

THE RESTON

LETTER

# Reston National Golf Course development plan left out of one 2025 Fairfax County review, but could move forward in another

By Gene Powell, Staff Writer

A two-option proposal to develop the 168-acre Reston National Golf Course was left out of a 2025 county-wide development review process in a June 10 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors vote. But a 14-acre part of the proposal could move ahead under a different county review process.

The board vote ends any review—for this year—of the course development options under the county’s comprehensive planning program titled SSPA. But Reston National owners filed an alternative request June 5 with the county, using a different zoning and development review process, asking to proceed with a proposal to build 288 residences on 14 acres of the course.

The supervisors voted 10-0 to approve a variety of county-wide projects for comprehensive review in 2025, but not the RNG proposal, rejecting a June 4 recommendation by the county planning commission to include the golf course residential development proposal in the SSPA review.

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn, who represents the Reston area, opposed adding the course to the SSPA program. He cited a long-standing pledge to oppose residential development of the course without approval from the community to consider a change in the course. In a series of public hearings on the RNG project, a sizable majority of



Reston National Golf Course redevelopment has been a source of contention for years. See the Opinions section for details. Photo by Benjamin Burgess

those speaking opposed development. Course owner War Horse Cities, of Baltimore, and developer NVR of Reston, advanced a “two option” proposal for the SSPA program: One option would have allowed residential housing on 86 acres of the golf course, while designating the remaining 80 acres as open space for a park or other public use. The open space would be deeded to the county or the private Reston Association homeowners’ group. The course opened in 1970 as Reston South Golf Course. The second option—now the sole active proposal—would renovate and redesign the existing 18-hole golf course while building an estimated 280-plus townhouse units on 14 acres. The course

owner, listed on the alternative “PRC” review proposal as Virginia Investment Partners, maintains the smaller tract already is zoned for residential housing and that “option two” can move forward under the alternative review process. Some county officials and opponents of residential development already question whether such an alternative approach will meet legal review. After the vote, Alcorn noted his 2019 pledge was renewed in 2023, and added: “I want to thank the hundreds of Hunter Mill residents that attended one or more of the SSPA meetings, sent in emails, called my office, or otherwise engaged in this process—you have been heard.”

# Steeped in community: Elden Street Tea Shop’s annual tea festival brings flavor and charm to Reston

By Sarah Hickner, Staff Writer

What began as one woman’s passion for tea and community has blossomed into a beloved springtime tradition. On May 18, Elden Street Tea Shop—owned by Rachel Rozner—hosted its third annual Northern Virginia Tea Festival at Lake Anne Plaza, drawing a lively crowd of tea lovers, families, and curious newcomers. Tents lined the lakeside, offering tastings of teas from around the world, loose-leaf blends, accessories, and beautifully handcrafted goods. While kids created their own “tea pets,” young musicians from the local Bach to Rock studio provided a festive soundtrack.

It’s not just the atmosphere that makes this festival special—it’s the focus on tea education. Rozner curates a full day of workshops and demonstrations led by passionate tea experts. “They all know more than me,” Rozner said. “We only bring in people with real knowledge.” Most presenters are local, some with tea businesses of their own, and all are eager to share their expertise. One standout session? Microwaving Tea and Other Tea Time Faux Pas was a fan favorite.

For Rozner, the magic moment comes when the chaos melts into joy. “My favorite part is when everything is in place and Andy, our MC, announces the start,”



Essie Hickner poses with Elden Street Tea Shop owner Rachel Rozner and the ‘tea pet’ frog she made. Photo by Sarah Hickner

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## the bulletin



Letter from the editor, Hopecam story, Pride Festival, TEPHRA Art Festival, Pure Barre and Reston Swim Team Association build community

## sports



Reston Sprint Triathlon, Herndon High baseball coach voted Liberty District Coach of the Year

## education



Congrats to the class of 2025, Making an Impact column, a local Eagle Scout, Sylvan Learning Center feature

## kids



Summer reading ideas, a recipe, art magic, geocaching, trails guide

## opinions

Redevelopment vs. no redevelopment of the golf course, shout-out to dads, Greenfare’s column

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# THE BULLETIN

*Mission Statement:*  
The Reston Letter seeks to inform the Reston community of local events, highlight local groups' and individuals' accomplishments, and provide a platform for residents to weigh in on local topics relevant to the majority of readers.

**Tea Shop, cont'd from front page**

she said. “My second favorite is over-hearing people talk about a class or demo they loved.” Those moments, she says, make all the behind-the-scenes work worthwhile.

With the help of a small team and dedicated volunteers, Rozner delivers a full-day celebration that blends education, fun, and, of course, plenty of tea. The event also supports a good cause; donations benefit the RoSgle Foundation, which promotes literacy and education throughout Northern Virginia. It’s just one more way this local business gives back to the community it serves.

Missed the festival? Don’t worry—Rozner is already thinking ahead. “Follow us on Facebook or subscribe to our newsletter to get updates,” she said. “We’ve got more events coming.”

And you don’t have to wait until next spring for a good cup of tea. Elden Street Tea Shop is open five days a week. It’s perfect for dropping in for a drink or picking up loose-leaf tea to enjoy at home.

From first-time sippers to full-blown tea nerds, the Northern Virginia Tea Festival has something for everyone. Even coffee drinkers are welcome.

Visit [www.eldenstreettea.com](http://www.eldenstreettea.com) or stop by the shop at Lake Anne Plaza, just a few doors down from the Reston Museum.

**Dear Readers,**

Our writers have been busy preparing this June issue for you as our Reston rain has given way to a lovely green summer. This month with school out, we focused on the idea of exploring in our own backyard. In our kids section there is a mini guide to the trails, which are perfect for biking or walking or scootering from pool to pool and playground to playground. One of our writers even created a Reston Letter geocache for kids to find!

We have a kids summer reading list curated by Friends of the Reston Library and an intro to their summer reading program.

Along the exploration lines, in our ever-expanding Life-time section we’ve got a story of a lifelong lover of bicycling. We’re featuring my editor dream: side-by-side opposing views in our opinion section. This one is about Reston National Golf Course redevelopment.

I am super excited about our new online events section. Anyone can enter their event on our site for free and upgrade to a larger post or more prominent placement if you’d like.

I’d like to welcome our brand new advertisers, Sylvan Learning Center Reston and Pure Barre Reston.

Next month will be our special edition Reston Pets issue. Please scan the QR code to submit your pet’s picture and bio for the paper!


Happy reading!

**Dawn Crosson**  
Owner/Editor

Feature

**YOUR PET IN**

THE RESTON LETTER



## Art and community converge at 34th annual Tephra ICA Arts Festival

By Emma Kingkeo,  
Reston Letter Intern

For 34 years, the Tephra ICA Arts Festival has brought tens of thousands of people together to celebrate a diverse array of artwork. On May 17 and 18, Reston Town Center was once again transformed into a vibrant outdoor gallery, filled with original works of art for visitors to admire and purchase.

Showcasing everything from abstract paintings to handwoven textiles, more than 200 local and national artists and artisans lined the streets with booths displaying their work. For many, the festival offered more than just a chance to sell—it was an opportunity to connect with the community.

“I think meeting the people who buy the work—you get to know where it’s going, how excited they are about the pieces—and that really brings a lot of joy, not only to their lives, hopefully, but mostly to mine,” said photographer John Scanlan of Glenwood, Iowa, who has been a festival vendor for nearly a decade.

As he travels the world capturing images, Scanlan often finds that customers are just as interested in the stories behind his photos as they are in the artwork itself. “They’ll share their own travel stories, and we have these great



Reston weather cooperated as hundreds of festival-goers flocked to Town Center on May 17 and 18. Photo by The Reston Letter

exchanges,” he said.

Unlike traditional galleries, which display art in more formal, curated spaces, festivals like Tephra’s create a dynamic environment with direct artist-audience interaction. For returning artists, the event is also a reunion with previous buyers who come back to share how their artwork has enriched their lives.

A highlight of this year’s festival was a performance by Chicago-based artist Claire Helen Ashley, who transformed the park into an otherworldly landscape using large, colorful inflatable

sculptures. Her piece, “Radiant Spawn,” featured volunteers dressed in green performing as alien creatures exploring their new environment inside the sculptures.

Ashley sees art festivals as a way to reach people who might not typically visit galleries or museums. “I was really excited to come to an art festival and perform with these sculptures that aren’t necessarily salable objects,” she said.

To learn more about Tephra ICA and its year-round programs, visit [tephraica.org](http://tephraica.org).

## Staying connected: How Hopecam helps kids with cancer feel less alone

### Hopecam Brings the Classroom to Kids Fighting Cancer

By Kaydence Smith and Emma Kingkeo,  
Staff Writers

When a child is diagnosed with cancer, their world is suddenly filled with hospital visits, treatments, and uncertainty. But what often gets overlooked is how much they miss out on the everyday joys of childhood, especially the connections they form at school. School is more than just academics; it’s where children build friendships, share milestones, and experience the simple pleasures of growing up. For many young cancer patients during treatment, attending class in person isn’t possible.

That’s where Hopecam comes in. The nonprofit organization is dedicated to helping children stay connected to their classmates and communities through the use of technology. By providing web-enabled devices and coordinating with schools, Hopecam enables children undergoing treatment to virtually “attend” class, interact with peers, and maintain a sense of normalcy.

At the heart of Hopecam’s mission is Brett Rachel Fox, the organization’s Director of Operations and Philanthropy. Fox has helped thousands of children maintain vital social connections during one of the most isolating times of their lives.

“Hopecam is about so much more than school-work,” says Fox. “It brings back the social parts of a child’s life—like chatting about what happened at recess or showing off a cool new shirt. Those little moments matter.”

We had the opportunity to witness Hopecam in action at the Robert E. Simon, Jr. Children’s



Eliza reads her copy of the new book along with her classmates on a virtual call. Photo by Hopecam

Center, where 5-year-old Eliza, who is bravely battling Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, joined her class via webcam. During the session, she read a special book with her classmates, “My Brave Friend,” written by none other than Brett Rachel Fox.

The children’s book follows the story of Emma and Noah, two best friends whose relationship is tested when Emma is diagnosed with cancer. As Noah learns how to support her through her treatment, young readers are gently introduced to the themes of empathy, resilience, and the power of friendship.

Continued on page 4

# THE BULLETIN

## Pure Barre Reston Builds Strength and Community

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

When Sam Nims walked into her first Pure Barre class in 2018, she had no clue it would change her life. The longtime Reston resident and former Fairfax County Public Schools teacher was just hoping to find a workout she didn't dread. What she found instead was a passion, a purpose—and eventually, a new career as the owner of Pure Barre Reston.

"I hated my first class," Nims admitted, describing how she tried to blend into the back of the studio and struggled through every movement. "But something about it stuck with me." By the end of a 10-class pack, she was hooked. "I felt stronger. The mental health benefits alone were worth it," she added. "I upgraded to an unlimited membership and never looked back."

Fast forward to today, and Nims is not only teaching two to three classes a week, but also running the entire operation at Pure Barre Reston—technically located in Herndon, but serving both communities. With no prior fitness or dance background, Nims immersed herself in Pure Barre's rigorous teacher training, ultimately becoming certified in all four class formats the studio offers: Classic, Empower, Align, and Define.

More than a love of fitness drove Nims' journey from client to owner. "During the pandemic, Pure Barre saved my sanity. When the previous owner announced she was selling, I couldn't stand the idea of losing the community that had meant so much to me," she recalled. "So, I bought the studio."

Since taking over, Nims has introduced several new offerings, including Engage, a free 30-minute introductory class for first timers that emphasizes proper form and comfort for beginners. "It's so important that people walk in and feel like they belong," she observed. That spirit of inclusivity has helped Pure Barre Reston attract a wonderfully diverse client base. "There's no 'typical' member here," said Nims, who proudly describes herself as a Gen X grandma. "We have teens, retirees, working professionals—you name it."

The workouts themselves are high-intensity, low-impact, and designed to challenge people at every fitness level. But Nims emphasized that it's the community, not just the calorie burn, that keeps people coming back. "We celebrate every milestone, from 50 to 2,000 classes. We know our members by name. We want you to feel like you matter."

Pure Barre Reston has also deepened its ties to the greater community. Nims and her team have held pop-up classes at local businesses like Kendra Scott and Aslin Brewery, and they're planning a free outdoor class and open house at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 28, to celebrate their back-to-back wins as Northern Virginia Magazine's "Best Barre" studio. "We're working with other businesses at Woodland Park Crossing to make it a fun, festive event," said Nims, who hinted at a few surprises in store, plus visits from Meanwhile Coffee and a permanent jewelry artist.

Even as she has expanded the studio's offerings and client base, Nims remains grounded in her original mission:



Pure Barre Reston fosters a sense of belonging that keep their members coming back for more.  
Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

building community and helping people feel better, both physically and mentally. "I didn't come into this with a business background," she said. "I came in as someone who needed this place. And I know how powerful it can be when you feel like you've found your people."

Looking ahead, Nims hopes to grow the studio's reach even further. "We're a luxury brand in an uncertain economy, so we're always working to strike the right balance," she said. "But we believe now, more than ever, that people need a space to reset, recharge, and reconnect."

Whether you're a seasoned athlete or haven't worked out in years, Nims wants you to know you're welcome. "If I can go from crying on the mat after my first class to owning the studio, truly, anyone can do this," she said. "You just have to take that first step."

For more information, visit [purebarre.com/location/reston-va](https://purebarre.com/location/reston-va) or follow @purebarrereston on Instagram.



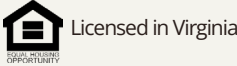
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## Rise Up! Reston Pride celebrates local LGBTQ+ community

By Lake Mannikko, Staff Writer

Lake Anne Plaza is always a colorful place, but no time of year is it more colorful than in June, when Reston Pride hosts its annual festival. Decorated with rainbow flags and chalk art, the plaza became a beacon of love and acceptance, celebrating the diversity of Reston residents and those in the greater Northern Virginia community. Upbeat music, exciting drag performances, and empowering speeches drew crowds around the Washington Plaza Baptist Church.

This year marked the debut of the Rising Voices Concert, held on May 31, followed by Reston's largest Pride festival to date, featuring 70 vendors, on June 1. Reston Pride was not always this big—it began

in 2018 as an event in a house of worship. With each passing year, the event grew, eventually moving to its current venue at Lake Anne. Even the COVID pandemic couldn't stop Reston Pride, as the annual celebration was held in a virtual setting in 2020.

Reston Pride board Vice President Kyle R. describes the event as "Welcoming, affirming, healing, and rallying." Kyle R. has served on the Reston Pride board since 2022, where their mission is to advocate for and celebrate our queer community.

"We have always been here," said Reston Pride President Bri Morgan in her opening speech. "In every generation, in every culture, in every corner of the world, and we are not going anywhere. This year's theme is Rise Up, and



Photo by Jennifer Heffner, East 27 Creative

it couldn't be more urgent... Rise up with your voice. Rise up with your presence. Because Pride without action is just a party. But Pride with purpose? That's a movement."

The nationwide Pride movement dates back to June

28, 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar that served as a popular meeting spot for LGBTQ New York residents. Since then, marches, parades, and festivals occur every June, celebrating and fighting for LGBTQ+ rights.

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# THE BULLETIN

## Generations in the Water: Reston Swim Team Association Keeps Community Spirit Afloat

RSTA Makes Waves in Reston for More than 50 Years

By Kaydence Smith, Staff Writer

For more than five decades, the Reston Swim Team Association [RSTA] has been making waves—both literal and metaphorical—throughout the Reston community. What began as a modest summer swim league has grown into a cherished local tradition, connecting families, fostering lifelong friendships, and cultivating a shared love of swimming across generations.

If you’ve ever spent a summer Saturday morning on a Reston pool deck, you know the energy and excitement of an RSTA meet. Children, ages 5 to 18, compete across eight neighborhood pools in a season that runs from the Tuesday after Memorial Day through the end of July. But RSTA is about more than winning races.

“It’s about developing a lifelong love of swimming, building great technique, and learning what it means to be part of a team,” said Nicola Caul Shelley, an RSTA board member.

What sets RSTA apart is its strong sense of community. The league is entirely volunteer run, with parents, guardians, and extended family members making the experience possible. From year-round board planning and team management to officiating meets, running concession stands, and timing races, RSTA thrives thanks to local dedication.

One family in particular exemplifies that spirit. Emily Clark, now a team manager, grew up swimming in the league.

Today, all three of her children compete. Her mother, Linda Hill, has been involved with RSTA for more than 35 years and recently became a sponsor, stepping up when the league launched its sponsorship program. This year, Linda’s mother—Clark’s grandmother and the great-grandmother of the current swimmers—also joined as a sponsor. That’s four generations in one league, demonstrating not only decades of involvement but a deep love of swimming nurtured by RSTA.

“Families come back year after year because of the environment,” Shelley said. “It’s fun, welcoming, and genuinely supportive. Our older swimmers mentor the younger ones. Coaches often return from college just to give back. It’s the full package.”

Hill’s roots with RSTA run deep. She began volunteering in 1990 and helped launch the Autumnwood swim team in 1992. She served as team manager for 13 years and was president of the RSTA board in 1993 and 1994.

“She was a foundational part of what’s become a long-lasting organization,” Clark said. “She and Kim Carmen—who now has an RSTA award named in her honor—managed Autumnwood together and helped build something enduring.”

Today, Linda Hill remains a fixture at meets, volunteering as a timer and staying actively engaged with the league she helped shape. Her passion lives on through her family. Emily Clark swam from age 10 through her senior summer and later competed at the collegiate level.

“RSTA kept swimming fun and connected to friends and family, even while I was training seriously,” she said.

Her children, now 12, 10, and 7, carry on the tradition. All three swim every summer, and Clark has served as a team manager for the past five years.

“Summer swim is where we can be a family, be with our favorite people, and continue a tradition that brings so much joy,” she said. “It’s about community, roots, lifelong friends, and gratitude. RSTA created a lifetime of joyful memories for me, and now it’s doing the same for my kids.”

RSTA’s mission extends beyond the pool. With support from generous local sponsors, the league provides scholarships for swimmers in need, purchases equipment, and expands access to more



Sasha Geel, Age Group Coach, with swimmers Grace Steiner and Vivy McFarland of North Hills Hurricanes who swim at Lake Newport Pool. Photo contributed by RSTA

families. The sponsorship process is straightforward and outlined on RSTA’s website at [rsta.org](http://rsta.org). Every dollar goes directly toward keeping the league affordable and accessible.

For swimmers not quite ready for competition, RSTA offers its popular “New Wave” program. Designed for kids ages 5 to 12 with basic swim skills, it helps bridge the gap to team readiness. While not a swim lesson program, New Wave has helped many children progress to competitive swimming since it launched five years ago. Registration opened May 17, and spots are still available.


RSTA’s 2025 season kicked off on June 7 with its first meet. Practices start in the evenings while school is in session and switch to mornings once summer break begins. Registration is already open, and while many teams are filling quickly, some still have space. Now is the perfect time to dive in.

As a nonprofit, RSTA is deeply grateful to its sponsors, whose support helps cover equipment costs, fund scholarships, and keep participation affordable. The 2025 sponsors include Synergy Design & Construction, The O’Gorman Team, Linda and Peter Hill, Jean McKee, Glory Days Grill at North Point, and Pediatric Dentistry of Reston (Dr. Neda). Sponsors are recognized on the RSTA homepage, where a short video also captures the league’s spirit.

Shelley remains optimistic about the future. “We’re not trying to grow endlessly,” she said. “We want to maintain what makes this league so special. But we’d love to return to pre-COVID participation levels and continue encouraging families to get involved. The league survives and thrives because of this amazing community.”

It may mean early mornings and busy weekends, but once you’re on the pool deck—watching a swimmer set a new personal best or celebrating a relay with teammates—it’s easy to understand why families return year after year. And why new families are always welcome.

To register or learn more, visit [rsta.org](http://rsta.org). Whether you’re a swimmer, a cheering parent, or a sponsor behind the scenes, there’s a place for you in the RSTA community.




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### Hopecam, cont’d from page 2

“Describing cancer to children can be tough,” Fox explained. “We needed a tool to help start the conversation in a way that wasn’t scary. That’s where the idea for the book came from.”

Although “My Brave Friend” is geared toward students in kindergarten through third grade, its message resonates with readers of all ages. It helps dispel common fears, like whether cancer is contagious, and encourages classmates to show kindness and support.

“The goal is to teach empathy,” says Fox. “Nobody wants to have cancer, but being a good friend can make a world of difference for a child going through it.”

More than just providing a webcam, Hopecam helps children feel included

during a time when they might otherwise feel left behind. “The best part of my job is hearing stories like Eliza’s,” Fox says. “It’s not just about staying on top of schoolwork; it’s about being there for your friend when they need you most.”

The impact is clear. Eliza’s classmates were overjoyed to see her, even through a screen. They chatted about crafts and drawings, waved excitedly, and crowded around the camera to say goodbye. It was a touching reminder that even virtual connections can be deeply meaningful.

Since its founding 23 years ago, Hopecam has connected more than 5,500 children with their classmates. And with the growing awareness of the importance of mental health, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for

### LISTEN TO



**OUR PODCAST WITH RSTA’S NICOLA SHELLEY**



Brett Fox reads the newly released book to Eliza and her class. Photo by Hopecam

programs like Hopecam has never been greater. As technology becomes more accessible, the organization is expanding its reach, ensuring that even more children can experience the joy and comfort of staying connected.

To learn more about Hopecam or apply for support, visit [www.hopecam.org](http://www.hopecam.org).

# THE BULLETIN

## Reston Gallery Hosts Global Artist’s Retrospective

Contributed by Reston Art Gallery

Rosemarie Forsythe’s solo exhibition, “Illuminations: A Retrospective,” is on view through June 29 at Reston Art Gallery and Studios at Lake Anne Plaza.

The show highlights artworks from the past 15 years of Forsythe’s artistic career. Drawing inspiration from 15th-century illuminated manuscripts, she infuses her work with a contemporary twist: physics equations drift through enigmatic landscapes, blending science with visual poetry. Her vibrant mixed-media pieces celebrate both nature and science, created with acrylic, Flashe paint, and 23k gold leaf to evoke a sense of magic and mystery. A signature element of her style is the use of gold rivets, which add texture and dimension. Her kaleidoscopic compositions often feature jewel-toned, concentric circles that seem to gather entire worlds within them.

A global perspective informs Forsythe’s distinctive approach. Over the course of her previous careers—as a U.S. diplomat, policymaker, and international business executive—she lived in seven countries and visited more than 60. Entirely self-taught as an artist, she combines her intellectual background and cross-cultural experiences with her creative vision, resulting in a body of work that honors the power of ideas and the evolution of thought.

Her art has gained international recognition. The U.S. Department of State’s Art in Embassies Program has exhibited her work in U.S. embassies in Austria, Jordan, and Bolivia. Her paintings are held in diplomatic collections around the world, including in Qatar, Jordan, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Australia,



Rosemarie Forsythe will showcase her art until June 29. Photo contributed by Reston Art Gallery

Saudi Arabia, Togo, the U.K., and the U.S. Notably, her art was selected for the Brussels office of Rose Gottemoeller, then Deputy Secretary General of NATO.

Forsythe is also a member of the Advisory Board and Director’s Circle of the National Museum of Women in the Arts and is a juried member of the Reston Art Gallery. Her work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide.

To learn more about Forsythe and her art, visit [rosemarieforsythe.com](http://rosemarieforsythe.com) or follow her on Instagram @rose-

marieforsythefineart.

Visitors to the gallery also can enjoy works by all seven artists at Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza West. Look for the orange “ART” sign by the lakeside at historic Lake Anne Plaza. The gallery is steps from Lake Anne’s Saturday morning Farmers Market and surrounded by local restaurants with outdoor seating. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Appointments are available by emailing [art@restonartgallery.com](mailto:art@restonartgallery.com).

## Dominion Energy to resume clearing, cutting along W&OD Trail on June 16; NOVA Parks ‘concerned’

By Gene Powell, Staff Writer

Dominion Energy has notified NOVA Parks that it intends to resume clearing and tree removal on June 16 along much of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad Regional Park trail, even as park officials press for a coordinated approach to vegetation removal, power line safety, and restoration using native plants in affected areas.

A June 5 letter from Dominion’s Manager of Electric Transmission Forestry Amanda Keyes said the power company will resume work in its established trail-side “easement” area. Dominion said the identified trees need to be cut down because they pose immediate threats to its power transmission lines, which if damaged could cause a major power blackout. It expects the cutting and trimming work to be completed in “approximately three to four weeks.”

The energy company said a high percentages of the trees, in addition to posing a safety hazard, had been identified as “undesirable vegetation” in a prior maintenance agreement with NOVA Parks, but in a June 6 response to the energy company, NOVA Parks executive director Paul Gilbert said, “We are concerned with the scope of the tree cutting proposal and the lack of a plan to restore the impacted areas.” He noted the area, “Is one of the most used and valued parks in Virginia, and this environmental resource needs to be protected and enhanced.” Keyes said in her letter that “we understand the cherished nature of the W&OD Trail,” but added that warmer weather can cause power lines to sag.

From November to March, Dominion clear-cut trees and other vegetation

along a four-mile section of the park trail in the Dunn Loring-Vienna area, prompting objections from counties and municipalities along the trail route.

Gilbert’s reply said that because of the move to “aggressively cut almost all the trees ... that area is now being overrun with invasive plants that will be increasingly hard to manage in the years ahead because it was cut to the ground without a restoration plan.”

Gilbert warned Keyes that “without preventative measures, the new round of cuts will have similar impacts.”

The two sides have said they hope to arrive at a mutual, coordinated effort to protect the power lines and also restore and maintain the park’s natural condition, including suppression of invasive vegetation.

But in the exchange of letters, there is a conflict over their most-recent contact. Keyes’ let-

ter says the decision to move ahead with clearing and cutting came after a June 3 “walk-through” on the trail with Park’s staff. But Gilbert said his team “did not request or support any tree removal ... only that work be done to reduce and manage invasive species.”

The 45-mile W&OD park includes a paved trail between Shirlington and Purcellville, through the center of Reston. The narrow park follows the railbed of the former railroad, which ceased operation in 1968. Dominion transmission lines run for about 30 miles of the park’s length.

On April 25, NOVA Parks’ proposed a new “Vegetation Management Memorandum of Understanding” that recognized Dominion’s easement right to trim trees, bushes, and other growth, and which also had a detailed restore, replant, and maintain the program.



Photo by The Reston Letter



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

<div>13</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Fab Fridays Summerbration</div>	<div>13</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Happy Hour with Darden and Friends</div>	<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Family Fun Entertainment Series</div>	<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Juneteenth Celebration</div>
<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Kids Fishing Derby</div>	<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Reston Concerts on the Town</div>	<div>15</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Shenandoah Conservatory</div>	<div>20</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Play all Day VA</div>
<div>21</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Deckboat Disco 2025</div>	<div>25</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Senior Movie Days</div>	<div>28</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Lake Fairfax Fireworks</div>	<div>28</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Laughter to Uplift: Celebrating Reston's Community &amp; Nonprofits</div>
<div>28</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Summer Sprint in the Park</div>	<div>4</div> <div>JULY</div> <div>Fab Fridays Summer- bration: Taylor Swift Tribute Band</div>	<div>4</div> <div>JULY</div> <div>Firecracker 5K for the Troops</div>	<div>10</div> <div>JULY</div> <div>The Reston Letter Book Club</div>

<p><b>Friday, June 13</b> <b>Fab Fridays Summerbration</b> <b>7-8:30 p.m. Fridays all summer</b> Reston Station</p> <p><b>Friday, June 13</b> <b>Happy Hour with Darden and Friends</b> <b>5:30-6:45 p.m. Fridays all summer</b> Reston Town Square Park</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 14</b> <b>Family Fun Entertainment Series</b> <b>10-10:45 a.m. Saturdays all summer</b> Reston Town Square Park</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 14</b> <b>Juneteenth Celebration</b> <b>12-3 p.m.</b> St. John Neumann, 11900 Lawyers Rd</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 14</b> <b>Kids Fishing Derby</b> <b>9:30-11:30 a.m.</b></p>	<p>Lake Audubon Pool, 2070 Twin Branches Road <a href="https://www.reston.org/calendar.aspx?EID=1062">https://www.reston.org/calendar.aspx?EID=1062</a></p> <p><b>Saturday, June 14</b> <b>Reston Concerts on the Town</b> <b>7:30-10 p.m. Saturdays all summer</b> Reston Town Square Park</p> <p><b>Sunday, June 15</b> <b>Shenandoah Conservatory</b> <b>7 p.m. Sundays all summer</b> Reston Town Square Park</p> <p><b>Friday, June 20</b> <b>Play All Day VA</b> <b>10 a.m.-6 p.m.</b> RCC Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Rd</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 21</b> <b>Deckboat Disco 2025</b> <b>6-10 p.m.</b> Lake Thoreau, South Lakes Drive* *in the middle of the lake!</p>	<p><b>Wednesday, June 25</b> <b>Senior Movie Day</b> <b>9:15 a.m.-12 p.m.</b> LOOK Cinemas at Reston Town Center</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 28</b> <b>Lake Fairfax Fireworks</b> <b>12 p.m.</b> 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive Ticketed entry begins at noon. Fireworks start shortly after 9 p.m.</p> <p><b>Saturday, June 28</b> <b>Laughter to Uplift: Celebrating Reston's Community &amp; Nonprofits!</b> <b>6-8 p.m.</b> Beloved Yoga <a href="https://belovedyoga.cowtinker.com/om/workshops/laughter-to-uplift">https://belovedyoga.cowtinker.com/om/workshops/laughter-to-uplift</a></p> <p><b>Saturday, June 28</b> <b>Summer Sprint in the Park: Family Friendly 5k and 1 Mile Fun Run</b> <b>9 a.m. race start, Race packet pick-up 7:45-8:45 a.m.</b></p>	<p>1400 Lake Fairfax Drive <a href="https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax/summer-sprint-park/062825">https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax/summer-sprint-park/062825</a></p> <p><b>Friday, July 4</b> <b>Fab Fridays Summerbration: Taylor Swift Tribute Band</b> <b>7-8:30 p.m.</b> Reston Station</p> <p><b>Friday, July 4</b> <b>Firecracker 5K for the Troops</b> <b>8 a.m.</b> Reston Town Square Park</p> <p><b>Thursday, July 10</b> <b>The Reston Letter Book Club</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b> Elden Street Tea Shop *Memoirs of a Suburban Troublemaker* by Ellen R.B. Smith.</p>
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<div><div>RESTON AQUATICS</div><div>2025 Pool Schedule</div></div>							
SEASON 3 (June 14 - August 15) includes Juneteenth & July 4 holidays	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Autumnwood Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Dogwood Pool	10 a.m. - 7 p.m.	10 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Glade Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Golf Course Island Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Hunters Woods Pool & Spa	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.
Lake Audubon Pool	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.
Lake Newport Pool	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	CLOSED
Lake Thoreau Pool & Spa	Open 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Fitness 6-9 a.m. & Fitness 12-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Fitness 6-9 a.m. & Open 12-9 p.m.
Newbridge Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED
North Hills Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
North Shore Heated Pool & Spa	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.
Ridge Heights Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Shadowood Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Tall Oaks Pool	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.
Uplands Pool	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

# LIFETIME

## Wendel Yale keeps on riding

By Emma Kingkeo,  
Reston Letter Intern

At 85 years old, Wendel Yale turns heads when he pedals down the road on his trusty bicycle. Most people his age are thinking of slowing down for retirement and relaxation. But having ridden through the city, state, and even internationally in Canada and overseas for two years in England, biking has been one of Yale’s greatest passions, and he does not plan to give it up anytime soon. With every mile he bikes, he’s rewriting what it means to grow old.

“Now that I’m in my eighties, I’m starting to feel old, but I’m not going to stop biking,” he said.

Aging comes with its downsides that not even the fittest person could avoid. For Yale, that means arthritis in almost every joint in his body. He doesn’t have as much energy as he did when he was younger. But while Yale listens to his body, he doesn’t let it dictate his ability to ride.

“I go slower,” he said. “I used to average 15, 16, 17 miles an hour. Now I average about 12-1/2. And you know what? I still enjoy it. It’s a lot of fun.”

Growing up in Flint, Michigan, Yale

rode his bike everywhere. Back then, a bicycle wasn’t for fitness or fun; it was his only real means of transportation. He drifted away from it as he got older, trading in his bike for a car and eventually picking up golf as a hobby instead. It wasn’t until he moved to Virginia that he remembered that crucial part of his childhood.

“I suddenly realized that golf was not exercise,” he said. “And so I thought, gosh, why am I not riding a bike these days? I haven’t done that in ages. I wanted to go back to it, and I could see that I could go out instead of just walking around a golf course, not getting any exercise, and not particularly enjoying it, I could just go anytime I wanted to, anywhere,” Yale said. “I don’t think I’ve played a day’s golf since.”

Yale biked in Europe when he lived there. “It was a wonderful experience. Riding there, going out and visiting areas that had been built up by the Romans a couple thousand years ago, is just amazing,” he said.

He rode around Reston, familiarizing himself with the open road. Soon, he went to Leesburg, over the rolling hills of Middleburg, and all across the state. He

would bike 30 or 40 miles. This continued until he was in his seventies, living a happy life with a wife and son. Biking had kept him extraordinarily healthy. “I thought I was the healthiest person in the world for a long time,” he said, “until I had a heart attack. That was a wake-up call.” But when he told his cardiologist he biked two to three times each week, the doctor said, “Make it four.”

Yale has still had his fair share of accidents due to falling off his bicycle. His first one, which was after more than 45 years of biking, broke his hip and another, his collarbone.

“The biggest danger on a bicycle is if you fall, that’s obvious,” he said. “So you have to learn all the rules, you have to become skilled enough so that doesn’t happen.”

A sightseer at heart, Yale often bikes to tourist spots to savor the sights, despite the distance from home. “It’s the idea that I rode out there on my bike, it’s something that I did myself, it has more meaning,” he said. “I can take a car out to all those things and see them, but it’s different if you’re just using yourself on something as simple as a bicycle.”



Wendel Yale on a tour with Bike Virginia.  
Photo contributed by Wendell Yale

Yale is able to recognize his faults and his limits. But even as the years pile on, his passion hasn’t diminished—instead, it’s evolved into a commitment to doing what he loves.

“I’ve come to accept the fact that I’m winding down. We don’t know what tomorrow brings, but if I’m going to bike, I just go out and do it, and every time I come back from having done it, I feel great,” he said.

## Lifelong learning after retirement: OLLI at George Mason offers enrichment and connection

By Kaydence Smith, Staff Writer

Retirement doesn’t have to mean slowing down; it can be the perfect time to explore new interests and stay mentally active. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute [OLLI] at George Mason University invites adults, ages 50 and older, to engage in learning, make new connections, and dive into topics they may not have encountered during their working years.

OLLI offers a wide range of courses in literature, history, science, art, current

events, and more. Classes are taught by a mix of retired professionals—including former professors who volunteer their time—and individuals still active in their fields or passionate about sharing their expertise. All instructors must submit course proposals for approval, ensuring that classes maintain high standards of quality and content.

“Too many people retire and just sit at home; this gives you a reason to keep learning and connecting,” says Anita Lasansky, a member of OLLI’s outreach committee.

First-year membership is \$150 and includes unlimited classes. After the first year, annual dues are \$450, with continued access to unlimited courses. In addition to its academic offerings, OLLI features clubs such as cooking, tai chi, and memoir writing, as well as social events like holiday gatherings and group lunches.

Courses are available both in-person and online, with many offered in a hybrid format via Zoom. In Reston, classes are typically held at the Lake Anne Community Center. Additional sessions are

offered in Fairfax and Loudoun, making participation flexible and convenient for a variety of learners.

Prospective members can browse the course catalog online or register by mail. With a mission to enrich the lives of older adults through education and community, OLLI provides a welcoming environment to stay intellectually and socially engaged.

To learn more, visit <https://olli.gmu.edu/>.

## June is Great Outdoors Month: Walking Reston Trails

By Scott Parkin, Staff Writer

One of the joys of living in Reston is being able to enjoy its natural surroundings. Before my wife and I decided to move here in 1986, we drove around to get a feel for the community. My wife was struck by how many people we saw out walking and biking, something that was unusual in the part of Alexandria where we then lived.

After visiting the Lake House, where the Welcome Center was located at the time, we were even more intrigued. I remember seeing a scale model of Reston (it’s now on view at the Reston Museum) that displayed the existing walking trails along with the lakes and various village centers. We decided to move shortly thereafter.

As older adults who enjoy walking without having to drive far, we’ve come to appreciate several favorite trails.

Among them are the Turquoise Trail in South Reston, which runs from South Lakes Center to Hunters Woods; the Green Trail, which stretches from Reston Town Center to Lake Anne; and the Pink Loop in North Reston.

We often access the Turquoise Trail by parking on Soapstone Drive between Glade and Lawyers roads, entering near the trailhead on the west side of the road. (Be aware that parking on the east side, in the bike lanes, may result in a ticket.) There’s an easy, one-mile paved walk to a bench by a stream. The trail is heavily canopied by tall trees and relatively flat, making it pleasant in any season.

Now that we live across from Reston Town Center and adjacent to the Green Trail, we use it to walk to Lake Anne and back. The trail is mostly shaded, although there is a sunny hill that can be a challenge on the return from Lake Anne. An unpaved side trail runs through the woods behind Lake Anne Elementary,

parallel to the Green Trail for about half a mile; you’ll often hear children playing during the school year. You can access this area by parking near The Container Store or at Lake Anne Village.

We used to live near the Pink Loop Trail in North Reston. A convenient way to access it is to use the public parking at the North Hills Pavilion or near the North Hills pool and tennis courts. Much of this trail is level and shaded, running through woods parallel to Woodbrook Lane. Some sections have been prone to flooding in the past, so you may need to detour through the woods at times.

June is Great Outdoors Month. What better time to explore a Reston trail? Trail maps are available at <https://www.reston.org>.

*Scott L. Parkin is president of Reston for a Lifetime (www.RestonforaLifetime.org), a nonprofit organization with a mission to inform and educate residents about how to age in place.*



### Come Join Our BOOK CLUB!

July 10th @6:30



- **Location:** Elden st. Tea Shop
- **Book:** Memoirs of a Suburban Troublemaker by Ellen R.B Smith
- The book is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

For book club suggestions or to be added to our email list and receive book club updates, please email [therestonletterbookclub@gmail.com](mailto:therestonletterbookclub@gmail.com).

# EDUCATION

**THE RESTON LETTER**

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATE!

**TO: EL & JOANIE BOYKIN**

**SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025**

**THE RESTON LETTER**

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATE!

**TO: NATHAN RITTER**

Congrats on your 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation!

**HERNDON MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025**

**THE RESTON LETTER**

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATE!

**TO: TEDDY CROSSON**

We are so proud of the young man you are and how hard you have worked in 6th grade. Look out, HMS! Here comes Ted!

-Love, Mom and Dad

**ARMSTRONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025**

**THE RESTON LETTER**

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATE!

**TO: AUDREY FLYNN**

Congratulations Audrey, We are so proud of you!

-Love, Mom & Dad

**SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025**

**THE RESTON LETTER**

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATE!

**TO: CAROLINE AYRES**

Congratulations Caroline! We are so proud of you and all of your accomplishments! Good luck at William & Mary!

**SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025**

*Congratulations to all 2025 grads and their families!*

## Sylvan Learning Center Helps Reston Students Thrive

By Holly Weatherwax, Staff Writer

When your child needs help with schoolwork, a challenging subject, or SAT prep, having the right support can make all the difference. The Sylvan Learning Center in Reston, conveniently located on the main level of the brick building in Fox Mill Shopping Center, provides just that. Established in 2017 and acquired last year by Florence Monkam, the center blends the trusted resources of the national Sylvan Learning network with a personalized approach that helps students thrive.

Sylvan offers three core programs: Personalized Tutoring, Academic Coaching, and Advancement & Test Prep. Every

new student begins with a comprehensive assessment to identify specific learning needs. Based on the results, Director Cristina Schonthaler-Rivera matches the student with a tutor and sets a schedule tailored to their goals. Most tutors are current or former Fairfax County teachers.

As owner, Monkam oversees operations, partners with local schools, and promotes the center throughout the community. Originally trained as an engineer, she transitioned into math education and, after spending time away from the area—during which she tutored independently—returned to pursue a career in educational services by joining an established brand.

While many families seek support af-

ter first-quarter report cards, summer is also an ideal time to catch up or reinforce key concepts. “Learning doesn’t stop when school ends,” Monkam said. “Summer’s flexible schedule is a great opportunity to keep students from losing momentum.”

Students come to Sylvan for a variety of reasons: SOL and SAT prep, strengthening skills in reading, writing, or math, or simply gaining confidence in the classroom.

If you think your child could benefit from extra academic support this summer or during the school year, consider scheduling a free evaluation. Call 703-382-6300 or email [restonva@sylvan-learning.com](mailto:restonva@sylvan-learning.com).



Sylvan is a locally owned option for summer enrichment. Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

## Perseverance and Purpose: Jackson Hayken’s Journey to Eagle Scout

By Conor Gillingham, Reston Letter Intern

Being a Boy Scout takes commitment, and earning the rank of Eagle Scout requires perseverance. For Jackson Hayken, a rising senior at St. Paul VI Catholic High School, that journey has been years in the making.

Hayken has been a member of Reston Boy Scouts since kindergarten and has spent countless hours volunteering and developing leadership skills in pursuit of scouting’s highest honor. One of his most notable accomplishments involved supporting the Fairfax County Police Department’s K9 unit. Last November, Hayken helped construct specialized decoy boxes designed to aid K9s in focusing on specific scents or tasks. He also installed commemorative plaques honoring K9 officers who died in the line of duty.

“That project started as something I needed to do,” Hayken said. “But as I got more involved, I developed a real passion for it. Making connections in the police department and working with the dogs was amazing.”

Projects like this one helped define what scouting means to Hayken. For him, it’s more than learning outdoor skills; it’s

about building character and making ethical decisions in the wider world.

“When you demonstrate the scout law, our words to live by, you become a very well-rounded citizen for your community and nation,” said Hayken.

Balancing academics with scouting has given Hayken a unique dual education. During the week, he focuses on schoolwork; on weekends, he heads into the wilderness with his troop for campouts, where he finds a different kind of challenge.

“Camping has become my favorite part of being in the troop,” he said. “It’s a break from the busy school schedule, and gives me a chance to take on something physical instead of sitting behind a desk.”

What Hayken enjoys isn’t relaxation; it’s the opportunity to push himself in new ways. Camping and hiking tested his stamina and adaptability. Earning his camping merit badge was one of his most challenging accomplishments.

“You have to log a ton of nights outdoors, and it takes a lot of work,” he explained. “It was the first merit badge I started, five years ago, and the last one I completed—just a month

before becoming an Eagle Scout.”

That dedication has deep roots. Hayken followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, an Eagle Scout himself, who inspired him to stick with it. “My grandfather was always behind the scenes, motivating me to finish what I started and reach that final goal,” Hayken said. “He played a big part in helping me get there.”

Looking ahead, Hayken hopes to become an entrepreneur, applying the values of scouting in the business world. He sees it as the next opportunity to lead with integrity, perseverance, and purpose.

He also hopes his journey will inspire younger scouts to aim high.

“It’s all about not giving up,” he said. “Think of it as improving yourself and gaining a skill set that stays with you for life. That’s a huge lesson that shaped who I am today.”



Jackson's Eagle Scout project involved helping with K9 training. Photo by Greg Hayken

### High school seniors make legacy walk



Herndon and South Lakes seniors donned their robes and mortarboards, hopped on buses, and visited their elementary schools and middle schools, as students cheered them on. Here HHS grads tour Armstrong and SLHS grads tour Lake Anne Elementary. Photos by Isadora Guerreiro

EDUCATION

Making an Impact

Debbie Schooler: a lifelong learner

By Chuck Cascio, Author and Former South Lakes Teacher

One particularly significant statement Professor Debbie Schooler makes as she reflects on her own academic background casts significant light on her career path: "I was always jumping from one curiosity to the next."

Is it any wonder then that her affection for curiosity led her from "walking down the path behind our house in Reston to see the beavers swimming around" to "hanging around South Lakes after school, whether for band or rehearsals for the school musical" and eventually to her current role as a psychology professor at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.?

A 1995 graduate of South Lakes High School, who also went to elementary and middle schools in Reston, Debbie credits many faculty members for instilling in her a love of learning. "I had amazing teachers at all levels who emphasized critical thinking and creativity," she says. "I remember having spirited debates in class, sometimes testing the limits of my teachers' patience. It sparked in me a love of learning, and I basically never left

school." When Debbie says she "never left school," she means it literally. She graduated from Brown University in 1999 with a degree in psychology and then went on to earn her doctorate in psychology at the University of Michigan. At first, Debbie had planned to teach elementary education but then, "I really liked the classes in child psychology and the research we were learning, so I decided to get my PhD."

After achieving that goal, Debbie's journey in education continued. "At Michigan, I was lucky to have some amazing mentors," she says. "I started studying the role of media and culture in identity development," which led to teaching at San Francisco State University as a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Sexuality Studies followed by four years as an assistant professor of psychology at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. When a position at Gallaudet University in D.C. became available in 2011, Debbie saw a unique opportunity that she has found extremely fulfilling.

"I felt so fortunate to be welcomed into Gallaudet's community and learn from my deaf and hard of hearing students

and colleagues," Debbie says. "My students were so patient with me as I learned American Sign Language [ASL], and I'm so grateful for that. Teaching in my second language has made me a better teacher. I have more empathy for students who are learning in their second language. You really have to know what you are teaching well in order to translate it into another language."

Debbie acknowledges that "threats to academic freedoms" today are increasing the challenges higher education faces. The impact of those threats has reinforced Debbie's commitment to her profession, especially to liberal arts programs. "A lot of people view college as a pathway to career success, and it can certainly be important for that," she says. "But at its roots, a liberal arts education is about teaching students skills needed to be free members of society, to think critically, to hone our values, to build on the work of those who've come before us, and to create new knowledge that we can use to solve today's problems."

Given those objectives, Debbie is highly motivated by the unique challenges of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community: "There has not been enough research



Debbie Schooler

conducted about deaf and hard of hearing people, so I work to continue training students to help expand their knowledge base with research that is meaningful to them. My goal is to continue to expand the access DHH students have to those kinds of learning opportunities."

For Professor Debbie Schooler, how to make an impact and the rewards for doing so boil down to this: "I love seeing the transformations that happen as students start questioning assumptions they've held and start learning how to find answers to their own questions. I get to keep learning every day on the job, and that is one of my favorite things to do."

Summer Reading: Color Our World Your Way!

By the Friends of the Reston Regional Library

June marks the beginning of the Fairfax County Public Library Summer Reading program. This year's theme is Color Our World. What a perfect chance to let your kids put their own mark on their reading list!

By now we hope everyone knows the value of literacy for readers of all ages (Education! Empathy! Creativity! Critical Thinking!) And if you're a parent, you've probably heard about the 'summer slide.' No, it's not a fun feature at the Water Mine. It's the dreaded idea that students might fall behind over the summer, losing literacy, knowledge, or skills gained during the school year. With that kind of concern on your mind, it can be tempting to put a lot of pressure on Summer Reading, and on Summer Readers!

But this summer, we encourage you to let your young readers do their own thing. There's nothing worse for a kid than to pick up a book that seems interesting and then be told "You're too young/too old/too fill-in-the-blank for that!" or "Why don't you read something educational?" or, worst of all, "That's not real reading!"

Don't treat summer reading like homework. If you want kids to enjoy reading, then let them read what they enjoy. Let them choose a storyline, genre, or format they've always wanted to read but maybe haven't had the time, resources, or confidence. Or let them re-read an old favorite, even if it's

all summer long. Resist those all-or-nothing expectations. Not everyone becomes an avid reader overnight, and not everyone takes the same path to a love of reading. 500 page novels or 5 minute short stories, a graphic novel next to the pool, or an audio book in the car – reading in big and small doses can foster literacy and a lifelong love of reading.

If you want to give your readers the best chances to find their own way to a love of reading, don't forget to visit the library in person. Searching online is handy, and can give you results when you know what you're looking for. But browsing in person, at any age, lets readers wander and discover. Browsers can respond to what catches their eye. Librarians work hard to put together displays to offer a variety of tantalizing prospects for readers. Don't miss out on them! Like going into Costco for 'milk, eggs, and flour' and coming out with a cartful --- a trip to the library can bring a stack of unexpected treats.

To participate in the Summer Reading Adventure, readers can

sign up online or in person. Once they start reading, they can use Beanstack or a paper log to track books and reading time, earn virtual progress badges, and complete goals. At the end of the summer, readers have a chance to win real prizes including gift certificates and coupons for all sorts of local businesses.

Information about the Summer Reading program can be found on the Fairfax County Public Library's website: <https://research.fairfax-county.gov/reading-challenges/summer-reading>

Wondering if adults can participate in Summer Reading? According to FCPL, "Absolutely! We want to involve adults in the summer reading experience. It promotes adult literacy and encourages people to interact with the library in different ways. Plus, adults like reading books, attending engaging summer events and receiving prizes, too!"

Stop by Reston Regional Library soon to get your family started on a Summer Reading Adventure.



Crossword Corner

By Reston crossword constructor, Joe O'Neill

Joe O'Neill, a 40-year Reston resident, is a retired English professor and IT executive who recently began writing and submitting crossword puzzles to major U.S. daily newspapers.

Joe's puzzles have appeared in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. This is O'Neill's 23<sup>rd</sup> crossword puzzle creation, made specifically for The Reston Letter readers!

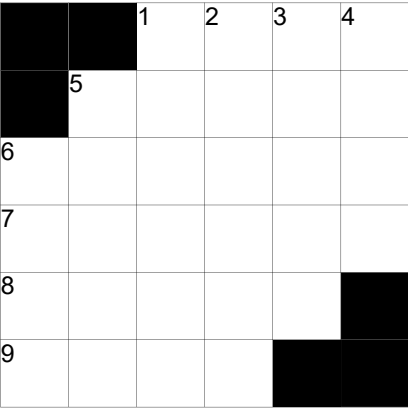
Seeya!

ACROSS

- 1. Kept in the loop via email
- 5. Former governor of NY Andrew
- 6. Woman fond of multiple meowers
- 7. Early phases of a disease or condition
- 8. Sheer dress or curtain fabric
- 9. "...meeny, miny, moe" opener

DOWN

- 1. Jumps a ticket line, say (2 words)
- 2. Pleasing in appearance
- 3. Express strong feelings, particularly on stage
- 4. DeLuise, Dimaggio, and some monks
- 5. Kayak's kin
- 6. Quiet place to tie up your 5-Down



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SPORTS

Reston Sprint Triathlon Unites 777 Racers and Community Volunteers

By Matt Reider, Staff Writer

One day before race day Jen Dryzga unpacked plastic bins full of yellow volunteer shirts in front of Reston’s Lake Newport Pool. She was using her time away from her day job as co-owner of the local REPFIT gym in Herndon to focus on athletics in a different way-- as the race director of the Reston Sprint Triathlon. She trained for the position by attending classes provided by USA Triathlon (USAT), which provides membership, training, and certifications for such roles. The Reston Sprint Triathlon is an official USA Triathlon-sanctioned event.

This requires significant coordination and sponsorship, with Jen being part of Racing in Reston, which is organized under the CORE Foundation. Together, they serve to “ignite positive community impact by fostering emerging nonprofits.” Racing in Reston serves as a fundraising arm, and focuses on athletic events-- such as the Reston Youth Triathlon, the Reston Sprint Triathlon, and the Reston Triathlon to raise funds.

This is Jen’s third year as race coordinator, and seventh involved in the race. This year, she is organizing nearly 120

volunteers from across the community to pull off the event. Many positions are held by friends and families of the athletes - all hoping to get a glimpse of their racer somewhere on the course, which hasn’t changed over the 19 years the event has been held.

It begins with a 400-meter swim in Lake Newport pool, followed by a 12-mile (19k) bike ride on Reston roads, and ends with a 5km run on area paths. This sprint version is shorter across all events than the standard Olympic version, which includes a 1.5km swim, 40km bike, and 10km run. The first Reston Triathlon was held in 1984, with the sprint version added in 2007. Prior to the covid pandemic, the Triathlon grew to be the largest triathlon in Virginia, with 1000 participants. This year’s event has 777 athletes across many categories. Awards go out for overall winners in the male and female categories, and then winners across different age groups. The youngest age group starts at 13, and while there is no maximum age limit, the most experienced competitor was 84 years old. For those who aren’t ready to tackle all three parts of the course, relay teams compete - and there is an Aquathlon entry for

those that want to avoid the bike ride.

On race day, the Lake Newport area is much more crowded. Local police officers and traffic cones line the course. Hundreds of volunteers in yellow shirts are there too-- with thousands of friends, family members, and other spectators cheering the racers on. Doug Bushee, the founder of CORE Foundation, announced the race day program. Meagan Murphy, Core Executive Director, said she “loves that it is a community event with lots of local athletes and first timers, and hundreds of local volunteers.” That community feeling is obvious, with old friends running into each other throughout the day. There have been 19 Reston Sprint Triathlons organized by CORE Foundation, raising \$545,000 for charity. Four athletes have competed all 19 years the event was held, this year’s event had 42 racers under the age of 18, and 28% of the racers were from the Reston area.

With a pool temperature around 68°F, some of the participants donned wetsuits for the swim portion. Competitors climbed out of the pool after eight laps, then headed to the chaotic transition area to mount their bikes for three laps around North Reston and then the



The day before the event, Arsenal Events was out supporting the event setup and race timing  
Kristen Lasich, Tammy Birdie-Clark, Neil Richard, Cameron Sidebotham, Jacob Korn.

5K run. As anticipated, the first finishers hit the gate around the one hour mark, winded but proud of their accomplishment. The rest of the morning is for celebration with family and friends, with many group photos, snacks, and a beer garden sponsored by Lost Rhino brewing company. In the coming weeks, many of the coordinators, athletes, and participants are sure to start planning for next year, with the 20th Anniversary of the Reston Sprint Triathlon certain to be the best yet.

Herndon baseball coach wins coach of the year

By McAllister Pierce-Biney, Guest Writer

Herndon High School’s varsity baseball team had a stellar 2024 season, finishing with a 14-3 record—its second-highest win total and third-best winning percentage (.824) from 2021 to 2024. Head Coach Steve Frank was named Liberty District Coach of the Year for his leadership and team development.

Despite a tough regional playoff loss to Westfield, Coach Frank views the season as a success, emphasizing growth, resilience, and learning from the challenges of the previous year. The team reached key goals: improving their record, defeating rival South Lakes, and becoming the toughest squad in the district.

“These awards are the result of our team’s hard work and dedication,” Frank said. “We didn’t have any players make first or second team All-Region, while McLean—the team we tied for first—had six. That just shows we played as one unit, and that unity made us even stronger and more fearless.”

One unique team-building strategy Frank introduced was the “Three H’s”—players shared their heroes,

hardships, and highlights with one another. The exercise created deeper bonds and built trust throughout the roster. “A team with strong connections is easier to coach,” Frank said.

The players embraced a family-first, team-first mindset. During end-of-season meetings, many described the experience as their most meaningful in high school athletics, thanks to friendships formed and games won together.

Trust is a cornerstone of Frank’s coaching philosophy. “I give every player the green light to steal. Most coaches call the play—we don’t. We practice it a lot, and I trust them to know when they’re ready to go.”

That trust has paid off. Over the past two seasons, Herndon recorded the top two single-season stolen base totals in school history. Brayden Humpherys set the record with 27 steals in 2024, and Kyler Rodgers followed with 24 in 2025.

Frank believes a strong team identity is what sets great teams apart. “When you build around character and values, success follows.”

The highlight of the baseball season was their spring



A cornerstone Coach Frank’s coaching philosophy is trust.  
Photo by Steve Beasley

break trip to UNC for Wake Forest vs UNC. “Then we went on to Folly Beach, SC and played 4 games in 3 days, and had some great beach time and plenty to eat—definitely a highlight for the players that not every team does on spring break,” Frank said.

Thousands Take to the Trails for Bike to Work Day 2025

By Patricia Kovacs, Staff Writer

Thursday, May 15 marked this year’s Bike to Work Day, drawing thousands of cyclists across the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia region (the DMV). With more than 100 pit stops– including over two dozen in Fairfax County alone– the event continues to grow in popularity and impact.

The local pit stop in Reston was hosted by The Bike Lane in their parking lot conveniently located off the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail. Participants enjoyed free food, giveaways, and a complimentary event T-shirt provided to the first 18,000 registered riders.

Bike to Work Day encourages commuters to rethink their daily travel habits, promoting bicycling as a healthy, environmentally friendly alternative to driving alone. It supports active commuting, reduces traffic congestion, and

contributes to cleaner air– all while giving participants a fun and energizing start to their day.

A Time-Honored Tradition

Bike to Work Day was first launched in 1956 by the League of American Bicyclists as part of National Bike Month. In 2001, Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) introduced the event to the DMV, where it has since become an annual tradition drawing widespread support and participation.

Commuter Connections, a program funded by the D.C., Maryland, Virginia, and U.S. Departments of Transportation, works year-round to promote carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, walking, and other alternatives to solo driving. The organization also provides ridematching services and the Guaranteed Ride Home program, offering commuters a free and

reliable ride home in case of an emergency.

Similarly, WABA’s mission is to empower people to ride bikes, build connections, and transform places to create a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

Powered by the Community

At the local level, pit stops were made possible by a diverse coalition of hosts, including local governments, nonprofits, businesses, federal agencies, military organizations, Business Improvement Districts, and even individual volunteers.

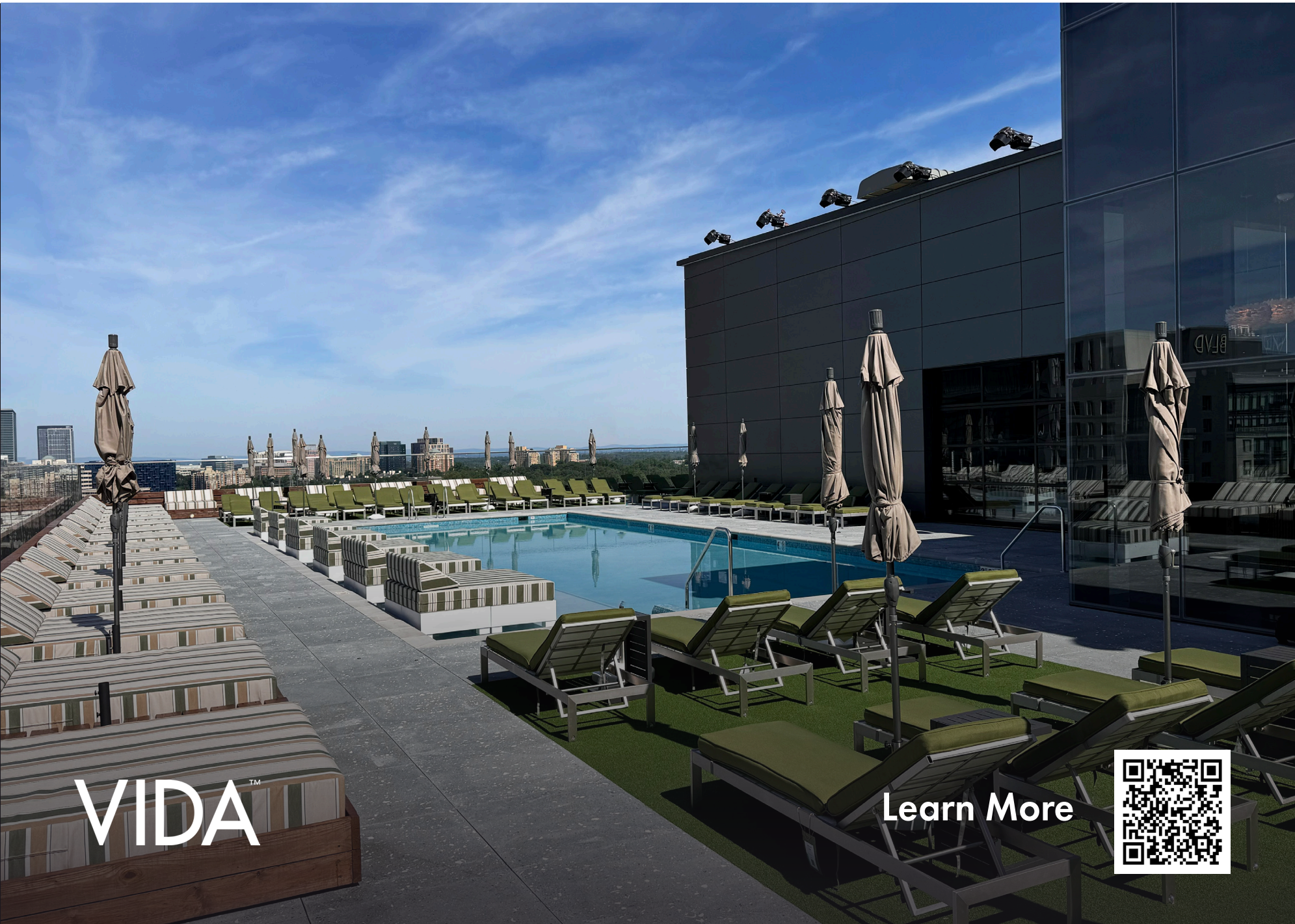
The event welcomes all—even those who work remotely can participate by biking to a nearby pit stop and returning home to start their day, while those with long-distance commutes can utilize one of the many pit stops that are located near transit hubs and park-and-ride lots, mak-



Photo by Patricia Kovacs

ing biking a smart and flexible option for the first and last miles of a commute.

Whether you’re a seasoned cyclist or just getting started, consider joining the Bike to Work Day tradition next year. It’s more than a commute—it’s a celebration of healthy living, environmental stewardship, and community spirit.



Learn More



# Plan Your Event at VIDA Reston

VIDA Reston offers sophisticated and versatile event spaces for professional and social gatherings. From the rooftop Penthouse Pool and Lounge to the contemporary Bar VIDA, our venues provide an elevated setting for unforgettable experiences.

- Flexible event spaces
- Customizable food & beverage packages
- Dedicated event coordination
- Specialty cocktails and curated menus
- Optional wellness experiences
- Breathtaking rooftop views



KIDS



Photo by Vanita Rao

No-Bake Oatmeal Energy Bites

Submitted by Henry Berber and Elizabeth Bainbridge

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup nut butter (we use almond butter)
- 1/3 cup almonds (optional)
- 1/3 cup mini chocolate chips (a few extra to enjoy while making the bites)
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries (a few extra to enjoy while making the bites)

Steps:

1. Pour all of the ingredients into a bowl and mix them together.
2. Refrigerate the mixture for at least 30 minutes.
3. When the mixture is cold, scoop out a spoonful, and roll it into a ball.
4. Keep scooping and rolling until you've used all your mixture.
5. Eat + enjoy!
6. Store the bites in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.



This is Henry making the bites!

Go on a geocaching adventure in Reston!

By Erin Gibbens, Staff Writer & Kids Section Co-Editor

There are two geocaches hidden just off the trails in Reston, waiting to be discovered. Bring your curiosity and a small item to trade, like a sticker, eraser, tiny toy, drawing, or even a crayon. It’s customary to take a little treasure and leave one behind, so everyone can share in the fun.

To get started, download the free app Geocaching® by Groundspeak. <https://www.geocaching.com/>

The basic (free) version works perfectly to find both caches. Each cache has a poetic clue (below) to help you know where to begin. Once you’re at each location mentioned in the poems below, use the app to navigate to the geocache and log your find.

See if you can find them both! And when you do, we’d love to see you!

Snap a photo and tag us on Instagram or Facebook: @TheRestonLetter with #TheRestonLetter and #Reston-Geocache.

Geocache 1: “A Clue by de Clieu”

In the south of Reston, where trails unwind,  
A prize awaits for those inclined.

Near De Clieu (yes, that’s your clue!)  
With coffee and gelato, and something new.  
The stream nearby hums soft and low,  
And just off-trail, the brave will know:  
A little box, a hidden prize,  
From The Reston Letter, a sweet surprise.  
So grab a friend and go take a walk.  
Peek around the cool, wet rocks.  
With trails, and clues, and snacks to savor,  
You’ll hunt with hope... and maybe try a new flavor.

Geocache 2: “A Hidden Clue with a Lake in View”

Where dragonflies flit and shadows play,  
And ripples dance in the light of day,  
Lake Newport hums a hushed refrain,  
Inviting seekers once again.  
Among the trees, down a hilly trail,  
Where stories ride the breeze so pale,  
A treasure waits just out of sight.  
Tucked close to the path, and sealed up tight.  
This trail rewards the quiet kind,  
With nature’s gifts and peace of mind.  
So take a walk, embrace the view.  
From The Reston Letter, there's a surprise for you.

### KIDS SUMMER TRAIL GUIDE!

North Reston

<b>BLUE</b>  3.5 miles	<b>Tall Oaks to Lake Anne:</b> Visit North Shore, Lake Newport (two diving boards!), Golf Course Island, or Tall Oaks pools, rent a boat at Lake Anne, fish, or feed the turtles, play at Brown’s Chapel park, grab a giant pretzel at Lake Anne Plaza and a sweet treat at North Point’s Sweet Frog.
<b>PINK</b>  4 miles	<b>North Point Parks Loop:</b> Enjoy playgrounds, Chick-fil-A at North Point, Autumnwood pool and pickleball courts, North Hills pool and tennis, soccer at Lake Newport soccer fields, or abundant geocaching on the shaded paths.
<b>GREEN</b>  1.5 miles	<b>Reston Town Center to Lake Anne:</b> Explore public art, snap pictures at Mercury Fountain, cool off at the splash pad, play chess or cornhole at the pavilion, and head to Lake Anne to boat, fish, eat, and walk over the Van Gogh Bridge on Reston’s shortest trail. Hop into the used book store to look for a good read. Break the trip up with a dip in North Shore Pool!

South Reston

<b>TURQUOISE</b>  5 miles	<b>South Lakes Village Center to Hunters Woods Center:</b> Along this trail you have many options for fun food at South Lakes and Hunters Woods. You’ll get close to more pools, including Glade– the only RA pool with a water slide– and have access to Walker Nature Center, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, and Lake Audobon’s boat rental dock on Reston’s longest trail.
<b>RED</b>  2 miles	<b>Lake Thoreau Loop:</b> Spend time circling beautiful Lake Thoreau, fishing, swimming at Lake Thoreau or Ridge Heights Pools, and enjoy lunch or snacks at South Lakes Village Center.

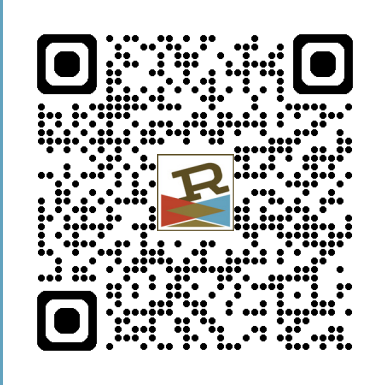
Calm Corner  
Enjoy the Journey: A Mindful Way to Explore the World

By Victoria Stacy, Staff Writer & Kids Section Co-Editor

Have you ever gone exploring—maybe on a geocache hunt, a nature trail, or just a walk around your block? Adventures are exciting, but sometimes we focus so much on the destination that we miss the magic along the way. That’s where mindfulness can help! Mindfulness means slowing down and paying attention to what’s happening right now. When we practice mindfulness, we notice things we usually miss—like the tiny ants on the sidewalk, the sound of the wind in the trees, or how our legs feel as we walk. It helps us enjoy the journey, not just the finish. Here’s a cool mindfulness practice

- to try on your next adventure:  
“Mindful Steps” Walking Practice
- As you walk, try this:
1. Walk slowly and quietly—like a sneaky ninja or a curious explorer.
  2. Feel each step—notice how your foot lifts, moves through the air, and touches the ground.
  3. Take 10 slow, careful steps, paying attention to how your body moves.
  4. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your steps.
- So the next time you’re on a walk, a hike, or even a treasure hunt, try being mindful with your steps. Life is like a big, winding path. Some parts are fast, some are slow, and some are full of surprises. If we’re mindful, we can enjoy every twist and turn along the way.

Scan to see detailed path maps!



KIDS

Ask an Expert: Dr. Marnie Sturm

By Dr. Marnie Sturm

Dr. Marnie Sturm is a Geospatial Analysis and Earth Science teacher at South Lakes High School in Reston, VA, where she has taught for the past five years. She holds a PhD in Geochemistry from Duke University and has a passion for maps, geography, and exploring the world. How does a GPS know where I am when I go geocaching?

A GPS (Global Positioning System) communicates with satellites in space. These satellites send signals to your GPS, and by measuring how long it takes the signals to arrive, it figures out exactly where you are located on Earth. To find your exact location, there needs to be data from three different satellites.

What do you use satellites for when you're studying geography?

Satellites take pictures of Earth from space and help scientists like myself and my students learn about

weather, forests, oceans, cities, and how the planet is changing. It's like having a camera way up high in the sky. Looking at satellite imagery over time allows us to view changes on Earth, such as seeing the extent of melting of glaciers or the rise or fall of sea level in specific places.

Can you find treasure anywhere in the world with geocaching?

Yes, you can. People hide geocaches all over the world including in cities, forests, and on mountaintops. People can use GPS to find these treasures almost anywhere, but some may be in hard-to-reach places. Often, there is a logbook at the cache site where you can leave a journal entry or note.

How do you know where mountains, rivers, and cities are without going there?

Maps and satellite images show us where these places are. You can look at them on a screen to see what the land looks like and where things are without ever leav-

Why was the trail so good at telling stories?

It always had twists and turns

ing home. In my classes, we plan trips all over the world without ever leaving our classroom.

Have you ever found something really cool using your maps or GPS?

Yes, all the time. One of my students this year mapped out vernal pools in Virginia that no one even knew existed using satellite data. Vernal Pools are temporary, isolated water bodies that form in low-lying areas, particularly in woodland depressions or meadows, during the wet seasons and are very important to the biodiversity of local ecology. Now, scientists can use her maps to study these vernal pools.

Meet our June Super Citizen

By Lisa Johnson, Staff Writer

Celebrating Reston kids who are making differences in our community

Audrey, a sophomore at South Lakes High School, is passionate about making a positive impact in her community. A dedicated theater student, she serves as a stage manager and works behind the scenes with the costumes, hair, and makeup crews. But for Audrey, theater isn't just a personal passion—it's a plat-

form for giving back.

Through her work with the Reston Stars, a local volunteer organization, Audrey helps make performing arts more accessible to young people in the community by fundraising for scholarships.

"Whether it's vocal lessons, instrument lessons, or participating in a summer musical, we help kids get the training they want," she says. "We want the arts to be something everyone can experience, no matter their financial situation."

Audrey's commitment to service extends beyond the stage. She's also participated in WorkCamp, a service project organized by the Arlington Diocese that helps low-income families repair and improve their homes.

"Whether it's fixing roofs, replacing windows, or redoing siding on a trailer, we do whatever's needed to make homes safe and livable," she explains.

Despite her busy schedule, Audrey always makes time to give back—and encourages others to do the same.

"Everyone is busy. We all have a lot going on. But when we strengthen our community, we also strengthen our own support system," she says. "Giving back means adding more people to care about and support each other."

Her advice to other kids and teens: "Don't wait—and don't underestimate your ability to create change."

"You're never too young to help out. Don't be afraid to go big. If you're pas-



Audrey is our June Super Citizen

sionate about something, reach out to someone in charge and ask how you can get involved."

At the same time, Audrey believes small efforts can be just as impactful. "If you don't know where to start, ask your teacher if there's something you can do. It could be as simple as helping clean a classroom," she says. "Every little thing makes a difference."

Do you know someone in Reston who is under eighteen who has done something kind in their community? If so, scan the QR code below to nominate them to be featured as a super citizen in a future issue of The Reston Letter!



Student Art

Ava U.  
SVES, Grade 1

Serena C.  
SVES, Grade 1

Brynn F.  
SVES, Grade 1

June Art Magic!

Find a leaf on the trail-  
Put it under the paper.

Rub it with a crayon-  
... make plant pictures-it's easy!

Summer Reading at the Library

On Saturday, June 14, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., kick off your Summer Reading at Sherwood Regional branch with the Children's Summer Reading Festival. The festival is a free outdoor family-friendly event. There will be games and crafts, a bounce house, photo booth, popcorn and cotton candy, food trucks, and more!

On Saturday, August 16, wrap it all up with the End of Summer Reading Bash at our very own Reston Regional Library! This popular summer celebration is back and better than ever. Sponsored by the Friends of Reston Regional Library, this event will feature indoor and outdoor activities, food trucks, games, and entertainment. There will also be a book sale for Kids, Young Adults, and Teachers that Saturday!

# OPINIONS

We want to hear from our readers! What local topics do you care about? Please pitch your opinion articles or article ideas to ezreston@gmail.com

Ask Doctor S.

## Dads, you matter, too!

Dads have gotten a bad reputation in popular culture. They're often depicted as clueless, reactive, and firmly in the backseat to "heroic" moms. More recently, news stories and social media portrayals have cast fathers as self-serving or immature. Historically, moms have been seen as children's primary caretakers, while dads were cast as their primary playmates.

But according to the American Psychological Association, modern-day fatherhood is about far more than being a traditional married provider and disciplinarian. Today's dads are just as likely as moms to view their parental role as central to their identity.

What dads offer their children is different, but no less important, than what moms offer. Dads of all kinds—married or single, gay or straight, working or stay-at-home, adoptive, or step—and those who stand in for dads, such as grandfathers, uncles, and other important adults, are increasingly recognized as essential to children's social and emotional development.

For example, dads often influence their sons' sociability. They also play a significant role in their daughters' self-esteem and identity, especially during adolescence. Children with sensitive and supportive dads tend to have higher social competence and better peer relationships. Kids whose dads frequently talk with and teach them perform better in school and show more advanced language skills. Dads who maintain healthy partnerships with their children's moms or other caregivers, even in cases of divorce, tend to have children with stronger self-worth, better academic performance,

and more positive peer connections.

When dads struggle with their mental health, it affects their children both directly and indirectly. In my clinical work, I often meet fathers dealing with depression or anxiety who were raised in families where vulnerability was dismissed, minimized, punished, or ignored—and where seeking mental healthcare was seen as a weakness. As a result, these dads may struggle with irritability, withdrawal, poor frustration tolerance, avoidance, anger, or addiction.

Children look to their dads for affirmation and validation. When fathers can't express or regulate their emotions, they may unintentionally model maladaptive coping strategies or instill feelings of unworthiness in their kids. This can increase the risk of emotional and behavioral issues for the next generation. On the other hand, dads who are open about their struggles and seek professional help not only mitigate these risks; they also reassure their children and model healthy, proactive behavior.

Wishing all dads—and all those who serve as dads—a very happy Father's Day. And a reminder: take care of your physical and mental health. Your kids are watching, learning, and benefiting every day.

Psych'd to see you next month! - Dr. S.  
*Dr. Hayley B. Sherwood is a longtime Clinical Psychologist in Reston/Herndon. To learn more, please visit her website at [www.oakhillpsychological.com](http://www.oakhillpsychological.com). Please visit the About Us section on our website to learn more about our team of therapists!*

GREENFARE

## Whole again

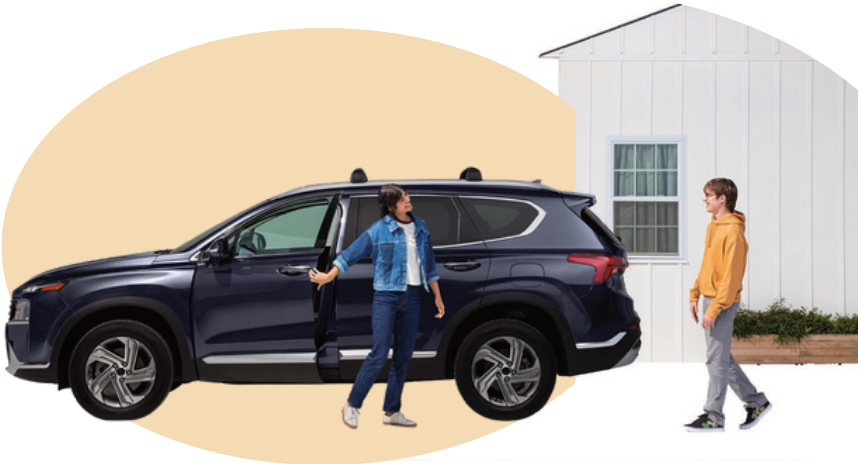
So many diets and so much controversy. The American College for Lifestyle Medicine (since 2002) has centered on six pillars of health: nutrition, exercise, sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances (alcohol and smoking), and social connections. Doctors accredited with ACLM are focused on using these lifestyle levers before prescribing medications to fix the root cause and not just eliminate the red blinking light on the dashboard. If you had a noise in your car engine and took it to a mechanic, you would be unhappy if you were given ear plugs, knowing that the problem was still there but you could no longer hear it. A whole food, plant-based diet is the scientific consensus that is being taught by ACLM for doctors who want to heal and not just treat.

When T. Colin Campbell's coined phrase "whole food, plant-based" was chosen, he wanted to emphasize the "wholeness" of the food, and the "perfectness" of plants to be optimal for human nutrition. Later, people began saying that they were whole food, plant-based to mean that they consumed meat surrounded by plants. This is most definitely not what was meant; in 2015, Greenfare reframed the phrase to be "whole plant food," that is, minimally processed plants. With enough calories and enough variety, all protein and fiber types are met, if whole. The latest science (David Katz from Yale and Christopher Gardner of Stanford) shows that the quality of protein is more important than the amount of protein.

What does Whole actually mean?  
Intact. Nothing removed or added. Complete in itself. The whole is all there is: every part, member, and aspect. In his book "Whole" Campbell writes about how plant

Continued on page 15

# I'm here to help you bundle your home & auto



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OPINIONS

Golf course redevelopment will disrupt Reston’s planning legacy

By Rescue Reston

A curious partnership has teamed up to upend Reston’s long history of careful planning.

Since 2012, Reston has fought to protect its private open space from development. Its two golf courses—though privately owned—are a legacy to Robert E. Simon’s original vision for Reston and are vital to Reston’s biophilic character, serving to connect residents with nature where they work, live, and play.

As former Reston Citizens Association President Colin Mills wrote in the Patch in August 2012: “It’s a fundamental question of what our community will look like in the future. If the golf course, which is designated as open space in Reston’s Master Plan, is ruled to be developable, what will that mean for the rest of Reston’s open space? If the open space designation in our zoning has no meaning, what’s to stop the rest of it from being filled up? Allowing Reston National [Golf Course] to be redeveloped sets a dangerous precedent. Open space and greenery is a key part of what makes Reston special; to allow it to disappear would endanger the long-term vision and plan for our community.”

For those worried that Reston does not have enough housing, we have 11,000 units zoned but not built. There will be more added to that number as the Site-Specific Plan Amendments work their way through the County process.

Reston National Golf Course has held the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf certification since at least 2010, using practices that cut water and chemical use while expanding wildlife habitat. This 18-hole public course is a key recreational amenity and integral to the community’s original design. Despite the owner’s claims—rooted in having overpaid—that the course is failing, it could become a nationally recognized eco-friendly destination if funds were shifted away from legal fees and PR firms.

But let’s focus on the money. The names behind the published LLC ownership of Reston National Golf Course: Scott Plank and his company War Horse Cities out of Baltimore, MD. Plank and his previous partner overpaid greatly for non-developable land, betting that they could find a way around the open space designation. That’s a risk Plank decided to take, and Reston citizens have no obligation to bail him out by sacrificing our open space. He knowingly bought property with a land use designation of golf course and zoned PRC (open space).

Now Plank has teamed up with NVR, Inc., one of America’s largest home builders. The faces behind NVR are billionaires Paul Saville, Executive Chairman, and Dwight Schar, NVR’s Founder.

NVR, Inc. and their attorney have come up with several plans to attempt to force housing on portions of Reston National Golf Course. But do they have a longer game in mind?



Reston National Golf Course from above.  
Photo by Benjamin Burgess

On a side note, Dwight Schar is the father-in-law of Comstock Holding Companies CEO Chris Clemente, who has been the central figure lobbying to bring a casino somewhere along the Silver Line.

Open the door to housing on the golf course, and you may be opening the door to a casino on the greens. Learn more at [RescueReston.org](http://RescueReston.org), a grass-roots organization of community volunteers who oppose redevelopment of Reston National Golf Course into residential housing or any site development other than a golf course or comparable open space.

Reston should embrace redevelopment to realize Simon’s plan

By Matt Reider, Reston Resident

Change and growth is inevitable, especially in Reston. Redevelopment near the Silver Line will happen. Rather than attempt to stop all new development, the community should aim to ensure that redevelopment within Reston benefits existing neighborhoods and addresses the need for housing in the area. Due to the efforts of the community over the last decade, the current redevelopment plan outlined for the Reston National Golf course does strike this balance, permanently setting aside 80 acres for public recreation and open space while adding a mix of housing. It also provides investment money and new members to the Reston Association (RA) for maintenance and improvements. The transfer of ownership of 80 acres to Reston or Fairfax County will make the open space available for all (not just golfers), and put an end to the constant, repetitive planning battles that recur every few years.

Recent developments in Fairfax County, including previous plans for the same golf course, did not address local residents’ concerns. Development will bring additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic and eliminate open space— and developers and the county must prioritize the funding and solutions to these problems. If 800 homes are built, and the RA charges \$10k for each home, the proposal includes a “one time” fee of around \$800,000 to RA and 800 new, annual fee-paying members. Reston has decades of deferred maintenance it needs to address, and has not added a significant number of new members for many years.

Certainly, the details matter. How many houses, of what type, and what starting prices? Who will acquire and oversee the new common space and what amenities (fields, lights, playgrounds), if any, will it have? How much will RA charge in fees for these new homes to join the association? Will the county also receive proffers and then prioritize and build the turn lanes, sidewalks, traffic lights, and perhaps the new bridge over the toll road that will be needed once these homes are complete and populated? These details must be communicated before final approval.

The rule of supply and demand applies to real es-

tate. While many established residents enjoy seeing their home values increase, they do so at the expense of living in a vibrant, diverse, family-oriented community— as younger citizens and families are unable to move in and contribute. High demand and low inventory for homes can only be addressed by increased supply: through a combination of resale by those departing the community and the creation of additional housing. Since a wave of existing home sales seems unlikely, Reston needs new housing.

One of Robert E. Simon’s original seven goals stated that “the town would provide housing for a variety of needs and incomes, and inhabitants would be able to spend their entire lives in the development.” An individual or family could “live, work, and play” inside the confines of a walkable, amenity-laden community. The idea was that younger, or lower income residents could start off life in Reston in an apartment or condo, then as needs or finances grew, could move to a townhome, perhaps start a family and acquire a single family home. Afterward the kids leave, “empty nesters” could move back again into apartments or condos.

Demand in Fairfax County has made such mobility unlikely. According to Realtor.com, the average home price in Fairfax County is \$750,000. Many current owners lament that they could never afford the house they purchased years ago. Often children who grew up in these townhomes and single family homes return to Reston, but few are able to purchase homes here due to the lack of new or affordable housing.

Without the addition of new housing, Reston will continue to be a haven for the wealthy few—a far cry from the original plan. In the 1960’s the vision was a new kind of walkable suburban community that integrated citizens across racial, economic, and religious divides. With the continuous increase in even “entry level” home prices, Reston’s dream remains unfulfilled.

Finalizing the details of this plan are important, but adding to the number of people that can live in our planned community, while contributing to its open space and filling the coffers of our underappreciated HOA should be celebrated.

Whole again, cont'd from page 14

foods are perfect, and how the food industry (and now us, with our vitamixes, dehydrators, freezers, and air fryers, adulterate mother nature’s gift to us. The food industry loves to take out fiber and water, cook and extrude, and add all kinds of junk back in. We love to drink our food after the long fibers are destroyed in a blender and food becomes a drink, causing loss of absorption and creating inflammation.

Reading Campbell’s masterpiece “Whole” gives a reference for the complexity of the human body (and its ability to adapt), and as well, the complexity of plants as a symphony of nutrients and fiber, that when adulterated (intensified, modified, or subjected to extreme temperatures) lose their power to provide energy and act as healing agents. I remember the commercial years ago for margarine, where a lightning bolt strikes because “you shouldn’t fool Mother Nature.” When we embrace the gifts given by nature, we truly find the meaning in the adage “food as medicine.”

*This article is written by Gwyn Whittaker, owner of Greenfare Organic Cafe*

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# LIFESTYLE

## Inside Art

By Louise Seirmarco-Yale,  
Reston Artist



Have you ever gone to pick up a child early at a friend's birthday party? The air is filled with concentrated joy.

The children are entirely engaged in the fun of it all. That is the whole point, right? Fun?

You get that same feeling when you come upon Pat MacIntyre on Saturday mornings in front of her Art Gallery on Lake Anne Plaza. The children surrounding 'Ms. Pat' do not even notice you are there. Nothing is more important than what they are making. Regulars come often to experience the various craft ideas Pat brings every week. They come because it is fun. It satisfies that itch that is within us all, to create.

This happens every Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to noon April to December. In December 2026, she will have done this for forty years, which shows a commitment to art that few can rival. Her advocacy for the arts is widely known and respected. Her creative ideas in supporting the arts have been endlessly encouraging to many, for years.

"Today, we will be making sandy beaches," she says, cutting cardboard into small half-boxes. Her intern, Victoria, tapes the sides to make little stages with yellow paper "beaches" or "blue water" glued inside. Out come tiny little umbrellas to add, because naturally one needs shade from the sun. A big bowl of sea shells provides those important beach accessories. When a child starts to place a shell, Ms. Pat says something like, "That is exactly the right thing to do." Always receiving easy praise and permission, kids feel free to create, which allows pure childlike expression.

A pile of old folders, colorful pages, worn or torn, is there too, as they might be needed at any moment.

It's all so busy. There is a constant flow of new children joining in from the street. "What's that?, a passing child asks. "They are making art." "What?" She thinks. "I can walk down the street and there are children making art? I want to do that too." That's a natural reponse that is in all of us.

"Whatever works" Pat continues to guide. "You can put fish on it if you want, there are markers over there." One child adds cats. She likes cats. True to all art, there are no rules, do whatever the imagination dictates. That is Pat's touch when it comes to kids and art.

Charmingly, some beaches have five umbrellas stabbed into the cardboard. No rules. Real art.

Perhaps 25 children will join Pat on a Saturday morning. It is unclear who has the most fun, Pat or the kids. How many children have this early art memory because of Pat, over 40 years? Thank you, Pat, for all those years of devotion to making and loving art with children.

Louise Seirmarco-Yale is a Reston artist, speaker, teacher, and author of "Art. You Be The Judge. Reawaken your Instincts and Enjoy Art On Your Own Terms" available on Amazon. Visit her: [www.people-needart.com](http://www.people-needart.com), or [hello@peopleneedart.com](mailto:hello@peopleneedart.com), FB & INST @Louise\_Seirmarco\_Yale

## Thrive in '25 Health Fair showcases mind-body wellness for all ages

Contributed by Anytime Fitness

Families, professionals, and wellness enthusiasts came together on May 10 for the Thrive in '25 Health Fair at Anytime Fitness Herndon. Burnout coach and Better Habits LLC founder Danielle Hagerty, known to many as Coach Dani, curated the lively event. Designed to support guests of all ages and fitness levels, the fair offered interactive experiences aimed at reducing burnout, boosting energy, and fostering healthier habits.

Attendees explored a variety of ways to reset and recharge, from live workouts and wellness coaching to recovery tools and creative expression. A crowd favorite was the high-energy

demonstration by Taekwondo in Action, whose students impressed with their skill, discipline, and confidence—an inspiring example of how movement shapes both body and mind.

Guests also had the chance to meet Miss DC US International, Nicky Kandola, who brought warmth and encouragement as she mingled with attendees and local vendors.

"The goal was simple: help people take one small step toward better habits—and remind them they don't have to do it alone," said Coach Dani. "We created an experience that felt fun, approachable, and energizing, whether you're battling burnout or just want to feel better in your body."



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## Reston faces serious environment threats, but shows signs of improving conditions

By the RA Environmental Advisory Committee

The 2024 Reston Association State of the Environment Report (RASER) was approved for distribution at the RA Board of Directors May meeting. The RASER is a product of the RA Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and is updated every two years in an ongoing effort to protect and improve Reston's environmental quality. The current report assesses the condition of 23 environmental attributes of Reston, and indicates most of Reston's attributes are in fair condition with some considered to be good and fewer considered poor. Some attributes were not rated due to insufficient data.

Reston is facing a multitude of serious environmental threats, including:

- stormwater runoff
- climate change
- non-native invasive species
- deer overbrowsing
- obstacles to greening the infrastructure
- limited recycling options

According to the report, it is noteworthy to recognize that none of these threats are unique to Reston. They are widespread problems that currently threaten many U.S. urban communities. On the other hand, Reston's historic preservation of its open spaces and extensive tree canopy, its adherence to the principles of a biophilic community and Robert E. Simon's founding vision, and its commitment to environmental education through the programs of the Walker Nature Center, set Reston apart from most other communities of similar size. These same community features have the potential to make Reston more resilient to environmental threats when compared to other communities lacking such history and commitment.

As a companion to this report, the EAC

also issued a set of actionable recommendations that may be implemented by RA, Reston residents, and business owners to improve or better protect the natural resources and environmental attributes that make Reston such a special place to live, work, and play. The 2024 RASER and its companion document entitled "2024 RASER Recommendations & Report Card" can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.reston.org/Document-Center/Index/51>.



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### Answer Key



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