

Be Independent

The Fairfax Independent

~ The Independent News Press ~ February 2025 | Vol. 2 No. 2 | www.tfinews.press

The Independent News Press Publication
Publisher of The Fairfax Independent Since 2024

Unicorn in American Politics: Jimmy Carter

Written by Chap Petersen

Republished from thevirginiaattorney.com

Jimmy Carter was a unicorn in American politics. The only Democrat elected President in the years between Lyndon Johnson and Bill Clinton (1968-1992). A peanut farmer with no family wealth. A rural Southerner, Navy veteran and evangelical Christian who ran and governed as a moderate, if not liberal. You don't find people like that anymore.

Carter was the ultimate non-politician. His one-term Presidency was derailed by a perception that America had become weak. He never really pushed back against that, even as he confronted Soviet expansionism. He never got credit for historic feats, like the Camp David Accords which ended years of war between Israel and Egypt. He was a humble man, which worked as a candidate — but not so much as a Commander in Chief running for re-election.

He found his groove after his Presidency, promoting causes like Habitat for Humanity and Third World disease prevention. (His role in ending the Guinea worm disease may be his most significant achievement). He never ran for office again, nor did he push his wife to do so. In that way, he and Rosalyn stayed above the fray, which gave gravity to their work.

Carter's post-Presidential work was not perfect. As a mediator with the Carter Center, he gave too much love to socialist dictators (Hugo Chavez, Kim Jong Un) who didn't deserve it. But he got one thing very right, both as President and as a former President: he refocused U.S. foreign policy on democracy and human rights and, yes, that had a role in winning the Cold War.

Jimmy Carter would never be nominated, much less elected, today. But that's OK. He did a lot to make the world a better place. And he lived the values that he learned in church, whether it helped him politically or not.

"Well done, good and faithful servant." Matthew 25:21 ■

"We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes — and we must."

Jimmy Carter, Nobel Lecture



America's Constitutional Promise: The 2025 Peaceful Transfer of Power

Written by Tania Hossain

The Fairfax Independent

On January 20, 2025, America witnessed one of its most profound democratic traditions - the peaceful transfer of power from the Biden Administration to the Trump Administration. The upcoming inauguration carries particular weight as President Donald Trump returns to the White House, making this an unprecedented historic moment in America. While some may focus on the political implications, this peaceful transfer of power truly represents America's greatness.

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies aptly chose "Our Enduring Democracy: A Constitutional Promise" as the theme for the 60th Inaugural - in recognition of the Founders' commitment to ensuring the stability and continuity of our democratic system for future generations. A young and experimental democracy system that is the living fulfillment of our constitutional principles - a tradition that will continue as America embarks on her Quarter Millennial birthday in 2026.

This inauguration reminds us that democracy is not a spectator sport but a participatory endeavor. With the area hotel occupancy rate of 94-97% in Washington D.C. and extensive security preparations that began in mid-summer, Washington DC was again the center of attention for the Nation and the world. As we witness this transition, we would do well to remember that what we're celebrating is not just the beginning of a new administration, but the continuation of a constitutional promise that has sustained our republic for almost a quarter century. ■

**Social Security
Fairness Act**
Page 10

**College Sports Represent
the Best of America**
Page 11

**The Commanders Beat
the Lions**
Page 25



CHAP PETERSEN & ASSOCIATES, PLC

Specializing in Business Law, Commercial Litigation & Property Rights



(571) 459-2512



Responsive | Creative Solutions

“We are a small, family-owned firm located in downtown Fairfax City, a block from the historic courthouse. We handle cases for clients, local, national and international, who seek the very best in legal representation. We have won cases in State and Federal courts around Virginia and throughout the D.C . metro area. Let us know how we can help you. “

– Chap Petersen

*Serving Northern Virginia with
over forty years of combined
attorney experience.*

 **petersenfirm.com**

Scan to subscribe or go to www.tfinews.press/subscribe





The Fairfax Independent

The Independent News Press
3976 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 102
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 282-3813
info@theindependentnewspress.com

The Fairfax Independent, your source for local news, stories, and community updates. Established in our beloved City of Fairfax and operating since July 4, 2024, The Fairfax Independent part of a consortium of local newspapers published by The Independent News Press.

Owner & Publisher
Chap Petersen

Editorial Team

- Managing Editor**
Tania Hossain
- Book Publishing Manager**
Grace Brooks
- Art Director**
Angie Tran
- Web Content Manager**
Taslima Islam
- Marketing Team**
Savi Mamgain
Layla Mohran
- Writing Team**
Caleb Brooks
Grace Brooks
Caroline Chu
Heather Durkin
Hannah Lee
Layla Mohran
- Guest Writers**
Rachel McQuillen
Chap Petersen

Our Partners

- S & J Printing
Printing & Distribution
- Our Hometown
Website Management
- Chap Petersen & Associates
Legal & Business
- USPS
Fairfax City Mail Carriers
- Zayd Hamid
Voice from George Mason University
- Pick Up Location Partners**
De Clieu Coffee & Sandwich
eXurb Fitness Fairfax
Fairfax Regional Library
Giant – Oakton & Fairfax
Joy Unlimited
Main Street Bagel

Team Holiday Party



From Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Caleb, Chap Tania, Taslima, Grace, Heather

Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

What a great start to 2025. As I am writing to you, I am reflecting on how fortunate that we have pulled off a local newspaper unlike any other – yes, I am unabashedly biased.

We have so many things to share. Most importantly I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our advertising partners for helping keep the consortium of local newspapers published by The Independent News Press, including *The Fairfax Independent*, free for our readers.

Thank you to our amazing, fearless, and curious writers for growing with the paper. We love our guest writers and thank them for sharing stories. Our partners are the best at what they do to make our paper shine with each edition.

I am thrilled to share that we have received a hearty welcome from Mayor Colbert, Town of Vienna as we come to the eve of launching our second newspaper – *The Oakton and Vienna Independent!* We appreciate and take note of governments who support an independent and free press in their communities – one of the pillars of a healthy democracy.

We are also in talks with a local TV station for a news spot and eventually to have our news programming as early as this spring. Finally, we have great humble plans to expand our readership to 250K by this fall.

We love the communities we serve. We want more stories about our towns, cities, counties, and communities. Please join us.

With love & gratitude, Tania. ■

Advertise with Us

Reach more than 15,000 Fairfax City homes and businesses monthly by advertising in *The Fairfax Independent* as well as 10 pick up locations throughout the city. Your advertising dollars help keep the print edition free and support the local community. For more information visit: www.tfinews.press/advertise ■

“Within our system of government every American has a right and a duty to help shape the future course of the United States. Thoughtful criticism and close scrutiny of all government officials by the press and the public are an important part of our democratic society. Now, as in the past, only the understanding and involvement of the people through full and open debate can help to avoid serious mistakes and assure the continued dignity and safety of the Nation.”

- Former President Jimmy Carter’s farewell address to the Nation, January 14, 1981

Place Your
Small Ads in
Our Classified
Section.



www.tfinews.press/classifieds



Join Our Team!

We’re Hiring

We’re looking for a few good writers!

If interested, contact Tania Hossain at info@theindependentnewspress.com

City of Fairfax Mayor and City Council Introductions

The City of Fairfax has a council/manager form of government. The mayor and six councilmembers are elected every two years on an at-large, non-partisan basis. The current term expires 12/31/2026. The governing body can be reached through the City Manager’s Office at (703) 385-7850. The current mayor and councilmembers are listed below.

Bios and Photos courtesy of the City of Fairfax

Mayor
Catherine S. Read



Catherine S. Read is serving her second term as Mayor.

She currently serves on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), and Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC). Additionally, she serves on the Virginia Poverty Law Center Advisory Board and the Equality Virginia PAC Board.

A city resident since 2000 in the Daniels Run Woods, Providence Square, and Fairchester Woods neighborhoods, she has most recently worked with local nonprofits on legislative advocacy and messaging, and continues to occasionally host shows for Fairfax Public Access.

Read earned a B.A. in Government and Politics from George Mason University and was recently elected to serve on the Alumni Chapter Board of Mason’s Schar School of Public Policy and Government for 2024-26.

She resides with her husband Tom Greeson and their dog Reggie.

Send Mayor Read your comments and feedback to:
Catherine.Read@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Anthony T. Amos



Anthony T. Amos is serving his first term on the City Council.

He was the city representative on the Fairfax Campus and Community Advisory Board in 2024.

Amos currently works as a legislative and community outreach aide for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, handling constituent services cases relating to land use, permits, taxes, environment, stormwater, and utilities.

Born in Germany, Amos is the son of a retired Army captain and Eritrean immigrant and worked for the state senate for the Hawaii legislature, focusing on policy research and educational development.

He has received the Rising Star Award from Volunteer Fairfax, the Jack Wood Award for Town-Gown Relations from George Mason University, and the Outstanding Community Service Award from the Bernie L. Bates Foundation. He was inducted into the Pi Alpha Alpha and Pi Gamma Mu societies.

Amos earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology and political science from the University of Hawaii-West Oahu. He earned his master’s degree in public policy from Mason, specializing in economic policy, and was appointed graduate student ambassador for the Schar School of Policy and Government.

He is a member of the Fairfax Rotary Club, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, and the NAACP.

He and his partner Marena have lived in the city since 2022.

Send Councilmember Amos your comments and feedback to:
Anthony.Amos@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Billy M. Bates



Billy M. Bates is serving his second term on City Council.

He has represented the city as an alternate member for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Region Forward Coalition and MWCOG Human Services Policy Committee.

He was the high school liaison to the city’s Environmental and Sustainability Committee while a student at Fairfax High School. He has been a member of the Virginia Young Democrats in both high school and college and has interned with state and federal campaigns.

Bates, a member of George Mason University’s powerlifting club, has been involved with the Mason chapter of Best Buddies International, a non-profit global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships and empowerment

for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The lifelong city resident received his bachelor’s degree in physics from Mason; as an undergraduate research intern, he participated in computational physics research. He is pursuing a master’s degree in physics at Mason while working as a graduate teaching assistant at the university.

Send Councilmember Bates your comments and feedback to:
Billy.Bates@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Stacy R. Hall



Stacy R. Hall is serving her first term on the City Council.

A city resident since 2011, she served on the City of Fairfax School Board from 2023-24, during which time she represented the school board on the city’s Environmental Sustainability Committee.

The longtime Providence Elementary School PTA member served as its president and its vice president of membership and also ran the PTA book fair for several years. She served as an at-large member of the Cobbdale Civic Association from 2011-22 and has been its treasurer since 2022.

She has worked as an accountant in the private sector and currently works

as a controller at ACI Biosciences.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in finance and minors in economics and biology from the University of Delaware. She has been a member of DECA, a nonprofit organization that prepares high school and college students for careers in marketing, finance, and management.

She and her husband Russ have two sons and two dogs.

Send Councilmember Hall your comments and feedback to:
Stacy.Hall@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Stacey D. Hardy-Chandler



Stacey D. Hardy-Chandler is serving her first term on City Council.

She served on the city’s Commission for Women for five years, including a year as secretary.

A city resident for 11 years, she is currently the CEO of the Association of Social Work Boards, a nonprofit serving the social work regulatory community in the U.S. and Canada. She is a licensed clinical social worker with special training in forensic social work. Her professional career includes direct clinical practice, academic faculty membership and administration, and human service senior management.

She has received numerous awards, including the Sol Gothard Lifetime Achievement Award and National Association of Counties and Virginia Association of Counties achievement awards.

Hardy-Chandler earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of California, Riverside; a master of social welfare from UCLA;

and a master’s in psychology and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University. She earned her juris doctor in law from the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, and a post-graduate diploma in organizational leadership from Oxford University’s Saïd Business School.

She is a member of the National Organization of Forensic Social Work and the National Association of Social Workers, and is an active member of the Fairfax chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

She and her husband Mark have two dogs, Liberty and Terrence.

Send Councilmember Hardy-Chandler your comments and feedback to:
Stacey.Hardy-Chandler@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Rachel M. McQuillen



Rachel M. McQuillen is serving her first term on City Council.

The 14-year city resident served on the City of Fairfax School Board from 2023-24, during which time she represented the school board on the city’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

She served as the Providence Elementary School PTA secretary and the Providence Elementary School PTA spirit wear chair. She also has been a Westmore Neighborhood Association block representative since 2015. She is the public image chair and assistant treasurer of the Rotary Club of Fairfax and spearheads the Dictionary Project, which provides free dictionaries to third graders.

She worked in the accounting and finance industry and the health and

fitness industry before launching a dog training and pet care service in 2018.

McQuillen, a George Mason University Global Engagement Scholar, earned her bachelor’s degree in marketing from the George Mason University School of Business and completed studies with the Cultural Intelligence Center.

She is a member of the International Association of Canine Professionals and visits local schools with her Labrador retriever, who recently began work as a therapy dog.

She and her husband have two children.

Send Councilmember McQuillen your comments and feedback to:
Rachel.McQuillen@fairfaxva.gov

Councilmember
Thomas D. Peterson



Thomas D. Peterson is serving his first term on City Council.

Peterson, who has lived in the city since 2002, served as chair of Fairfax City’s Environmental Sustainability Committee from 2022-24.

He is founder, president, and CEO of the Center for Climate Strategies, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that coordinates worldwide to develop and implement shared solutions to climate change, economic development, social equity, and sustainability.

He is an adjunct professor and lecturer at the Johns Hopkins University Energy Policy and Climate program and an adjunct professor at the George Mason University Department of Environmental Science and Policy.

Peterson has held numerous positions in the government and private sector, including as White House senior advisor at the Council of Economic Advisors and Council of Environmental Quality; Brookings Legislative Fellow to Sen. Joe Lieberman; economist at the EPA; vice president of DSL Capital; and adjunct professor at the Penn State Dickinson School of Law and the George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

He was awarded the U.S. EPA Gold Medal for Exceptional Service and was featured in Michael Fraidenburg’s Intelligent Courage: Natural Resource Careers that Make a Difference.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from the College of William and Mary, an M.S. M.E.M. in natural resource economics and policy from Duke University, and an M.B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin.

He is a member of the Maryland Clean Energy Center Advisory Council and the Johns Hopkins University Energy Policy and Climate Advisory Committee.

He and his wife Melissa have one daughter and share their home with rescue dogs and cats.

Send Councilmember Peterson your comments and feedback to:
Tom.Peterson@fairfaxva.gov ■



The Fairfax Independent

Your source for
local news, stories
and community
updates.

GET MORE STORIES
ONLINE



Subscribe to online news
\$50/year or \$5/month

www.tfinews.press

2025-2026 Mayor and City Council Swearing- In Ceremony – City Hall



Left to Right: Councilmember Anthony T. Amos, Councilmember Billy M. Bates, Councilmember Stacy R. Hall, Mayor Catherine S. Read, Councilmember Stacey D. Hardy-Chandler, Councilmember Rachel M. McQuillen, Council Member Thomas D. Peterson

Written by Grace Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

Fairfax City officially welcomed its new City Council during a swearing-in ceremony held at City Hall on January 14, 2025. In her opening remarks, former Council Member Janice Miller noted the new council’s historic significance in having a female majority and for the swearing-in of Stacey Hardy-Chandler, the first African American woman to serve on the council.

Following the certification of election results by Rick Herrington of the Electoral Board, City Clerk Melissa Shinaberry administered the oath of office for the first time to Council Members Anthony T. Amos, Stacy R. Hall, Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Rachel M. McQuillan, and Thomas D. “Tom” Peterson, along with incumbents Mayor Catherine S. Read and Council Member Billy M. Bates.

Additionally, Anthony T. Amos is the second African American male in the council’s history. Amos alongside Hall, McQuillan, and Peterson upheld the City’s charter of no political party allegiance during their campaign as independent candidates who ran an exceptional joint campaign ■



OP-ED Anatomy of A City Hall Smear Campaign

Written by Erik Kuiler
Fairfax City Resident

Or How the Mayor and Her Cronies Fired the City Manager and Tied Up the New Council with a Year-long (at least) Search for a New City Manager and Endangered the City’s Fiscal Stability

As reported last month in breaking news by The Fairfax Independent, on December 10, 2024, at their last meeting, the outgoing City Council voted 4-2 to fire Laszlo Palko for “convenience” and not for cause. The mayor had reportedly been laying the groundwork for Mr. Palko’s firing for several months. In accordance with the City Charter, Mr. Palko insisted on reporting to the city Council; he kept the Mayor, whose duties are primarily ceremonial, informed of his plans but sought approval of his actions from the Council.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS’ RESPONSE
Stability is a major concern of members of the business community. Rick Dickson, a prominent and long-time City of Fairfax business owner, hand-delivered a letter in support of Mr. Palko to the mayor and all new council members on January 4, 2025. In his letter, Mr. Dickson stated, “I sincerely believe that the previous administration acted foolishly based primarily on ‘personality differences’ between some elected officials, department heads, and Laszlo Palko.” Furthermore, Mr. Dickson stated that he believes “it is appropriate that every taxpayer know if the previous administration acted with cause or if their firing of Laszlo Palko was arbitrarily and capriciously based on something other than performance.” He expressed concern that the “abrupt departure of Laszlo Palko has put the city’s economic future into serious question.” Other business leaders have expressed similar concerns.

Residents have also expressed concerns about the outgoing Council’s firing of Mr. Palko “for convenience” and without cause. In emails to the new Council, they have cited the unfairness of the action and the impact of using the “for convenience” clause at the very last meeting of the outgoing Council. They are concerned that the clause undermines government transparency, City staff morale, and the ability of the City to attract qualified and experienced applicants. Even David Meyer, a former mayor, noted that this is the first time the City of Fairfax Council has fired a city manager. What also disturbs residents is that Mr. Palko was not given a reason for his firing.

BACKGROUND
Before coming to Fairfax City, Mr. Palko served as the City of Manassas Park city manager. He is credited by the City of Manassas Park Mayor and governing body (Council) with helping to save the city from financial ruin. When he took office in 2017, Manassas Park was in the red and declared by the state as being on “fiscal distress watch”. When Mr. Palko left office at the end of April 2024, to become the City of Fairfax’s city manager, the City of Manassas Park’s budget was stable, and the city’s credit rating was at A1 or higher.

Indeed, the Manassas Park Governing Body, the city’s legislative Council, approved a proclamation honoring Mr. Palko’s accomplishments in office. At the time of his hiring, the outgoing City of Fairfax Council praised Mr. Palko for his efforts in bringing the City of Manassas Park from the brink of bankruptcy. Furthermore, the Council welcomed his plans to meet with the City of Fairfax civic, business, and religious groups, and his aims to attract and retain business, streamline city operations, where needed, and control spending. Mr. Palko was especially interested in improving back-office operations, such as permitting and zoning, through the use of technology and business process improvements. Indeed, one Council Member echoed the sentiments of other members when she lauded Mr. Palko’s hiring as bringing “a breath of fresh air” to city government.

FAST FORWARD TO TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024

The abrupt timeline of Mr. Palko’s termination was laid out in the last issue of The Fairfax Independent. He was fired without any warning on December 10, 2024. It is interesting to note that a few weeks earlier, the Council’s review of Mr. Palko’s performance did not mention any dissatisfaction with his performance, and he appeared to be on track to exceed his performance goals. However, rather than leave significant personnel decisions to the new Council, the outgoing Council chose to saddle the new Council with the at least year-long task of searching for and hiring a new City Manager at a time when the new budget was to be discussed and approved.

Indeed, at the public portion of the December 10th meeting, during the final public comment period before the closed-door session, council member-elect, Stacy Hall, on behalf of herself and Anthony Amos, Rachel McQuillen, and Tom Peterson, the three other council members-elect who had run as independents, rose to speak and stated:

“We understand that a closed session will soon be held to discuss personnel matters. While the specifics are not yet clear, we want to emphasize, for the record, that we believe decisions regarding significant personnel changes should not be made by an outgoing council.

As this is the final meeting for five of the six council members, we strongly believe that any major personnel changes – changes that will impact both the incoming council and the City residents—should be left to the incoming council.”

By firing Mr. Palko just before the holiday season, the mayor and her cronies on the old Council all but ensured that the new Council Members would not have time to meet with Mr. Palko to hear his side of the story before a January 7, 2025, special meeting and closed-door session to discuss personnel matters.

THE NEW COUNCIL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO REINSTATE MR. PALKO: IT ONLY TAKES FOUR VOTES

Four of the six council members elected last November ran as independents. They were elected because voters wanted change and transparency. There is still time to reinstate Mr. Palko and save the City the expense of hiring an executive search agency and a facilitator to help the new Council set goals and priorities. Given the state of play now, it is highly unlikely that qualified and experienced people will apply for the City Manager position because of the way Mr. Palko, who was trying to improve city operations and services and control spending, was treated.

To repeat: there is still time to reinstate him. ■

YOU
COULD
BE
HERE

Reach More Than
15,000 Fairfax
City Homes +
10 Pickup
Locations

Advertise with
us and get in
front of your
customers

www.tfinews.press/advertise

BestCrosswords.com - Puzzle #4 on 1/15/2025

Across

- 1- Long-tailed parrot; 6- Sandwich shop; 10- Edible roots; 14- Unescorted; 15- Put ___ on it!; 16- Like ___ out of hell; 17- Rose; 18- Fortuneteller's opening; 19- State bird of Hawaii; 20- One with a beat; 21- Festive occasions; 23- Trapshooting; 24- Board for nails; 26- Eats to a plan; 27- Take into custody; 29- Caterpillar rival; 31- Arrivederci; 32- Championship; 33- Pasture; 36- In spite of; 40- Riviera season; 41- Bridget Fonda, to Jane; 42- Words to Brutus; 43- Merits; 44- Wear; 46- Goodnight girl of song; 48- Toil; 49- Trap; 50- Penetrating cold; 52- Rhyming boxing champ; 55- Et ___; 56- Greek war god; 57- Acrylic fiber; 59- Use a surgical beam; 60- Dinner faux-pas; 61- Former Houston footballer; 62- Jug; 63- Matches a bet; 64- Perhaps;

Down

- 1- Not fem.; 2- Choir member; 3- Collaborate; 4- Year abroad; 5- Jams tight; 6- Every 24 hours; 7- Literary lioness; 8- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 9- Ox tail?; 10- Federal soldier in the Civil War; 11- Red as ___; 12- Lions' locks; 13- Editor's mark; 22- This was produced by Van Gogh, for example; 23- Femme fatale; 25- Cat call; 26- Boxer Oscar ___ Hoya; 27- Skin eruption; 28- Civil disturbance; 29- Flat circular plates; 30- Novel conclusion?; 32- At that point; 33- In the strict sense; 34- Within (prefix); 35- Son of ___!; 37- Silly; 38- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 39- "Whip It" band; 43- More spine-tingling; 44- Actor Holbrook; 45- Flowering; 46- Acquired relative; 47- Elevate; 48- Has "s" trouble; 49- Mall event; 50- Rock's Motley ___; 51- Roll-call response; 53- "Stay" singer Lisa; 54- Memo starter; 56- Tummy muscles; 58- Narrow inlet;

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						32					33	34	35	
36				37	38						39			
40				41							42			
			43						44	45				
	46	47						48						
49						50	51				52	53	54	
55					56					57	58			
59					60					61				
62					63					64				

FY 2026 Budget Calendar

*** All meetings listed are scheduled to begin at 7pm. Please check the City Meeting link on the City website at www.fairfaxva.gov**

**** Required 30 days advance notice prior to public hearing on real estate tax rate if assessments increased greater than 1%**

For more Information on the City's budget, visit:

www.fairfaxva.gov/government/finance/budget

DATE	ACTION ITEM
October 22, 2024	FY 2025 Quarterly Financial Review; Suggested FY 2026 Budget Guidelines & Budget Process
November 9, 2024	FY 2026 Budget Retreat
November 12, 2024	FY 2026 Consideration of Budget Guidelines & Budget Process Approval
January 28, 2025	FY 2025 Quarterly Financial Review
February 4. 2025	FY 2026 City Manager's Proposed Budget Presentation
February 25, 2025	FY 2026 City Manager's Proposed Budget Presentation
March 4, 2025	FY 2026 Budget Work Session; Presentations by School
March 11 2025	FY 2026 Budget Public Hearing; Consideration of Real Estate Tax Rate to be Advertised**
March 25, 2025	FY 2026 Budget Public Hearing
April 1, 2025	FY 2026 Budget Discussion Work Session
April 8, 2025	FY 2026 Budget Public Hearing; Introduction of C&I, Wastewater, Stormwater Utility and Old Town Service District Rates; Budget Work session
April 22, 2025	FY 2025 Public hearing for RE Tax Rate, C&I, Wastewater, Stormwater Utility and Old Town Service District rates; Introduction of FU 2025 Budget Appropriations; FY 2025 Quarterly Financial Review; Budget Discussion Work Session
May 6, 2025	Special Council Meeting - Public Hearing on FY 2026 Budget Appropriation; Budget Adoption

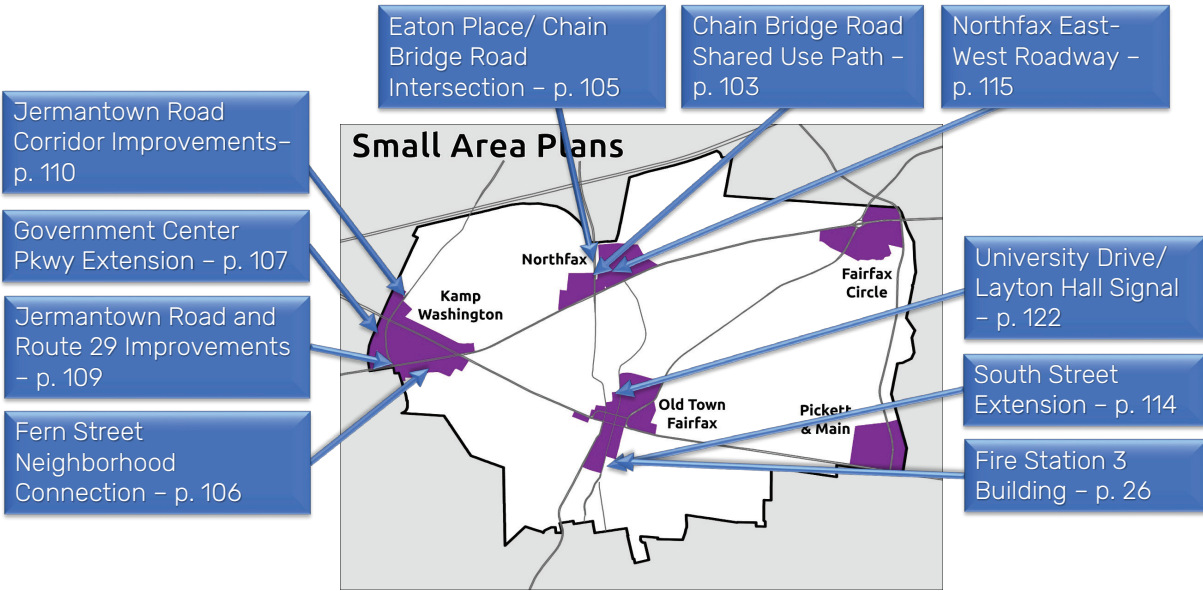
FY26-30 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

All capital projects must support the City's vision and 2023-2024 goals established by the Mayor and City Council and the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

MOVING FORWARD

- November**
 - 9 – City Council Budget Retreat
 - 25 – Planning Commission work session – City Manager's CIP presentation
- December**
 - 3 – City Council Work Session – City Manager's CIP presentation
 - 9 – Planning Commission Work Session – discussion of CIP and potential public facilities review (Section 2232)
- January**
 - 13 – Planning Commission Work Session – continue CIP review
 - 27 – Planning Commission Public Hearing – Consideration of Resolution to recommend approval of the CIP to City Council
 - 28 – FY 2024 Quarterly Financial Review
- February**
 - 4 – City Council Meeting - Planning Commission presentation of CIP recommendations to City Council
 - 25 – City Council Meeting - City Manager presents proposed budget including CIP to the City

Small Area Plan CIP Projects



Council
Please visit the Fairfax City https://fairfax.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=11&event_id=3266&meta_id=120012



THE QUI

KOREAN GRILLE

www.quikoreanbbq.com



HOURS OF OPERATION

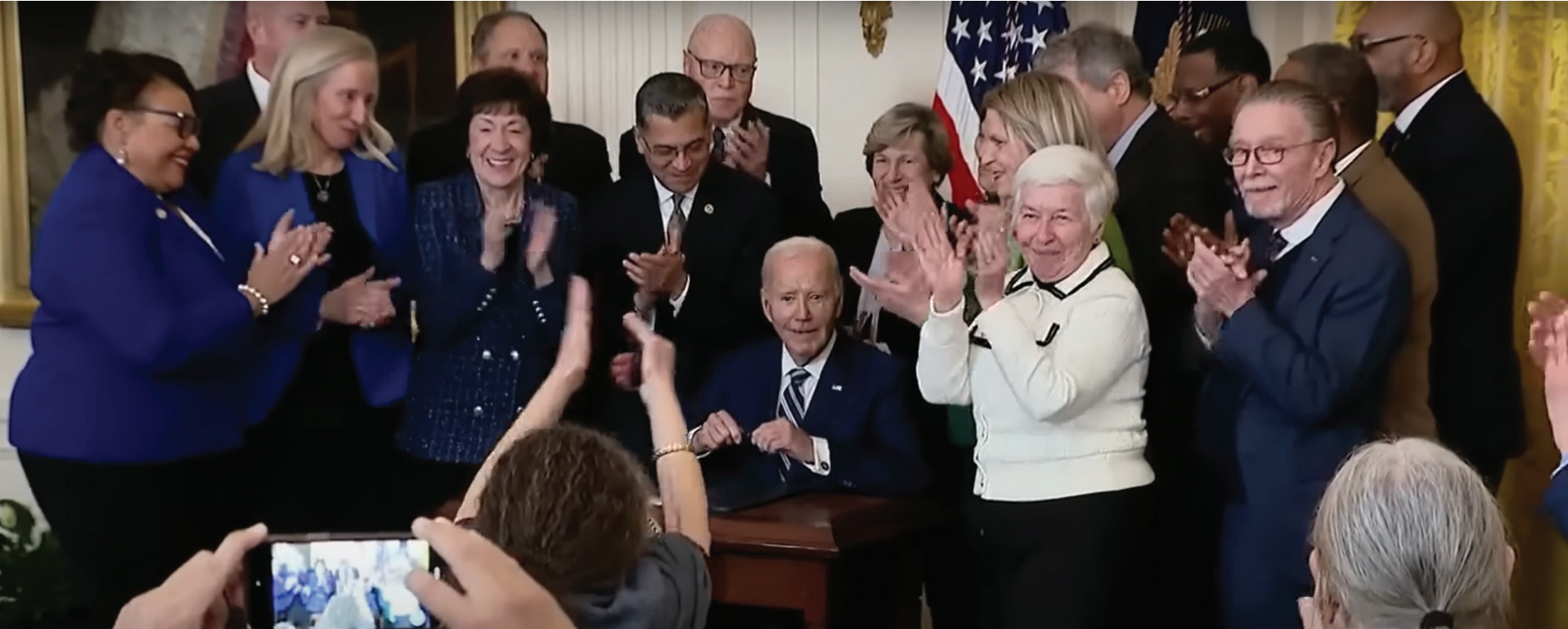
Sunday - Thursday	11:30am - 10:00pm
Friday - Saturday	11:30am - 12:00am

LOCATIONS

FAIRFAX 10160 Fairfax Blvd, Ste #116 Fairfax, VA 22030 (571) 591-2955	CHANTILLY 13972 Metrotech Dr, Chantilly, VA 20151 (703) 817-2505	GAINSVILLE 7390 Atlas Walk Way Gainesville, VA 20155 (703) 929-2296
---	--	---

Social Security Fairness Act: A Long-Awaited Victory for Public Servants

The signing of the Social Security Fairness Act by President Biden on January 5, 2025, marks the culmination of a four-decade struggle to correct what many viewed as fundamental inequities in the public service retirement system.



President Joe Biden signs Social Security Fairness Act on January 5, 2025

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

This landmark legislation eliminates two controversial provisions that have long penalized millions of public servants, fundamentally reshaping retirement prospects for teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other government workers.

At the heart of this legislation lies the repeal of two provisions that have significantly impacted public sector retirees. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), enacted in 1983, adjusted Social Security benefits for individuals receiving pensions from jobs not covered by Social Security taxes.

The Government Pension Offset (GPO), implemented in 1977, affected spousal and survivor benefits, often reducing or eliminating Social Security payments for those with public pensions. These provisions were originally designed to prevent “double-dipping” - receiving full benefits from both Social Security and a separate public pension system. However, in practice, they created substantial hardship for many retirees, according to CEO Today (2024).

The City of Fairfax, as the largest employer within city limits (Contributors to Wikimedia projects, 2002), maintains a substantial workforce of public servants who have been subject to the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO).

According to Congressional Budget Office estimates, affected employees can expect an average increase of \$360 in monthly Social Security payments by December 2025, with some surviving spouses potentially receiving up to \$1,190 more per month.

For the City of Fairfax government, this change requires careful attention to retirement planning and benefits administration. The legislation’s retroactive application to January 2024 means the city’s human resources department will need to work closely with affected employees to ensure they understand their new benefits. This comes at a time when the Social Security Administration itself is facing staffing challenges which may impact the speed of implementation, according to the Associated Press (2025).

Affected employees can expect an average increase of \$360 in monthly Social Security payments by December 2025, with some surviving spouses potentially receiving up to \$1,190 more per month.

In addition, while the Act represents a victory for public servants, it does raise fiscal considerations. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the changes will cost nearly \$200 billion over a 10-year period. Critics have expressed concern about the impact on Social Security’s long-term solvency, with estimates suggesting it could advance the program’s insolvency date by approximately six months, according to CEO Today (2024).

However, supporters argue that addressing this fundamental inequity takes precedence over these fiscal concerns. This legislation will have far-reaching implications for our local government workforce and the broader community of public servants who call Fairfax home as well as all across the nation. ■



Do You Have A Story to Tell?

We love a good local story and if you’re willing to share, we’re willing to listen. Submit your ideas to us at info@theindependentnewspress.com

College Sports Represent the Best of America: Pay for Play Does Not



Written by Chap Petersen
thevirginiaattorney.com

The snow is still on the ground and the temperatures remain below freezing. It's the best time of year to make a fire and watch football.

Next Monday night will be the college football championship between Ohio State and Notre Dame, two legendary gridiron programs. I will be watching.

One hundred fifty years after its inception, college football remains the most quintessentially American sport: the regional rivalries, the outrageous mascots, the petty hatreds. (In what other sport would a five-minute brawl occur thanks to one team trying to plant a state flag on the other's 50-yard line?)

The game between the Buckeyes and the Fighting Irish represents the best of this tradition: the school which symbolizes Midwestern stolidity and grit versus the inimitable history of the Irish Catholic church. It's more than a game, folks.

But there are dark clouds on the horizon. The last few years have seen a brutal reorganization in college athletics: first, through the demise of athletic conferences and, second, through the sudden rise of an unregulated "pay for play" system through "name, image, likeness" (NIL) deals.

I've talked about the first factor and its corrosive impact. The second has taken college sports from an ostensibly amateur undertaking (you play sports, you get a scholarship) to an unrestricted free market where a player can "enter the portal" for any reason: not enough snaps, not enough exposure, not enough dollars. Unlike professional sports, there are no contracts. You show up, you play (or don't), you leave when you want.

A month ago, Dave Clawson of Wake Forest -- one of the most respected coaches in the nation -- tapped out after a decade at one of the ACC's smaller schools. (I've known Dave from the 1980's at Williams College, where he played basketball and football). The message was simple: I can't keep recruiting young men, coaching them into top players, then see them leave to the highest bidder.

College basketball is seeing the same defections. Late last year, Tony Bennett of UVA and Jim Larrañaga of Miami (and before that, our beloved coach at GMU) both decided to retire. Again, the reason was the same: I came to coach and develop young men, not negotiate with their agents. Yet the modern era has athletes walking out the door if they don't get "big money." And the coaches who found and developed their talents have no way to stop them.

Not sympathetic with coaches earning seven figures? Understood. But what about those athletes who are not securing the big NIL money?

The overwhelming percentage of college athletes will not play professional sports. They need the academic degree, life skills and connections you develop in college in order to succeed in life. Yet one of the features of the modern era is athletes who show up on campus with a scholarship, excited to attend that university, then are pushed out the door when a transfer shows up. (Yes, I've talked to the parents).

There is a solution, and it must come from Capitol Hill, as it is a national problem. Here are some basic concepts;

1. Mandate regional conferences, which will greatly improve the lives of athletes, fans and parents. (No, we don't need Cal or Stanford in the ACC).
2. Protect student-athletes by limiting the ability of institutions to revoke awarded scholarships.
3. Establish a pay scale and make it transparent, so everyone knows who's getting paid what. In return for getting paid, players can be bound for a term of years (This is how pro sports works, not to mention the military). If necessary, enact a salary cap to protect competitive balance.
4. Have lower tiers of athletic conferences where true amateurs can compete on a level playing field.

College sports represent the best of America. Nobody does it like us. However it requires a neutral body with disciplinary authority to apply universal standards, and the NCAA has become useless.

Let's save it while we still can. ■

The Troubling Reality of Campus Extremism at GMU

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

The arrest of Abdullah Hassan, a George Mason University freshman, residing in Falls Church, for allegedly plotting a terrorist attack marks a disturbing event in the Mason community that demands serious reflection. The FBI's investigation revealed that Hassan, an Egyptian national studying information technology, had been meticulously planning a mass casualty attack on the Israeli consulate in New York.

The path to Hassan's arrest began with a tip to Fairfax County police about suspicious social media activity, where he allegedly operated multiple accounts promoting ISIS and al-Qaeda ideologies. Prosecutors allege that Hassan made posts "revering Osama bin Laden" while maintaining several accounts that "promoted violence against Jews" (GMU Student Charged with Plotting Mass Casualty Attack on Israeli Consulate in New York, CNN, 2024).

The investigation culminated when Hassan allegedly recruited an undercover FBI informant to conduct a mass casualty attack, providing bomb-making instructions, information about the Israeli consulate to discussing escape routes to countries without extradition treaties

George Mason University's administration acted swiftly, with President Washington announcing Hassan's immediate ban from campus property. This incident does not exist in isolation.

The university has recently faced other concerning situations, including a separate case involving two students whose off-campus residence was searched by authorities, allegedly yielding weapons and materials promoting violence (FBI Charges GMU Student with Plotting Mass Attack on Israeli Consulate, NBC, 2024) However, Washington emphasized there appears to be no connection between these events. ■

The Data Center Dilemma: JLARC Report

Fairfax County is grappling with an unprecedented data center expansion that threatens to reshape our community’s character and financial well-being.



Virginia’s data centers currently consume over 25% of all power produced in the state.

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

While the tech industry touts economic benefits, the realities of unconstrained data center growth present mounting challenges for residents, from soaring electricity costs to quality-of-life concerns. As neighboring jurisdictions like Loudoun and Prince William counties struggle with the consequences of rapid data center development, Fairfax finds itself at a critical juncture where decisions made today will impact our community for generations to come.

The numbers tell a troubling story about how data centers have infiltrated our residential areas. According to recent findings, a staggering 55% of Fairfax County’s data centers are located within 200 feet of residential zones, and 70% lie within 500 feet of homes. This represents the highest concentration near residential areas in Virginia, far exceeding both Loudoun County, where only 24% of facilities are within such close proximity, and Prince William County at 21%. The Plaza 500 project epitomizes this encroachment, with plans for a 466,000-square-foot facility mere hundreds of feet from homes, playgrounds, and a community center. As resident Tyler Ray aptly noted, “All that we are asking for is, as the county is trying to bring in this data center income, that they are doing it in a way that doesn’t run residents away from their homes” (As Data Centers Proliferate, Conflict with Local Communities Follows, The Associated Press, 2024).

The financial impact on Fairfax residents extends far beyond property values. Virginia’s data centers currently consume over 25% of all power produced in the state, a figure projected to rise as high as 46% by 2030 (As Data Centers Proliferate, Conflict with Local Communities Follows, The Associated Press, 2024). This exponential growth in energy demand will likely increase system costs for all customers). The JLARC study found that unconstrained data center growth could drive

up power generation and transmission costs by as much as \$18 billion by 2040, with residential customers bearing a significant portion of these costs. For the typical household, this could mean a 41% increase in monthly power generation and transmission charges by 2040

In response to mounting concerns, Fairfax County has recently implemented stricter zoning regulations. The September 2024 ordinance requires data centers to maintain a minimum 200-foot setback from residential properties, with equipment like backup generators mandated at 300 feet (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/board-supervisors-approve-new-data-center-zoning-ordinance-amendment). The regulations also impose a one-mile minimum distance from Metro stations and require pre- and post-construction noise. However, many residents argue these measures are insufficient. Community groups have demanded setbacks of up to 1,000 feet from residences, highlighting the gap between current regulations and community expectations (Jimmy Henderson / Fairfax County Times, 2024).

The environmental implications of unchecked data center growth are equally concerning. These facilities place enormous demands on our power infrastructure, with newer AI-focused centers requiring unprecedented levels of electricity. As Dominion Energy’s Bob Blue revealed, while traditional data centers typically demand 30 megawatts, new facilities are requesting 60 to 90 megawatts or more. Larger campuses could require several gigawatts of power. This surge in demand raises serious questions about grid reliability and environmental sustainability. The massive diesel generators that power these facilities’ backup systems pose additional environmental concerns, potentially compromising regional air quality.

The path forward requires a delicate balance between economic development and community protection. While data centers contribute

significantly to tax revenue - with Virginia’s existing facilities generating \$1 billion in 2024 - we must question whether these benefits outweigh the costs to our community’s character and residents’ quality of life. As Kathy Smith, vice chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, acknowledged, “Data centers are not going away” (As Data Centers Proliferate, Conflict with Local Communities Follows, The Associated Press, 2024). However, this reality should not preclude us from implementing stronger protections for our communities.

The Board of Supervisors’ recent push for broader reforms through the 2025 General Assembly legislative agenda represents a step in the right direction. Their recommendations for increased oversight of environmental impacts and enhanced local authority to regulate these facilities acknowledge the regional nature of these challenges. Yet, as demonstrated by the contentious Plaza 500 project, we must act decisively to prevent our neighborhoods from becoming cautionary tales of unchecked industrial development.

Rather than simply accepting data center expansion as inevitable, Fairfax should lead the way in developing comprehensive regulations that truly protect residential communities while managing growth responsibly. This means implementing stronger setback requirements, ensuring fair distribution of infrastructure costs, and maintaining the suburban character that has long defined our community. The time for meaningful action is now before more of our neighborhoods face the prospect of industrial-scale neighbors that operate 24/7 and fundamentally alter the fabric of our community. ■

We would like to hear from our readers about their thoughts on data centers. You can comment on this article on our website at www.tfinews.press/articles/business/the-data-center-dilemma-jlarc-report

Target’s New Cash Rules: A Conversation We Need to Have

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

Who hasn’t had that awkward moment at the checkout when your crumpled dollar bill looks more like it’s been through the washing machine a few too many times? Starting in 2025, Target is saying “thanks, but no thanks” to those well-loved bills. And they’re not alone in this - Walmart, Dollar Tree, and Costco are jumping on the same bandwagon. But before you start panicking about every slightly wrinkled bill in your wallet, let’s break down what’s going on here.

What’s All the Fuss About?

Picture this: you’re standing in line at Target, holiday shopping list in hand, only to discover that the cash you’ve been carrying around might not make the cut. Why? Because the Bureau of Engraving, Secret Service, and something called the Advanced Counterfeit Deterrence Committee (try saying that five times fast) have decided it’s time to clean up our cash act. They’re particularly interested in weeding out what they call “mutilated” bills - you know, the ones that look like they’ve had a rough day with cuts, damaged edges, or that mysterious discoloration that makes you wonder where they’ve been.

When is “Worn Out” Too Worn Out?

Now, you might be wondering what exactly counts as too damaged to use. We’re talking about bills that have been through some serious trauma - fire damage, chemical exposure, or even those that have been buried (because apparently, that’s a thing people do). But here’s the kicker - this isn’t just about looks. The real concern is about security and being able to tell the real deals from the fakes.

Don’t Panic - There’s a Solution

Before you start thinking your damaged money is worthless, take a breath. The government has thought this through. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) has your back with its free mutilated currency redemption service. Yes, you read that right - free!



Looking Ahead: The Cash of Tomorrow

This isn’t just about being picky about wrinkled bills - it’s part of a bigger picture. The Federal Reserve is rolling out some impressive updates to our currency over the next few years – new designs for the \$50 bill in 2028, the \$20 bill in 2030, and even the \$5 and \$100 bills getting makeovers between 2032 and 2038. These aren’t just cosmetic changes - they’re adding sophisticated security features that would make James Bond jealous.

What This Means for Your Shopping Habits

Let’s get real - this change is going to affect how we think about cash, especially during those crazy holiday shopping seasons. If you’re someone who likes to pay with cash, you’ll need to be a bit more mindful about the condition of your bills. And while this might seem like a hassle, there’s a silver lining. This push for better-quality currency in circulation means we’re all going to be dealing with cleaner, more secure money.

The world of retail is changing, and whether we like it or not, how we pay for things is part of that evolution. Target’s new policy isn’t just about being fussy - it’s about adapting to a future where our money needs to be as sophisticated as our smartphones.

So maybe it’s time to give those beat-up bills in your wallet a proper retirement party and make sure your cash is as ready for 2025 as you are.

After all, nobody wants to be stuck in the checkout line with a bill that looks like it’s been through the apocalypse! ■

Source: www.bep.gov/currency/currency-redesign

George Mason’s Carter School Named UN SDG 16 Hub Chair

Republished from GMU Campus News
January 2025

The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University has achieved a remarkable distinction, being selected as the Hub Chair for the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG

16): Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

This prestigious appointment emerged from a competitive field of over 330 applicants, establishing Mason as one of only two universities in the United States to chair a Sustainable Development Goal Hub. ■



Annandale OB-GYN: Welcome to Fairfax City!



Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

Annandale OB-GYN represents the evolution of women’s healthcare - where advanced medical expertise meets compassionate, patient-centered care. Through their comprehensive services, technological investments, and unwavering commitment to patient satisfaction, they have created a model of care that addresses both the medical and emotional needs of their patients. As healthcare continues to evolve, Annandale OB-GYN stands as a testament to the power of combining medical excellence with genuine care and attention to patient needs, setting a standard for women’s healthcare delivery that others would do well to emulate.

Part of Privia Health, Annandale OB-GYN offers the most advanced state-of-the-art technology, with many services readily available in their offices, such as office hysteroscopy, endometrial ablation, vaginoplasty, bone density testing, urinary incontinence testing, in-office laboratory, and ultrasound, including 3D/4D imaging.

Annandale OB-GYN’s mission is to provide the highest quality healthcare for women that is personalized for each patient and delivered with respect and trust in a warm, comfortable environment. Their Fairfax City location opened on January 13, 2025, located at 3925 Blenheim Blvd, Unit 52 C/D, Fairfax, VA 22030. ■

LITE BUILDING SERVICES

Your Commercial Building Handyman

Expert Repairs & Renovations

Specializing in minor commercial renovation and maintenance projects. Keep your business running smoothly—contact us for a free estimate today!

 **LiteBuildingServices.com**
 **571.229.6327**



FARRISH OF FAIRFAX

Farrish of Fairfax Family Owned and Operated Automotive Dealership and Repair Shop Proudly Serving the Fairfax and Greater Northern VA Community since 1956.



Highest Google Rated CDJR Store in Northern VA
(4.6 Google Rating, 3,000+ reviews)

 ★★★★★

Newly Renovated Showroom and Service Lounge
Schedule Service Appointments by Phone Available 24/7

9610 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax VA 22031
Call or text to speak with an associate
703-273-0200 | FarrishDodgeJeep.net

FARRISH SUBARU



Top Rated Subaru Store with 4.6 Google Rating

 ★★★★★

Schedule Service Appointments by Phone Available 24/7

10407 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax VA 22030
703-352-4000 | FarrishSubaru.com

FARRISH OF FAIRFAX AUTOBODY

Highest Rated Autobody in VA with 4.9 Google Rating

 ★★★★★

Work with ALL Insurance companies Certified Repair Facility for Subaru, CDJR, Hyundai, Kia, Honda, Acura, Mazda, GM and many more.

3166 Roanoke St, Fairfax VA 22031
703-934-1622 | FairfaxAutodody.com

\$500 OFF

ANY NEW VEHICLE

Must present coupon at time write up. Limit one per household. Offer not combinable with any other specials or offers. Plus taxes and fees. Exclusions may apply. See dealer for details.

Ink, Drinks, and Mayhem: A Spirited Take on *Park Row* (1952)

Written by Tania Hossain
“We Googled Ourselves”

Samuel Fuller’s “Park Row” charges onto the screen with all the subtlety of a newsboy shouting headlines on a busy street corner. Set in the gritty world of 1880s newspaper publishing, this film serves up a delicious cocktail of journalism, romance, and occasional fisticuffs that would make any modern-day media mogul raise their eyebrows – and possibly their printing presses (Park Row (1952) - IMDb, n.d.). If you are not a fan of the classics, try to stay awake for the first 18 minutes.

The story revolves around our hero, Phineas Mitchell, played by Gene Evans, who believes the best way to launch a newspaper is to spend quality time in bars contemplating the state of journalism. In what might be the most journalism-heavy bar scenes ever filmed; Mitchell transforms from a disgruntled reporter to a newspaper owner faster than you can say “hot off the press.” His drink order alone deserves a Pulitzer – asking for a “keg-drainer, stick of straight, schooner chaser.” One can only imagine this was the 1880s equivalent of ordering a triple espresso with a side of deadline anxiety.

The film takes an especially entertaining turn when Mitchell decides that the best way to handle his competition is not through witty editorials but through what can only be described as nineteenth-century street justice. In one particularly memorable scene, Mitchell storms out of a bar to “clobber a cadre of agitators,” proving that sometimes the pen isn’t mightier than the fist – especially when defending your printing press.

The romantic subplot between Mitchell and his rival publisher Charity Hackett (Mary Welch) plays out like a nineteenth-century version of “You’ve Got Mail,” except instead of competing bookstores, they’re trying to put each other out of business with competing newspapers (Park Row (1952) -- (Movie Clip) Words and Garbage - TCM, 2009).

Their confrontations are a masterclass in passive-aggressive journalism, with Charity attempting to poach Mitchell’s printer with all the subtlety of a front-page scandal.

Fuller’s direction shows off some impressive long takes, particularly when Mitchell launches his newspaper “The Globe.” The scene involves complex camera movements following characters as they simultaneously set type, argue about headlines, and probably compose sonnets about the importance of proper punctuation. It’s like watching a choreographed dance, if the dancers were all caffeine-addicted newspapermen with ink-stained fingers.

The film’s most quotable moment comes from Mitchell himself, who solemnly declares what he would do if he had a newspaper, “First thing I would do is Christen it. I would call it “The Globe.” I would make it the best newspaper on Park Row, that’s what I would do. I would give away free ice, summer excursions, and Christmas dinners for the poor that would make them happy and make news. News makes readers. Readers make circulation. And circulation means advertising. And advertising means I would print my paper without the support of any political machine. That is what I would do if I had a newspaper.”

Astonishingly enough, this was a familiar discussion at the birth of The Independent News Press, located in Fairfax City, publisher of *The Fairfax Independent* and *The Oakton & Vienna Independent* local newspapers!

Sam Fuller, being an ex-journalist himself, clearly poured his heart and ink into this project. The result is a film that manages to be both a love letter to journalism and an unintentionally hilarious testament to just how dramatic newspaper publishing can be. It’s the kind of movie that makes you grateful for modern word processors while simultaneously making you yearn for the



Scene from film “Park Row (1952)” (Photo Credit: IMDb)

days when starting a newspaper meant you might end up in a bar fight over proper grammar. Through its remarkable long takes, passionate idealism, and combination of “blood and ink,” “Park Row” stands as a testament to the glory days of newspaper publishing, when headlines were hot, the competition was heated, and apparently, every journalist needed to be part writer, part businessman, and part bare-knuckle boxer.

In today’s world of digital media and online news, there’s something charmingly chaotic about this portrait of journalism’s rowdy adolescence, where the biggest viral sensation was going viral from handling lead type all day. ■



\$100 OFF
YOUR FIRST 4 ORDERS

**CHEF-PREPARED HEALTHY MEALS
DELIVERED FRESH TO YOU!**



**www.mightymeals.com/order/r/
FAIRFAXINDEPENDENT/**

The Six Triple Eight: More Than A Story of Untold Valor



Women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Parade honoring Joan d'Arac (Photo Credit: womenofthe6888th.org)

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

Tyler Perry’s attempt to bring the remarkable story of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion to the screen reveals both the power of overlooked history and the limitations of well-intentioned filmmaking. The film chronicles the first and only all-Black Women’s Army Corps unit to serve overseas during World War II, tasked with tackling an overwhelming backlog of undelivered mail that was dampening troop morale.

By 1945, the situation had reached a critical point. Warehouses in Birmingham stood filled to the ceiling with millions of pieces of undelivered mail, some dating back several years. For the seven million American service members and government workers stationed throughout Europe, this wasn’t merely an administrative failure - it represented severed connections to home, family, and hope (6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion (U.S. National Park Service), 2023). The backlog was so severe that military lead-

ership estimated it would take six months to process, a timeline that threatened to further damage already fragile troop morale.

Kerry Washington emerges as the film’s strongest asset in her portrayal of Major Charity Adams. A tribute that is lasting in the renaming of Fort Lee on April 27, 2023, to Fort Gregg-Adams to honor Colonel Charity Adams and General Arthur J. Gregg. This was the first time an Army base was named for a living person and the first time it was named for African Americans.

The story of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion stands as a testament to the power of dedication, innovation, and unwavering resolve in the face of both practical challenges and societal barriers. These women proved that victory in war could be achieved not just on the battlefield, but through the essential work of maintaining the human connections that sustain soldiers’ spirits. Their legacy continues to inspire, reminding us that courage takes many forms and that sometimes the most profound victories are won not through force of arms, but through force of will and dedication to duty.

Readers can read more about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion on their website at www.womenofthe6888th.org ■

Funday Monday

Funday Monday is geared towards children of preschool age but is open to children of all ages! On any given day, there will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more! nonconforming, spoken-word performing artists.

All performances and programs begin at 10:30 a.m. and — unless otherwise noted

WINTER/SPRING ‘25 @ The Sherwood Center - 3740 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax City (next to Van Dyck Park)

- February 3** Music Together (Little Steps)
- February 10** Interactive Music for Children with the “AX” Experience
- February 17** NO PROGRAM
- February 24** My Gym
- March 3** Music Together (Little Steps)
- March 10** Oh Susannah! Sing and Dance-Along
- March 17** “St. Patrick’s Day!” Storytime with Miss Becky (Fairfax Library)

For full schedule and updates:
www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts



Exploring the Depth of Caste and Identity in Ava DuVernay’s Origin

Written by Grace Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

Director Ava DuVernay’s highly anticipated film *Origin* recently hit theaters, captivating audiences with its profound exploration of systemic injustice, racial identity, and personal grief.

Adapted from Isabel Wilkerson’s acclaimed book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, the movie intertwines Wilkerson’s journey with her broader examination of caste systems across the globe—most

notably slavery in the United States, genocide in Nazi Germany, and the untouchables in India.

Throughout Wilkerson’s global investigation of caste systems, she delves deeper into the historical context that forms societal hierarchies and discovers disturbing parallels between these systems. *Origin* is an exploration of discrimination, and a personal narrative grounded in Wilkerson’s experiences with loss and grief. Her journey becomes a coping mechanism, providing a channel for person-

al mourning while providing a border commentary on racial injustice. Her emotional inquiries into the human condition are highlighted by her interactions with various characters who exemplify the systemic issues she seeks to address, from conversations about the painful history of slavery to evaluations of the Holocaust’s impact on Jewish identity.

Firmly rooted in its dialogue in personal adversity and profound societal critique, the film is a bold cinematic exploration of the connec-

tion between race, caste, and identity. Through Isabel Wilkerson’s quest, *Origin* invites viewers to reflect on the ongoing implications of caste in society and inspires discussions about race and justice that resonate on both an individual and collective level.

In Wilkerson’s exploration, audiences can explore the repetitive nature of injustice and the pervasive presence of history within society, marking *Origin* as a defining film of recent cinema in addressing these complex themes. ■

Partisan Politics and Special Interests: The Battle Over Tysons Casino Legislation

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

The Virginia General Assembly is facing renewed debate over legislation that would pave the way for a casino in Tysons Corner, with State Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell taking up the mantle from his predecessor.

The proposal highlights a concerning pattern of special interests attempting to bypass local governance and community wishes through state-level manipulation. While proponents tout economic benefits and tax revenues, the reality is far more complex and troubling for Fairfax County residents.

The Legislative Landscape and Key Players

Senate Bill 982, introduced by Senator Surovell, would add Fairfax County to Virginia's list of casino-eligible localities. Summary of SB 982 - *Casino gaming; eligible host localities. Adds Fairfax County to the list of localities eligible to host a casino in the Commonwealth and provides that any proposed site for a casino gaming establishment considered by Fairfax County shall be (i) located within one-quarter of a mile of an existing station on the Metro Silver Line, (ii) part of a coordinated mixed-use project development consisting of no less than 1.5 million square feet, (iii) within two miles of a regional enclosed mall containing not less than 1.5 million square feet of gross building area, and (iv) outside of the Interstate 495 Beltway.* The bill was referred to the Committee on General Laws and Technology.

The current bill on gaming and casino is § 58.1-4107. Eligible host city; certification of preferred casino gaming operator (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/58.1-4107>) under which Fairfax County does not qualify.

Surovell argues that the casino would help keep gambling revenue in Virginia rather than letting it flow to Maryland's MGM National Harbor (Scott McCaffrey, 2025). However, this simplistic argument ignores the fundamental transformation such a development would impose on Tysons' carefully crafted community vision that started in 2010, and plan amendment authorized in March 2013 by the

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/tysons/comprehensive-plan).

A development plan built on shifting sands; the proposed casino project is being marketed as far more than just a gambling establishment. Comstock envisions a massive 6- to 8-million-square-foot mixed-use development including a performing arts venue, hotel, convention center, and housing. Yet the developer's recent track record raises serious concerns, as evidenced by the collapse of their downtown Herndon redevelopment project (Angela Woolsey, *FFXNow*, 2024).

More troubling, this proposal represents a direct challenge to Tysons' existing development framework, which has followed a community consensus plan since 2010 that would be fundamentally undermined by a casino-anchored entertainment district.

National Security and Social Costs

Perhaps most alarming is the unprecedented opposition from the national security community. A group of 109 national security leaders, including 57 former CIA officials and 18 former Defense Department officials, have warned of the acute risks posed by placing a casino within easy reach of thousands of cleared personnel (Samir Ali Nomani / *Fairfax County Times*, 2025). Their concerns aren't merely theoretical - historical evidence shows that gambling debts have previously motivated the compromise of classified information (Samir Ali Nomani / *Fairfax County Times*, 2025). The American Psychiatric Association's classification of gambling as an addictive disorder that "rewires the prefrontal cortex" adds weight to these security concerns.

The Democratic Process Under Siege

What makes this legislative push particularly troubling is its circumvention of local authority. Unlike other Virginia localities that have pursued casino development, Fairfax County has not requested this authority. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has not taken a formal stance. Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn warned that a casino would transform Tysons'



Metro station areas into "no-go zones for major employers" (Scott McCaffrey, 2025).

This top-down approach from Richmond represents a dangerous precedent where powerful economic interests can bypass local governance structures to impose unwanted development.

The push for a Tysons casino exemplifies how special interests can manipulate state-level politics to override local community planning and concerns. While proponents dangle promises of tax revenue and jobs, they conveniently minimize the serious social, security, and community impacts. A recent UMASS Amherst

study found that 90% of casino revenue comes from at-risk or problem gamblers, highlighting the predatory nature of this industry.

The No Casino and Yes Casino battle continues into another election year. Will the Virginia General Assembly pick politics over people? We are welcoming readers to share their thoughts.

The comment deadline to get into print is due by February 10, 2025 by email to info@theindependentnewspress.com and comments are open online. ■



Civic Associations & Community Groups Events

The Fairfax Independent welcomes all Fairfax City Civic Associations and Community Groups to post their community events on our events page for free.

Please visit www.tfinews.press/add-listing for the events entry page.

We look forward to featuring community events with our readers online and in print.

Governor Youngkin’s Vision for Virginia: Final State of the Commonwealth Address



Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

On Monday, January 13, 2025, Governor Glenn Youngkin’s final State of the Commonwealth address painted a portrait of Virginia as a resurgent economic powerhouse, while simultaneously revealing the deep political fault lines that may challenge his ambitious agenda in his administration’s final year. Speaking to a joint session of the General Assembly delayed by Richmond’s water crisis, Youngkin presented his vision of a “winning” Virginia, though the reception from the Democratic-controlled legislature suggests a complex path ahead for his proposals.

The governor’s narrative of economic transformation was backed by impressive statistics. Virginia has witnessed a remarkable turnaround, moving from 41st to 9th in net population movement nationally, with more people moving to Virginia from other states than leaving - a first in over a decade. The state’s economy has added 257,000 jobs since January 2022, with \$90 billion in new investment commitments from companies like LEGO, LS Cable, and Micron. This economic renaissance has been paired with significant tax relief, including the elimination of the state grocery tax and nearly doubling the standard deduction, totaling \$5 billion in tax cuts.

The administration’s approach to education reflects both ambitious investment and strategic reform. With an unprecedented \$7 billion increase in education funding, including an 18% raise for teachers, the commitment to educational excellence is clear. However, Youngkin’s vision extends beyond mere funding increases. The introduction of Virginia Opportunity Scholarships, providing \$5,000 to 10,000 low-income families, represents a significant shift in educational policy.

Perhaps the most pressing challenge facing Virginia is its power infrastructure. The Virginia Clean Economy Act of 2020 has proven problematic, with the state now importing 40% of its power needs compared to 18% in 2020. This situation is particularly critical given Virginia’s position as a technology hub – data centers alone support 74,000 jobs and contribute \$9.1 billion to the state’s GDP.

The administration’s approach to public safety shows measurable progress, with violent crime declining significantly. The Commonwealth has launched what Youngkin describes as “the most aggressive drug interdiction campaign in history,” resulting in the seizure of 16,000 pounds of illicit opioids. More importantly, Virginia has achieved a 23% reduction in overdose deaths, outpacing the national decline by 9 percentage points.

To maintain Virginia’s competitive position, Youngkin outlines several critical initiatives. The proposed Car Tax Credit for Working Class Families would provide up to \$300 for joint filers earning under \$100,000 annually and will be funded by \$1.1 billion from the state’s projected surplus.

2025 State of the Commonwealth presents Virginia at a crossroads of opportunity and challenge. While the economic indicators show remarkable progress – from job growth to population gains – significant hurdles remain in energy infrastructure, education reform, and maintaining competitive advantages. As Youngkin notes, “Virginia is growing. Virginia is competing. Virginia is winning.” ■

Governor’s 2025 Address is available online at www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2025/january/name-1038956-en.html

Lead Free Fairfax: A Public Health Priority

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

The City of Fairfax faces a significant but often overlooked public health challenge regarding lead exposure, particularly given that nearly half of our community’s homes were built before 1978.

While Fairfax Water maintains excellent standards in water quality, the broader threat of lead exposure extends beyond our drinking water into our homes through aging infrastructure, lead-based paint, and contaminated soil.

The Lead Free Fairfax program represents more than just regula-

tory compliance - it demonstrates a sophisticated understanding that protecting public health requires comprehensive action. Fairfax Water’s outreach to 137,000 customers to determine potential lead exposure points shows unprecedented commitment to community safety. However, this massive undertaking raises questions about the resources required and whether the program goes far enough in addressing all potential sources of lead contamination.

Rather than merely testing water and updating infrastructure, our community needs a broader conversation about lead exposure prevention. This should include practical guidance for homeowners and renters, profession-

al expertise for renovation work, and most importantly, robust public education about lead risks. The success of Lead Free Fairfax will ultimately depend not on compliance statistics but on tangible improvements in public health outcomes and informed community engagement. As our city continues to grow, we must ensure that this initiative becomes a model for addressing environmental health challenges at the local level.

If you are drinking Fairfax Water and your home was built before 1978, please visit the Lead Free Fairfax initiative on Fairfax Water website at www.fairfaxwater.org/leadfree ■



A Legacy of Resilience: Phylis Walker’s Journey through Education and Community

Written by Grace Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

When Phylis Walker graduated from Luther Jackson High School in June 1965, she became one of the last students to walk across its stage before its closure. Just a few months after her graduation, Fairfax County Public Schools completed the long-awaited process of desegregation, marking an end to the era of separate education for Black students. Luther Jackson, the only high school for Black students in the county, closed its doors as students began integrating into previously all-white schools.

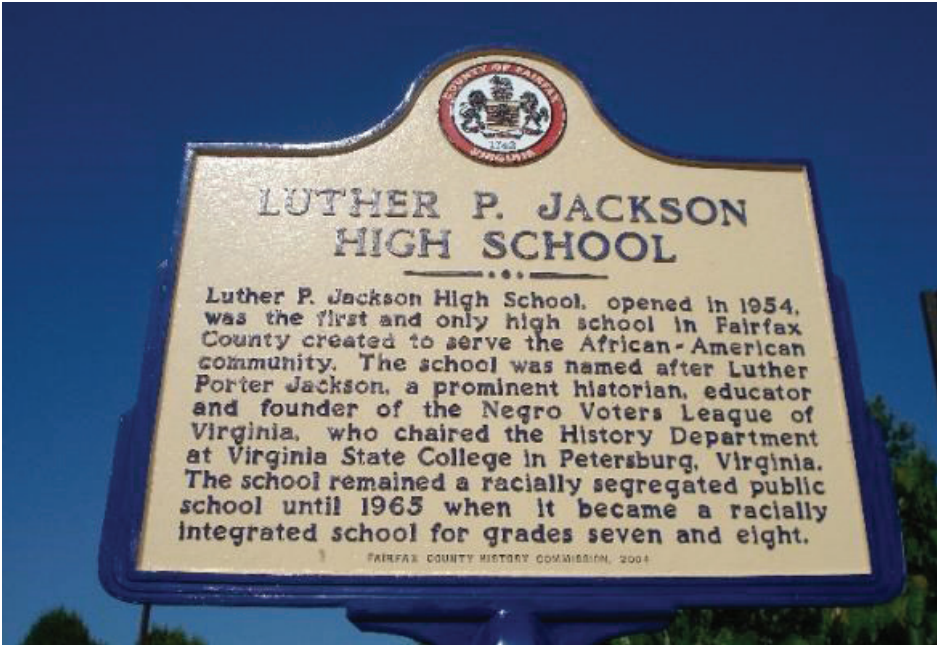
Phylis was born in March 1947 in Washington, D.C. The need to locate a hospital willing to admit Black patients meant that she entered the world miles away from her hometown of Fairfax County, a place that, during her early years, promised a future of educational inequity. Growing up in a segregated society defined by Jim Crow laws, she navigated a world where public spaces and facilities were racially divided.

Her educational journey began at Drew-Smith Elementary School in Gum Springs, a segregated institution that boasted an all-Black staff dedicated to teaching students from kindergarten through seventh grade. From eighth grade onwards, Phylis transitioned to Luther Jackson High School, a decision that came about as a direct result of community activism.

In 1948, just a year after Phylis’s birth, a group of eleven representatives from the local Black community approached the Fairfax County School Board, advocating for a “comprehensive Black high school.” Seven years later, Luther Jackson opened its doors, named after Dr. Luther Jackson, a notable historian and civil rights advocate recognized by the NAACP for his contributions to African American history.

Reflecting on her time at Luther Jackson over fifty years later, Phylis recalls the nurturing sense of community that enveloped the high school. In a 2021 oral interview, she shared memories of compassionate faculty members who were deeply invested in their students’ success. Despite the limitations imposed by segregation, she never felt disadvantaged compared to her white peers.

By her senior year, Phylis served as the associate editor of the “Jackson Tattler,” Luther Jackson’s annual newspaper, showcasing both her academic prowess and her contributions to school life. Her dedication culminated when she was recognized as Miss Homemaker of Luther Jackson, achieving high scores on the annual homemaking exam.

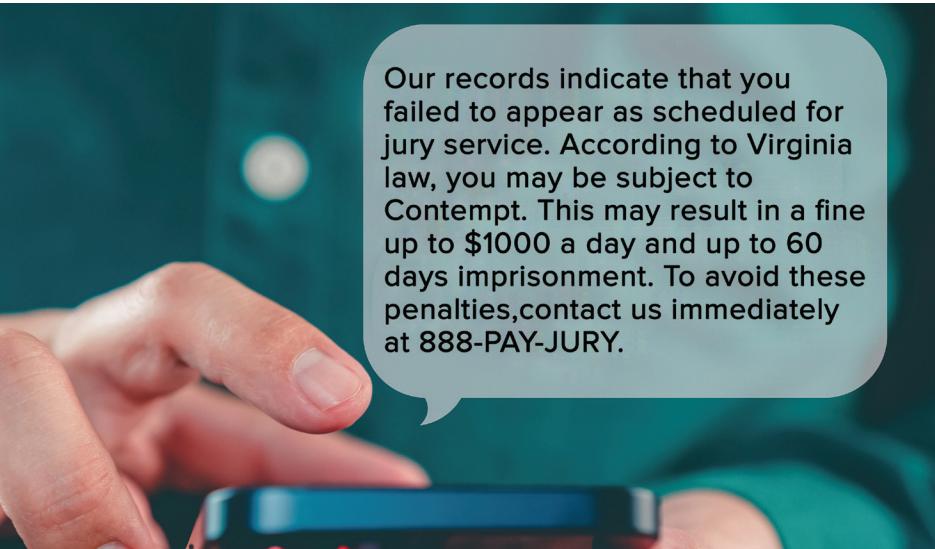


However, just months after her graduation, dramatic changes occurred. The closure of Luther Jackson High School followed the Supreme Court’s landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which declared the segregation of public schools unconstitutional. Today, the former high school stands as Luther Jackson Middle School—a poignant reminder of the struggle for educational equity, now transformed into a beacon of multicultural education for future generations.

Phylis Walker-Ford still calls Fairfax County home and remains an ardent advocate for the preservation of Black history. In 2021, she served as a commissioner on a committee that initiated the Fairfax County African American History Inventory, a collaborative endeavor between the Fairfax County History Commission and the Center for Mason Legacies. This project aims to safeguard and celebrate the stories of Black history in Fairfax County, ensuring that the legacy of resilience and activism, which the high school and its alumni represent, continues to inspire future generations. ■

Transcript of her Oral Interview: https://research.fairfaxcounty.gov/id.php?content_id=63228667
For more information on Fairfax County African American History Inventory visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/history-commission/african-american-inventory

Jury Duty Scam Targeting Virginia Residents



Written by Grace Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

Across Virginia, including in Fairfax County, residents have received false phone calls, voicemails, and emails from scammers impersonating state police. The scammers claim that residents have a warrant out for their arrest for missing jury duty.

They claim that for a resident to resolve these false criminal charges, residents must pay bail to avoid going to jail, allowing them to steal money and personal information from the victims they target. Such calls

are complete fakes. State police or Fairfax County Circuit Court do not call to ask for a bond for Jury Duty or monetary fees when rescheduling jury duty. such claims are scams.

If you receive such a call, do not respond and report such activity to law enforcement. ■

For more information on how to protect yourself from such scams please visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit/newsandevents/fairfax-circuit-court-officials-warn-residents-jury-duty-scam

3033 Chain Bridge Road

Written by Tania Hossain
The Fairfax Independent

The aging AT&T campus in Oakton stands at a crossroads, poised for a dramatic transformation that could reshape the character of this Fairfax County community. After decades as a corporate office space, this 33-acre property is now the subject of an ambitious mixed-use development proposal that exemplifies the broader challenges and opportunities facing our suburban communities as they adapt to changing workplace dynamics and housing needs.

A proposal to redevelop the AT&T site at 3033 Chain Bridge Road that would require a change to the Comprehensive Plan continues to spur controversy among Oakton residents two years after it was submitted and as a Board of Supervisors decision approaches. Readers can join in the discussion with Oakton residents on the Options for Oakton and Smart Growth for Oakton’s public group www.facebook.com/groups/1570583073777721

An affiliate for prospective developer, EYA, first filed for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the County’s 2022-23 Site Specific Plan Amendment process. EYA seeks to change the zoning of the site from its current 0.4 FAR (floor area ratio, a measurement of density) to 1.0 FAR. EYA has held over 25 ongoing community meetings, including with local homeowners.

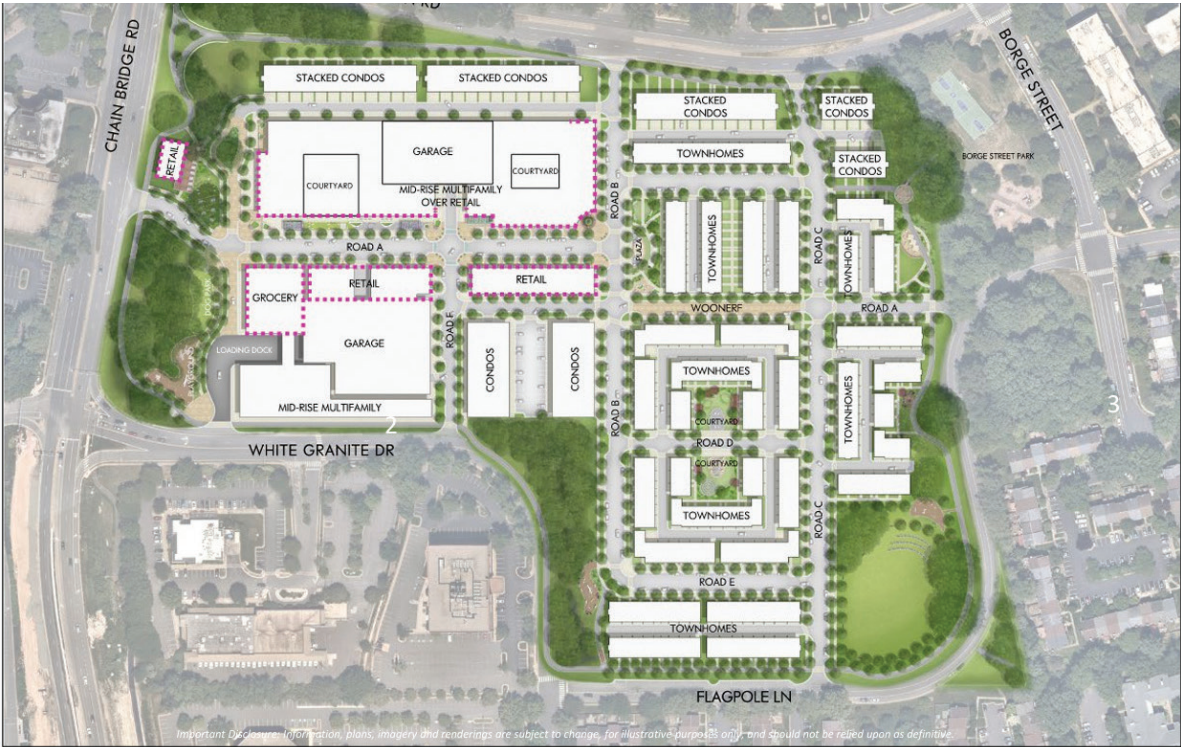
These meetings resulted in the reduction of the number of originally planned homes and the addition of green spaces. EYA also points to improvements it is planning to make to some pedestrian and bicycle routes and its inclusion of affordable housing units. As it currently stands, EYA says it plans to build 854 units and 120,000 square feet of retail.

Nonetheless, according to representatives of the Greater Oakton Community Association (GOCA), the organization hears frequently from residents who are concerned about the added stress this development would add to an already difficult traffic environment. “Residents also worry that the additional development already underway across from the site on Chain Bridge Road will compound these issues,” said Lauren Crum, co-chair of GOCA.

KEY FACTS

Site area: 33.08 Acres or 1,441,058 SF

Realign White Granite to create town center near existing commercial lots
Leverage existing curb cuts



AT&T campus in Oakton, VA (Photo Credit: EYA)

Oakton resident Beverly Dickerson commented in a letter she sent Supervisor Palchik with a copy to GOCA, “If the planning process will take a broader view of the impact of this and other nearby proposed developments, the community can better understand the full range of consequences and make more informed decisions about the project’s feasibility and required mitigations”. She added that she thinks it important that no recommendations be made regarding the property until the broader impacts have been studied and addressed.

The community’s concerns are substantiated by the traffic study commissioned by EYA as required as part of its proposal. The study by Gorove Slade Associates identified seven nearby intersections that scored failing grades on VDOT’s rating criteria. Area parents also note that their children are unable to walk to school at the nearby Oakton Elementary due to unsafe conditions for pedestrians.

Three local groups, Options for Oakton, Smarter Growth for Oakton, and a coalition of the leaders of nearby homeowners’ associations, stood up specifically in response to the proposed new development. These groups, along with GOCA, have been talking with the County in hopes of protecting what they see as the community’s interests before decisions are made on amending the Comprehensive Plan.

Some groups, such as Fairfax YIM-BY (Yes In My Backyard), Fairfax Coalition for Smarter Growth, and Fairfax Families for Safe Streets are enthused about the proposed installation of more pedestrian and bike-friendly byways, as a way to further their vision of a region less dependent on the automobile. At the same time, according to Shelley Deutch, co-chair of GOCA, concerned residents say that the distance of the proposed development from the metro, its proximity to I-66, and the developer’s interest in attracting people from outside the development to support the retail it proposes make fewer automobiles an unrealistic goal.

Planning officials say that mitigation for traffic and other issues would come as part of the subsequent rezoning applications process. At a recent open house, they laid out the next steps in the process, which they said include a virtual public meeting to review the recommendations of the Planning Commission, scheduled for January 28th, a Planning Commission virtual in person meeting on February 26th, and finally a vote by the Board of Supervisors on the planned amendment on March 18th. Should that pass, the project would advance to the rezoning review. ■

The development’s website is located at www.3033chainbridge.com. GOCA’s website is located at www.greateroakton.com

We have reached out to the City Council to get their thoughts about this development. Our readers can share their thoughts in the comment section online at www.tfinews.press/articles/community/3033



Tania Hossain
Photography

taniahossainphotography.com

25% off
2025 Wedding Packages
Mention “The Fairfax Independent”



Habitat for Humanity: Building Hope, One Home at a Time



(Photo Credit: Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C. & Northern Virginia)

Written by Grace Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

As Habitat for Humanity continues to shape communities and uplift families, the legacy of its most renowned supporter, former President Jimmy Carter, resonates throughout our local community. Founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has helped over 59 million people by providing decent, affordable housing. The nonprofit assists families worldwide and throughout Northern Virginia. Through continued dedication to affordable housing, Habitat DC-NOVA has built and renovated hundreds of homes across Northern Virginia.

The powerful, life-changing work of Habitat for Humanity was born out of the vision of the organization’s founders Millard and Linda Fuller. In the late 1960s, after becoming self-made millionaires, the couple sold all their possessions and moved to an interracial community farm in Georgia built upon a commitment to equality. At the Koinonia farm, the Fuller couple developed the idea of partnership housing, which believed affordable houses could be built through volunteers and fundraising efforts.

Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosylan deeply admired Habitat for Humanity’s innovative model, which reflected their own vision of partnership, equality, and community involvement. The Carter’s tirelessly advocated for the organization created the Jimmy Carter Work Project in 1984.

In addition to building homes, Habitat’s commitment to advocacy and sustainability echoes Carter’s principles. The organization promotes policy reforms to enhance affordable housing accessibility while ensuring that new homes are built with sustainable practices that benefit future generations.

Through Habitat for Humanity’s mission, residents receive a home and become part of a cooperative effort that enriches their neighborhoods. Each homeowner contributes by building their future residences, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

Habitat DC-NOVA has built over 300 houses since its founding in 1988, and it plans to build nearly 70 homes over the next five years. This initiative aims to address the critical shortage of affordable housing in the area.

The spirit of collaboration permeates every project, with local businesses, volunteers, and community members rallying to support Habitat’s missions. Participating in these projects has become a cherished tradition for many in the Northern Virginia community, reflecting the shared belief that everyone deserves a decent place to live.

As Habitat for Humanity forges ahead, its work is a powerful reminder that through collective effort, every nail-driven wall raised helps build homes and nurtures a thriving community for all. ■

For more information about Habitat for Humanity, please visit: www.habitat.org or to better engage with the local work of Habitat DC-NOVA, please visit: www.habitatdcnova.org



SINCE 1995

한국자동차

HANKOOK MOTORS

Experience the difference.

Get Behind
the Wheel
of Your
Dream Car
Today.

Located at:

9909 Main St #C

Fairfax, VA 22031

Hankook Motors is an
independent used car dealer,
proudly serving Fairfax since 1995.

hankookmotor.com

EO 33: Phone-Free Virginia Schools

Written by Layla Mohran
The Fairfax Independent

With fast-paced, technology-run academic and work spaces, technology has taken over and affected the way students perform socially and academically. There have been many negative effects on students and their mental health due to the heavy use of social media and phones during school, so, the issue was taken into larger consideration than ever before.

In his final State of the Commonwealth, on January 13, 2025, Governor Glenn Youngkin shared the cold hard truth that cell phones are damaging the developing minds of our young people. How much damage? Teens spend on average 7 hours on their phones per day; suicide rates have increased 167% for our young girls; and rates of depression are up by 145% for our young boys.

Prior to the 2024-2025 school year, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin signed Executive Order 33 which establishes a phone-free academic environment in every public school in Virginia. It was then left up to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to implement the policy. This was fueled by the research on the impact of cell phone and social media usage on the youth’s mental health. It was proved that with limited phone usage at school, students have less distractions and can focus better. It is also said that the limited phone usage allows for more in-person and face to face interactions among students. Youngkin not only emphasized the importance of phone use on mental health, but also academic performance.

“The intention of the policy was to eliminate distractions,” High School student Methuki Kariyawasam said, “but now more students are worried about hiding their phones and finding loopholes” (www.fcps.edu/cell-phone-policy)

The new policy for grades nine through 12 states that phones must be silenced and put away during instructional times. It allowed for phone usage during the passing periods, before and after the bells and lunch. The majority of teachers began using cell phone caddies. These caddies would hold up to 30 phones. Almost all teachers enforced the phone policy and the use of phone caddies. However, a few teachers believe that the harsh limitation of phone usage is counterproductive for students because it doesn’t allow them to learn and practice self-control. With students about to go to college, these teachers believe that self-control should be enforced within themselves and mastered before being released into more professional work spaces.



The VDOE issued its final guidance in September for local schools to enforce the policy and its procedures by January 1 2025. With the intention of bettering the youth’s mental health,all efforts made to limit cell phone usage during instructional periods. However, some students don’t feel a difference in their mental health just yet, but do feel a difference in the way they interact with their peers. “I don’t believe it’s had an effect on my mental health,” Kariyawasam said, “But I feel more connected to others since we’re forced to have more in person interactions.”

Starting January 1, 2025, phones must be turned off and put away during all instructional time, passing periods and lunch. This bell-to-bell policy completely eliminates any phone usage during the school day. In order to store students’ cell phones throughout the day, phones will be placed into magnetically sealed pouches during the school day. With this phone policy just gone into effect, there will be many balancing acts for students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. We will share more about how we are adjusting to this policy in future articles. ■

For more information and helpful resources, please visit the VDOE cell phone policy website at www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/cell-phone-free-education-in-virginia-k-12-public-schools

HEAT UP YOUR WINTER WITH LIMITED-TIME SAVINGS!

Save \$500!

\$500 OFF

new installations

"After years of reliable service, Ace replaced our 21-year-old heat pump efficiently and right on schedule. With their service plan, we're confident it'll last another 21 years!" – Jim B.

★

★

★

★

★

ACE

ACE Air Conditioning & Heating Service, Inc.

703.691.0095

\$20 OFF

a New Priority Service Plan

Use Code: WINTER25

To qualify for these exclusive discounts, simply mention this ad at the time of purchase. Don't miss out!

OP-ED

The State isn't Underfunding Education in Fairfax. We're Overpaying.

Written by Eileen Chollet
Fairfax City Resident

As next year's budget discussion reaches a fever pitch, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) leaders are shouting that the Commonwealth has been underfunding education by \$1,900 per student.

The \$1,900 number comes from a 2023 report by the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Research Commission (JLARC), but local elected officials are pulling a switcheroo with the context. The JLARC data actually say that northern Virginia school systems are wasting more than \$1,900 per student, and that waste is paid for by under-funding school divisions in the rest of the state.

Page 76 of the JLARC report shows that FCPS's labor expenditures (salaries and benefits) are 38% above state averages. Fairfax County's cost of living is expensive, but not that expensive; the Comparable Wage Index for Teachers (CWIFT) calculation that JLARC used says that FCPS's personnel costs should only be 19% above the state average.

The net effect of this overpayment is staggering. In fiscal year 2024, FCPS spent \$3.1 billion on labor. If FCPS had only spent the necessary 19% instead of 38%, those labor costs would have been \$400 million lower, well in excess of the \$300 million shortfall in Fairfax County's budget this year. Divide that \$400 million by the 180,000 students in Fairfax County, and **FCPS alone is wasting more than \$2,200 per student on excessive personnel costs.**

The excessive personnel costs for other northern Virginia school systems are just as large: Loudoun County is paying 27% more than the state average when it should be paying 11%, Alexandria City is paying 38% more when it should be paying 20%, and Arlington is paying 43% more when they should be paying 22%.

Over the past decade, the General Assembly has mostly let northern Virginia taxpayers bear the costs of their spendthrift school systems, which is why state funds account for a lower percentage of local education expenditures in Virginia than in surrounding states.

Fairfax County should be careful what they wish for when asking for more state funding, as increased funding comes with increased scrutiny. The General Assembly may start asking why FCPS is wasting \$400 million of taxpayer funding while a quarter of their schools are “off-track” or “need intensive support” per the state’s new accountability system.

Even if the General Assembly decided to subsidize the profligacy of northern Virginia school boards, the money would still come from the pockets of Fairfax County taxpayers. As the Chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors pointed out to FFXnow in September, most of the state's income and sales tax revenue comes from northern Virginia.

In a letter, he asked the governor to return more of that state tax revenue to northern Virginia to allow the Board of Supervisors to offset local taxes. This idea is a shell game: Fairfax County taxpayers would pay more, but local government officials would get to blame Richmond for high taxes rather than their own school systems' irresponsibility.

Fairfax City and County taxpayers shouldn't fall for this deception. We need to demand a full, fair, and external audit of Fairfax County Public Schools' spending on personnel rather than blindly emptying our wallets. ■



This stage of life comes with experience.

And the wisdom to
recognize a good opportunity.

No monthly maintenance fee. No minimum balance requirement. And earning interest. With Senior Interest Banking, for those 55 and up, that's our promise to you. All of our checking options provide the convenience of mobile and online banking, access to 55,000 surcharge-free ATMs, Zelle®, bill pay, and mobile deposits. Life is full of financial destinations. We're with you all the way.



Sandy Spring Bank

Start earning today at sandyspringbank.com/senior

Zelle® and the Zelle® related marks are wholly owned by Early Warning Services, LLC and are used herein under license. U.S. checking or savings account required to use Zelle®. Transactions between enrolled consumers typically occur in minutes. Sandy Spring Bank, Member FDIC. Sandy Spring Bank and the SSB logo are registered trademarks of Sandy Spring Bank. © 2024 Sandy Spring Bank. All rights reserved.

www.choiceproperty.us | www.choicehandyman.us



Choice Property
Management

A Smarter Way to Take Care of Your Home

- Residential Property Management
- Community Management
- Home Maintenance Services



Choice Handyman
Services



Top Property Management & Maintenance Services in Virginia, Maryland & DC

**10% Off Any
Maintenance Job**
Of \$500.00 or More

**\$100 OFF
1st Month
Management Fee**

Contact

 703-760-8909 | 877-760-1880

 3905 N. Railroad Avenue, Suite 101 Fairfax, VA 22030

 www.choiceproperty.us | www.choicehandyman.us

Introducing City of Fairfax School Board

Republished from cityoffairfaxschools.org

School Board Chair Carolyn Pitches



Carolyn Pitches is serving her eighth term as a School Board member and has been chair since 2018. She previously served as vice chair of the Fairfax City School Board for six years and is the Fairfax City Schools representative to the Washington Area Boards of Education. Ms. Pitches is currently a Math Specialist at Flint Hill School and serves on the Community Planning and Development Committee for Fairfax County Public Schools. She has 28 years of teaching experience and has been a resident of the City of Fairfax since 1999. Her two daughters attended City schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade, graduating from Fairfax High School in 2020 and 2022. Ms. Pitches earned a B.A. in Elementary/Middle Education from Virginia Tech and a Master's in K-12 Education from George Mason University.

School Board Member Amit Hickman



Amit Hickman is serving her second term on the City of Fairfax School Board and as vice chair. She is the education director for a local non-profit early childhood program where she has worked for over 15 years. Ms. Hickman served on the Daniels Run Elementary School PTA as vice president of fundraising and as president. She is also a member of the City of Fairfax Neighborhood Readiness Team. Hickman holds a Master of Education in curriculum and instruction from George Mason University and is currently pursuing her Master of Social Work, also at GMU. Ms. Hickman and her husband have been city residents for the past 10 years and live with their three school-aged children in the Old Lee Hills Neighborhood.

School Board Member Lauren Bartelme

Lauren Bartelme is serving her first

term as a member of the City of Fairfax School Board. She holds Bachelors of Science in Physics from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Masters in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University. She has a background in science and math education, from teaching geometry and physics in Baltimore City as a member of Teach for America to teaching middle school science in Fairfax County Public Schools. She has been a city resident since 2009, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. Her oldest daughter is a freshman at Fairfax High School (attended Providence and KJMS). Her youngest daughter attends a specialized school for dyslexia in Annandale.

School Board Member Kristina Cecere

Kristina Cecere is serving her first term on the City of Fairfax School Board. She is an evaluation specialist in the Office of Evaluation at Arlington Public Schools. Previously, she worked at Fairfax High School for over a decade as a math teacher and AP Coordinator. Ms. Cecere has served on the Providence Elementary School PTA in many roles, most recently as the Director of Afterschool Enrichment. She was also appointed as the city's School Board representative for the FCPS Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) Advisory Committee in the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Cecere holds a Master of Education in curriculum and instruction from George Mason University, a Certificate in Education Finance and a Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University's McCourt

School of Public Policy. Ms. Cecere and her husband moved into the City of Fairfax for the past 12 years and have two children in the city schools.

School Board Member Sarah Kelsey



Sarah Kelsey is serving her first term on the City of Fairfax School Board. She has also served as secretary and membership chair for the Mosby Woods Community Association, classroom representative for the Lord of Life Preschool Board, and three years as the book fair chair for the Providence Elementary School PTA. Mrs. Kelsey grew up in Kansas City, Missouri where she taught elementary school and special education for ten years. She has taught preschool since moving to the City of Fairfax with her husband, two children, and dog. Mrs. Kelsey received her B.A. in elementary education K-6 from Northwest Missouri State University and a Master in Special Education from University of Kansas. ■

ZINTA & ROB

703-304-1150



www.RedTruckRealtyGroup.com



Expertly serving N. Virginia since 1989

The Commanders Beat the Lions: but, no, they didn’t win the Super Bowl in 1991

Written by Chap Petersen
Republished from thevirginiaattorney.com

Last night was the best night of football in DC since ... the 1991 NFC championship when Washington routed Detroit (again!), before a delirious crowd at RFK stadium. Two weeks later, they crushed Buffalo in the Super Bowl to go down as one of the all-time great NFL teams.

Washington’s victory last night was less expected but no less magical. The offense, led by the brilliant rookie Jayden Daniels, carved the Lions defense to shreds. The defense snared five takeaways, including a pick-six. Washington was relentless in all phases of the game and deserved the win.

Afterwards, the Fox Sports network showed a graphic depicting “the Commanders” as the NFL champion in 1991.

That is, of course, false. The team that won the crown that year, like the team that won in 1982 and 1987 (and 1937 and 1942) was The Washington Redskins, the descendants of the Boston Braves who moved to the capital city in 1937.

In 1971, after years of mediocrity in DC, the Redskins brought in a new coach, George Allen, who rebranded the team by etching the image of a Blackfoot (Montana) Indian Chief, Two Guns White Calf, on the side of its helmet. That was done with the specific authorization of the Chief and his tribe.

The image quickly became iconic, and the team itself reached the Super Bowl in 1972, thus kicking off two decades of excellence.

Today, the Chief is dead and the logo discarded, but the tribe and his family remains. They’re mad as hell -- and they have every right to be. Their identity has been canceled. And that sucks.

It is an accepted fact of American life that a private business owner gets to name it: the Redskins or the Commanders. What is less acceptable is to have that owner (or a supine media) pretend that the former brand never existed. The Redskins had a hell of a run (1937-2019), longer than any other DC sports team. They had over fifty years of sold-out stadiums. It was a unique and glorious history.

Why is the media so scared to acknowledge it?

The irony, of course, is that these Orwellian tactics are not harming white people; instead, they’re canceling the image of the American Indian.

For years, the Indian warrior on horseback was a symbol of America. It was the



505 Redskins (Navajo) in Phoenix, 2016 (Photo Credit: Chap Petersen)

perfect image for athletic teams, like the Redskins, the Chicago Blackhawks or Florida State Seminoles. It was also apparently offensive to certain academics and journalists.

In the protest summer of 2020, the Soros-funded campaign to cancel the Redskins reached a critical mass. The team dumped the name without any notice. That same day, I heard from a friend with the Lakota (Sioux) tribe in North Dakota. They had buses of supporters ready to mobilize support from “Indian country.” I called The Washington Post to relay the news -- but they weren’t interested in that story. It didn’t fit the accepted narrative.

Today, most progressive communities have erased any image of the American Indian, whether from sports teams or state logos. Perhaps that is why most American Indians voted for Trump in 2024. Nobody wants to see their history canceled.

None of this detracts from what the Commanders have accomplished. They’ve had an amazing season and deserved all the success they have achieved. But they did not win the Super Bowl in 1991. That was the Redskins. ■

Fairfax Homeschool Athletic Hawks Girls Varsity Basketball Team Continue Winning Streak

Written by Caleb Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

The Fairfax Homeschool Athletics (FHS) Varsity Girls Hawks continue their winning streak with a 13-0 standing. The Hawks’ most recent win came on January 4, 2025, playing against the Loudon County Homeschool team. The Hawks won with a final score of 58 to 40. The team is composed of three Seniors, two Juniors, four Sophomores, five Freshmen, and one 8th grader. All girls have been vital to the team’s overall performance and success. The Hawks scored as high as 70 points in one game. The three closest rivals were Fredericksburg Victory with a final score of 44 -40 with a four-point difference played on

January 3, 2025, Spirit Homeschool League with a final score of 51 to 45 with a six-point difference, and the Frederick Warriors with an overall score of 53- 46 with a seven-point difference.

Within the FHSSA Region, they are currently in first place. The FHSSA Region is a geographical division within the Virginia High School League. This is where high schools compete against each other in athletic competitions. FHS is included in the homeschool division within the region. They are ranked 21 in Virginia and the Washington D.C. Metro Rankings. The vision for Fairfax

continued from **Hawks**, page 25

Homeschool Athletics is to create a community around a robust athletic program with high-quality coaching to develop home-school athletes competing at the highest level. The Varsity Girl's Basketball team along with their coaches are exemplary of the FHS vision.

The Fairfax Independent wants to celebrate the Hawks' success! ■

GMU Women's Basketball: Dawn of a Golden Era Under Blair-Lewis

Written by Caleb Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

The George Mason women's basketball program stands at what appears to be the dawn of a golden era. Under Blair-Lewis's leadership, they've transformed from a struggling program into a conference contender, with their current 13-3 record. She systematically rebuilt a struggling program in just three years. From a team that won just three games in 2020-21, Mason has evolved into a formidable force, setting program records with 23 regular season wins and 14 Atlantic 10 victories in 2023-24.

The 2024-25 season has already etched its place in George Mason's record books. The Patriots opened the season in historic fashion, securing an impressive 11-1 record through their non-conference schedule. This remarkable start included signature victories over ACC oppo-

nent Wake Forest and maintaining an almost perfect record at home, where they've established EagleBank Arena as a formidable fortress for visiting teams. Perhaps most notably, their only loss came against eighth-ranked Maryland in a game where the Patriots held a fourth-quarter lead, demonstrating their ability to compete with the nation's elite programs.

The current roster showcases a blend of emerging talent and established performers. Kennedy Harris has emerged as a dynamic force, leading the team with 14.7 points per game, while Zahirah Walton contributes 11.6 points and 6.5 rebounds. The team's success is built on a foundation of balanced scoring and defensive prowess, with Nalani Kay-sia anchoring the interior with 10.3 rebounds per game. This collective effort has resulted in the Patriots averaging 74.4 points per game while holding opponents to just 55.4 points.

The program's success hasn't gone unnoticed within the collegiate basketball community. Blair-Lewis's coaching excellence earned her recognition as a Kathy Delaney-Smith Mid-Major Coach of the Year finalist, placing her among the nation's top mid-major coaches (Vanessa Blair-Lewis - Head Coach - Staff Directory, 2024).

Moreover, the team achieved another significant milestone when three players - Sonia Smith, Zahirah Walton, and Kennedy Harris - earned All-Conference postseason honors in the same year, a feat not accomplished since George Mason joined the Atlantic 10. As they continue their conference schedule, the Patriots have demon-

strated that they're not just building a team but establishing a legacy that could reshape the landscape of Atlantic 10 women's basketball. The university's commitment to the program's continued success is evident in their recent decision to extend Blair-Lewis's contract through the 2028-29.

This extension reflects not just a recognition of past achievements but an investment in the program's future. Athletic Director Marvin Lewis emphasized that Blair-Lewis has "positioned our program into being recognized as one of the top teams in the A-10" while "providing a holistic student-athlete experience." ■

Youth League Games

Vienna Youth, Inc., or VYI as it is more commonly called, is a youth sports organization that offers sports programs to children from 5-18 years of age in Vienna, Virginia, and the surrounding Northern Virginia area. VYI's programs include **Basketball, Football, Lacrosse, Cheerleading, Track, Cross Country, Wrestling, Volleyball, and Rugby.**

Visit the www.vyi.org to register.



Winter League Calendar

www.mccleanbasketball.com/basketball/winter-league-calendar

- February 1 2pm
- February 8 3:15pm
- February 15 4:30pm
- The end-of-season tournament begins on February 22nd and March Madness Championship weekend is March 8-9

FREE CONE OR DISH

WITH PURCHASE OF ANY COMBO MEAL

Limited to one scoop of custard per dish or cake cone per combo meal purchase per coupon. Toppings or waffle cone available at additional cost. Not valid with any other offer. Redeem when ordering. **EXP 03/31/2025.** **VALID ONLY AT 10030 FAIRFAX BLVD, FAIRFAX, VA 22030**

Freddys.com

Fairfax Lions Boys Basketball Team Gets Another Win!

Written by Caleb Brooks
The Fairfax Independent

The Fairfax Lion’s Boys’ Basketball team currently holds a 6-3 record. On December 20, 2024, the team secured a win against the Alexandria Titans, in a close game with the Final score of Lions 50 and the Titans scoring 49. It was too close to call until the final quarter. With 20 seconds left on the clock, Cam Yingling, a 6’4” Senior playing Guard, made the final basket hitting a huge step back three to win the game.

According to the Fairfax Instagram, Jackson Young, a 6’1” Senior playing Guard was the Lunchpail Player of the Game due to his multiple steals down the stretch. The Fairfax Lion’s team lost to Herndon High School and Westfields High School, while winning games against Centreville, McLean, and Annandale High Schools.

Fairfax Lions played in a Shootout at the Sea Tournament on December 28-29, 2024, in North Myrtle Beach, North Carolina. In their first game they played against the Andrews’ Yellowjackets from Andrews, South Carolina. The Lions managed a vic-

tory with a final score of 44-38. Cam Yingling gained twenty-two points and ten rebounds. Penn Morris, the 5’7” Senior playing Guard, accumulated seven points with five assists and he had three steals. Fairfax’s win bumped their record to 6-3.

In their second game of the tournament Fairfax hit the court again playing their next match against Christian Academy from Myrtle Beach with a 46-45 victory on December 29, 2025. Cam Yingling made “all-tourney team” and was Lunchpail Player of the Game with 25 points and five rebounds. Aidan Mullen, a 6’3 Senior, playing Forward scored six points. Gavin Bermudez, a 5’ 11 Sophomore playing Guard also scored five points.

The Fairfax Lions continued to work stronger as a team and finished the game with 14 assists.

The Fairfax Independent wants to congratulate the Fairfax Lions Boys’ Basketball Team on their wins against the Alexandria Titans and their wins in the Shootout at the Sea Tournament.

The Lions are 7-3 overall. ■

BestCrosswords.com - Puzzle #4 on 1/15/2025 (solution)

Across
1- Long-tailed parrot; 6- Sandwich shop; 10- Edible roots; 14- Unescorted; 15- Put ____ on it!; 16- Like ____ out of hell; 17- Rose; 18- Fortuneteller's opening; 19- State bird of Hawaii; 20- One with a beat; 21- Festive occasions; 23- Trapshooting; 24- Board for nails; 26- Eats to a plan; 27- Take into custody; 29- Caterpillar rival; 31- Arrivederci; 32- Championship; 33- Pasture; 36- In spite of; 40- Riviera season; 41- Bridget Fonda, to Jane; 42- Words to Brutus; 43- Merits; 44- Wear; 46- Goodnight girl of song; 48- Toil; 49- Trap; 50- Penetrating cold; 52- Rhyming boxing champ; 55- Et ____; 56- Greek war god; 57- Acrylic fiber; 59- Use a surgical beam; 60- Dinner faux-pas; 61- Former Houston footballer; 62- Jug; 63- Matches a bet; 64- Perhaps;

1	M	A	C	A	W		6	D	E	L	I		10	Y	A	M	S
14	A	L	O	N	E		15	A	L	I	D		16	A	B	A	T
17	S	T	O	O	D		18	I	S	E	E		19	N	E	N	E
20	C	O	P		21	G	A	L	A	S		23	S	K	E	E	T
				24	E	M	E	R	Y			26	D	I	E	T	S
27	A	R	R	E	S	T		29	D	E	E	R	E				
31	C	I	A	O			32	T	I	T	L	E		33	L	E	A
36	N	O	T	W	I	T	H	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G		
40	E	T	E		41	N	I	E	C	E			42	E	T	T	U
				43	E	A	R	N	S		44	H	A	V	E	O	N
46	I	R	E	N	E			48	L	A	B	O	R				
49	S	N	A	R	E		50	C	H	I	L	L		52	A	L	I
55	A	L	I	I		56	A	R	E	S		57	O	R	L	O	N
59	L	A	S	E		60	B	U	R	P		61	O	I	L	E	R
62	E	W	E	R		63	S	E	E	S		64	M	A	Y	B	E

Down
1- Not fem.; 2- Choir member; 3- Collaborate; 4- Year abroad; 5- Jams tight; 6- Every 24 hours; 7- Literary lioness; 8- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 9- Ox tail?; 10- Federal soldier in the Civil War; 11- Red as ____; 12- Lions' locks; 13- Editor's mark; 22- This was produced by Van Gogh, for example; 23- Femme fatale; 25- Cat call; 26- Boxer Oscar ____ Hoya; 27- Skin eruption; 28- Civil disturbance; 29- Flat circular plates; 30- Novel conclusion?; 32- At that point; 33- In the strict sense; 34- Within (prefix); 35- Son of ____; 37- Silly; 38- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 39- "Whip It" band; 43- More spine-tingling; 44- Actor Holbrook; 45- Flowering; 46- Acquired relative; 47- Elevate; 48- Has "s" trouble; 49- Mall event; 50- Rock's Motley ____; 51- Roll-call response; 53- "Stay" singer Lisa; 54- Memo starter; 56- Tummy muscles; 58- Narrow inlet;





FEBRUARY 1 & 2 • EAGLEBANK ARENA

SAVE with FAMILY NIGHT PRICING!
SATURDAY 6PM SHOW

PAWPATROLLIVE.COM

A VSTAR ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION © 2025 & TM Spin Master Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

PAW Patrol Live! Giveaway!

Catch the PAWsome pups in *PAW Patrol Live! “A Mighty Adventure”* in Fairfax February 1 & 2 at EagleBank Arena!

Win 4 Free Tickets!

1. Join Facebook Group: Monster Love - Fairfax City, VA (www.facebook.com/groups/monsterlovefairfaxcity)
2. Like The Fairfax Independent Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/thefairfaxindependent)
3. Tag 5 of your friends on the giveaway post.



January 31 - February 1, 2025

CHOCOLATE LOVERS FESTIVAL



www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/chocolate-lovers-festival

Price Gouging on Life-Saving Drugs: Legal Implications and Future Considerations



Written by Hannah Lee
The Fairfax Independent

The financial burden of diabetes treatment has rapidly escalated over the past two decades, with insulin prices skyrocketing by over 1,000% since the early 2000s. According to Vincent Rajkumar in *The High Cost of Insulin in the United States: An Urgent Call to Action* (2020), the price of brand-name insulin treatment averaged \$21 in 1999. The unbridled price growth has been attributed to a web of agreements between drug manufacturers and PBMs, which incentivize higher list prices rather than affordability for consumers (Celine Castronuovo, State Health Trend Reporter at Bloomberg Law published an article on December 19, 2023, *Insulin, PBM Lawsuits Seen as Alternative to Pricing Legislation*).

On September 20, 2024, the Federal Trade Commission announced that it filed a lawsuit against prescription drug “middlemen” alleging that the Pharmacy Benefit Managers’ (PBM) rebate-seeking strategy has led to skyrocketing list prices of insulin medications. The complaint highlighted that while PBM respondents garnered billions in rebates and associated fees, one out of every four insulin patients was not able to afford their medications by 2019—an effect attributed to the increase of over 1,200% in the list price of Humalog, which soared to \$274.

These growing costs have had dire, life-threatening implications for individuals with diabetes who rely on these life-saving medications. Consumers are consequently forced to deal with the adverse and burdensome side effects, including rationing, which, according to Right Care Alliance (2024), has been linked to the fatal condition of diabetic ketoacidosis and has forced individuals to make the difficult choice between seeking a proper medical treatment or fulfilling vital living expenses—a choice that should not have to be made in this modern day and age.

The soaring costs of insulin have sparked a wave of legal actions across the United States, with litigation attempting to address the price-gouging practices of insulin suppliers. In Virginia, the consistent increase in insulin medication prices has compelled various local governments to pursue legal action against major insulin manufacturers and pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, including Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk, and Sanofi.

Several lawsuits have been filed by the different states and cities of Virginia against such manufacturers and PBMs. Fairfax City law firm, Chap Petersen & Associates represents many Virginia localities including Accomack County and the City of Portsmouth, the City of Charlottesville, Henry County, the City of Newport News, Northampton County, Orange County, Pittsylvania County, Richmond County, and York County initiated related lawsuits according to the December 9, 2024, edition of *The Virginia Attorney*.

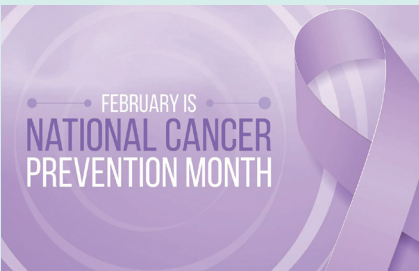
This systematic manipulation extracts massive, unwarranted profits at the direct expense of taxpayers, as local governments and healthcare systems struggle under the crushing weight of artificially inflated costs. Allegations claim that these “middlemen” have prioritized high-priced insulin medications to maximize rebates instead of reducing costs for consumers. These practices have been highlighted in investigative reports on the insulin pricing scheme that revealed a collaboration between manufacturers and PBMs designed to keep prices inflated (*Insulin Pricing Lawsuit - Price Inflation* (Updated November 2024)).

When companies conspire to inflate prices, they’re not just manipulating markets - they’re actively undermining the ability of local governments and healthcare systems to serve their communities. The financial burden imposed by these schemes represents a direct transfer of wealth from public coffers to corporate balance sheets, achieved through deliberate deception rather than legitimate market competition. Addressing this challenge requires not only aggressive enforcement but a fundamental rethinking of how we protect essential public services from predatory corporate behavior. Virginians and Americans deserve better. ■

Join Us in Raising Awareness for These 3 Causes in February



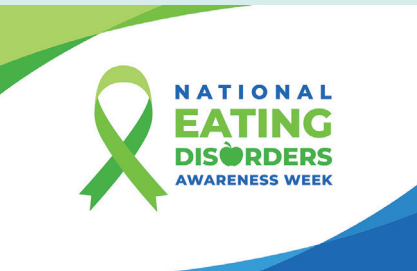
This awareness month was established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to educate the public about heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association (AHA) promotes healthier lives during the month of February and resources for millions of people for a common goal: to eradicate heart disease and stroke.



The American Cancer Society fights to free the world from cancer and provides patients and caregivers resources on their website. This organizations funds and conducts research, shares expert information, support patients, and spreads awareness about prevention.



National Children's Dental Health Awareness Month is a month-long health observance to bring together thousands of dedicated professionals, health care providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers and teachers. The American Dental Association (ADA) is America's leading advocate for oral health and provides resources for parents and caregivers.



Eating Disorders Awareness Week is an annual campaign to educate the public about the realities of eating disorders and to provide hope and visibility to individuals and loved ones impacted by eating disorders. Eating Disorders Awareness Week takes place February 24 - March 2, 2025.



Place Your Small Ads in Our Classified Section.



www.tfinews.press/classifieds

VALVOLINE INSTANT OIL CHANGE

9883 FAIRFAX BLVD FAIRFAX, VA 22030



DEDICATED TO SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

VIOCVA.COM

*max \$25 per invoice Not valid with any same services offers/discounts (including fleets)



DRIVE THRU OIL CHANGE IN ABOUT 15 MINUTES
NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
15% OFF INVOICE FOR "THE INDEPENDENT" READERS*

Please present this offer to receive your savings

CODE: DVINDEP



SCAN ME!



FOR HOURS, MORE LOCATIONS, & MORE WAYS TO SAVE, PLEASE VISIT VIOCVA.COM

Christmas Book Tree: A Girl Scout Holiday Tradition

Written by Layla Mohran
The Fairfax Independent

Interview with Avery Adams - Troop 79

In partnership with our Girl Scout service unit, a few girls run a book drive near the end of each year, collecting books from the service unit and the community. Me (Avery Adams) and Ellie Bierwirth have been in charge of this project for 3 years, picking it up from my sister and one of her troopmates after they graduated in 2022. Now, as I am a senior and graduate this year, Ellie (a sophomore) is planning on taking on the project with Hannah Eddy (7th grade) in the future.

After our collection drive, which usually takes place in November, we spend a day sorting the books by reading level and theme, while removing books that would be inappropriate for the kids. We then separate the books into piles of 3-4 and tie up each pile with a holiday ribbon. On the day of the dinner event, we bring our stacks of books and lay them under the tree. The kids attending the dinner come up throughout the evening to pick a pile or two that looks interesting, with a little help from us to make sure it is at their age level. Each kid, no matter their age, can pick up a stack of books and we hope that our tradition helps them in their learning while also providing entertainment. ■



Left to Right: Avery Adams (Troop 79), Ellie Bierwirth (Troop 2748), Hannah Eddy (Troop 55043)

Annual Christmas Party: Rotary Club of Fairfax

Written by Rachel McQuillen
City Council & Rotary Member

On December 16th, the Rotary Club of Fairfax Tonight hosted our annual Christmas party for deserving families at the American Legion. With the help of our incredible volunteers, festive music from members of the Fairfax City Band, a Book Giving Tree created by the Girl Scouts, and a special visit from Santa, we were able to provide a magical evening for over 30 families. Delicious food was generously provided by Chick-fil-A and Nothing Bundt Cakes. ■



(Photo Credits: Rachel McQuillen)



A Ramadan Story: More Than Fasting



Written by Layla Mohran
The Fairfax Independent

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which Muslims all around the world observe for 30 days by fasting, introspection, and prayers. When most people hear Ramadan, they think of fasting - no drinking or eating of any sort from sunrise to sunset. Though fasting is a huge part of Ramadan and well known to everyone, fasting is one aspect of observing.

Ramadan is a time to grow as a person and spend time with the people you love as you learn more about spirituality and faith. Fasting isn't easy, but by the end of the first week, your body is completely used to it.

Along with it, you adjust to the sleep schedule of waking up before the sun rises to eat your pre-fasting meal and staying up to do late-night prayers, within the first few days.

Fasting always reminds me to constantly be grateful for all the food, water, and other blessings I've been provided with. I learned to not take even the littlest things for granted.

My favorite part of Ramadan is staying up all night with my friends and siblings to get to go to IHOP at five in the morning. I also love staying at the mosque at night with my friends and eating so much to the point where I can't breathe.

After the month of Ramadan is over and I can return to eating at any time, it is a strange feeling. However, it helps me realize that I have the privilege to eat whenever, which in turn serves as a reminder that not everybody in the world has the blessing of a meal on their plate.

The thing that makes Ramadan so unique is the length of it. Not many other holidays are 30 days long. This is why all the good habits we build during Ramadan are so important because when we do them for 30 days straight, they become a part of our routine and not just something we do once a year.

Many traditions that are very important to the meaning of Ramadan include breaking your fast with delicious date fruits. This is followed by a festive meal called iftar which usually takes place with a gathering of friends and family. Ramadan is such a uniting time for Muslims across the world and it holds such a special place in my heart.

Observing Muslims can find accurate prayer, iftar and sehri times by contacting their local mosque. ■



Fairfax City Celebrates Black History Month

Let's Celebrate Black History Month to honor, learn, and explore our nation's black history

- February 1-28:** Frederick Douglass: Advocate for Equality Exhibition
- February 6:** VA Opera "The Constitution of Loving v. Virginia" Legal Panel
- February 9:** AfroTales: Then and Now
- February 10:** Funday Monday with the "AX" Experience
- February 11:** Versa-Style Street Dance Company Lecture/ Demonstration
- February 15:** Great Performances at Mason: Versa Style Dance company

Full calendar of events: www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/community-events/black-history-month

EARP'S CALENDAR



Earp's Ordinary is Northern Virginia's premier destination for live music, dining, and events, located in the heart of Old Town Fairfax.

Listed below are some of our upcoming shows, please visit our website for more events and future performances!

Contact us today to let us host your next event!

UPCOMING SHOWS

- 2/7/25 - THE BOB BAND**
"THE ULTIMATE BOB DYLAN TRIBUTE BAND"
- 2/12/25 - JENNIFER KNAPP**
WITH SUPPORTING GUEST FLAMY GRANT
- 2/14/25 - THE REAGAN YEARS**
The 80's Valentine's Event at Earp's Ordinary
- 2/15/25 - TOTALLY BOWIE**
Celebrates the Musical Legacy of David Bowie
- 2/21/25 - GROOVALICIOUS**
Playing the hits from the decade of boogie and the dance floor at Studio 54!
- 2/28/25 - CALIGULA BLUSHED**
Smiths/Morrissey Tribute Band
- 3/8/25 - DOC MARTIN AND THE FLANNELS**
Tribute to 90s Rock AKA Grunge
- 3/14/25 - THE KILMAINE SAINTS**
Celtic Rock Folk Band

10420 Main Street, Fairfax, VA
www.earpsordinary.com



2024: A Year of Impact!

This year, we proudly:

- served 36,531 patients,
- welcomed 899 bundles of joy,
- and performed 289 major surgeries.

With 16 providers strong, Annandale OBGYN remains committed to delivering exceptional women’s healthcare.



GEARING UP FOR 2025!



Opening new locations

- RESTON
- ARLINGTON
- FLORIDA



Family Medicine opening on Feb 2025



Dr. Joan Gonzalez



New Chief Medical Officer:

A leading expert in laparoscopic and robotic-assisted surgical techniques for gynecological condition



Dr. Rami Tabbarah

“We are big enough to serve, but small enough to care”

ANNANDALE
4208
Evergreen Ln,
#213
Annandale
VA 22003

ALEXANDRIA
5148
Leesburg Pike
Alexandria
VA 22302

FALLS CHURCH
7655
Leesburg Pike,
Falls Church
VA 22043

MERRIFIELD
2810 Old Lee
Hwy,
#305 Fairfax
VA 22031

FAIRFAX CITY
3925
Blenheim
Blvd.,
Unit 52C/D,
Fairfax,
VA 22030