



No Kings protestors in Fairfax City (Sam Douglas)

Crowds Gather for “No Kings” Protest in Fairfax

BY SAM DOUGLAS

Protesters lined intersections in Fairfax on the afternoon of June 14, as part of a nation-wide “No Kings Day”. Citizens lined 16 intersections in and around Fairfax City, holding signs and chanting in protest of recent actions by President Donald Trump during his second term in office.

“They’ve defied our courts, deported Americans, disappeared people off the streets, attacked our civil rights, and slashed our services. The corruption has gone too far. No thrones. No crowns. No kings,” reads the website nokings.org.

The protest happened hours before the United States Army 250th Anniversary Parade occurred in Washington D.C., which celebrated

the 250 years since the United States Army’s formation coincided with President Trump’s 79th birthday.

In Fairfax, protestors gathered peacefully for a stretch of four hours, encouraging passing cars to honk as they stood on sidewalks lining roads such as Main Street and Fairfax Boulevard. The biggest gatherings had several dozen protestors braving the mid-June heat. 330 total people signed up for the protest, with many bringing friends and family.

Similar protests occurred all around the country, using the “No Kings” slogan. Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Chicago were among the cities included in the 2,000 planned protests.

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June 17 - Primary Election: Unofficial Results



A polling place volunteer waits to greet primary voters at Fairfax HS on Primary Election morning. (Tania Hossain)

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The Virginia primary election on June 17, 2025, played a crucial role in shaping the political landscape for the upcoming November general election, with voters determining Democratic nominees for key statewide and local offices. The Department of Elections released unofficial results on election night, with official certifications to follow from local electoral boards and the State Board of Elections.

Democratic Primaries: Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General

With former U.S. Representative Abigail Spanberger running

unopposed for the gubernatorial nomination, attention was largely focused on the Democratic primaries for lieutenant governor and attorney general. These races were pivotal in setting the Democratic ticket for the general election.

Lieutenant Governor Candidates

Six candidates competed for the Democratic nomination for Lieutenant Governor.

Ghazala Hashmi: A state senator from Chesterfield, she emphasized her extensive legislative experience and focus on education and healthcare, especially for stu-

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Special
Election
on June 28

What is Birthright Citizenship?

BY HANNAH LEE

On his first day back in office, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that sought to end universal birthright citizenship. On January 20th of this year, Trump issued another order, Executive Order 14160, which denied citizenship to individuals born from a mother whose residence in the United States was unlawful or temporary and a father who was not a citizen or lawful permanent residence. His presidency has brought a plethora of changes.

What exactly is birthright citizenship? It is a legal principle whereby individuals acquire citizenship at birth through birthplace, by being born within a country's territory, or legally, through their parents' citizenship. Its roots can be traced to common law in England over 400 years ago, notably exemplified by Calvin's Case in 1608. This case ruled that individuals born in Scotland were considered natural-born subjects of the King of England, since they were born on the sovereign's land—regardless of the parents' status. Thus, any child born on the sovereign's territory owed allegiance to the ruler and



Ai Generated Citizenship Certificate & US Flag

was consequently entitled to inheritance, protection, and other legal matters.

When English colonies began to sprout across North America, this common law principle was quickly embraced by the early United States' legal tradition. Influential jurists, including Chancellor James Kent of New York, described citizenship as being linked to birth within the nation's jurisdiction. This concept was applied to grant citizenship to virtually every-

one born within U.S. territory, regardless of parental nationality. The application of this rule even extended to children born to temporary visitors, confirmed by the 1844 case of *Lynch v. Clarke*. The basis of the ruling was the principle of *jus soli*—right of the soil—which was the prevailing grasp of citizenship during this period, which meant that anyone born within the country was considered a citizen.

This broad application, however, was

undermined by racial exclusions as the citizenship of African Americans came into play. The 1857 decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* denied citizenship to individuals of African descent, even if born in the United States. Injustices enabled by such rulings led to the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1868, under President Abraham Lincoln, which explicitly highlighted birthright citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof," thus solidifying citizenship based on birthplace whilst preventing unjust discrimination within application of this rule.

While recent events under the Trump Administration have sparked questions regarding the definition and application of birthright citizenship, its origins in English common law reflect the principle that birthright citizenship is derived from the place of birth—a foundation that remained steadfast during the early days of the United States. Today, the Fourteenth Amendment continues to embrace this concept, legally providing individuals born in the country—regardless of their parents' status—with U.S. citizenship.

America 250! Let's Start The Party

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Let's chat about something really cool coming up: America 250! Imagine it like a massive birthday party for the United States in 2026, celebrating 250 years since it all began. It's not just about looking back, though; it's a huge moment for us to think about where we've been, what we've achieved, and even the tough stuff we've faced together. The big idea is to get everyone, from every corner of the country, involved in this amazing remembrance.

So who, what, when? The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress in 2016 to plan and orchestrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States. The non-partisan Commission, chaired by former Treasurer of the United States Rosie Rios, is working with America250.org, Inc. to engage Americans across the country in designing the largest anniversary observance in our nation's history.



In Fairfax, during the 2020 Session, the Virginia General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, legislation to establish the American Revolution 250th Commission within the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States. On October 9, 2020, Governor Northam released the names of the appointees for Virginia's American Revolution 250th Commission. The legislation also mandated that George Mason's Gunston Hall would appoint and establish an Advisory Council composed of non-legislative citizen members. During the 2020 Session, the Vir-

ginia General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, legislation to establish the American Revolution 250th Commission within the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States. On October 9, 2020, Governor Northam released the names of the appointees for Virginia's American Revolution 250th Commission. The legislation also mandated that George Mason's Gunston Hall would appoint and establish an Advisory Council composed of non-legislative citizen members.

Well, think of it as a nationwide series of events and programs that was envisioned and planned by many Americans all across the country. We're talking about everything from cool historical exhibits to community projects, all built around ideas like what democracy means to us, how we innovate, and how we can all come together as a nation. Lots of different groups – local towns, museums, historical societ-

ies – are teaming up to make sure there's something for everyone, no matter where you live or what your background is. It's all about creating experiences that really resonate with people.

What makes America great is that as an independent minded newspaper, we get to safeguard the death of independent thinking due to the tyranny of majority rule due to superficial and uneducated politicians as De Tocqueville warned us about. To that end, we are thrilled to share all the celebrations that will be taking place that gave birth to an army, a nation, and her states.

At its heart, America 250 is more than just a historical marker. It's a fantastic chance for us to pause, reflect, and recommit to the core ideas that built this country. By taking a good look at the past 250 years, we're hoping to inspire each other to keep moving forward, united by our shared values. It's really about celebrating our journey and inspiring what comes next for the United States!



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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.

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Bethany Han is a new writer for The Fairfax Independent. She is a high school student at Woodson High School and has lived in the Fairfax area for eight years. She hopes to further pursue writing in college through majoring in English, and her other interests include reading and field hockey.

Letter from the Editor: Growing Together

Dear Readers,



Chap Petersen had this idea about a local newspaper that should go into every single mailbox in the City filled with local news about his beloved City. He had been envisioning this for a few years. It was not something I was interested in but I was interested in publishing a wedding magazine. So while I was packing my bags to leave my appointment to his office at the end of 2023, I was also trying to keep an open mind about this City newspaper. He was talking to other far more brilliant people than me. Then I did not hear anything during the late summer and into fall of 2023. I thought it was definitely time to move on.

As it turned out, as only Chap would do, he threw a Hail Mary 3 weeks before Christmas of 2023 and I just happened to be the person there to catch it. And with that mustard seed of faith and the \$100,000 grant funding from Chap and Sharon, I became the publisher of a local newspaper called The Fairfax Independent, published by The Independent News Press.

Aww shit! Now what do I do? Chap did not have a lick of time to spare with his busy law practice - so did what any accidental publisher would do - I started posting SOS on Facebook - first thing first! That got city permitting, occupancy and licensing going which took us into late June 2024. Yes, it took over 3 months. I made 18 visits to City Hall. I think various agency staff might still remember me.

Alas, the birth was spectacular when a moment of epiphany hit me while, then internand now writer,Savi Mamgain and I were handing out introductory newspaper flyers to City residents along the parade route - the birth of The Fairfax Independent took place on the Fourth of July 2024.

As with any startup, the charts are unpredictable, and every month has been spent in some level of anguish over missing a piece of news and when is the next advertising dollar coming through. Yet we forged on because of that one encouraging email and that one more story to cover. I am not sharing this for a pity party but to let you know that we had a couple of close calls of not being able to print the next

edition. But we did not give up because that one more story was more important that the last and it had to be shared with others.

At almost a year old, I am thrilled to share that we have been blessed by nothing short of a divine intervention with the arrival of Steve Chang this spring. A recently retired pastor with a previous successful business life, when Steve jumped in, it felt like we got on board a bullet train to somewhere. His exceptional understanding of startup comes from owning, growing and building startup businesses into successful businesses. As a retired pastor, he brings a sense of scolding calm excitement (yeah, go figure that one out) as we get ready for year two under his leadership as CEO.

Chap is excited about this situation because it means he can truly enjoy his ownership role as Founder of this newspaper. He has never imposed any decision, opinion or action item on the newsroom and our brilliant writers. Steve is like minded that our newsroom must always be free and clear of any ownership biases. I cannot begin to explain what it means for this City to have a true independent thinking newspaper. Our editorial team certainly knows and feels the incredible liberty yet at the same time - this awesome responsibility of writing for our beloved readers.

The Independent News Press is a consortium of independent local newspapers connecting communities across Virginia. Our first circulation The Fairfax Independent goes to 15,000 residents and business mailboxes. What an exciting journey this has been. The next few years will be even more amazing for our newspaper as we grow our circulation to the Town of Vienna, hopefully this year.

All this to let you know that there will be a long gap before the next edition which will be just in time for the 11th CD Special Election. We need to get on some tech tools, build our social media communities, and actually get going with the rest of our lingering news websites.

And finally, thank you to our startup partners and incredibly responsive print shop run by Ron Jenkins and his team, all our amazing writers from day one to now, eternally grateful to our advertising clients for advertising with us so we can be free, and to the team at Chap Petersen & Associates for business and legal support.

We will be working away for the next 8 weeks! Have a wonderful summer time and have fun!

With heartfelt gratitude, your friend Tania

Petersen Appointed to State Board of Elections

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Chap Petersen, a former state senator, has been elected to Virginia's State Board of Elections and his term will end in January 2027. This new role will allow him to use his long experience in public service to help manage and oversee elections in the state. His deep understanding of election laws and processes makes him a valuable addition to the commission.

During his time as a senator, Petersen was actively involved in creating laws related to voting, election security, and how campaigns are funded. This background will be very helpful as he works to address current and future election challenges, such as adopting new voting methods or protecting voter information.

Petersen will help set election rules, manage the overall election process, and confirm election outcomes. Known for his careful approach and ability to work across political lines, he is expected to be a strong advocate for fair and transparent elections for everyone in Virginia.

Chap Petersen runs a law practice with his wife Sharon Kim Petersen in Fairfax City. He is an author, writer, and radio personality residing in Fairfax City. His public thoughts, opinions, and



Image courtesy of Chap Petersen

perspectives are available on www.the-virginiaattorney.com.

The State Board of Elections supervises, coordinates, and regulates local electoral boards, registrars, and election officers. It provides electronic voter registration and absentee ballots for military and overseas voters, maintains a statewide automated voter registration system to track addresses, prescribes standard voter forms, and cancels unqualified registrant records. For more information, please visit the SBE website at <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/board>.

Sang H. Yi as the Acting Maritime Administrator

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The U.S. Department of Transportation has appointed Sang H. Yi as the Acting Maritime Administrator (MARAD). This appointment, announced by Secretary Sean P. Duffy, places Yi at the helm of efforts to advance the Trump Administration's goals for domestic shipbuilding and restore maritime dominance. He will focus on modernizing infrastructure, strengthening the maritime workforce, fostering innovation, and expanding collaborations for a robust transportation system, recognizing the Merchant Marine's vital role in national security and economic growth.



Sang Yi official photo (US Government)

Sang H. Yi brings nearly 15 years of experience from leading congressional oversight and investigations for three U.S. House of Representatives committees, most recently as director of investigations for the House Committee on Homeland Security. Prior to this, he served in the intelligence community, starting as a maritime analyst at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). A graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, he received a commission as a Navy Reserve officer and a Third Mate Unlimited license, and remains a reserve lieutenant

commander. Yi also holds an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College and a J.D. from George Washington University Law School, transitioning from legislative oversight to executive administration.

Yi's appointment following the resignation of Rear Adm. (Ret.) Ann C. Phillips in January, leaving MARAD without a confirmed leader, President Trump has nominated Capt. Stephen. Sang Yi is a former Fairfax City Council Member.

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JUNE 17 - PRIMARY ELECTION IN VIRGINIA...From Page 1

dents with special needs. As of 9:50 p.m. on election night, she held a narrow lead over other candidates. Unofficial results showed Hashmi leading by 3,825 votes with 96.2% of votes counted. She received 27.4% of the votes.

Levar Stoney: The former Richmond mayor and Virginia Secretary of the Commonwealth highlighted his executive experience, with top priorities including affordable housing and education. He was within 1 percentage point of Hashmi, with 26.6% of votes, potentially triggering a recount.

Aaron Rouse: A state senator from Virginia Beach and former NFL player, Rouse cited his record of action in the General Assembly and emphasized his local and state experience. He received 26.3% of the votes.

Babur Lateef: The Prince William County School Board chair focused on healthcare and education policy, notably opposing a proposed casino in Tysons Corner and not accepting funds from casino interests. He received 8.4% of the votes.

Victor Salgado: A former federal prosecutor, Salgado campaigned on campaign finance reform, small business support, and resisting "federal overreach," emphasizing his legal back-

ground for the role. He did not complete the Virginia Mercury's questionnaire. He received 5.6% of the votes.

Alexander Bastani: A labor attorney, Bastani expressed frustration with the Democratic Party's direction and focused on economic inequality and worker issues. He received 5.7% of the votes.

The lieutenant governor's role is largely ceremonial but includes the important function of breaking ties in the state Senate, where Democrats hold a narrow 21-19 advantage. The position is also often a stepping stone to the governorship.

Attorney General Candidates

The Democratic primary for Attorney General featured two main contenders.

Jay Jones: The former Norfolk delegate was projected as the winner of the Democratic nomination by the Associated Press shortly before 10 p.m.. He led Henrico County Commonwealth's Attorney Shannon Taylor by nearly 10,000 votes. He will face Republican incumbent Jason Miyares in the November general election.

Shannon Taylor: Henrico County Commonwealth's Attorney was the challenger to Jones.



Democratic Primary voter Mohammad Hossain of Merrifield gets ready to cast his ballot at Fairhill Elementary School in Fairfax County. "Fair and peaceful elections are a hallmark of democracy. Everyone should exercise their right to vote," said Hossain. (Tania Hossain)

Republican Ticket

The Republican Party had already nominated its candidates for the statewide offices prior to the June 17 primary.

Governor: Current Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears was nominated as the Republican candidate for governor. She articulated a vision of continuing Governor Glenn Youngkin's administration, emphasizing Virginia's status as a leading state for living, working, and raising a family. Earle-Sears also vowed to broaden school choice.

Lieutenant Governor: John Reid, a former Richmond talk radio host, became the Republican nominee by default after Pat Herrity withdrew from the race due to health reasons. Re-

id's candidacy faced pushback from some party members due to alleged sexually explicit online posts, though he denied making the posts and vowed to remain in the race, attributing the efforts to his sexual orientation.

Attorney General: Incumbent Attorney General Jason Miyares was the Republican nominee for re-election.

House of Delegates

All 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates were up for election. The Democratic Party held a narrow majority in the chamber. Primary elections were conducted to determine the party nominees for several districts. Fairfax City Delegate David Bulova did not have a primary chal-

lenger but he is being challenged by Republican Adam Ware this November.

The primary results set the stage for the November 4, 2025, general election. The gubernatorial race between Democrat Abigail Spanberger and Republican Winsome Earle-Sears is anticipated to be a significant contest. Spanberger, a former congresswoman, has expressed voters' exhaustion with "political chaos coming out of Washington". Earle-Sears, the incumbent Lieutenant Governor, aims to continue the policies of Governor Glenn Youngkin. Additionally, the Commonwealth is poised to elect its first female Governor in over 400 years - a new bellwether to chime throughout Virginia.

In a media statement released late June 17 evening, from the Democratic Party of Virginia, Chairman Lamont Bagby stated: "With more than 480,000 ballots cast – including a record-breaking number during the early voting period – Virginians have made it clear: they are energized, engaged, and ready to elect Democrats up and down the ballot this November. With Abigail Spanberger, Ghazala Hashmi, and Jay Jones forming the statewide ticket, and a record-breaking slate of House of Delegates nominees, Democrats are united, focused, and ready to win."



Photos from the Army's 250th birthday taken on June 14, 2025. Courtesy of Art Harman, an award-winning photographer and Fairfax City resident.

Stronger Together: The Chamber Powering Fairfax’s Present and Future

BY JENNIFER ROSE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL
FAIRFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In the heart of the City of Fairfax, where tradition meets innovation and local business is the lifeblood of community identity, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is not just a professional association—it’s a catalyst. It’s a steady hand during uncertainty, a champion for small business, and a bridge-builder between commerce and community.

As we navigate economic headwinds and political turnover, the Chamber’s role is more vital than ever. We are the infrastructure that supports our small businesses, the convener of voices in local leadership, and a trusted advocate for those who invest their time, talent, and treasure in Fairfax.

Small Business, Big Vision
While the phrase “small business” might suggest modest scale, the impact of local entrepreneurs on our economy and civic life is anything but. With nearly 370 member businesses—up from just 85 a few years ago—the Chamber has become a powerful coalition, advancing economic vitality while creating meaningful connections across industries, generations, and backgrounds.

Through programs like our B.O.S.S. (Business Owners Strategy & Support) Luncheons, Veterans Network, and Community Impact Council, we offer resources that are responsive, inclusive, and action-driven. Whether it’s teaching young professionals how to navigate debt, helping nonprofits partner with corporations, or hosting the Fairfax’s Finest Valor Awards to honor our law enforcement and first responders, the Chamber ensures that every program reflects the pulse of our community.

Advocacy Where It Matters
When Fairfax City faced a proposed 50% meals tax increase, the Chamber didn’t sit on the sidelines. We mobilized, testified, and helped stop the increase that would have harmed local restaurants and widened inequality in regional taxation. From city council chambers to Richmond policy discussions, the Chamber is there—relentlessly focused on making it easier to do business and make a difference.

Our advocacy has extended beyond city borders. As federal policies and tariffs impacted local businesses, particularly those serving government contracts or managing global supply chains, the Chamber stepped up. We gathered insights from member businesses, attended

regional and national briefings, and made sure Fairfax entrepreneurs had timely access to job fairs, funding opportunities, and expert guidance. We became a hub of information—because when uncertainty hits, connection to resources can make all the difference.

And while the region continues to experience federal downsizing and demographic shifts, we are working alongside local leaders to ensure business owners stay informed and empowered. Our Tuesday night presence at City Council meetings isn’t performative—it’s purposeful. We’re listening, documenting, and advocating—so that our members can focus on their businesses until it’s time to speak up.

A Chamber for All
The Central Fairfax Chamber isn’t exclusive to retailers or startups. We represent nonprofits, students, solopreneurs, and community leaders. Our Fairfax Forward Foundation—newly launched in 2024—will soon roll out a “Citizen’s Academy” to educate residents on local government and civic engagement, building a more connected, informed, and involved city.

Whether you’re a veteran launching your next career, a nonprofit needing

board training, or a high school student exploring entrepreneurship, the Chamber has a place for you. We believe in access and in building lasting value for all who call Fairfax home.

Beyond Transactions—Toward Transformation
To those who think the Chamber is just a networking group or a directory listing, I invite you to take a deeper look. We are planners, collaborators, connectors, and advocates. We are storytellers, event producers, economic developers, and community builders.

Our team may be small—a full-time equivalent staff of two—but our impact is deep. Because what we do is powered not by numbers alone, but by purpose. The Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is about lifting businesses, supporting people, and shaping a Fairfax we’re proud to pass along to the next generation.

We are not just surviving change—we’re leading it.

If you’re ready to be part of that momentum, your Chamber is ready for you.

To learn more about membership, upcoming events, and the full scope of our work, visit us at www.cfcc.org.

New Business Opening

COMPILED BY BETHANY HAN
J. Crew Factory
Another extension of the clothing chain J. Crew Factory opened in February in Fair City Mall. J. Crew offers quality retail clothing and can also be found in the other Fairfax locations in Tysons and Fair Lakes.

We think shopping should be fun. Actually, really fun. As in, scoring our exclusive collection of colorful, classic styles at prices that can’t be beat. A fan of lots of options in amazing fits? You’ve got it. Looking for some great accessories you won’t find anywhere else? Check. Need to get dressed for a day at the office, a weekend get-together or your next family vacation? Easy, preppy-inspired outfits are a part of our DNA, so we’ve got you covered. Whatever the occasion, we’ve got styles for the whole family that’ll have your crew looking good. Plus, there are

always deals waiting for you—24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Haraz Coffee House
The Fairfax location of the coffee chain Haraz Coffee House opened in April. Haraz specializes in serving traditional Yemeni coffee and desserts and building community. Come visit the Haraz Coffee House at 11015 Lee Highway

Haraz Coffee is on a mission to share the rich heritage of Yemeni coffee with the world. By sourcing the finest beans and honoring traditional craftsmanship, we bring the bold, authentic flavors of Yemen to every cup. As we expand across the United States, we’re committed to creating unforgettable coffee experiences that connect communities and celebrate culture.

In 2021, Hamzah Nasser set out on a mission to bring a unique coffee experi-

ence to life by opening the first Haraz Coffee House in Dearborn, Michigan. Guided by his vision of sharing Yemeni coffee culture and heritage, Hamzah introduced a concept that quickly resonated with coffee lovers.

Since its humble beginnings, Haraz Coffee House has grown to 20 locations across metro Detroit and other cities with 142 in the pipeline, becoming a symbol of authenticity and excellence in the coffee industry. By blending rich traditions with modern tastes, Hamzah has created a space where culture and community thrive.

Today, Hamzah Nasser is widely recognized as “The Face of Coffee,” a testament to his dedication and passion for elevating Yemeni coffee on a global scale.

Sushi Friends Hashi
In April, the restaurant Sushi Friends

Hashi opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Sushi Hashi Friends serves quality Japanese food with a focus on experience. Visit Sushi Hashi Friends at 4090 Jermantown Road.

We proudly offer an authentic Japanese culinary experience, curated by our head chef, who brings over 20 years of expertise in crafting exquisite dishes.

At Sushi Friends HASHI, freshness is our priority. We meticulously source the finest ingredients daily, ensuring that every dish embodies exceptional quality and flavor. Whether you’re planning a romantic evening, a family dinner, or a special gathering, we are dedicated to providing a warm, memorable dining experience with outstanding service and unforgettable cuisine.

Join us and let our expert chef and attentive team take care of your perfect evening.

A Creative Swing: How Scotty Hub Golf Is Redefining the Game in Fairfax

BY PHILLIP KIM

In a bright corner of Nova Labs in Fairfax, Scott Barnard spends his days surrounded by laser cutters, wood shavings, and golf putters that look more like art than equipment.

“I normally work 12 hours a day,” Barnard says, “but sometimes it feels like one hour. Time just disappears when you’re doing something you love.”

At ScottyHub Golf, everything is handmade, fully customized, and designed in close collaboration with the client. Whether it’s a personalized putter engraved with a Van Gogh motif or a laser-etched wooden box for a custom pair of golf shoes, every item is unique. “The best feeling is handing over a finished product to the client... seeing the reaction on clients’ faces,” he says. “You just know it’s going to be a treasured item for them.”

Customer input is an essential part of Barnard’s work. Barnard often brainstorms and exchanges ideas with his clients for days. “The thing that they really enjoy is that they also get to be a part of the design process,” he said. “They feel like they also made it too, which is just really special.”

Barnard isn’t doing this alone. The business, which began in 2024, has grown into a small collective of makers, many of whom he met at Nova Labs. He welcomed a shoemaker, a painter, a woodworker, a drone pilot, and a leather specialist, allowing him to expand the kinds of products he can customize. “I feel like Peter Jackson or Walt Disney—just getting all these incredibly creative people together and letting them run wild,” the long-time Lord of the Rings fan said.

The offerings now go far beyond putters and bag tags.



Photo of Scott Barnard at his workshop (Scott Barnard)

Scotty Hub Golf produces handcrafted leather belts and headcovers, engraved golf ball markers, personalized scorecard holders, and even high-end, made-to-order golf shoes. “Anyone who gets a custom pair of shoes from us, you don’t get a cardboard shoebox,” he said. “We’ll build you a beautiful handcrafted shoebox with different woods that match the design of your shoe, and then we laser-engrave and personalize it.”

Local country clubs have taken notice. “About 95% of our clients are in Fairfax or Northern Virginia,” Barnard says. “We do a lot of bulk orders for clubs and their members. But we’ve also shipped putters to California, Massachusetts, and even Ireland.”

Every product reflects Barnard’s passion not just for golf, but for craftsmanship—and that passion is rooted in a winding personal journey.

Barnard was a history major at Virginia Tech. After college, he spent approximately 10 years working as a golf instructor and assistant pro. Then, he pivoted to finance, working for UBS and later at Gladwyn Financial Advisors. When COVID hit, Barnard was stuck at home and started wanting to do something with his hands.

That something turned out to be Nova Labs, a local makerspace where he first began experimenting with woodworking, design, and customization. “I had no background in computers, I had no background in woodworking... I didn’t know anything. Then I came to NovaLabs makerspace. The community of people here is just a melting pot of brilliantly smart and creative people where everyone helps each other out.”

Barnard’s experience in the golf industry gave him a unique insight to what contemporary

golfers wanted. “I saw golf clubs like cell phones. They all look the same on the outside, but you can customize them,” he said. “Almost every time something goes out the door, within a week or two, we end up getting a message from someone saying, ‘Hey, I was just golfing with so-and-so. I love your work. How do I get one of these?’”

Barnard’s personal life has also shaped the business. The company’s squirrel logo is inspired by his wife Nicole, a local artist and wildlife rehabilitator who fostered baby squirrels during the pandemic. It was Nicole who encouraged her husband to follow through on his new passion and held the fort for the family financially through the process. A painter herself, she always gives him

constructive feedback as well as artistic inspiration.

“At about 10 PM last night I said I gotta go back into the office. She just gives me a kiss on the head and just says, ‘I’m really proud of you,’” Barnard shared. “At the end of the day, the only person I’m really trying to impress is my wife. Her love and support is just the most important thing for me. She’s just been great”

Looking ahead, Barnard hopes to keep growing his creative team, expanding his product line, and staying true to his original mission: making golf more personal.

“It’s just been very rewarding, very fulfilling, and a lot of fun,” he said. “And we’re just getting started.”



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FinTastic Funding, presented by Apple Federal Credit Union, is a pitch competition designed to empower local small businesses in the Northern Virginia area. The initiative offers a total of \$50,000 in prizes, with a grand prize of \$25,000, second place receiving \$15,000, and third place getting \$10,000. To enter, businesses must submit a short application along with a 90-second video showcasing their passion, innovation, and positive impact on the community. A panel of judges selects finalists, whose videos are then featured in a public voting round on social media to help determine the winners. Applications for the current round close on July 1, 2025, with finalists announced on August 15, 2025. Interested businesses can find more information and apply at AppleFCU.org/FinTasticFunding.



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The GST - Not the Final Chapter

BY JUDY ROBB FRASER,
RESIDENT OF COUNTRY CLUB HILLS

The hot button George Snyder Trail (GST) put our beleaguered council in the spotlight on June 10. A packed chamber was evidence that the day of reckoning on the GST had arrived.

The decision on its face seemed easy to many. After all, what's not to like about a trail?

Yet as more members of the community absorbed what the engineers have designed, significant concerns have surfaced. Five bridges and four stretches of boardwalk are necessary for this short bike road through the woods. Each bridge and boardwalk is a multimillion dollar piece of infrastructure. More than 500 mature trees, the giants of our little city, will need to be taken from this small woodland to make way for the bikes. The project effectively slices this thin strip of stream valley – a gash lengthwise from head to groin, requiring hundreds of feet of retaining wall that will cut the stream off from long stretches of the adjacent wetland and soil hydrology. The thorough analysis of the extensive clearing and grading for the project provided by the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance convinced many of us that the damage to the ecosystem would be immediate, long-lasting and likely irreversible in any of our lifetimes.

As one of the headwaters of the Accotink Creek, what we do here has a regional impact. More than 3,000 community members have signed a petition to stop destroying woodlands and wetlands for bike roads.

Innumerable dedicated residents have begged the City Council to stop this project over the past two plus years. But VDOT put down its metaphorical foot, issuing deadlines that required the city council to make a decision. City staff raised the stakes enormously by informing council that the city would have to pay back all the money the city has spent on the engineering drawings and the legal work to obtain right of way over private properties, together totaling \$3.7 million.

The mayor, who relishes being

politically connected, has been an adamant supporter of the trail, seeing it as a commitment the city made to the region (conveniently forgetting our commitment re the Accotink). The firmament of the City democrats showed up on June 10 - former mayor, council members, illustrious citizens galore- to pressure council to proceed with the project.

Council member Peterson, a conservationist who recognized that, as designed, this project is a reckless destruction of habitat, withstood the pressure and valiantly worked to persuade his fellow council members to cancel. Council member Hall, clearly struggling in the face of a divided community, admirably voted as her conscience dictated and opposed the project. Council member Amos drew the opposite conclusion, while acknowledging that experts in our neighboring county have stated that asphalt trails have no place in the sensitive, legally designated Resource Protection Area of a stream, his commitment crumbled under the weight of a potential \$4 million bill. Council member McQuillen, the dark horse of the night, remained silent through the entire discussion save to register mono-syllabic votes. In the end she cast the deciding vote to condemn the woodland. She ran on a campaign to protect our green spaces in the city, but in the moment, she failed to vote her conscience and her commitment.

Most discouraging is that our staff seemed to be pushing the project forward rather than assisting the council with the expressed interest in exploring less destructive alternatives and finding solutions. With patient persistence, Peterson, felt certain that any required payback could be financed and offset by savings in other areas of the city's Capital Improvement Plan, and was able to confirm from the City CFO that any payback component could be managed in a way that wouldn't cause issues with the City's bond rating or raise other concerns. Given that Mayor Read has raised that red herring several times it was a sticky wicket for the CFO to not appear to undermine Read's repeated pronouncements of impending doom related to our bond rating should the project be cancelled. But it was too late to sway the other members of council.

Staff could have provided repayment options or even something as basic as the agreement terms that govern the project to Council. Being able to discuss the terms of the agreement with the city's attorney could have provided greater clarity and more options. Why has the staff been so recalcitrant?

Just weeks ago, Peterson garnered unanimous agreement from his colleagues on a motion to continue discussions with VDOT about road adjacent alternatives, but the very next day that action was short circuited by acting city manager Foster. Then on May 29, after an inconclusive council discussion at the May 27 work session, Foster again reached out to VDOT and without any public action of any kind from the council stated he was directed by council, and that a majority of Council had come to some kind of agreement on building only half of the project. The irony about his "hybrid" option is that opposition to it was shared by almost everyone in the room on June 10, and as such was a lone point of agreement in an otherwise contentious evening on a contentious project. It went down in flames with a 1-5 vote.

Last I checked, the staff works for the council, on our behalf, not for the mayor, not for the former mayor. On a heated and divisive issue such as the GST it is paramount that staff remain neutral and provide council with the information they need to make an informed decision.

The resulting intervention of a state agency also seems unprecedented. Essentially VDOT placed its thumb on the scale of a local decision by producing a constrictive set of deadlines out of the blue and an apparent payback stipulation, along with supporting Foster's eleventh hour "hybrid" idea that resulted in an even more accelerated timeline giving Council a mere week to decide whether to pick Door #3, which resulted in forcing the vote on the entire project.

The sample resolution for cancellation provided to council on Tuesday was also an eye opener. The sample motion stated that council would require itself to pay back the full amount the city has spent https://fairfax.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_

[id=13&clip_id=4228&meta_id=123863](https://fairfax.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4228&meta_id=123863). In what world would a council make that commitment without confirmation that such a payment was unavoidable? Correspondence that has been shared with the public from VDOT does not state any specific payback amount nor the conditions under which a payback would be required. There is not a payback clause in any agreement available to the public. The mayor is the only one who has said that cancelling the project would be a breach of contract, but no one has explained how the city would be breaching the agreement when there are clauses that allow cancellation. And shouldn't staff be working to minimize potential negative impacts of decisions the council may find it needs to make? Did the city attorney counsel council at all? It seems like staff, along with the proponents of the project, were determined to make the payback appear as onerous as possible. They succeeded.

Many people remain unconvinced that the majority of council would support this project were it not for the threat of the \$3.7 million payback. Yet we still don't even know the truth or validity of that threat, and maybe never will. Sadly, for many in our community, the damage of this construction project with its bulldozers, cranes, concrete mixers, dump trucks, and inevitable cost overruns, will be all too real - but only when it's too late to prevent.

The community members who have been, and remain today, dedicated to the protection of this patch of nature in our midst should be proud of their work. It may be a small recompense, but the vote reflected that our efforts have not been completely in vain. A majority of our current council members now realize this project will damage the sensitive riverine and terrestrial ecosystem of the headwaters of the Accotink Creek. If still willing to ignore it for now, in the abstract, they will be sensitized to it when the destruction commences, and we will be there to remind them of it. It is this writer's hope that the other council members will strive to follow council member Peterson and Hall's courageous commitment to doing the right thing even when it may seem enormously difficult at the moment. We live for hope.

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4-H Fair Pledge Ceremony courtesy of the 4-H Fair website

75th Annual Fairfax County 4-H Fair!

BY LAYLA MOHRAN

Fairfax County is proud to host their 75th annual 4-H fair this July 31 to August 3. Don't miss out on all the fun activities the fair has in store for everyone in the family. Watch and interact with farm animals like cows, hogs,

rabbits, and goats. Bring friends on an adventure of carnival rides, live entertainment, and delicious fair food.

4-H works as the largest youth development organization in America, and just so happens to hold their biggest event right here in Fairfax County (and includes

youth from Fairfax City). Many 4-H programs provide the youth with hands-on learning experiences. About six million children have been educated on societal issues such as the importance of equality. The educating of our youth takes place during school hours, after school programs, 4-H camps and community clubs.

VA-AAUP Urges State Legislators to Block Youngkin's BOV Appointees

BY SAM DOUGLAS

On June 11, the Virginia conference of the American Association of University Professors sent a letter to the Virginia General Assembly, the state's legislative branch. In the letter, VA-AAUP shares their concerns on appointments to university's board of visitors by Governor Glenn Youngkin.

"We write to express our profound alarm at the increasing politicization of public university governance in the Commonwealth. This troubling trend is most clearly illustrated by Governor Glenn Youngkin's appointments to the Boards of Visitors (BOVs) at Virginia's public colleges and universities—appointments that appear to prioritize partisan loyalty over academic integrity and

institutional well-being," the letter read.

The letter further claims that there has been a "pattern of significant overreach" by Youngkin's appointees, listing actions such as micromanaging university operations, undermining shared governance, threatening academic freedom and open inquiry, and attacking principles of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

VA-AAUP's letter ends by asking the General Assembly to reject all future nominations by Youngkin, deny confirmation to any current Youngkin nominees, and to "direct all BOVs to rescind and halt implementation of ideologically driven decisions."

Governor Youngkin has made a

flurry of nominations to school's boards of visitors around the state since his inauguration in January 2022. Most recently, several of his nominations were rejected in the state senate, including Kenneth Cuccinelli, a former state attorney general who was scheduled to join the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors, and Caren Merrick, who was scheduled to join the board of George Mason University.

Cuccinelli's nomination was opposed by Senate Democrats partially due to his role in the writing of "Project 2025", a controversial, right-wing initiative created by the Heritage Foundation. Members of the Heritage Foundation can be found on BOVs around the state, including Cully Stimson, the rector at George Mason University.



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and lobby of our office.

This story has been removed.
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BestCrosswords.com - "Cookies" by Allen Vaughan on 6/14/2025

Across

1- Loafer or wingtip, e.g.; 5- Break down; 10- "____ in the Wind" : Kansas; 14- Celebratory dance; 15- Muse of poetry; 16- Ancient Andean; 17- Lyft competitor; 18- Eponymous cookie brand launched in 1975; 20- Case with screwdrivers, pliers, etc.; 22- Cara of "Fame"; 23- Furnace fuel; 24- Vibrant; full of life; 27- They make cookies in a hollow tree; 31- Commercial makers; 32- Fencer's blade; 33- Sandwich stuffing; 37- 52, in old Rome; 38- Bribe; 40- Egyptian cobra; 42- Poke fun at; 43- "____, Brute?"; 45- Neptune's realm; 47- American symbol; 49- Home of a beloved cookie-loving "monster"; 52- Feign; 55- "And I Love ____" : Beatles; 56- Utopian; 57- "Nobody doesn't like" this baker; 61- Purveyors of Samoas and Trefoils; 65- ____ Scotia; 66- Drudge; 67- Anticipate; 68- Pluck; 69- Bar association member: Abbr.; 70- ____ firma; 71- Congers;

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					
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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				65			
66					67						68			
69					70						71			

Down

1- Open's counterpart; 2- King of the road; 3- Nabisco cookie; 4- Place for a stud or hoop, perhaps; 5- Desecrate; 6- The "E" of Q.E.D.; 7- Engine part; 8- From ____ Z; 9- One of us; 10- Anne Frank, for one; 11- Not fulfilled; 12- Teatime treat; 13- Stunned, in a way; 19- Filly's father; 21- Pottery ovens; 24- Calendar abbr.; 25- "The magic word"; 26- Currier's partner; 27- Curly cabbage; 28- Computer menu option; 29- Give off, as light; 30- Reiterate; 34- Craving; 35- "Blue" or "White" river; 36- Assist in crime; 39- Greek peak; 41- Pan or Piper of kiddie lit; 44- As a rule; 46- Soul, to Sartre; 48- Put in order; 50- Building additions; 51- National forest in California; 52- Fraternity letter; 53- Dostoyevsky novel, with "The"; 54- Reason for a raise; 57- Recipe direction; 58- Handed-down history; 59- Blackhearted; 60- Chows down; 62- Tabby; 63- Be in arrears; 64- Egypt and Syria, once: Abbr.;

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HOSTED BY THE 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE & THE FAIRFAX GOP
WITH SPECIAL GUEST MODERATOR
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S

ummer has arrived and with it comes sunny weather and high temperatures!

We encourage each of you to spend some time this summer relaxing and enjoying our City's wonderful parks, public gathering areas, and community events, such as Rock the Block! and the 4th of July Independence Day Celebration.

However, we want to make sure you are enjoying these in a safe manner. Drink plenty of water and find shady areas to take frequent breaks. If you are ever concerned that you may be experiencing a heat-related illness, contact 911. For more information, please visit the following City website at www.fairfaxva.gov/government/fire-department/community-education-and-risk-reduction/health-education/heat-related-illnesses

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Have Your Say in the Future of Fairfax Center Area: Survey Open Until July 26!

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Fairfax County is actively seeking community input through a vital survey, open until Friday, July 26, as part of the ongoing Fairfax Center Area Planning Study and the Government Center Visioning process. This is a crucial opportunity for residents, workers, shoppers, and business owners in the area to directly influence the long-term development of a significant portion of the county.

The Fairfax Center Area Study is a multi-phase undertaking designed to update the long-range land use plan for an expansive 5,500-acre region. This area, strategically located between Route 50 and Route 29, encompasses key landmarks such as the Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax Corner, and a diverse array of surrounding commercial and residential developments. The overarching goal of this ambitious study is to transform the area into a transit-ready, mixed-use, and highly walkable community that is vibrant and inclusive. Progressing Through Key Phases

The county has diligently completed Phases I and II of this comprehensive project. Currently, the initiative is embarking on Phase III, a critical stage that was re-



authorized by the Board of Supervisors on April 11, 2023. This current phase is dedicated to refining recommendations for the core area, with a strong emphasis on fostering a truly mixed-use, walkable, and dynamic environment. Key components of Phase III include a thorough transportation analysis, ensuring that updates can effectively accommodate both existing and future developments within the area.

Your Voice Matters: Shaping the Future

Community feedback is not just en-

couraged, it's absolutely crucial for the success of this endeavor. The insights gathered from the online survey will play a pivotal role in helping the study's Task Force formulate robust recommendations for how the Fairfax Center Area can evolve and thrive in the coming years. Whether you live, work, shop, recreate, or conduct business in the Fairfax Center area, your thoughts and perspectives are invaluable in creating a well-planned, inclusive, and prosperous future for the community.

In parallel with the broader Fairfax

Center Area Study, a critical component under review is the Government Center visioning process. The existing Government Center was developed nearly 40 years ago, and its role, along with its surrounding area, is now being meticulously re-evaluated. This re-evaluation is being conducted in light of modern needs and policies, including the overarching Countywide Strategic Plan and the One Fairfax equity policy, ensuring that the Government Center can better serve the community in the decades to come.

For those who wish to remain updated on this important initiative and to learn about future engagement opportunities, residents are encouraged to visit and bookmark the dedicated project webpage. Additionally, subscribing to the county's mailing list on Comprehensive Plan Amendments is an excellent way to receive ongoing updates directly. Don't miss this opportunity to contribute to the future of the Fairfax Center Area – participate in the survey today online by visiting the following Fairfax Center Area Planning Study, Phase III and Government Center Visioning at <https://engage.fairfaxcounty.gov/ffx-center-area-study>. This is a 10 minute poll. Responses will be accepted through Friday, July 26, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

Automatic Train Operation (ATO): Metro

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Have you taken Metro lately? WMATA (Metro) is re-implementing Automatic Train Operation (ATO) across its rail system, aiming to enhance safety, efficiency, and rider experience. ATO, which controls train acceleration, deceleration, and speed, was initially used when Metro opened in 1976 but was suspended in 2009 after a fatal Red Line collision, though the incident was not attributed to ATO itself. The reintroduction began on the Red Line in December 2024, expanded to the Green and Yellow lines in May 2025, and is expected to cover the entire system by June 15, 2025.

The benefits of ATO include smoother and faster rides, with Red Line travel times already reduced by 8 minutes and further reductions expected across other lines, along with a return to speeds of up

to 75 mph. ATO also enhances safety and on-time performance by maintaining consistent schedules and reducing "platform adjustments," leading to greater cost efficiency and allowing operators to focus more on safety and customer service. While Metro envisions future fully automated trains, the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) has scrutinized the ATO expansion due to instances of platform overruns on the Red Line, requiring resolution before further implementation.

As of Sunday, June 15, 2025, the Orange Line, along with the Blue and Silver lines, began operating under Automatic Train Operation (ATO). Enjoy the smoother and faster rides on Metro! For more information, please visit the following WMATA website at www.wmata.com/initiatives/plans/Automatic-Train-Operation-ATO/

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New Commanders Stadium & RFK Campus Redevelopment

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The approval for the new Commanders Stadium & RFK Campus Redevelopment deadline is set for July 15, 2025. The project is a \$3.7 to \$3.8 billion investment to build a brand-new domed stadium with a seating capacity of 65,000 at the site of the old RFK Stadium. The Washington Commanders are contributing approximately \$2.7 billion toward the cost. The District of Columbia is providing over \$1 billion in public funds, primarily for infrastructure improvements around the site to support the new stadium and related development.

What's Included

The stadium itself is the cen-

terpiece but is part of a larger mixed-use redevelopment plan.

This includes:

Residential housing, with a target that 30% of the units will be affordable to help address housing needs in the city. Retail space for shops and dining.

Parks and open public spaces to enhance community access and green space.

A sports complex designed to be a hub for community and professional sports activities.

The overall goal is to transform the entire RFK campus into a vibrant,

year-round destination beyond just football games.

The project requires approval from the D.C. Council; as of mid-2025, the Council was still deliberating. While approval is expected, it could slip past the initial July 15 deadline. If approved on time, construction could begin in 2026, with the stadium aiming to open by 2030. The timeline accounts for the complex nature of building a large stadium with mixed-use components, public infrastructure upgrades (roads, transit access, utilities), and community engagement requirements. For more information, please visit the Commanders website at www.commanders.com/new-commanders-stadium

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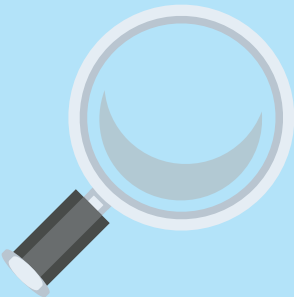


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Currently Declared 11th CD Democratic Candidates

Amy Roma

Amy Roma is a Democrat who has built a global reputation as a tenacious problem solver and trusted leader – someone who delivers results when others see only gridlock.

As an attorney and internationally recognized expert on energy policy, Amy has spent her career at the intersection of law, energy, and national security. She works with industry leaders, federal agencies, and local governments to strengthen the electric grid, lower energy costs, protect national security, and keep the United States at the forefront of innovation. She has addressed multiple United Nations climate summits (COPs), testified before the U.S. Congress, and helped shape energy policy on a global scale.

But Amy doesn't stop at the boundaries of her job description. When challenges arise, especially where others have stalled, Amy steps up. She's the person people turn to when the stakes are high and the path forward isn't obvious.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when hospitals were desperate for protective equipment, Amy organized a humanitarian mission with the New England Patriots to deliver nearly two million masks to frontline workers. After the fall of Kabul in 2021, she led high-risk evacuations for more than 500 Afghan women, girls, and U.S. allies, including women athletes threatened by Taliban rule. And in the wake of the Sandy Hook tragedy, Amy coordinated a large-scale active shooter preparedness exercise to help communities respond to unthinkable threats – providing free training to schools, first responders, and local officials.

Now, Amy is running to represent Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax because she believes Northern Virginia needs a leader who won't just talk about problems, but who will roll up her sleeves and solve them.

Amy Papanu

Amy Papanu is a former CIA Operations Officer and lifelong public servant who is running for Congress to fight against the extreme attacks on the federal workforce and agencies that make our country strong. As a mother and spouse of a combat veteran, Amy will protect

Northern Virginia families and ensure our national security and economic security.

She was born into a middle-class family – her dad was a union electrician, and her stay-at-home mom had a small business craft shop. Growing up, Amy loved playing cops and robbers – even then, she knew she wanted to spend her life standing up for what's right.

After college, Amy joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), where she conducted counterterrorism surveillance operations across the Northeast. Her time at the FBI laid the foundation for a career rooted in service, integrity, and sacrifice.

Soon after, she became a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Department of State, deploying on classified missions to some of the most dangerous regions in the world in the wake of 9/11. She was among the first officers posted to the newly re-opened U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan in 2002. After the invasion of Iraq, Amy served in Baghdad, where she worked on counterterrorism strategy and supported high-stakes hostage operations.

In 2008, Amy joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and served for over 16 years – living and working in the Middle East, Africa, and Washington, D.C. As a CIA Operations Officer, she served as a Chief of Station, led covert action programs, oversaw teams of officers, and partnered with U.S. allies to dismantle terrorist networks, disrupt drug traffickers, and counter rogue regimes.

Candice Bennett

Candice Bennett is done watching the chaos. She's running for Congress because the people of Virginia's 11th District deserve better—better leadership, better representation, and a return to ethics, competence, and constitutional respect in Washington.

But this isn't just any district. Candice knows Virginia's 11th—block by block, intersection by intersection, cul-de-sac by courthouse. She's spent over twenty years walking its streets, working in its neighborhoods, and listening to the people who call it one of the most influential districts in the country. And she knows this: The district is changing.

It's younger, more diverse, more dynamic. Its needs are evolving, and its role on the national stage is growing. We need a representative who gets that—and who brings the relationships, experience, and courage to serve not party or ego, but the voter.

A proud and longtime resident of Fairfax County, Candice is a planning commissioner, a public servant, a housing advocate, a marketer, a small business owner, a wife, and now caregiver to her own mother. She is not here for stunts or soundbites. She knows the system, the players, and how development, planning and power actually work in the 11th, the Commonwealth and Washington. She knows how to grind the MAGA machine to a halt, to stop Donald Trump's chaos from metastasizing even further, and to fight hard for a pro-democracy future rooted in integrity, effectiveness and equality.

Though she has not been waiting in line for office, Candice will bring deep roots and serious policy experience to Virginia's 11th District. As an At-Large Commissioner on the Fairfax County Planning Commission since 2020, she's helped guide the region's growth—block by block, family by family—with an eye toward sustainability, equity, and innovation.

Dan Lee

Dan Lee is running to represent Virginia in Congress to take on the affordability crisis that's crushing Northern Virginia families, starting with the skyrocketing costs of health care and housing.

Dan has spent his career in public service building solutions that work and holding the powerful accountable. He's worked at the highest levels of government and global development, and he built companies to make health care more transparent and affordable. But for Dan, this work is personal.

He was born and raised in Fairfax County to working-class South Korean immigrant parents who often worked two jobs and took on extra shifts to give their children a shot at the American Dream. Dan mopped floors to put himself through college, later serving in the White House, at the World Bank, and as a senior aide to the Democratic Chief of Staff for the Governor of Massachusetts.

Dan's father, a small business own-

er, died of heart complications after years of rationing his medication. His mother, a lifelong nurse, lacked insurance until Medicare kicked in. When she was diagnosed with Parkinson's, Dan moved home to be her caregiver. These are the experiences that shaped Dan, and the reason he's fighting to fix a broken system that leaves too many behind.

Dan is also a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), a husband, and a proud product of Fairfax County public schools. He earned his undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences from George Washington University and a Master of Public Health and MBA from Dartmouth. He considers one of his greatest accomplishments to be convincing his wife, Weisiyu, to marry him.

Irene Shin

Irene Shin is a longtime community organizer and activist who currently serves in the Virginia House of Delegates. The daughter of Korean immigrants, her family instilled in her the values of service, hard work, and integrity. She learned early on that the promise of America, which families like hers sacrificed so much to pursue, wasn't always a promise as much as it was a possibility—one you had to fight for.

Irene's family story is similar to many in Fairfax County. Her dad was a small business owner who worked long hours to make ends meet. She was fortunate to attend a state school on a scholarship and paid her way through college by waiting tables on weekends.

When Irene's father got seriously sick, it had a devastating impact on the whole family. After spending months in and out of the hospital and racking up thousands of dollars in medical debt, her father ended up flying back to Korea to get the life-saving surgery he needed. But it shouldn't be easier and more affordable to fly halfway around the world to get the health care you need.

That experience drove home that "business as usual" doesn't work for families like hers, or for so many other families in Virginia. So she decided to challenge the system and ran for the House of Delegates in 2021. And she won, defeating an incumbent in the process and over the next four years, Irene has been successful in delivering real results for working

Virginians. She passed Malcolm’s Law—legislation that requires hospitals to test for fentanyl during drug screenings, going toe-to-toe against the hospital lobby to get it done.

James Walkinshaw

James Walkinshaw was born and raised in Northern Virginia and has devoted his career to ensuring that our community remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family. He lives in the Truro neighborhood of Fairfax County with his wife, Yvette, and their son, Mateo.

During more than a decade of service as Chief of Staff to Congressman Gerry Connolly, James oversaw all aspects of the Congressman’s office and served as his chief adviser on a host of issues, working closely with state and local officials. He worked alongside Congressman Connolly to pass the Affordable Care Act, fight climate change, secure federal funding for Fairfax, and deliver for federal employees.

Since his election to the Board of Supervisors in 2019, James has focused on solving everyday problems for the communities he represents and making real progress on issues that matter. On the Board, he has led efforts to ban guns from libraries and rec centers, improve pay and benefits for working families, extend tax relief to seniors and military families, fight climate change, and keep our local environment clean and healthy.

James was Congressman Connolly’s Chief of Staff during Donald Trump’s first term and knows what it takes to fight Trump and win. When James and the Board of Supervisors refused to turn our local police into Trump’s mass deportation force, Trump’s henchman Stephen Miller threatened him with jail time. James didn’t back down. And when he was attacked by Trump’s EPA Administrator for his initiative to reduce plastic pollution in our local environment, James doubled down and pressed forward.

Leo Martinez

Leo Martínez is a battle-tested leader who’s made real sacrifices to serve - and will never stop fighting for us.

An international lawyer, graduated from Harvard Law School and Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs, former Venezuelan Congressman, U.S. Department of Commerce Counselor, human rights advocate, small business champion, and Fairfax County parent, Leo is running for Congress to represent this district with honesty, compassion, and courage.

In Venezuela, a country plagued by authoritarianism for the last two decades, Leo was a leading voice in the fight for democracy. For standing up to an increasingly repressive regime, he and his family paid a steep price - government seizure of family assets, phys-

ical attacks, kidnapping attempts, and threats of imprisonment. No one understands the fragility of democracy more personally than Leo - and just how vital it is that we defend it.

After being forced from his home and immigrating to the United States, Leo dedicated the next 20 years to public service and advocacy. Here in Virginia, he served our Commonwealth on the University of Mary Washington Board and was a leader on Governor Northam’s Small Business Legislative Committee.

Nationally, he helped found the Latino Victory Fund and served as a member of the Democratic National Committee, working to uplift underrepresented voices in politics.

As a public servant, he’s fought for working families, small businesses, and immigrant communities. As a father and husband, he knows the everyday struggles facing Virginians—from the rising cost of living to the growing threats to our veterans and federal workers.

Stella Pekarsky

Stella Pekarsky is a mom of six, Virginia State Senator, former educator, and experienced public servant running to represent Virginia’s 11th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Raised in a working-class immigrant family, Stella brings a deep, personal understanding of the challenges families face—along with a proven

record of standing up to entrenched interests and delivering real results.

After earning a Master’s degree in Education from George Mason University, Stella began teaching full time in Fairfax County Public Schools. She and her husband settled in Centreville, where they started a family and launched a small business. Stella’s journey in public service began when she flipped a Republican-held seat on the Fairfax County School Board, representing the Sully District. There, she quickly established herself as a tireless advocate for students, educators, and public education.

Her leadership and commitment earned her the role of Chair of the School Board, where she led the fight against Governor Glenn Youngkin’s attempts to politicize Virginia classrooms. Whether defending inclusive curriculum, opposing discriminatory policies, or protecting local control from state overreach, Stella stood firm against the MAGA agenda—ensuring Fairfax schools remained focused on learning, equity, and students’ well-being.

In 2023, Stella brought that same courage and conviction to her campaign for the Virginia State Senate. She defeated a career politician in the Democratic primary for the 36th District, running on a bold, grassroots platform. Her victory underscored both her deep connection to the community and her ability to take on powerful interests, even in her own party—and win.

Democratic and Republican Unassembled Caucus: Election on June 28

BY HANNAH LEE

With the recent passing of Congressman Gerry Connolly, Governor Glenn Youngkin has set September 9th as the date of the special election for the new representative of Virginia’s 11th Congressional District. In response, both the Democratic and Republican committees for this district have announced details for their unassembled caucus or firehouse primaries – to nominate their respective party candidates for the September 9th Special Election.

Political parties organize and fund firehouse primary elections, allowing for more efficient nominations, greater control over the nomination process, and potentially higher voter turnout. In Virginia, these primaries occur outside of the November



general election. Due to a shorter timeframe, they typically have fewer polling locations and shorter voting hours than state-run elections. In addition, unlike a publicly funded election, an unassembled caucus has party rules that voters must

adhere to.

The 11th Congressional District Democrats nominee will be selected on June 28 from 7 am - 7 pm at 17 locations countywide, with early voting

dates June 24, 25, and 26 from 3 - 8 pm at the Fairfax County Government Center. For more information about voting in the Democratic Caucus, please visit the following 11th Congressional District Democrats website at www.cd11votes.com/voters

The 11th Congressional District of the Republican Party of Virginia will be selecting their nominee on June 28 from 9 am – 4 pm at Fairfax High School, with pre-registration available starting on June 25. For anyone who cannot vote on Saturday, June 28, 2025 for religious reasons, may cast their ballots on Friday, June 27 from 3 - 5 pm at the Fairfax GOP Headquarters, 4246 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA 22030. For more information about voting in the 11th Congressional District Republican Canvass, please visit their website at <https://11cdgop.org>.

Currently Declared 11th CD Republican Candidates

Arthur Purves

Arthur Purves grew up in Washington, D.C., and has a BA, MS, and MBA from the University of Pennsylvania. He retired after 40 years as a computer programmer. He and his late wife, Carol, moved to Vienna in 1976.

They have two children, who attended Fairfax County Public Schools grades K-12, and eight grandchildren. He was president of the Marshall High School lacrosse boosters and the Thomas Jefferson High School crew boosters.

For 27 years he has been president of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance. Arthur was Scoutmaster for a small Latino troop, has helped a refugee family with asylum applications, was treasurer for the Fairfax Committee of 100 and served on the 2014 Fairfax County Meals Tax Task Force and on the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Family Life Education Advisory Committee. He is currently on the FCPS Equitable Access to Literacy Community Advisory Committee.

Lucas Rand

Lucas Rand is a devoted husband, father, decorated military veteran, and hospital administrator whose life is defined by an unwavering commitment to service. Born and raised in Whiting, New Jersey, in a family steeped in military tradition—his grandfather a Marine in WWII, father a Navy veteran of Vietnam, sister an Army Gulf War veteran, and stepbrother a Coast Guard veteran—Lucas carries forward a legacy of duty. Married to Sarah Ann for 11 years, whom he met during his military service, Lucas is the proud father of two daughters. As a practicing Catholic, he remains deeply rooted in faith, family, and community.

Lucas excelled in academics and athletics at public schools in Manchester, New Jersey, competing in tennis, football, and soccer. He attended East Carolina University where he co-founded the Chi Phi fraternity, before enlisting in the Army in 2003. While serving, he earned an undergraduate degree through Excelsior College and later an MBA from the University of North Carolina in 2022, showcasing his dedication to lifelong learning.

His distinguished 20-year military career began with basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and advanced air traffic control training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Promoted to Sergeant in Korea, Lucas was selected for Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and commissioned as a Logistics Officer in 2005. At Fort Bragg with the 82nd Airborne Division, he earned Jumpmaster wings and led as a Platoon Leader and Company Commander. Deploying to Afghanistan twice for a total of 27 months, he earned the Combat Action Badge, two Bronze Stars, three Meritorious Service Medals, and two Army Commendation Medals.

Mike Van Meter

I am seeking election to the U.S. House of Representatives, 11th Congressional District in the upcoming 2025 special election. My goal is to help Virginia be the best it can

be by ensuring the health, safety, and education of all Virginians is the top priority. As many of you are aware, there will be a Special Election to fill the vacancy of this seat in the wake of the passing of Representative Gerry Connolly. I will be seeking the Republican nomination. Every Virginian has a right to expect that their leaders are working to promote their freedoms through adhering to the constitution, protecting their liberties, and placing their well-being above all other endeavors. This expectation includes the promotion of prosperity through responsible spending and taxation. Every Virginian has the right to feel safe in their community by ensuring Virginia has the best trained and equipped First Responders in the nation. Virginians also have the right to expect the best education of their children, knowing that our future lies with our children. To be competitive not only in this nation, but worldwide, we must work to make our public education system unparalleled. I have spent my entire career in the service of this great nation, and I seek to continue this service as a member of Congress. After a career in the military, police, FBI, and now as a behavioral therapist combating our addiction epidemic, I hope that you will join me in this journey of making Virginia the best possible place for prosperity in this great nation.

Karina Lipsman

Karina Lipsman is the American Dream. A seasoned national security expert with a proven record in advancing U.S. interests on the global stage, she has experience in international diplomacy, defense operations, and strategic policy development, where she has championed America's leadership in the geopolitical, cyber, and space domains. Karina has played a critical role in strengthening U.S. global defense systems and fostering cross-sector partnerships to ensure American security and prosperity.

Karina excels in navigating the complex world of Washington D.C., engaging directly with policymakers, embassies, and international stakeholders to drive policy that prioritizes American sovereignty and strength.

A former U.S. Congressional nominee for Virginia's 8th District, Karina was one of the first Ukrainian-born persons to run for a federal House seat and the third female to receive the Republican nomination for the district. She successfully managed a grassroots campaign, smashed fundraising goals and achieved historic victories in multiple precincts. Her campaign featured innovative voter outreach strategies, extensive public speaking engagements, and widespread media coverage.

Appointed by Governor Glenn Youngkin to the Office of New Americans Advisory Board, Karina contributes her expertise to advance immigrant integration, economic growth, and policy solutions that reflect the promise of American opportunity.

In her current role as Head of Government Relations at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC), Karina leads the foundation's engagement with federal

policymakers, human rights proponents, and international stakeholders. She successfully launched a bipartisan Congressional Caucus in the 118th Congress, raising VOC's profile with Members of Congress.

Nathan Headrick

Nathan's commitment to hard work and perseverance was shaped early in life when his father lost his job in North Carolina. Determined to build a better future, Nathan put himself through college and went on to establish a successful business career. This experience instilled in him the values of self-reliance, determination, and the importance of creating opportunities for others.

Nathan's vast professional experience spans capital markets, asset management, real estate, and his career as a private equity executive. He served as a board member, president, CLO, and general counsel to dozens of public and private funds and raised billions of dollars in investment capital, representing thousands of investors.

Keeping true to his roots and Christian values, Nathan also founded and served as a board member of the Ridgecrest Foundation, where he still operates Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Ridgecrest for Girls near Asheville, NC. This foundation impacts some 70,000+ unique visitors and more than 14,000 children annually. As our Congressman, Nathan will put common-sense problem solving over scoring cheap political points.

A political outsider and proven business leader, Nathan brings practical solutions to the problems we face. Inspired by the leadership shown by Governor Glenn Youngkin, Nathan is a serious person with the right background and experience to deliver results for Northern Virginia. After years of unchecked worst-in-America fees, taxes, and spending from out-of-touch leaders, Nathan Headrick knows it's beyond time for our district to reclaim our voice in Washington and finally put Virginia and America FIRST!

Nathan Headrick lives in Great Falls with his wife Kerry and their five children.

Sam Wong

Manuel "Sam" Wong is an American-born, 3rd-generation U.S. Army Veteran with 28 years of distinguished active-duty service including combat tours and diplomatic assignments across the globe.

A proud recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, Sam has also served with distinction in the Intelligence Community, building deep expertise in international security and strategic affairs. The son of Chinese-Peruvian legal immigrants, Sam brings a global perspective rooted in conservative American values.

Over four decades living and working in China, Japan, Europe, and South America have given him a unique understanding of both foreign policy and the challenges facing American families today. Sam is a Christian Conservative, small business owner, and passionate

community advocate.

He holds dual Master's degrees in STEM and Business Administration. Currently, he serves as an influential Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) leader, elected as Post Commander for three consecutive years giving voice to the concerns of Veterans and their families across Virginia.

Stewart Whitson

Stewart Whitson is a U.S. Army combat veteran and a former FBI Special Agent, currently serving at one of our country's top conservative think tanks. There, he fights every day to advance conservative policy on Capitol Hill. With President Trump back in office, Republicans need true conservatives in Congress to help the President restore common sense and get the country back on-track. Republicans have now been given what could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to seize the District from the grip of the Democrat party, strengthen our narrow majority in Congress, and deliver results for the American people.

As a proven Conservative, armed with decades of experience, who knows how to get things done on Capitol Hill, Stewart is ready to serve the 11th District in Congress. He is the only candidate with the experience and skill needed not only to defeat the Democrats in September, but to help President Trump advance the America First agenda. It's time to fix the economy, restore public safety, and tackle waste, fraud, and abuse. Stewart will help the President achieve all three. Longtime residents of Great Falls, Stewart and his wife Melissa have been happily married for 20 years and are the proud parents of five school-aged children.

Stewart currently serves as the Senior Director of Federal Affairs for one of the nation's premier conservative think tanks. In that role, he leads a team tasked with advancing conservative policies through Congress that promote limited, constitutional government and improve the lives of millions of Americans. As part of his job, Stewart routinely testifies before Congress in public hearings and closed-door briefings on a wide range of federal issues. He has appeared on numerous television and radio programs to promote conservative policies and has published dozens of articles in a wide range of media outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Times, The Federalist, The American Spectator, and The Washington Examiner, among others.

Stewart served in the FBI for almost a decade, leading a large section in the FBI's Directorate of Intelligence as his final assignment. Earlier in his career, Stewart served as the FBI's lead investigator following the first ISIS-claimed attack upon the U.S. homeland and deployed to Iraq, Jordan, and Eastern Europe in support of other FBI investigations. Stewart also served as a member of the FBI SWAT team and as an FBI-certified legal advisor for national security-related matters. Stewart is also a U.S. Army veteran, having personally led more than 300 combat missions in Iraq, including a mission that led to the successful rescue of a hostage.

A Local Landmark for Film Lovers: Mark O'Meara's Lifelong Mission to Make People Happy



Mark O'Meara pictured in his office (Phillip Lee)

BY PHILLIP LEE

If you've ever seen a film at Cinema Arts or University Mall Theatres in Fairfax, chances are you've felt the warmth of community cinema at its finest. For over three decades, Mark O'Meara, the theaters' owner and heart behind their operation, has quietly become a hero of local film culture—one movie ticket at a time.

"I just think we can reach different audiences," O'Meara says, reflecting on his decades of commitment to affordable, inclusive moviegoing. "People can bring a whole family for five

bucks a ticket and afford to go. I like that."

Cinema Arts has built a reputation for screening arthouse and international films that other theaters overlook. This includes Streaming-only films such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Blitz*, and *May December*. O'Meara likes to give audiences a chance to check all films on the big screen before they hit the small screens. "That's our thing," he beamed.

For many, the environment he's created is as much of a draw as the films. "I think our biggest

selling point is that we treat people with respect and make them feel welcome," he says. "We've always had great kids working for us. When you walk in, someone says, 'Hey, how are you doing?' That's your first impression."

A Long Island native with a background in student affairs, O'Meara opened his first theater in 1991. "I walked past a closed theater and thought, 'I like movies. I wonder what that business is like.'" It turned out to be a life-long calling.

Despite industry shifts—like the digital revolution and streaming's rise—O'Meara remains convinced of the power of in-person cinema. "A movie is funnier, scarier, sadder when you're sharing it with a group," he says. "That's what I believe in."

He has gambled on small, lesser-known films like *Holy Cow*

and *Eephus*, screening them even when his own booker advised against it. "I don't even know how I found it—probably a trailer. If I like it, I play it," O'Meara said of *Eephus*, which ended up doing surprisingly well. "You've got to gamble."

O'Meara is also a people person. He's known for chatting with customers in the lobby, asking, "What did you think?" One of his favorite memories is of a conversation he had with a Korean family coming out of *Minari*. "I said, 'Did the grandmother say what they were putting on the subtitles?' They said, 'No, it was way worse, way funnier.'"

Despite the inflation, O'Meara has kept prices lower than competitors, in addition to offering \$5 Tuesdays, senior discounts, and more. "It pains me to raise prices," he admits. "My son yells at me, 'Dad, you're in the richest county in the country!'

But it's a personal philosophy."

"I'm a deal-seeker myself," he says. "If someone can bring their whole family for 20 bucks and enjoy something together, that's what matters."

Whether hosting movie clubs, championing independent cinema, or simply making guests feel welcome, O'Meara has made Fairfax theaters more than entertainment venues—they are neighborhood fixtures.

So why should anyone choose Cinema Arts or University Mall over a national chain? "Because we appreciate you," he says plainly. "We're in the neighborhood, we're lower-priced, and we try to have fun."

For O'Meara, theater is not more than a business. "It's not work for me. I can't wait to go in every day."



Cultural Attractions & Summer Travels

COMPILED BY CAROLINE CHU

Ah, summer vacation! It's a time for relaxation, adventure, and making memories. Whether you're planning a trip to a tropical beach, a camping adventure in the mountains, or just some quality time at home, there's always something exciting to look forward to.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Located in Richmond, Virginia, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the country. With over 50,000 works of art encompassing 6,000 years on display, VMFA offers a diverse and immersive viewing experience. Regularly rotating exhib-

its highlight the diversity of the art world and ensure a degree of novelty that keeps visitors engaged. After perusing the art, visitors can explore a gift shop or several unique dining options to complete the experience. In addition to its art, the museum regularly hosts special events, tours, and programs that cater to a wide audience; jazz nights, culinary events, and college internships are only a few of the many offerings that are sure to pique interest from every age group. As a bonus, the museum is open 365 days a year with free general admission, making it an economic and accessible destination for the summer.

Jamestown Settlement

This outdoor and indoor museum

offers visitors the exciting chance to experience what life was like in seventeenth century Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America. The settlement features a rich variety of activities that detail the complex history between English colonists, indigenous peoples, and Africans. Visitors can watch short films like *1607: A Nation Takes Root* and *Bacon's Rebellion*, and also explore galleries filled with artifacts from Virginia, Europe, and Africa. Outdoors, visitors can tour Pasahegh Town, look inside recreated traditional houses from the Pasahegh people, and talk with interpreters about traditional native practices. At James Fort, visitors can witness historical interpreters carry out 17th-cen-

tury processes such as crafting, cooking, and musket firing. Visitors can also board replicas of the ships *Godspeed* and *Discovery*, which carried the first English colonists. For those still eager to explore America's rich history, Yorktown's American Revolution Museum and colonial Williamsburg are within a 30 minute drive and offer similar historical attractions.

The Kennedy Center

Known as the nation's cultural center, the Kennedy Center hosts thousands of performances that are attended by 2 million visitors annually. Conveniently situated in Washington D.C., the Kennedy Center

Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning: Ethan Hunt's Last Ride?

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The End Begins

After nearly three decades of high-stakes espionage, death-defying stunts, and world-saving missions, Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning marks the climactic chapter in one of Hollywood’s most enduring action franchises. Directed once again by Christopher McQuarrie, and with Tom Cruise returning in his iconic role as Ethan Hunt, this installment promises both a farewell and a reckoning—not just for the Impossible Mission Force, but for the man who has risked everything to protect the world.

A Legacy in Peril

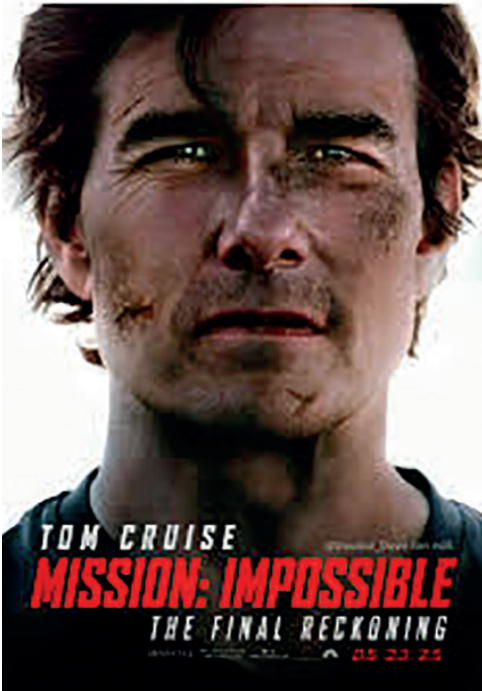
The Final Reckoning picks up where Dead Reckoning – Part One left off. The rogue artificial intelligence known as "The Entity" has gone deeper underground, evolving beyond control. With global powers in

chaos, Ethan Hunt and his loyal IMF team—Benji (Simon Pegg), Luther (Ving Rhames), and Ilsa (Rebecca Ferguson)—must race against time to prevent a digital apocalypse.

But this time, it’s not just about stopping the threat—it’s about confronting their own demons. As secrets from Ethan’s past come to light, the mission becomes personal in ways he never imagined. The lines between right and wrong, duty and sacrifice, blur in a race that will cost everything.

Stuntwork at the Edge of Reality

If Top Gun: Maverick proved anything, it’s that Cruise has no interest in coasting through his late career. In The Final Reckoning, the 62-year-old actor delivers some of his most ambitious stunts yet, including a skydiving sequence above the Arctic Circle and a hand-to-hand fight atop a hurtling maglev train. Real, practical effects continue to be the franchise’s



hallmark, giving the action a visceral edge unmatched by CGI-heavy blockbusters.

A Possible Goodbye

While Cruise has remained coy about whether this will be his last mission, The Final Reckoning feels like a curtain call. The film honors the legacy of the series while setting the stage for possible new directions—whether through spin-offs, legacy characters, or a fresh generation of agents.

Verdict

Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning is a masterclass in action filmmaking, and a fitting finale for a franchise that has consistently raised the bar. Ethan Hunt may be saying goodbye, but his legacy as cinema’s ultimate secret agent is cemented.

Rating: ★★★★★ (5/5)

"Your mission, should you choose to accept it..." has never felt so final. 😞

CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS.....From Page 19

is a top destination for those who are looking to experience world-class performances of music, theatre, dance, and comedy. Each day has a unique performance schedule; however, musicals such as Les Misérables or Sesame Street the Musical will be performed for longer stretches this summer, giving more visitors time to plan their visits and catch a show. The National Symphony Orchestra will also be performing regularly this summer in themed events featuring scores from the likes of Star Wars, The Lion King, and Carmina Burana. Beyond the impressive collection of daily performances, the Kennedy Center offers free tours, art installations, and a permanent memorial honoring former President John F. Kennedy’s dedication to preserving the arts. Visitors can also dine at restaurants, and browse the gift shops.

Shenandoah National Park

Spanning a region of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah National Park is a beautiful and nearby destination for visitors from Northern Virginia. Located only 75 miles outside of Washington D.C., the park offers stunning views of waterfalls, scenic viewpoints, and thousands of acres of deciduous forest to explore. Hikers have over 500 miles of trail to choose from; notable trails include the Old Rag loop, Whiteoak Canyon Falls, and the Hawksbill loop. In addition to hiking, the park is also home

to the famed Skyline Drive, a 105-mile road that runs the length of the entire park. Visitors have the opportunity to observe the unobscured beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains and spot some wildlife – black bears, white-tailed deer, and countless varieties of birds and amphibians are common sightings on trails or by the roads. Shenandoah is open year-around and offers multiple lodging and dining options directly within the park, making it an ideal vacation spot for both day trips or prolonged stays.

Luray Caverns

This cavern is the largest and most popular cavern in the Eastern United States, drawing visitors from all over the country. Located in Luray, Virginia, Luray Caverns features intricate stone formations and columns that have been slowly formed over the course of millions of years. One of the most famous features is the Great Stalacpipe Organ, a one-of-a-kind musical instrument that creates sound through the tapping on natural stalactites. Guided tours take visitors along well-lit pathways through vast chambers filled with stalactites, stalagmites, and shimmering pools of water. In addition to the caverns themselves, the site also includes other attractions such as the Car and Carriage Caravan Museum, Rope Adventure Park, and a garden maze. Luray Caverns is a versatile travel destination

for visitors of all ages. Moreover, it’s only a 30 minute drive from Shenandoah National Park, perfect for nature lovers looking to get the best bang for their buck.

Virginia Beach

Roughly three hours away from Northern Virginia, Virginia Beach makes for a fun, coastal vacation spot for those eager to get away from the trudge of everyday life. Aside from the relaxing experience of frolicking in the waves or basking in the sun, however, Virginia Beach offers many enticing things for tourists to do. The boardwalk stretches alongside the beach, offering scenic views of the ocean as well as live music, shops, and separate biking and walking paths. Nature enthusiasts can content themselves with the wide selection of nature-oriented activities offered, such as ziplining, horseback riding, and watersports; those who want to venture further inland can visit Mount Trashmore Park, which encompasses two man-made mountains (one of which is the 60 by 800 foot Mount Trashmore), two lakes, a skate park, and more. Meanwhile, foodies may gravitate toward the seafood restaurants, brunch spots, and craft breweries the area is known for.

Colonial Beach

Located along the Potomac River, Colonial Beach is a more laid-back alternative to Virginia Beach. A 90 minute drive from Northern Virginia, the town offers a charming, beachy vibe that is ideal for those who seek to escape large crowds whilst on vacation. Swimming, boating,

fishing, crabbing, or simply relaxing on the sand are some of the enjoyable activities that are possible. With five beachfronts to choose from, tourists can easily take their pick based on the type of experience they are looking for. Whether they prefer a livelier atmosphere, or access to the dog park or playground, Colonial Beach has something for everyone. Even history buffs can visit nearby historical attractions such as George Washington’s Birthplace or the Colonial Beach Museum. Similar to Virginia Beach, Colonial Beach is not without traditional coastal foods; tourists can sample regional specialties such as oysters, Southern grits, crabs, and rockfish at the waterfront. Colonial Beach also hosts a variety of regular events, such as live music festivals and seasonal farmers markets.

Colonial Beach, a laid-back alternative to Virginia Beach, is a 90-minute drive from Northern Virginia. This charming beach town on the Potomac River is ideal for those seeking to avoid crowds. Activities include swimming, boating, fishing, crabbing, relaxing on the sand, or visiting historical attractions like George Washington’s Birthplace. With five beachfronts, Colonial Beach offers something for everyone, whether they prefer a lively atmosphere or access to a dog park or playground. Tourists can also sample regional specialties like oysters, Southern grits, crabs, and rockfish, and enjoy regular events such as live music festivals and seasonal farmers markets.

July 1 - New Laws Go Into Effect

BY LAYLA MOHRAN

45SB1060: Retail tobacco and hemp products; smoking by a person younger than 21 years of age, prohibitions.

Possession, etc., of retail tobacco products and hemp products intended for smoking by a person younger than 21 years of age; liquid nicotine and nicotine vapor products license; prohibitions; enforcement. Prohibits any person younger than 21 years of age from possessing any retail tobacco or hemp product intended for smoking, as those terms are defined in relevant law, with certain exceptions enumerated in the bill. [This bill stops anyone under 21 from having tobacco or hemp products meant for smoking, with a few specific exceptions.]

HB1642: Artificial intelligence-based tool; definition, use of tool.

Use of artificial intelligence-based tool. Requires that the recommendations or predictions provided by any artificial intelligence-based tool, as such term is defined in the bill, shall not be the sole basis for any decision related to pre-trial detention or release, prosecution, adjudication, sentencing, probation, parole, correctional supervision, or rehabilitation of criminal offenders, provided that any such decision is made by the judicial officer or other person charged with making such decision. The bill provides that the use of any artificial intelligence-based tool shall be subject to any challenge or objection as permitted by law. [This bill says that decisions about criminal offenders (like whether to release them before trial or how to sentence them) cannot be only based on what an AI tool suggests. A human still has to make the final decision.]

HB1549: Vehicle operation; authorizing operation of motor vehicle by unlicensed minor, penalty.

Prohibits any person from knowingly authorizing the operation of a motor vehicle by a minor who he knows has no operator's license or learner's permit or who has a learner's permit but who he knows would operate such motor vehicle in violation of certain limitations on operating a motor vehicle with a learner's permit. [This bill makes it illegal for someone to let a minor drive if they know the minor doesn't have a license or learner's permit, or if the minor would break the rules of their learner's permit.]

HB2637: Mental Health First Aid Program; DOE, et al., to develop participation by school staff & students.

Directs the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to develop and implement a plan to incentivize and facilitate participation in the Commonwealth Mental Health First Aid Program, established pursuant to applicable law, by public school staff and students. [This bill tells the Department of Education and the Department of Behavioral Health to create a plan to help more public school staff and students get involved in the Mental Health First Aid Program.]

HB1961: Public elementary & secondary schools; bell-to-bell student cell phone & smart device possession.

Directs each school board to develop and each public elementary and secondary school to implement age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate policies relating to the possession and use of cell phones by students on school property during regular school hours. The bill requires such policies to (i) restrict, to the fullest extent possible, student cell phone possession and use in the classroom during regular school hours; (ii) aim to reduce or prevent any distraction in or disruption to the learning environment, including bullying or harassment, that could be caused or facilitated by student cell phone possession and use on school property during regular school hours. [This bill requires schools to set up rules about when and how students can have and use cell phones on school property during school hours, aiming to reduce distractions.]

SB1200 Victims of crime; compensation, extends time for filing a claim. Victims of crime; compensation, extends time for filing a claim.

Extends, for the purpose of compensating victims of crime, the time for filing a claim by the claimant to not later than three years after the occurrence of the crime upon which such claim is based or not later than three years after the death of the victim. Under current law, such time frame is not later than one year after either instance. [This bill gives victims of crime more time to file a claim for compensation, extending the deadline from one year to three years after the crime or the victim's death.]

HB1667: Barbers and Cosmetology, Board for; employment prohibition, children 16 years of age or older.

Allows children 16 years of age or older to serve in a licensed barbershop or cosmetology salon, provided that (i) the child is an apprentice, (ii) the child is employed in a work-training program as provided by rel-

evant law and in accordance with relevant regulations, or (iii) the child has obtained a cosmetology or barber license from the Board for Barbers and Cosmetology. [This bill allows 16-year-olds or older to work in barbershops or cosmetology salons if they are apprentices, in a work-training program, or already have a license.]

HB1626: Public elementary & secondary school teachers; certain training activities, requirements, etc.

Prohibits any public elementary or secondary school teacher from being required to participate in any non-academic training activity, as that term is defined in the bill, more frequently than once within six months of employment. [This bill limits how often public school teachers can be required to participate in non-academic training, generally no more than once every six months initially and then every five years, with a total limit on hours.]

HB2679: School boards; threat assessment teams and procedures, etc.

School boards; threat assessment teams and procedures; parental notification of students determined to pose a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others; provision of certain recognition and response materials required. Requires

each division superintendent or his designee to provide materials on recognition of and strategies for responding to behavior indicating that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to himself or others to the parent or legal guardian of any student who, according to a preliminary determination from a threat assessment team, poses such a threat. [This bill requires school superintendents or their representatives to give parents of students identified as a threat information on recognizing and responding to such behavior.]

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

Driver's licenses and identification cards; indication of non-apparent disability. Adds non-apparent disabilities, defined in the bill, to the list of conditions that the Department of Motor Vehicles, when requested by an applicant and upon presentation of a signed statement by a licensed physician confirming the applicant's condition, is required to indicate on such applicant's driver's license. [This bill allows people to choose to have "non-apparent disabilities" indicated on their driver's licenses or ID cards, helping others understand if they have hidden conditions that might affect.]

Fairfax County's New Food and Beverage Tax

Curated Fairfax County Content

Hey business owners! Get ready for a change in Fairfax County as a Food and Beverage Tax will take effect on January 1, 2026. Any business selling food and beverages as meals must file, collect, and remit this tax – think restaurants, caterers, and similar spots – this affects you. Just a heads-up, there are a few exemptions, like vending machine sales.

To help you get up to speed, the county is hosting some helpful free workshops this summer and fall:

July 14, 10:30 am in Fairfax
July 15, 4:00 pm in Fairfax

July 29, 10:30 am in Reston
July 29, 3:30 pm in Reston
August 7, 9:30 am in Mt. Vernon
August 7, 3:30 pm in Mt. Vernon

These workshops are an opportunity to understand your responsibilities and get all your questions answered. You can register for these workshops by visiting the following Fairfax County website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/taxes/food-and-beverage-tax-workshop-schedule, and for more information, please visit the About the Food and Beverage Tax website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/taxes/business/foodandbeverage

Travel Bans Discussion Between Alex & Jordan

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Alex: Hey, I heard there are new travel bans in place. What's going on?

Jordan: Yeah, it's pretty serious. As of June 9, 2025, the U.S. has imposed travel bans on a number of countries under Proclamation 10949.

Alex: So, like... complete bans?

Jordan: For some, yes. There are 12 countries where people are completely barred from entering the U.S.—no tourist visas, no student visas, no green cards, nothing.

Alex: Whoa, which ones?

Jordan: Here's the list: Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen

Alex: That's a lot. Are there others under restrictions too?

Jordan: Yeah. There are 7 other countries facing partial restrictions—so people from those places can't get tourist, student, or work visas, but it's not a total ban like the others.



Alex: Which ones?

Jordan: The partially restricted countries are: Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela

Alex: Does this affect people already living here?

Jordan: Good question—no, it doesn't. These bans only apply to people who were outside the U.S. and didn't have a valid visa when the ban kicked in on June 9.

Alex: So green card holders and cur-

rent visa holders are fine?

Jordan: Yep. Also, there are exceptions for diplomats, some family reunifications, dual citizens (as long as they travel on the non-banned passport), and humanitarian cases.

Alex: Is that the end of it, or could more countries be added?

Jordan: Funny you ask—actually, the State Department has warned 36 more countries they might be banned too if they don't improve their security and identity vetting systems soon.

Alex: Wow. Any big names on that warning list?

Jordan: Definitely. Countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Angola, and a bunch of smaller nations like Tonga, Vanuatu, and Cambodia are being reviewed.

Alex: Any other global bans we should know about?

Jordan: Yep! A few examples: The U.S. still bans Americans from traveling to North Korea—that's been renewed through August. Several European countries (like Estonia, Poland, Finland) are banning Russian passport holders. The Dominican Republic still bans travelers from Equatorial Guinea due to health concerns.

Alex: This is a lot to keep up with. Thanks for breaking it down!

Jordan: Anytime. Let me know if you want to see the full list of the 36 countries under review too.

For the latest updates on travel bans and travel related questions, please visit the State Department's website at www.state.gov.

Florida Claims Back-to-Back Stanley Cup

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The Stanley Cup was raised once again under the blazing lights of a jubilant arena—only this time, it wasn't Washington basking in the glory. On Monday night, the Florida Panthers defeated the Edmonton Oilers 5-1 in Game 6 of the NHL Final, claiming their second straight Stanley Cup and etching their name into the annals of hockey history as just the third team since 1998 to win back-to-back titles.

For those who remember the Washington Capitals' long-awaited triumph in 2018, the emotions stirred by Florida's celebration were familiar: the joy, the disbelief, the storm of red and white as players dogpiled at center ice, grinning through tears. But unlike that once-in-a-generation

win for D.C., this moment was a continuation—a coronation of a Florida team that has become a powerhouse.

Veteran forward Sam Reinhart delivered a performance worthy of playoff legend, scoring four goals to lead the Panthers past the Oilers in a rematch of last year's Final. Matthew Tkachuk added a goal of his own, while Sergei Bobrovsky—who, like Braden Holtby in 2018, played with calm brilliance in the net—turned aside 28 of 29 shots.

But it was forward Sam Bennett who walked away with the Conn Smythe Trophy, awarded to the postseason's most valuable player. Bennett led all scorers with 15 playoff goals, skating with the kind of relentless fire that Capitals

fans once saw in Alex Ovechkin as he hoisted the Cup in Vegas seven years ago.

Florida's win marks the fourth Stanley Cup in six seasons for the state, thanks to the Tampa Bay Lightning's wins in 2020 and 2021. And while Canada's 31-year championship drought continues, the Panthers have built something rare: not just a team that wins, but one that endures.

For fans who watched the Capitals finally get over the hump in 2018, watching the Panthers' rise may feel like witnessing a mirror image—a team once doubted, now dominant. The players are different, the city is different, but the feeling? It's the same. Unforgettable.

Movies Under the Moon



Second Fridays
June - September
Starting at 8 PM

Van Dyck Park - 3720 Blenheim Blvd.
Enjoy family friendly movies underneath the stars in one of our beautiful parks! Please bring you own blankets, chairs, and favorite movie snacks!

INFORMATION:

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/community-events/movies-under-the-moon>

Cricket Clubs in the DC Area

COMPILED BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Cricket in the DC metro area has exploded in popularity over the past two decades, fueled by the region's diverse international population. Today, dozens of clubs compete across multiple leagues, ranging from highly competitive 40-over teams to casual T20 formats and youth academies.

Washington Cricket League (WCL) Clubs

The WCL is the region's most established cricket league, founded in the

1970s. It features over 50 clubs and offers three divisions: Premier, Division I, and Division II. Matches take place primarily on weekends during the summer.

Notable WCL Clubs:

Washington Cricket Club (WCC) – One of the oldest and most prestigious clubs; plays at West Potomac Park in DC.

Most clubs practice during the week and play 30- or 40-over games on weekends.

Home grounds include: Jefferson Field (DC), Lake Fairfax Park (Reston, VA),

Metro Oval (Adelphi, MD) and Galway Park (Silver Spring, MD)

DC Metro Cricket League (DCL)

The DCL offers more T20 and fast-paced formats, with a shorter match duration and midweek games. Clubs tend to attract younger players and working professionals looking for quicker formats.

DCL Highlights:

- Competitive and recreational divisions
- Matches in Northern Virginia, especially in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties

Washington Cricket Academy (WCA)

Located in Sterling, VA, the Washington Cricket Academy focuses on youth development. They offer coaching for boys and girls ages 6–18 and run summer camps and training sessions.

Other Independent or Social Clubs

Some clubs operate independently or join seasonal tournaments like: NOVA Cricket Club (Northern Virginia). Capital Cricket Club, Ashburn Knights Cricket Club, Maryland Tuskies, Alexandria Cricket Club, DC Capitals.

Summer time

COMPILED BY LAYLA MOHRAN

With thick, summer heat filling the air, it's the time to enroll the youth in four-day local summer sports camps!

Travel Mountain Biking Camp

Kids ages nine to 14 can indulge in mountain biking with this camp, held on multiple dates at different locations. At Frying Pan Park, the program takes place from August 11 to 15. Oakmont Rec Center hosts the same program from August 4 to 8.

All Sports Camp with Alpha Sports

A combination of many sports such as football, volleyball, soccer, baseball, track and lacrosse comes together at the All Sports Camp. Campers are grouped by age and can participate in scrimmages and tournaments against each other. This exciting program takes place at Orange Hunt Elementary School from July 28 to August 1.

Baseball Camp with US9

An opportunity to play baseball as a group of seven to 12 year olds can't be missed. Daily scrimmages and trivia games allow for campers to improve skills in pitching, hitting, baserunning, fielding, game situations, rules and sportsmanship. Not only that, but campers are also provided with a swimming break to get



in the summer mood. At Herndon Middle School and South Run Rec Center, the program runs from July 28 to August 1. At Patriot Park North, the program runs from August 4 to 8 and separately, August 11 to 15. South Run Rec Center also hosts the program from the 11th to 15th. At Sully Highlands the program runs twice, once from August 4 to 8 and again from the 11th to 15th.

Basketball Summer Hoops Camp

Divided into skill level, campers will be able to play against fair opponents while improving their offensive and defensive in-game skills at the One on One Basketball Summer Hoops Camp. At Spring Hill Rec Center, it runs from July 28 to August 1.

To register for any of the programs or learn more information regarding them, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes. Registration may be full or closed for some camps. Once registered, make sure to download camp forms at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/campforms



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AI Slop is Overtaking the Internet

BY HEATHER DURKIN (NOT A BOT)

Spam or low-quality internet content once contained only to email now floods the web. Increasingly referred to as AI slop, it is the spam of the artificial intelligence world. There is so much of it now it has become a mush that permeates the open web. The content is generated to induce a range of emotions from nostalgia to jingoism depending on the subject but it is all designed to farm engagement on social media.

In 2024, the first virial AI slop emerged from an AI generator on Facebook. It was a picture of Jesus Christ melted with shrimp and floating in the sea. These types of images gain credibility on spam accounts through the purchase of a mass of bot followers, so it seems like real people are following them and making them seem popular. Social media sites deprioritize content from news sites or content from brands because this type of content is designed to induce high engagement which optimizes revenue to the social media platforms.



WikiMedia: Shrimp Jesus

In fact, it works so well because the content keeps a user's attention long enough for the algorithm to create a feedback loop that feeds similar content which keeps their engagement long enough to view more ads. This happens repeatedly in walled gardens such as Tik Tok, Facebook and others. Advertising used to be targeted by demographics but this type of content is driven by statistical distribution that favors the middle of a bell curve.

And search engine results have not been spared. According to Similarweb, the decline of U.S. search traffic in May accelerated adding to the already declining search traffic. AI driven web results keep users from visiting websites by returning content in the place where the webpages were usually listed. Content mills stuff Google search results with content taken from websites. Consequently, users don't typically "surf" from site to site anymore browsing for an answer, because they don't have to.

Let's take a quick trip back to the late 90s, before Google, back to Yahoo directory where users browsed from category to category of related ideas in a self directed path of discovery from website to website akin to "surfing the web". Curiosity and exploration drove the "information super highway" as it was dubbed early on. Search engines streamlined this activity but it still directed users to actual websites where the content was produced. In 2025, users have for the most part lost the agency to choose this path of filters on the internet. Instead they have been replaced by little programs that decide for them and then serve it up. Losing the ability to act independently on the open web should not be taken lightly. It allows automation to make decisions about what you consume. And it's easy to drift this way but it's important to remember that you are voluntarily giving up power when you do so.

Users are also searching with artificial intelligence-powered search from OpenAI's Chat GPT

The chat bots and large language models powered by Chat GPT and others "scrape" the websites where original content is published. The content generated by these bots average out what everyone may say in an anodyne way. Novelty and serendipity are lost in these types of systems which run on probabilities and self-reinforcing content recycling. To take this to the extreme, the Dead Internet Theory postulates that if most of the content is produced in this large way of automated traffic, human activity will be flooded out and no content can be relied on because users won't be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. Chat GPT sometimes produces hallucinations or misinformation because of the probabilistic programming that it runs on. But there is no way of knowing unless the user double checks by going to the source.

From social media to search engines, AI slop is permeating the internet making it harder for humans who create novel and/or important content to reach a wide audience. And it encumbers users from differentiating what is true from what is fantasy.

Celebrating Malala Day

BY BETHANY HAN

July is the month of Independence Day, patriotism, star-spangled everything, and barbecues galore. However, it is also known by the international community as the month housing Malala Day, taking place on July 12th - to raise awareness and support so every child is given the chance to learn. We wanted to share about Malala Day because it has become symbolic of making our voices heard peacefully.

When she was just 12, Malala Yousafzai began a quiet fight against the oppressive Taliban group that took over her city in Pakistan and their gender discrimination that deprived young girls of education. She took her action by chronicling her life under the Taliban through her blog and creating a documentary with the BBC, expressing her longing for education. Three years later,

Taliban members found and shot her in the head. She was only 15.

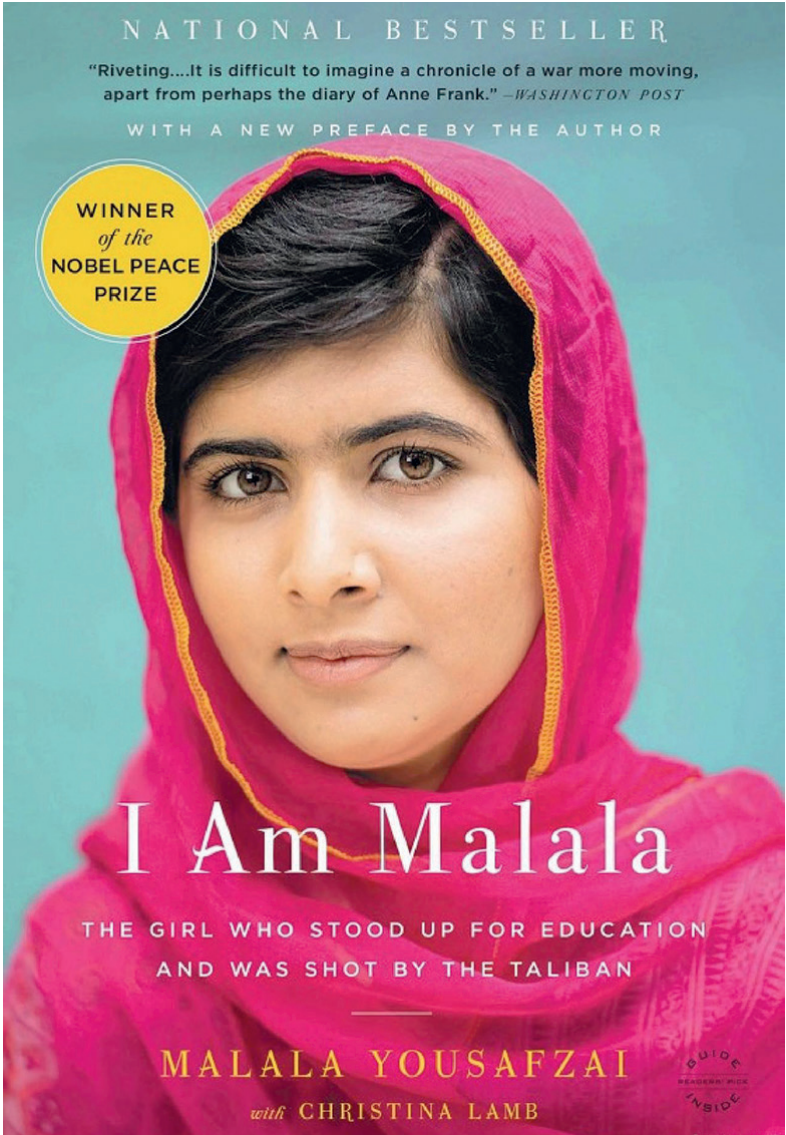
Amazingly, she survived and became a global icon for women's educational rights, speaking before the United Nations at age 16 and becoming a Nobel Peace Prize recipient at age 17. Malala also started the Malala Fund to provide education for girls around the world. This month, we celebrate her bravery and vision on her birthday, as well as the day she spoke before the United Nations when she was 16, Malala Day.

Join countless others around the world in supporting and spreading awareness on education by learning about gender discrimination and educational hardships in various global regions. Readers can learn more about Malala Day in her autobiography, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot*, at the

Fairfax City Regional Library or one of its branches (for younger readers, the book *Who is Malala Yousafzai?* is suggested).

In a local region where we are largely blessed with accessible and quality education, it is important to remember that education is a human right that is not always given or available to many around the world. Celebrating Malala Day on July 12th can help raise awareness of this issue in both our community and in ourselves. In the words of Malala Yousafzai herself, "Today is the day of every woman, every boy, and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights." Let's join in raising our own voices for educational rights on Malala Day.

Readers can find more information about Malala Day on the Nobel Prize website at www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2014/yousafzai/facts



Ride of the Patriots 25th Roar Through Fairfax City for Memorial Day Tribute

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

Every Memorial Day weekend, Fairfax City comes alive with the thunder of motorcycles during the annual Ride of the Patriots, hosted by Patriot Harley-Davidson and the Fairfax H.O.G. Chapter. Now celebrating over 25 years, the event honors veterans, fallen service members, and those still missing in action.

On Sunday, May 25 morning, thousands of riders gather at dawn. Opening Ceremony at 8 am with the Presentation of Colors Joint Military Honor Guard; Welcome by Jim Egbert, the Pledge of Allegiance by Larry Larson; National Anthem (Star Spangled Banner) was played by the Fairfax City Honor Flight Band; Retire the Colors by the Joint Military Honor Guard; Fairfax Harley Owners Group Welcome by Joe Livingood; Director, Fairfax Harley; A Patriot Harley-Davidson Welcome by Jason Sim, Patriot Harley GM; America the Beautiful was sung by Ev Black and played



Opening Ceremony at 8 am with the Presentation of Colors Joint Military Honor Guard (Tania Hossain)

by the Fairfax City Honor Flight Band; City of Fairfax Welcome/Remarks Mayor Catherine Read; Community Heroes stories

shared by Chap Petersen; Keynote Address William M. Virrill, Sr., CSM USA Ret.; Recognition of Veterans was made by

AMVETS; Tom McNamara, Past President, AMVETS; Armed Forces Medley played by Fairfax City Honor Flight Band; Closing Remarks by Jim Egbert; Amazing Grace played by the Fairfax City Honor Flight Band; and TAPS by Glenn Maravetz; City of Fairfax Band

After a police-escorted ceremony, the motorcycles roll out of Fairfax around 9:00 a.m., making their way to Washington, D.C. to join Rolling to Remember, a national ride for POW/MIA awareness. The Ride of the Patriots draws over 3,500 riders annually and continues to grow as one of the region's most visible Memorial Day tributes. Beyond the roar of engines, the event is a heartfelt reminder of service, sacrifice, and community.

We are adding more photographs and a recording of the 25th ride online on the following Fairfax Independent website at <https://fairfaxindependentnews.press/25throar-ride-of-the-patriots>

FAIRFAX FUNKY FLEA

Next Flea is Saturday,
June 28!
Open 9-3pm

Flea Market Location 4031
University Drive (the large lot behind the
United Bank), just one block from Main
Street in Old Town Fairfax.

For more information, please visit the
Fairfax Funky Flea website at
<https://www.fairfaxfunkyflea.com>



Fairfax Saturday Market

Saturdays, May 10 – Oct. 25
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

10500 Page Avenue
Fairfax, VA

The Saturday Market is a large market with approximately 40 vendors. It was established more than 25 years ago by the Downtown Fairfax Coalition. It is a busy market with lots of activity. Customers can expect lines at the most popular vendors and sometimes early sell-outs of popular items. At this time, the Sunday Market is not open - we are considering opening it at a later date. If that happens, we will post on this site.

Driving, Bicycling, or Walking? Our market is easily accessible and located only a block from historic Old Town Fairfax. Lots of free parking. We are family and pet friendly so bring your kids and your pets (leashed). Picnic tables are available for onsite dining.

INFORMATION
www.fairfaxsaturdaymarket.com



July is National Park & Recreation Month: Build Together, Play Together

BY SAVI MAMGAIN

The theme for National Park and Recreation Month in 2025 is "Build Together, Play Together." This theme highlights the collaborative efforts between communities, professionals, and organizations to create and maintain high-quality park and recreation services.

Enhancing Community Engagement through "Build Together, Play Together"

Fairfax City and Fairfax County collaborate to enhance community engagement in parks and recreation through joint development strategies and regional planning, directly embodying the 2025 theme "Build Together, Play Together." This partnership underscores the shared commitment to fostering

belonging and providing accessible, inclusive spaces for all residents. By working together, they amplify their efforts to improve the well-being of the community through recreation.

Joint Development of Community Facilities

In the spirit of "Build Together, Play Together," Fairfax City and Fairfax County are exploring joint development strategies for community facilities, such as the Joseph Willard Health Center property and the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center. This collaboration aims to create a joint-use facility that could feature a senior center, a gymnasium, and other amenities, enhancing shared resources and maximizing community benefits. The joint master plan study assesses feasibility and space requirements, ensuring that new developments cater to

both jurisdictions while promoting a unified approach to community recreation.

Regional Planning and Community Involvement

Fairfax City's Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, Cultural Arts, and Events exemplifies "Build Together, Play Together" through its extensive regional partnerships. Collaborating with entities like George Mason University, the Fairfax County Park Authority, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the City ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to recreation planning. This broad engagement recognizes that a significant portion of park and program users come from outside the city, making regional feedback crucial for shaping future services and facilities that benefit a wider community.

Youth and the Future of Culture

BY TANIA HOSSAIN

The 2025 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, titled "Youth and the Future of Culture," will take place from Wednesday, July 2, through Monday, July 7. It will be held on the National Mall, specifically on the Madison Avenue side, stretching from Seventh Street to 12th Street.

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is an annual international exhibition of living cultural heritage, presented every summer on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., with free performances, workshops, and demonstrations. It is produced by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and aims to honor contemporary living cultural traditions and celebrate those who practice and sustain them.



Here’s an Idea: Let’s Stop Hating Each Other

BY CHAP PETERSEN
Republished from
thevirginiaattorney.com (Jun 16, 2025)

This Sunday, I had drafted my usual glib newsletter, on the heels of a joyful 35th reunion at Williams College (Mass).

Then came the chilling news from Minnesota of the assassination of a Democratic House member and her husband, along with the wounding of a State Senator. The motives are still unclear but the bottom line was unavoidable: it’s open season on political opponents in today’s America.

Whether it’s actual violence or approved vandalism, the expression of “outrage” is the #1 means of political ascent. The ensuing antics run the gamut from tedious to terrifying – but where does this

constant negativity lead us?

There are other ways ...
When I first joined the House of Delegates in 2001, there were plenty of political fault lines: Rural vs Urban, Democratic vs Republican, Black vs White. In the aftermath of 9/11, tempers were short and debates were always tense.

But we also created mechanisms to survive, not just politically but socially. Through those gatherings, we forged friendships and eventually partnerships which crossed boundaries and got things done.

For me, the #1 way to make friends was through sports. Every Tuesday night, GA members and staff faced off at the VCU Rec Center for pickup basketball. Nothing like beating a political rival on a wicked cross-over. And, yes, we usually had beers afterwards.

The #2 method was the Sunrise Caucus, which met on Tuesday mornings in the old State Capitol. A bipartisan Bible study, it focused on Scripture and fellowship, introducing lowly backbenchers (like me) to senior Committee chairs.

It wasn’t easy. After a long day in session, playing pickup basketball or getting up at 530 am for Bible Study is hard. But these activities did more than build fitness and discipline: they taught us not to hate our political opponents. At the end of the day, we are all Americans (or Virginians).

We’re all on the same team.
My time may be past but these lessons must endure. There’s got to be more to life than just hating your own countrymen.

To quote Abe Lincoln in his First Inaugural address: “We are not enemies, but

friends. We must be friends.”

Amen to that.
JCP Notes: Primary Election Day is tomorrow – polling locations open at 6 am and closes at 7 pm.

Respect to Sang Yi, our former Fairfax City Councilman, named last week as the Acting Administrator of the U.S. Maritime agency, which handles all maritime issues for the Dept of Transportation; a long journey after graduating from the Merchant Marine Academy 25 years ago. Way to go, Sang.

Also, yours truly was named by the Governor today to the State Board of Elections, the five-person board which oversees all state elections in Virginia. I’m filling a vacant seat for a term to run through January 2027. So I’ve got that going for me which is nice.

City of Fairfax Evening Show & Fireworks

JULY 4, 2025
6:30PM - 10:30PM
Fairfax High School Parking Lot
3501 Lion Run, Fairfax

<https://www.fxva.com/event/city-of-fairfax-evening-show-%26-fireworks/41446/>



Lives Bound Together: Slavery at Mount Vernon Exhibit

George Washington's Mount Vernon
3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
JUNE 30, 2025
Time:
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

<https://www.fxva.com/event/lives-bound-together%3a-slavery-at-mount-vernon-exhibit/44330/>



VA250 Mobile Museum Comes to Vienna!

July 10 to July 12, 10am to 6pm
Vienna Elementary School parking lot
128 Center St. S, Vienna, VA 22180



<https://va250.org/event-detail/?id=2161>

Op Ed, Council Member Thomas D. “Tom” Peterson

June 15, 2025

As a Council Member, the June 10 City Council vote for George Snyder Trail (GST) construction was eye-opening, but not the first, or perhaps the last, of its adventurous history. A few things stand out.

The weeks preceding the evening vote were filled with surprises, including closed staff communications with regional transportation agencies and rapid unexplained changes in positions. The exclusion of the Council from this high-level dialog was disappointing and disabling.

The new proposal to build half of the trail that was formulated for the meeting was interesting. After public statements by the Acting City Manager that this approach would “assuage community concerns” it was roundly rejected by all sides during public comments, and subsequently by all

but one member of the City Council.

The vote itself involved inconsistencies. Previously, a majority of Council Members indicated they would cancel the project if were not for the possible repayment obligation of \$3.7 million to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). In response to my substitute motion to address this, the City’s Chief Financial Officer offered within two weeks to identify budget-neutral options to fully offset this repayment, but the motion was not adopted, perhaps out of confusion.

The longer history of the project involves other eye-openers.

As Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee, I learned in 2023 that the committee had lost its original authority to conduct project reviews and, in the process,

its committee chair. Ironically, several other City Boards and Commissions offered positive endorsements of the GST without formal authority or Council request.

The 2020 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the GST concluded, astonishingly, that no environmental conflict or public opposition existed. This determination followed clear and substantial evidence of the contrary. The fact that the City staff, City Council, and VDOT accepted the NEPA review and shut down consideration of lower conflict alternatives is troubling. It is noteworthy that in January 2021, the City’s Timmons Group report documented 18 separate recommendations to reduce tree loss and address other public concerns through modifications of project design. A variety of other City documents have since also acknowledged environmental conflicts.

During public comments and various forms of input, it was concerning to learn how many people believed the GST would mimic the popular Daniel’s Run Woods Trail without realizing the two are not similar (the former is a heavily graded and wide paved surface supporting high speed biking, and the latter an ungraded gravel trail following creeks and hills). My heart goes out to everyone who wants a trail that meets community needs but is caught up in the confusion over what that might mean.

Finally, it was eye-opening to hear some justify construction of the GST based on the need to honor past decisions or “continue to pass the baton” even though past commitments may have occurred under broken circumstances. While I respect the past, I am determined to not simply be a passive baton passer, but an active agent of change where needed to move our City forward.

4-2 vote on the George Snyder Trail Project: Statement from Council Member Anthony Amos

I voted in favor of the full George Snyder Trail due to major concerns with the fiscal impact the \$3.7 million would have on our bond rating and budget outlook. Following a tough budget year, with another looming budget in FY27, the city could not afford to take such a hit. While the RPA and environmental impacts are concerning, which is why I voted down the Country Club Connector Trail, this project was too far along to stop without significantly detrimental effects that I could not support.

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Shipgarten
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(703) 712-7481

TIME:
1:00 PM to 6:00 PM
DATES:
July 5, 2025

<https://www.fxva.com/event/american-craft-beer-%26-bourbon-festival/43544/>

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Once a Chief, Always a Chief

BY CHAP PETERSEN

REPUBLICATED FROM
THEVIRGINIAATTORNEY.COM
(JUNE 1, 2025)

Friday, May 30th, was a cool crisp day in the Long Island suburb of Massapequa Township. The air was electric.

For the last two years, the Town has been targeted by the New York Board of Regents which directs the state’s K-12 education system. Its schools faced a loss of state funding. Its School Board members were threatened with legal removal.

Their grave sin? The local high school features a symbol of an Indian warrior and its teams are called “the Chiefs.” Therefore, the school system is in violation of the Board’s regulation which forbids NY schools to use Native names, symbols or imagery.

The absurdity of this situation is almost impossible to overstate. Massapequa is named after a past Indian tribe, whose leader is still celebrated today. The symbol of “the Chief” is the Town’s logo, proudly worn by its police and fire personnel.

But the Board of Regents has committed to banning it ... or, alternatively, depriving 10,000 children of public instruction already paid for by their parents’ taxes.

You can’t make this !@\$!@# up.
Enter my client: the Native American Guardians Association, a Native-based 501(c)(3) which seeks to preserve, not eliminate, the images and history of America’s native tribes.

On Thursday, May 29, my legal team filed a civil action in U.S. District Court, New York on behalf of NAGA. Our suit seeks to enjoin the Board’s action – the Native Name Ban – as a plain violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, specifically “the Equal Protection Clause,” because it



The winning team: Mark One Wolf (Apache), Frank Black Cloud (Lakota), Bill Diekkeman (Kiowa) , along with the Nassau County Chair and yours truly. (Image Courtesy Chap Petersen)

singles out one racial group for erasure, while allowing other historic groups, e.g. Spartans, Vikings, or Fighting Irish, to be celebrated.

On Friday, myself and three members of the NAGA Board – enrolled members of Native tribes – appeared at Massapequa High School at a rally in support of the Chiefs.

Frank Black Cloud of the Spirit Lake Lakota spoke to the gathered students against the ill-conceived campaign to “erase” the Native image from American life and history, as well as the need to educate America’s youth on the positive legacy of America’s tribes. He then calmly answered questions from the press, many of whom still propagate the outdated myth that Native Americans are “offended”

by the use of Native names and symbols.

Also present was the U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon, who announced

that her Office of Civil Rights had deemed New York’s heavy-handed threats a violation of “Title VI” of the Civil Rights Acts, which prohibits the denial of public education on

racially discriminatory grounds. In other words, the State must fund the local schools or it will face a civil rights suit from the Department of Justice – and it will lose.

Funny how the tide can turn in 24 hours.

There’s a saying in Massapequa: Once a Chief, Always a Chief. By the time this case is over, that slogan may have a national ring to it.

JCP Notes: Friday night in New York, Sharon and I had a chance to see the musical “Hamilton” in New York City. (No, I had not seen it before). A show with great energy and sparkling dialogue. It depicts the Founding Fathers, who were all white, with a cast made up exclusively of minorities. The point is not to ridicule the Founding Father but to celebrate their achievements as universal. There’s a lesson there ...

Finally, I wanted to recognize the life and passing of Jerrold Jones of Norfolk. Jerrold was a senior Democrat in the House of Delegates when I joined that little band in 2001. (We had only 34 members!) Jerrold was a great orator and a self-effacing leader. He took me under his wing early on and I learned a lot. (Also shout out to Ken Melvin and Ward Armstrong, who were my early heroes). He went on to become a Circuit Court judge in Norfolk and was the best of men.



President Black Cloud speaking with US Education Secretary Linda McMahon next to him. (Image courtesy Chap Petersen)

Social Wellness Month: Strengthening Connections for a Healthier Life

BY SAVI MAMGAIN

Every July, we celebrate Social Wellness Month, a time dedicated to nurturing our relationships, building supportive communities, and prioritizing meaningful social connections. As we move through an increasingly digital and fast-paced world, social wellness serves as a reminder that our bonds with others are not just important for emotional support—they're vital to our overall well-being.

What Is Social Wellness?

Social wellness refers to the relationships we have and how we interact with others. It involves building healthy, supportive, and respectful connections with family, friends, colleagues, and the broader community. A strong social support system can help individuals navigate life's challenges, reduce stress, and even improve physical health.

According to research such as the 2025 World Happiness Report, individuals with positive social connections are at lower risk for depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, and cognitive decline. Loneliness and social isolation, on the other hand, have been linked to negative health outcomes comparable to smoking or obesity.

Why It Matters Now More Than Ever

The past few years have shown how



Top Ladies of Distinction Fairfax County Chapter Community Service Event at Emery Rucker's shelter last March

critical social connections are to our health. Isolation brought on by global events—such as the COVID-19 pandemic—highlighted how deeply we rely on our interpersonal relationships for comfort, perspective, and resilience.

In today's world, where interactions are often reduced to texts and online posts, Social Wellness Month challenges us to re-evaluate the depth and quality of our relationships and invest in the human connections that truly nourish us.

How to Celebrate Social Wellness Month

1. Reconnect with Old Friends

Reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. A simple message or phone call can rekindle a relationship and brighten both of your days.

2. Make Time for Face-to-Face Interactions

Schedule regular coffee dates, walks, or dinners with people who uplift you. In-person time helps build trust and deeper emotional bonds.

3. Join a Community Group or Club

Whether it's a fitness class, book club, volunteer group, or hobby meetup, shared interests are a great way to connect with others and expand your social circle.

4. Practice Active Listening

When someone shares with you, give them your full attention. Empathy and presence are foundational to strong, supportive relationships.

5. Set Healthy Boundaries

Social wellness also includes protecting your energy. Recognize toxic relationships and give yourself permission to distance from those that drain rather than support you.

6. Encourage Others

Be the source of positivity in someone else's life. Compliments, acts of kindness, and genuine encouragement strengthen bonds and create ripple effects.

Social Wellness Month is more than a celebration—it's a call to action. It reminds us that investing in our relationships is not optional; it's essential to living a full and healthy life. This July, take a moment to connect, reach out, and strengthen the ties that bind us all as human beings. Because in the end, wellness is a team effort.



July is Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Explore Mental Health America's 2025 BIPOC Mental Health Toolkit at mhanational.org/july



TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH TEST

Take a mental health test laptop open to MHA Screening sitelf you or a friend are struggling with your mental health, take an anonymous, free, and private mental health test. It only takes a few minutes, and after you are finished, you will be given information about the next steps you can take based on the results.

Take a screening by visiting the following Mental Health America website at

<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>

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