain and uses the technology in areas including authentication, data security, and claims management.

Michael Saylor's Microstrategy, recently renamed Strategy B, is the world's largest Bitcoin Treasury Company.

And the technology's applications in public service — like secure digital permitting, property records, or even elections — could bring more transparency and efficiency to local government. On the Board of Supervisors, we've been pushing to allow tax payments to be made via bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Efforts like our Accelerate Breakfast Series are helping catalyze this transition. These gatherings bring

together entrepreneurs, investors, and local leaders to share ideas, build relationships, and spotlight the county's innovation potential. A recent breakfast featured a pitch by a startup working to improve regulatory compliance and security for financial institutions utilizing blockchain technology.

The Fairfax Founders Fund, established by the Board of Supervisors, provides grants of up to \$50,000 to promising, early stage companies poised to disrupt industries and create new jobs. Blockchain-focused founders who choose to locate in Fairfax County can take advantage of this opportunity to help grow their businesses.

Blockchain's potential extends beyond the local economy. Globally, it has been used to deliver humanitarian aid more efficiently and transparently, including during crises in Ukraine and elsewhere. That same spirit of solving real-world problems can drive local innovation too—particularly as we seek technologies that promote both economic opportunity and social impact.

Fairfax should build on this momentum. That means continued investment in incubators and accelerators for emerging technologies, stronger workforce development pipelines through universities and

community colleges, and deeper partnerships between the public and private sectors to pilot blockchain use cases.

We can't control every twist in federal policy, but we can shape how we respond. By betting on innovation and backing our entrepreneurs, we can build a Fairfax County economy that is not only more resilient, but more inclusive and forward-looking. Blockchain isn't just a buzzword—it's a tool, and with the right support, it can play a role in ensuring our continued economic dynamism as a county and as a region.

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Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

Historical Marker Unveiled at Centreville School Honoring Colin Powell



PHOTOS VIA INSTAGRAM
From left, Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Annemarie Powell Lyons, the daughter of the late Gen. Colin Powell, and Supervisor Kathy Smith, (D Sully) of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at the unveiling of the new historical marker honoring General Colin L. Powell.



Fairfax County students, community leaders, family and descendants of General Colin L. Powell, the 65th U.S. Secretary of State from 2001 to 2005, and others attended the Colin Powell Historical Marker Unveiling and Dedication Ceremony in Centreville on June 14 at 11 a.m. Held at the Colin Powell Elementary School, the Board of Supervisors created the Black/African American Historical Marker Project in 2021 to recognize and celebrate significant figures and places that have shaped the county's diverse history, according to Fairfax County Public Schools.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chairman Jeff McKay thanked the Powell family and other participants for the chance to speak at the presentation of a new historical marker honoring Powell. He was a Fairfax County resident, the first Black American Secretary of State, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a longtime supporter of underprivileged youth. McKay said, "This special recognition is part of our ongoing effort to tell a fuller, more inclusive story of our county's history through the Black/African American Historical Marker Project.

General Powell advised presidents and several Republican administrators helping to shape American foreign policy in the last years of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century. He died in 2021 from COVID-19 complications. Powell was fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but had Parkinson's disease and had been treated for multiple myeloma, CNBC reported at the time. He was 84.

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‘Building Something New from Pieces of the Past’

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Estefany Menjivar Rivera receives her diploma from Erin Whatley.



Jennifer Velasco-Nunez gets her diploma from Erin Whatley.



Vicente Wehbe receives his diploma from Erin Whatley.



(From left) are grad Lucrecia Esteban and cousin Nicole Reyes.



Grad Parker Collins with (from left) mom Denise, sister Hailey and Dad Jeremy.

FROM PAGE 6

your voice, owning your story and building something new from the pieces of the past,” she said. “And you did that – every one of you re-wrote your ending.

“I’ve seen firsthand the grit, determination and heart that makes this graduating class truly special. Some people think ‘alternative’ means ‘less than.’ But let me tell you, it means different, creative and resilient. It means finding another way when the first one fails. And that, my friends, is powerful.”

Whatley said alternative high school isn’t always the path people expect, but “this class doesn’t do things just because they’re expected. We take the road that works for us and leads to growth – and that led you here today. You’ve redefined what success looks like.”

“Some of you worked jobs while finishing school, some overcame struggles most people couldn’t even imagine,” she continued. “Some of you had to believe in yourselves when no one else did. That’s not just education – that’s resilience and life experience – and that’s the power that’ll drive you forward.”

Now, said Whatley, they need to take that same drive and apply it to whatever comes next for them – whether it’s college, work, starting a business or simply figuring things out, one step at a time. She said the journey is theirs to make.

“The world didn’t ask you to fit in,” said Whatley. “It’s waiting for you to show up, exactly as you are. As you walk across the stage today, don’t just celebrate finishing school – celebrate everything you’ve survived, learned and become. Your diploma is proof that your past doesn’t define you – your choices do.

“The world is changing; now, more than ever, we need this generation’s innovative, free thinkers so that you can teach us and the generations to come. Congratulations, Class of 2025. You didn’t just take a different path, you paved your own – and that’s something truly worth celebrating.”

Award Presentations

Next came the student speaker (see sidebar), plus special awards from the school to three graduating seniors.

❖ Citizenship Award

College & Career Specialist Jenelle Lee presented it to Mauricio Villalva. “One of our Mountain View goals is that all students and

staff are respecting and caring of one another,” said Lee. “The Citizenship Award is given to a student who’s helped build a positive community through their example and their work with others. I’m pleased to present this award to Mauricio Villalva.”

❖ Personal Achievement Award

Jennifer Labbe, employment transition representative, gave it to Joshua Ortega Caballero. “Many Mountain View students wrestle with additional responsibilities of family, job and other adult commitments,” said Labbe. “The Personal Achievement Award recognizes a student who’s succeeded both academically and personally, despite these pressures and obstacles. On behalf of the Mountain View faculty, I’m pleased to present this award to Joshua Ortega Caballero.”

❖ Faculty Excellence Award

Science teacher Susan Culik presented it to Kim Chau. “Kim stands out as a student of exceptional determination, intelligence and resilience,” said Culik. “Her teachers describe her as one of the most hardworking, kind and consistent students they’ve ever taught. Kim earned nothing but As, including in her three honors classes. She earned a 4.12 GPA – the highest GPA ever earned by a Mountain View student.

“After being out of school for nearly three years in Vietnam, due to the pandemic and family challenges, Kim returned to her education with focus and drive. At Mountain View, she worked tirelessly to catch up – even taking two math classes in one year. And she remembers with pride the accomplishment of earning her first A in English.

Even after missing several weeks this year to return to Vietnam, Kim quickly made up her work and maintained her grades. Kim also balanced school with the responsibilities of home, supporting her family while remaining fully engaged in school.”

Culik then gave an example of Chau’s “outstanding scholarship” in Honors Chemistry. “Kim completed an independent project studying the effects of various disturbances on the water quality of both freshwater and saltwater ecosystems,” said Culik. “This involved chemical analysis and regular maintenance of three aquariums.

“She often arrived at class early so we could quickly review the day’s tasks. But in truth, she usu-

SEE ‘BUILDING’, PAGE 11

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Mountain View Graduate Shares His Story

FROM PAGE 6

“When I was in 11th grade, my cousin invited my father to come to the United States. My dad was excited because he’d always dreamed of setting foot on North American soil. I wasn’t sure about starting another life in the United States. I was excited, but also sad because I was leaving everything I’d built for myself until then. And I was leaving friends, family, school and future goals.”

But Villalva was pleased to discover an improved quality of life and education here. “Thanks to the American way of life, my family was able to get ahead,” he said. “My dad and I started working, the third day we arrived, moving [furnishings from] houses and offices. In August, my parents enrolled me in school. They knew education was the most important tool in life. “In fall 2023, Mountain View welcomed me with open arms. I was filled with excitement the first day I stepped through the doors. It was a new experience, studying abroad. Everything was different, but I managed to adapt. Throughout, the Mountain View staff – teachers, counselors and security – have all helped and guided me to this day.”

Villalva called Mountain View a unique school where “the teach-

ers care about students’ improvement in courses. And the friendly, fun atmosphere makes you want to come every day. Because it’s a school that accepts students from all backgrounds and countries, it’s never boring.”

He also joined the school’s theater program, which greatly helped him develop and improve his English. Performing in front of others helped him overcome his fear of public speaking and gave him more self-confidence. Until then, he said, “I’d been shy, reserved and afraid to ask questions. Performing at Mountain View opened many, new doors for me.”

His dream now is to obtain a college degree in civil engineering or architecture. “A professional diploma would be the best news my family could receive,” said Villalva. “That’s why, every day, I want to work harder to achieve this goal while focusing on my family that’s done so much for me.

“Thanks to Mountain View, I’ve become a better, wiser and more responsible person. I also thank my parents for all the effort they put into me – the patience, dedication and love they showed me at all times. They’re the fundamental part of my achievements and successes. And to all of us in the graduating class, congratulations – we did it!”

‘Building Something New From Pieces of the Past’

FROM PAGE 10

ally already knew exactly what needed to be done and went straight to it. More than once, I’d glance up after helping another student to remind Kim about a task – only for her to say, ‘I’ve already done it.’ Her efficiency and independence consistently impressed me.”

Chau plans to attend Northern Virginia Community College’s dental-hygiene program. But, said Culik, “Many of us believe she has the potential to go even further. Her counselor, Michael Todd, shared, ‘Kim is a star student. She quietly does her best, all day, every day. I can see her being a doctor someday.’”

All in all, said Culik, “Kim’s quiet determination, initiative and strong work ethic have made a lasting impression on everyone who’s had a chance

to work with her. It’s a true pleasure to present you with the Faculty Excellence Award; congratulations.”

Then, before the awarding of the diplomas, Assistant Principal Kim Witeck noted that, this semester, the nonprofit Mountain View High School Foundation awarded \$64,000 in scholarships to the grads. “This year marks a very important milestone,” she said. “Since 1999, the foundation has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships to over 550 students.”

“We’re enormously grateful for the opportunities they provide for our graduates, as this money directly impacts their access to post-secondary education,” added Whatley. “Thank you to all those who contribute to the foundation for your unwavering support for our school.”



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
FAUQUIER	7397	710	RECTORTOWN ROAD	GOOSE CREEK	5/23/2025
BEDFORD	2877	744	VON ROY ROAD/ROUTE 744	WOLF CREEK	5/19/2025
APPOMATTOX	1673	727	RED HOUSE ROAD	MAPLE SPRING BRANCH	5/14/2025
FRANKLIN	7832	613	NAFF ROAD/ROUTE 613	MAGGODEE CREEK	5/9/2025

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

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

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

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

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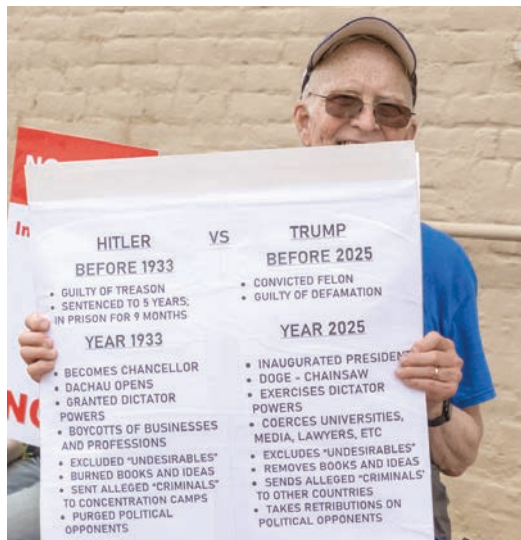
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Protesting on No Kings Day

People around the region (and around the country) turned out with their creativity and passion to express opposition to Trump administration actions and policies on Saturday, June 14, dubbed “No Kings Day.”

— PHOTOS AND INTERVIEWS BY JEFF HANCOCK



Richard, 74 of Fairfax, VA, a retired teacher, draws parallels between Trump and Hitler with his sign on the 3900 block of Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax, VA on Saturday, June 14, 2024.

PHOTOS BY
JEFF HANCOCK



Five local women brought their enthusiasm and their homemade signs to the Kamp Washington shopping center at Rt 20 and Rt 50 in Fairfax, VA on Saturday, June 14, 2024.



Sherman Greenstein, 80 of Fairfax Station, says he's been protesting since the 1961 House Un-American Activities Committee. He brought his years of experience to the No Kings Rally at Fair Lakes Shopping Center on Saturday, June 14, 2024.



Jay Converse of Fairfax, AKA “Tuba Man”, is a local celebrity from Fairfax, VA, who brought his sousaphone to Fair Lakes Shopping Center to support the No Kings Rally on Saturday, June 14, 2024.



Local women, 76 and 82, brought a large “No Kings, Blessed Be” sign to the Kamp Washington shopping center at Rt 20 and Rt 50 in Fairfax, VA on Saturday, June 14, 2024.

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SENIOR LIVING

Mobility Company Finds a Fit in Local Chamber

Wheelchairs and walkers are commonplace in this area.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

With the senior population growing in recent years, mobility issues are popping up due to osteoporosis, cancer and other bone density causes, so wheelchairs and walkers are becoming commonplace.

Bennet Helfgot sees it all around and as owner of Mobility City of Northern Virginia, he's there to help with his wide selection of products that help people get around. He opened the franchise in 2019 and just celebrated his fifth anniversary.

"There's a growing need out there," Helfgot said, and many times it takes a bigger effort than just relying on Medicare. "I help people on a daily basis, the system fails people," he said. There are plenty of seniors in the Mount Vernon-Springfield area so Helfgot joined the Mount Vernon-Springfield Chamber of Commerce recently to increase the company's exposure.

Once Helfgot finds the right equipment and fits it to the customer's needs, he remains committed to that transaction. "I'll maintain and repair it," he said. Although

his location is closer to Old Town Alexandria, he likes the Mount Vernon-Springfield Chamber of Commerce. "This chamber does a lot," he said.

Wheelchairs Needed

What Helfgot is seeing is a snapshot of a nationwide situation. According to the Social Security Administration, 12 percent of the total population is aged 65 or older this year, but by 2080, it will be 23 percent. This increase in the senior population is linked to the mobility issue so companies like Mobility City are getting more attention.

<https://alexandriava.mobilitycity.com/>

Vinny Baratta started Mobility City in Long Island, New York. He was raised in a family with several doctors and found himself fixing the wheelchairs in the family medical practice. His wife Diane got stuck in a summer downpour with a wheelchair patient and made an emergency call to Mobility City and they sent out a technician. "I understand what millions of people go through every day when their mobility equipment breaks down," she said. Now she is CEO of the company.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

At this Alexandria store there are all kinds of mobility options.

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PHOTOS NARRATED BY ELDEN, THE HERNDON BEAR



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"Herndon Police, Why are you moving my admirers behind that police tape?"



PHOTO BY SARAH

"Will someone please get this Maryland bear tracker collar and 'earring' off me? I want to be a Virginian."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"Score 1 for me, Elden. I came down the tree but took my planned escape route between the two houses away from the humans. There's a tall tree straight ahead."

We 'Bear'ly Got to Know Him

FROM PAGE 3

a Maryland tracking collar, which has been transmitting its location for approximately the last week and a half since it departed Springfield, Maryland. According to the tracking collar, the bear crossed the Potomac River, made his way to Great Falls and McLean, wandered over to Vienna, then Reston, and ultimately arrived in the Town of Herndon.

2:30 p.m.

Herndon Police block Elden Street and redirect traffic accordingly. The street transforms into a more tranquil, serene place. The tree-climbing black bear, now affectionately referred to as "Elden" by the Herndon Police Department, perches on a branch, appearing to relish the gentle breeze. Elden

seems more at ease as he lounges across one robust branch after another, extending himself and allowing his legs to hang freely. Throughout the afternoon, Elden lingers there. When nature beckons, he releases scat, bear droppings, onto the lawn beneath him. Little does Elden know that staff at Virginia Department of Wildlife is on their way to safely and humanely capture and transport him to a safe location.

Jimmy Cirrito, co-owner of Jimmy's Old Tavern, one block away, wanders down to see Elden. "I think he's just looking for a few necessities. He's going to be swinging by the 'Bear' Garden.' You know, we could use a good 'bear' tender," Cirrito says.

Quiet crowds gather closely behind the newly placed police bar-

ricade tape. A young girl named Maura, 7, says, "This is my first time seeing a bear. I don't really see bears."

Maura, along with other children and adults, can be heard softly "oooh-ing" and "ah-ing" at the bear's balancing talents. A community spirit fills the air. Neighbors mingle, lawn chairs are arranged in front yards, snacks and drinks are shared, and memories are captured in photos. Herndon Police remain on site. Their responsibility is crowd and traffic control.

Unbeknownst to Elden, staff members from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, which manages the state's Wildlife Management Area, are traveling to town, and the journey takes over three hours. In the bed of a truck is a mounted culvert-style bear trap.

The door opens from the rear for ease of animal relocation. Carl Tugend, a biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife and the Bear Project Lead, will assess the situation upon arrival and employ multi-pronged, non-lethal methods to remove Elden from the tree and into the bear trap.

5:00 p.m.

Tugend arrives on the scene and begins making noises. Elden appears unsettled, paces the branch, and attempts multiple times to shimmy down the trunk with his hind legs leading. Finally, he succeeds. But Elden runs around the side of the house and into the backyard of the neighbor's home. Elden climbs a dense river birch

SEE WE 'BEAR'LY, PAGE 15



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"It's Carl Tugend, the biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife and the bear project lead. Is he taking me somewhere?"



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"More fans and now TV cameras."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"I see an extension ladder down there. What are they doing?"



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

"Is Tugend holding an air rifle designed to shoot a flying syringe with a sedative at me?"

PHOTOS NARRATED BY ELDEN, THE HERNDON BEAR

We ‘Bear’ly Got to Know Him

FROM PAGE 14

tree using his strong claws and powerful limbs. LeBlanc estimates the bear’s perched height to be 30-40 feet, comparing it to the nearby rooftop of his home.

6:30 p.m.

Tugend drives his truck into the backyard of the second home. He loads his rifle with a tranquilizer dart, essentially a “flying syringe,” and goes to the base of the tree, aims, shoots, and misses. The syringe falls in a neighbor’s yard. Tugend fires a second syringe; its whirring whistle sound is easily heard. This time, it hits Elden. But he does not fall out of the tree. He is stuck. Fire and Rescue set up a ladder and cut branches. First responders gather underneath, holding the rescue net. Tugend climbs the ladder and pokes the bear, pushing him free. Elden falls into the net, and the crowd erupts in cheers. Then they gasp.

Elden is out of the net and stumbling along the fence line. The syringe can be seen embedded in his rump. Elden turns around and heads back toward his birch tree. First responders stand ready at a distance. Tugend shoots another tranquilizer syringe, hitting Elden a second time. He stumbles toward the large felled branches and lies down on them next to the fence.

7 p.m.

Five gloved responders load Elden onto a large black fabric with binding straps. They secure his mouth shut and his body to the cloth, according to Le Blanc, who has a close-up view of the happenings from the property’s back porch. The bear’s Maryland tracker is removed. Tugend does not attach a GPS or VHS collar to Elden to monitor his movement and behavior. According to Le Blanc, town staff later told him they learned “Virginia only tracks those [bears] in research programs.”

The responders carry Elden to the culvert trap, mounted on the back of Tugend’s truck, used for the live capture of bears. Carefully, they transfer the unconscious bear into the trap. It is designed with ventilation holes for humane transport.

According to Steve Pihonak, Chief of Police of the Town of Herndon, Elden was the ideal guest. “He kept to himself and didn’t cause any trouble. He was even seen multiple times properly utilizing the crosswalks to safely cross the street.”

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
“Tugend IS going to shoot me. Ouch.”



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
“Where can I hide? I’m stumbling. What is that poking my rump?”

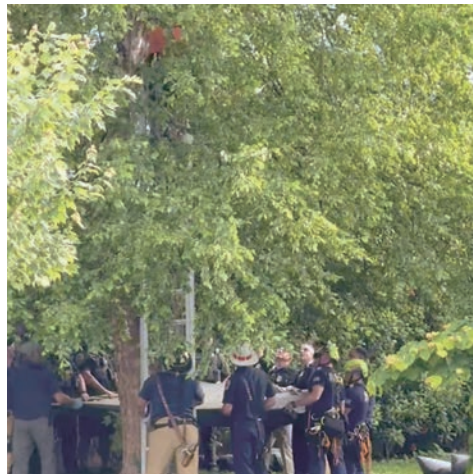


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
“I’m woozy; I’m stuck in the tree. I hear someone climbing up the ladder. Tugend, stop pushing me; I’ll fall”



SCREENSHOT SOURCE:
VIDEO BY ABBY GRACE SPRINGMANN
“Whew. You caught me in the rescue cloth. Thank you, but I’m out of here.”



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
“I can’t move. My collar is gone.”



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
“Ahhh, a safe den. Are you saying ‘Shenandoah Valley’? Am I a Virginian now?”

Recognizing Elden Day and his whereabouts

Tuesday, June 10, 7 p.m.

The Herndon Town Council recognized Monday, June 9, 2025, as “Elden the Bear Day” with a proclamation at their Tuesday night meeting. “The whole town took a ‘paws’ from their day on Monday to follow the journey of Elden, ... We’re not surprised that, after his Tour of the DMV, Elden chose Herndon as the best place to settle down,” said Keven LeBlanc, Herndon’s Mayor. “With our friendly neighborhoods, charming downtown, direct access to the Silver Line, and abundant picnic spots, it only makes sense.”

Wednesday, June 11, 3:26 p.m.

Shelby Crouch from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources said in a text message to The Connection, “The bear was released on a Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Wildlife Management Area.” According to the Town of

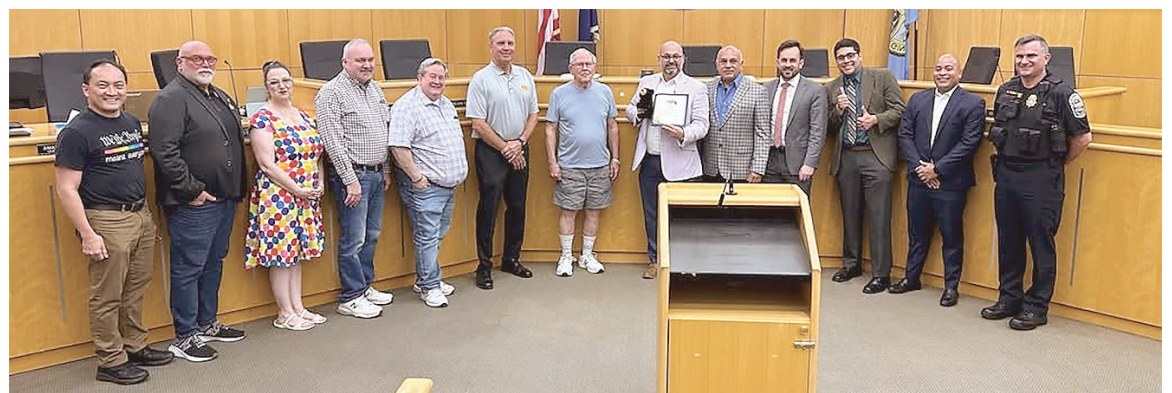


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED.

On June 10, the mayor of the Town of Herndon, together with the Herndon Town Council by proclamation, declare June 9, 2025 as “Elden The Bear Day in the Town of Herndon.” The proclamation celebrates “a moment of unexpected joy and unity” and the town’s “gratitude to all who ensured Elden’s safety and well-being.”

Herndon staff, sources at VDW told them that “Elden is residing in the Shenandoah region of Virginia.”

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources maintains 47 Wildlife Management Areas

(WMAs) across the state, totaling nearly 225,000 acres.” There are two Wildlife Management Areas in the Shenandoah region. One is the Goshen and Little North Mountain WMA.

The second is the Rapidan WMA

located along the east slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In Virginia, the home range of male black bears typically varies from 10 to 290 square miles. Perhaps Elden will make his way back to the Town of Herndon someday. LeBlanc said.

THE CONNECTION ♦ JUNE 18 - JULY 1, 2025 ♦ 15

ENTERTAINMENT



The Pack Drumline will appear on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at the McLean Community Center.

JUNETEENTH EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTY

The Fairfax County Park Authority invites the community to honor Juneteenth through a series of engaging events at multiple park locations, highlighting African American history, resilience and cultural contributions.

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated remembrance of the end of slavery in the United States. Observed each year on June 19, it commemorates the day in 1865 when the last enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, were informed of their freedom—more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

In Fairfax County, the Park Authority recognizes Juneteenth by sharing stories of the African American men, women and children who shaped the region's history through their labor, leadership, creativity and community.

Featured Events

Juneteenth Celebration at Sully Historic Site

Sully Historic Site, Thursday, June 19
Celebrate African American history through guided interpretive tours of original outbuildings and the first floor of the main house. Experience storytelling, music, children's activities, quilt exhibits, touchable artifacts, interpretive displays, and a free health clinic. Food trucks will be available and picnic tables provided. Free admission.

Juneteenth Smudge Stick Floral Workshop

Green Spring Gardens, Thursday, June 19

Join BLK FLWR MKT, a Black woman-owned business, in creating a floral smudge stick—a botanical bundle used in cultural and spiritual practices. Learn about the historical significance of these plants for Black Americans and engage in reflective activities, such as writing affirmations and sensory play. \$60 per person. Registration required
Exploring Our Historic Meeting House and Grounds

Frying Pan Farm Park, Saturday, June 21

Explore the rich history of Frying Pan's Meeting House, one of the oldest religious structures in Fairfax County. Staff and volunteers will offer informal tours of the building and grounds, highlighting the history of African Americans in the area. Free admission.

FREE GUIDED WALK AT MEADOWLARK

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

GARDEN TOURS

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

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

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

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

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

PLANT A TREE

The McLean Trees Foundation, Neighborhood Trees Program, wants to help you plant a native tree in your yard. Don't know how to plant a tree but want to support the environmental health of your community? Want your family to have the experience of planting a tree? If you live in McLean, Virginia, the McLean Trees Foundation (MTF) (a local nonprofit) will help you select an appropriate native tree for your property, deliver the



A Tribute to The Man in Black – Johnny Folsom 4: Johnny Cash Tribute will take place on Thursday, July 3, 2025 at McLean Central Park.

tree to your yard, help you plant it, provide information on maintenance, and even check back with you a few months after planting to see how your tree is doing. If you are interested in participating in this terrific program to boost our native tree canopy in McLean, please visit our website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/neighborhood-tree-program> and submit your application! A modest fee of \$100 is assessed to cover the costs of the program (limit one 6-7 foot tree in 15 gallon container per household). We have a separate program for those who are interested in spearheading a community tree planting campaign in their neighborhood. MTF's Tree Champion program makes it easy to help your neighbors plant more trees! For more information, visit the website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/tree-champions-program>.

THROUGH JUNE 29

Illuminations: A Retrospective by Rosemarie Forsythe. At Reston Art Gallery. Forsythe's artworks celebrate nature and science, using acrylic, flashe paint, and 23k gold leaf to evoke a sense of magic and mystery.

KIDS ON THE GREEN RETURNS

This summer, families are invited to the Freeman Store and Museum patio in Vienna every Tuesday at 10 a.m. in June, July and August for the 8th annual "Kids on the Green" series. This popular family event features free entertainment designed for children of all ages, such as performances by magicians, musicians and storytellers. Attendees are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on and enjoy the show. Visit www.viennava.gov/kidsonthegreen.

SENIOR MOVIE DAY

Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day. Join them on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie.

Doors: 9:00 a.m., Movie at 10 a.m.

Location: Movie theater at Reston Town Center

June 25: Featuring: Summer Camp Dive-In Movies

June 26, featuring, Kung Fu Panda 4

July 10, featuring, The Wild Robot

Aug. 6 featuring, Moana 2

JUNE 5-29

August Wilson's The Piano Lesson.

At 1st Stage in Tysons Corner. Set in 1930s Pittsburgh, Berniece and her brother, Boy Willie, navigate the complexities of their past and the weight of their future, all centered around an heirloom piano with a story of its own. Show times: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. General admission tickets are \$25 (limited availability), \$40 (limited availability), and \$55. Student, educator, and military tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

JUNE 5 TO AUG. 3

LEGO Summer of Play. At LEGO Springfield Mall. This summer, families can get ready for a celebration of play like no other at LEGO Discovery Center with an all-new event. From June 5 – August 3, the LEGO Summer of Play event will have new activities to help kids discover their unique Play Mode — whether they love to create, discover, build, dance or simply play their own way.

Event Activities:

- Imagine and design a more playful city in our Creative Workshop with a Master Model Builder
- Spot the summer surprises hidden in MINIWORLD
- Join a FESTIVAL dance party with an awesome LEGO character
- Build a LEGO bee and display it on our LEGO flower cart
- Capture your Play Mode pose in a photo with a LEGO character and share the moment

JUNE 16 TO AUG. 15

2025 Summer Art Camps. At Work-

house Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. 2025 Summer Art Camps at Workhouse Arts Center for ages 6-16. Spots are filling fast—secure your child's summer adventure today! Get ready for 9 unforgettable weeks of creativity and fun! Workhouse Arts Center's 2025 Art Camp kicks off June 16, offering dynamic, hands-on experiences for young artists, performers, and musicians. Whether your child joins us for one week or all nine, they'll explore new passions and build lasting friendships.

Choose Your Track:

Visual Arts — From clay to canvas, campers dive into a world of color and creativity.

Theater — Lights, camera, action! Budding performers learn acting, directing, and playwrighting.

Music & Dance — Let the rhythm move you with vocals, instruments, and high-energy dance.

Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/camps>

THURSDAY/JUNE 19

The Pack Drumline. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. This electrifying performance will have you on the edge of your seat or blanket! The Pack Drumline's renowned blend of southern show style drumming with intense upbeat choreography creates a production that is both powerful and awe-inspiring. Together, dynamic percussionists and dancers create explosive rhythms, intricate patterns and stunning visuals.

JUNE 19 AND 20

Indigo Girls Perform. At Capital One Hall. Grammy-winning duo Indigo Girls will be performing two evenings in Tysons with the Fairfax Symphony at the Capital One Hall on Thursday and Friday, June 19 and 20. For these special symphony shows, the iconic folk duo brought in musical arrangers Sean O'Loughlin (Chris Isaak, Feist, The Decemberists, Josh Ritter) and Stephen Barber (Rosanne Cash, Alejandro Escovedo, John Legend) to write orchestral charts for a selection of

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ENTERTAINMENT



Bennie and the Jets: Tribute to Elton John will appear on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at the McLean Community Center.

songs spanning their career, from the 1980s on.

SATURDAY/JUNE 21
Juneteenth at Frying Pan Park. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Frying Pan Park, Herndon. Uncover stories of free and enslaved African Americans. Learn how Black congregations fought for greater freedoms. Explore how they built a thriving community. Join tours through the church, grounds, and former Lee House site. (All ages) Free but registration recommended.

SATURDAY/JUNE 21
COPA Tysons Soccer Fest. 1 to 7 p.m. at Ken Lawrence Park, 8008 Jones Branch Drive, Tysons. The Tysons Community Alliance (TCA) is pleased to announce the 2025 COPA Tysons Soccer Fest, a free, all ages soccer festival featuring an exciting array of fun soccer activities such as bubble soccer, inflatables, soccer skills stations, photo opportunity with Washington Spirit mascot PK, vendors, a DJ, face painting, food trucks and more. All area soccer fans are invited to attend this family-friendly festival. This year, COPA Tysons Soccer Fest has added its inaugural co-ed small-sided, 4-v-4 adult tournament open to male and female players 18 years and older, featuring two divisions – the Open Division (18+ adults) and a Senior Division (35+ adults). Registration is \$200 (plus fees), which includes four guaranteed small-sided games, a COPA Tysons t-shirt, and an award for the winning team.

SATURDAY/JUNE 21
Rocknoceros. 10-10:45 a.m. At the rooftop of the Springfield CBC Commuter Garage, 7039 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Part of the Kids' Concerts on the Green Series at Springfield Overlook.

SATURDAY/JUNE 21
Vienna's Naturalization Ceremony. 5 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Fifteen people will become a part of our nation's fabric during this year's naturalization ceremony. Community members are invited to witness this inspiring event as their fellow foreign-born neighbors take



The Pathway's Artists Reception takes place on Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax.

the oath. This year's ceremony will feature live music and entertainment beginning at 3:30 p.m.

SATURDAY/JUNE 21
Play Palooza – The Ultimate Pop-up Kids Festival. Noon to 4 p.m. At Vienna Shopping Center, 180 Maple Ave., W, Vienna. Includes rock wall climbing, a giant bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, truck touch zone, foam and confetti parties, face painting, toddler play zone, virtual gaming experiences and kid vs. parent challenges. In addition, there will be cotton candy and popcorn.

SUNDAY/JUNE 22
Burke Historical Society Meeting. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Shemika Curvey, a Graduate Research Assistant at GMU, will present What's in a Name? Bethia Fairfax & Sarah Ambrose, Free Women of Color in 19th Century Fairfax County, Virginia.

SUNDAY/JUNE 22
Craft Fun. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Join craft experts at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum for Whirling Wonders. Create a DIY Pinwheel Craft. This fun and easy project is perfect for some summer fun. Just like the wheels on the train, the pinwheels you can create will spin gracefully in the breeze. Or make a 'flower' pinwheel stake for a garden pot, even a pinwheel wreath. Not all will spin, but the beauty of what your family will create is sure to fill all with joyful memories. All supplies are included, one craft per person while supplies last. Admission: Museum Members and children 4 and under, free. Ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older \$5, \$6 for special events. Seniors, \$4. Military, active and retired, \$4. www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

THURSDAY/JUNE 26
Bennie and the Jets: Tribute to Elton John. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Do you remember when rock was young? Even if you don't, you will want to rock with this Elton John tribute. Greg Ransom is every bit as flamboyant, outrageous and entertaining as the Pinball Wizard himself.



An Independence Day Fireworks Celebration takes place on Saturday, June 28, 2025 at Langley High School in McLean.

SATURDAY/JUNE 28
Free Talk. 2 p.m. At Historic Blenheim, Fairfax. Explore "The Creation of Black Mistrust in Police: An Exploration of the White Policing of Black Bodies in Fairfax County"; "A slave caught without a pass." George Mason University graduate Andrew Snowman's ongoing scholarship explores the Black experience with white policing through the study of Fairfax County's Antebellum policing and its evolution through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement. New scholarship from African American studies have provided tools that help revisit older examples of historical scholarship to help understand reasons for the current Black perspective toward police.

SATURDAY/JUNE 28
Independence Day Fireworks Celebration. 6:30-10 p.m. At Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Come celebrate Independence Day with MCC! The whole family will enjoy music, food trucks, giveaways, and at dusk, a huge fireworks display. There is a limited amount of free onsite parking and additional free satellite parking with shuttle bus service (accessibility equipped). For details and information regarding directions, shuttle buses, weather alerts, satellite parking and site location, visit mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 28
Workhouse Fireworks Festival. 4-10 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to announce the return of Northern Virginia's largest and most anticipated summer celebration—the Workhouse Fireworks Festival. This free, family-friendly festival draws thousands annually for its high-energy live music, carnival games, interactive art zones, food trucks, and a dazzling fireworks finale that lights up the Northern Virginia sky. Headlining this year is local favorite The Outer Loop, bringing danceable hits across the decades, along with DJs, a new art-themed mini golf course, and even a dunk tank featuring the CEO!

SUNDAY/JUNE 29
Oakton-Vienna Veterinary Hospital Celebrates 50 Years. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 320 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Oakton-Vienna Veterinary Hospital is thrilled to announce its 50th

Business Anniversary celebration, a community event filled with fun, food, and festivities! This milestone event is their way of thanking the community for their unwavering support and trust throughout the years. Highlights of the celebration include raffle prizes generously donated by our partners, fun crafts and activities for the whole family, music, delicious food, as well as the support from other fantastic businesses in our community.

TYSONS CORNER CENTER SUMMER 2025 PROGRAMMING
May– August on PenFed Plaza
Fridays: Live music offers two distinct experiences:
6/27, 7/4, 7/11, 7/25, 8/8, 8/29 4-6 p.m.
Close out the work week with the laid-back vibes of live acoustic music—perfect for unwinding or singing along with friends. Grab dinner at a PenFed Plaza restaurant patio like Earl's, Shake Shack, or Barrel & Bushel and soak in the sounds of summer.

June 20, July 18, Aug 22 (rain dates: June 26th, July 24th, Aug 28th) 5-8 p.m.
Check out PenFed Plaza for an exciting new concept music series featuring The Flying Ivories, Dueling Pianos, a live, fun, interactive duo performance. From Billy Joel to Aretha Franklin, from Sinatra to Metallica, from Johnny Cash to Taylor Swift, we've got it covered. You control the set list, so no two shows are ever the same.

THURSDAYS: FAMILY GAME NIGHT
June 19, July 3, July 17, Aug 7, Aug 21
4-7 p.m.
Tap into your competitive side with a friendly game of cornhole or ping pong, all set to an upbeat soundtrack curated by a live deejay. Between matches, savor happy hour specials from Barrel & Bushel's summer menu just steps away. Game equipment is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

THURSDAY/JULY 3
A Tribute to The Man in Black – Johnny Folsom 4: Johnny Cash Tribute. 7 p.m. At McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Called "a peerless tribute band to the late, great Johnny Cash," the Johnny Folsom 4 approaches their tribute to Cash with reverence rather than imitation.

We can't think of a better way to spend Independence Day eve than a picnic with friends and neighbors and hits by the Man in Black.

THURSDAY/JULY 10
Everything Old is New – Good Co. 7 p.m. At McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Bringing the roaring '20s into the modern era! Good Co.'s "new-old" sound of electro swing combines the era of jitterbugging flappers and underground speakeasies with the funky beats and the electric sounds of today's dance music.

THURSDAY/JULY 10
The Hot Lanes Perform. 7-8:15 p.m. At Nottoway Park, Vienna. Free. Outdoors. Part of the Fairfax County Park Authority Concert Series. After a seven-year hiatus, they are back with the FCPA Concert Series and will perform one long set of originals and standards. Bring a chair and some hors d'oeuvres while you enjoy some solid music.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 16
Pathway's Artists Reception. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Fairfax County Government Center, South Atrium, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Pathway Homes is hosting an Artist Reception as part of its 12th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit, where Pathway Homes' residents who have mental health challenges showcase and sell their own art, poetry, and crafts. Original art and artists will be on hand at this free reception that gives an opportunity to meet these talented people and celebrate their artistry. Pathway Homes is a nonprofit providing mental health services—starting with safe, stable housing—to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity.

SATURDAY/JULY 26
Live Summer Concert. 7-9 p.m. At Tysons Corner Mall, McLean. Live on PenFed Plaza is DC's White Ford Bronco, a 90s cover band. This free outdoor concert, sponsored by Lava Technology Services is for all music lovers filled with throwback hits from the '90s. Attendees can expect high-energy, interactive fun at the LAVA section and have the opportunity to snap photos with LAVA's mascot, grab cool swag, and connect with their team.

SATURDAY/AUG. 16
Play Palooza – The Ultimate Pop-up Kids Festival. Noon to 4 p.m. At Springfield Plaza, 7206 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Includes rock wall climbing, a giant bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, truck touch zone, foam and confetti parties, face painting, toddler play zone, virtual gaming experiences and kid vs. parent challenges. In addition, there will be cotton candy and popcorn.

AUG. 23-24
Experience Your Korea. At Tysons Corner Mall, McLean. Experience Your Korea is a vibrant cultural roadshow coming to PenFed Plaza at Tysons Corner Center with the best trend driven Korean content from food and fashion to beauty and live cultural experiences. Attendees can immerse themselves in curated K-culture zones, discover Korea's hidden travel gems and iconic festivals, and enjoy a range of interactive programs.



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Employment

IT company (Aldie, VA) seeks Software Engineer for enterprise application dsgn, dvlpmnt & testing. Duties: Anlyz/dsgn prgm logic, screen layouts, reports & testing criteria; dvlp logic/code & installation tasks; implmnt test plans. Req: US MS or foreign equiv in CS, CIS or rlted + 1 yr exp. Position may req reloc 6+ mos per proj/client needs. Send resumes: AI Consultants Inc, 23098 Red Sunset Pl, Aldie, VA 20105.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

Employment

Palo Alto Networks is accepting resumes for the following position in RESTON, VA: Senior Technical Support Engineer - Focused Services, Prisma REF8827635: Prove White Glove Technical Support to top-tier customers. Provides technical support to field engineers, technicians, and product support personnel who are diagnosing, troubleshooting, repairing and debugging complex electro/mechanical equipment, computer systems, complex software, or networked and/or wireless systems. Telecommuting may be permitted. When not telecommuting, must report to worksite. Send resume to usmailresumes@paloaltonetworks.com. EOE. Must include REF code.

Employment

Urgent.ly, Inc. seeks Technical Lead Engs in Vienna, VA to drv techn innov & sclng to brng Urgntly's RSFA srvc to hghst lvl w/qlty deliv in rdsid assist & fin spcs. 100% tlcom perm. Apply www.jobpostingtoday.com Ref#57410

Employment

Transaction Network Services, Inc. in Reston, VA seeks Director, Data Intelligence. Manage Data Intelligence team. Req's MS in Engineering + 3 yrs exp. Special Skills apply. May work remotely. Salary: \$167K-187K. 10% travel req'd to undetermined. Must email CV/CL to TAG@tnsi.com & reference title/Req #R365.

Employment

Staff Data Engineer – Applied Machine Learning. Apply data engg., data analytics, data sci., & quantitative analysis to dev. & optmze. mach. learning (ML) sys. McLean, VA HQ; telecommuting permitted. Reqs. quartly. trvl. w/in the US. Reqs. Bach. Deg. or higher in Machine Learning, Comp. Sci., Indust. Engg., Data Engg., or closely related field, & at least 2 yrs. of ind. exp. in data modeling & analytics. Exp. must incl. bldg. ML sys. for deploymt. into prod. envs., dev'g cust. data models & algos. for data set apps., dev'g A/B testing frameworks, managing ML model training pipelines, analyzing model perf. & data accuracy, predictive modeling, TensorFlow, PyTorch, and Python. Mail resumes to: Trase Systems, Inc., Attn: Joe Laws, 1800 Tysons Blvd, Suite 900, McLean VA 22102. Ref MS.TR.VT96.

Employment

Employment

Accountant (Herndon, VA) Comput taxes owed, assist in prep tax returns & ensur paymnts paid. Anlyz, resrch, & resolv AP discrepancies. Provid vendor paymnt reports to agents mnthly. Manag account affrs w/ local firm of subsid. Reqs: Master's account, fin, or smlr + 6 mo exp accountg or find reportg. Knwlg SAP corp account sftwr. Mandarin fluen. Res: China Telecom (Americas) Corporation, jobsatcta@ctamericas.com.

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Executive, McLean, VA. Mng dvlpmnt & implementation of VDC/BIM civil-eng'g tech & prof'l svcs across business ops & indvl constr. projects. Ensure proper training of eng'g/tech staff & spearhead mrktg efforts. Apply online w/Clark Construction Group, LLC at <https://www.clarkconstruction.com/build-your-career>.

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CALENDAR

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Six-foot Alligator Seeks Lodging at Fairfax County Motel

Fairfax County Police Department reported Monday, June 16, that an alligator was loose outside a local motel shortly after midnight, according to an officer's bodyworn camera footage released on social media. The officer can be heard saying, "Damn, that is an alligator. ... There is actually an alligator outside of the hotel." Asked by dispatch, "How big is it?" the officer responds, "If I lay down next to it, it's approximately six feet."

The incident occurred at the Budget Host Alexandria motel on Richmond Highway after a caller reported seeing the reptile outside their room. Reportedly, its owner was transporting the gator to a zoo in North Carolina. The outcome proved happy for all. Due to Virginia law prohibiting the possession of exotic animals, the alligator and its owner were escorted out of Fairfax County by police.



BODYWORN CAMERA FOOTAGE @FAIRFAXCOUNTYPD

Alligator estimated to be six-feet long at a motel on Richmond Highway, viewed on police body camera.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

<cal1>Volunteer Drivers Needed
<cal2>Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with ser-

vices and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

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

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

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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

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

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

Out of Balance



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When I finally - recently, received my berry-blend-variety of the health supplement I've been taking twice daily for 16+ years, after what seemed like months in arrears - due to a difficult rollout of the company's new computer system, they said, it reinforced my thinking as to why I've felt off lately. It had nothing to do with my thyroid cancer - which seems amazingly in control at present, my marriage which goes along as it mostly has - for nearly 48 years, my family - which consists of my father-in-law and his wife living in New York City and a nephew and spouse and their children all living on Topeka, Ks. our dog, Burton, presently lying under my desk with his jaw on the top of my right foot, and our four cats - all of whom generally speaking other than Andrew (who's in remission from lymphoma after a year of chemotherapy) are progressing "within normal perimeters" to quote Data from "Star Trek: Next Generation," and lastly our 275-year-old home standing up very well against the test of time. No. Why I'm feeling unsettled is I've not seen any Balance of Nature commercials on television lately. For a while there (a month or two or three), at least on the television channels I regularly watch, Balance of Nature was inundating these airways with testimonials from any number and variety of satisfied customers.

I think I must have seen upwards of a dozen or so of these first-person testimonials, in a fairly condensed timeline, saying all the right things about this product and the effect it has had on their lives: amazing, wish they had started sooner, feel like their old selves again, et. cetera. If I hadn't already been taking a competitor's identical product, I would have at the very least, made an inquiry as to cost, frequency and benefits. However, being fully "ensconced" not in crushed velvet (to invoke George Costanza from "Seinfeld") but in a parallel pill universe, I, despite this wave of overwhelming television repetition, have stood pat. I mean, for all I know, my brand's multi-vitamin-triumvirate might very well be the thing which has sustained me all these post-characterized-as-terminal years.

As such, my interest has been solely in noticing that something (the Balance of Nature television commercials) that had been so much a part of my life for the last two to three months, even though it had no direct bearing on my cancer health, was missing. And I felt it deeply enough that I thought I'd mention it. Again, as a 16-plus-year cancer survivor still undergoing treatment and still being seen by my oncologist and still PET-scanned every four months, and lab tested every four weeks, this kind of information interests me. The cancer news/stories of survival I hear, from whomever/whatever source, the better/more positive I feel about my circumstances. Not that any of what I hear has to mirror my health situation. It doesn't. Any example of people/patients overcoming their symptoms and/or returning to a "normal" life, gives me hope and encourages me to "Keep on keeping on." I gain strength hearing other survival stories. It's like we're all one big team and when a teammate does well, we all do well.

In this Balance of Nature experience, familiarity has not bred contempt. It has bred a type of consistency of expectations. And any chink in your consistency sort of affects your wherewithal. I didn't need to see the commercial to gain any knowledge, but not seeing their commercials made me feel as if something of substance in my life was missing. And for a cancer patient, you can't afford to be missing anything of substance. Who's to say what's really keeping you alive? Medicine certainly but one's attitude is huge. And I don't need anything to weaken my resolve. Internally or externally.

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



Madelyn Regan

Centreville High's Madelyn Regan Wins Cappies Award

Centreville High's Madelyn Regan won a Cappies Award for Maryland Theater Guide Returning Critic. She received this honor June 2, at the Cappies Gala at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. On the Theatre Centreville Facebook page, the school's thespians wrote, "Theatre Centreville is so proud of all of your hard work and dedication you put into this department."

- BONNIE HOBBS



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