

THE RESTON

LETTER

# Fresh food, local roots: Reston Farmers Market brings community together

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

Every Saturday morning, from April 26 through Thanksgiving, the Reston Farmers Market transforms Lake Anne Plaza into a vibrant celebration of local food and community spirit. Now in its 28th season, the market is part of the Fairfax County Park Authority’s 10-market system—one of the largest and most awarded in the region.

What makes Reston’s market unique? Ask anyone involved and you’ll hear a common theme: community.

“We’ve created something that’s more than just a place to shop,” says Fran Lovaas, Co-Market Manager and long-time volunteer. “It feels like a weekly reunion. Many of our vendors have been with us since the very beginning, and customers have become like family.”

Fran and her husband John launched the market in 1998 after returning from El Salvador, where they had been stationed with USAID. Inspired by the fresh food culture abroad and the need to revitalize Lake Anne, John—trained by the Park Authority—established the market with just a dozen vendors. It has since grown to 35, all carefully vetted and located within a 125-mile radius. Fran joined the managing team full-time in 2002, and today works alongside fellow co-managers Keith and Anne Strange, and Ben Miller, plus a team of trained volunteers.

Managing a market of this size is no small feat. The volunteer-run market features not only fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, meats, breads, and flowers, but also pop-up musicians, Master Gardeners, composting services, cooking demos, and a robust SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] matching initiative in partnership with Cornerstones and Fairfax County.

Fairfax County Farmers Market Coordinator Caroline Hockenberry, now in her fourth season and the first full-time



Reston Farmers Market opened for the season on April 26. Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

market manager for the county system, helps organize logistics, vendor applications, and community programs for the 10 county markets. “The Reston group is one of the most experienced and passionate teams I work with,” she says. “They know their community and work hard to serve it.”

The market’s SNAP matching program is especially impactful. Shoppers using food assistance benefits can receive up to \$40 in free produce per visit thanks to partners like Virginia Fresh Match and local nonprofits. And every last Saturday of the month from May through October, customers are encouraged to purchase and donate fresh items to Cornerstones through the Nourish Your Neighbor food drive.

Longtime vendors like Potomac Vegetable Farms’ Michael Bradford and 78 Acres’ Mary Harsh say it’s the people who keep them coming back year after year. “Some of our customers have watched me grow up,” says Bradford, who has worked the stand since he was 12. “It’s like having an extended family.”

“We love Reston. Our customers are loyal, the other vendors are like friends, and the market itself is so well-run and welcoming,” Harsh said. “There’s really nothing else quite like it.”

The market’s commitment to sustainability is another point of pride. This year, Reston Farmers Market goes fully plastic-free, offering compostable produce bags and distributing free canvas shopping totes to customers, another effort supported by Fairfax County.

So, whether you’re stocking up on summer tomatoes, enjoying live music by the lake, or catching up with neighbors and farmers who feel more like friends, the Reston Farmers Market offers something truly special.

Learn more by visiting the Reston Farmers Market website [www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/reston](http://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/reston) or by following the “Reston Farmers Market Group” on Facebook.

## LISTEN TO



OUR PODCAST WITH RESTON FARMERS MARKET VOLUNTEERS

# Earth-friendly fun draws families to 5th annual Green Reston

By Patricia Kovacs, Staff Writer

Fairfax County families gathered April 12 at the RCC Hunters Woods for the fifth annual Green Reston event, a celebration of environmental awareness ahead of Earth Day. The event brought neighbors together to learn about nature and sustainable practices while participating in eco-friendly activities.

Attendees navigated through a variety of exhibits from local organizations including the Fairfax County Park Authority Wonder Wagon, Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association, Sustainability Matters, Reston Regional Library, and Plant NOVA Natives. Children particularly enjoyed the face painting station, making dirt

pudding, building bird feeders, beach-combing, and exploring a variety of animal specimens.

Extending the Green Reston experience, Fairfax County also organized a scavenger hunt that took place April 1 to 15 to encourage the community to explore nature in their own backyards, take pictures along the way, and submit them to organizers for a chance to win a prize.

For many local families, the seeds of environmental stewardship planted at this community gathering will grow alongside the literal native seeds they took home, creating a greener future for Fairfax County one backyard at a time.



Green Reston promoted environmental stewardship and nature exploration for all ages. Photo by Patricia Kovacs

## the bulletin



Honoring two special Reston women, biking safety and benefits, why we shouldn't swim in the lakes, improv with a purpose, Reston National Golf Course redevelopment update

## sports



Reston Runners "Run Thru Reston" race, cricket at Lake Fairfax, high school athlete of the month, Herndon Track & Field senior night

## education



Herndon and South Lakes High School musicals take the community by storm, Yale Alley Cats coming to South Lakes, Making an Impact, runners receive scholarships

## kids



Spring is here! all about bikes, Ask an Expert with our own Reston triathlete, kitchen science, art magic, Reston's kids mountain biking club, crossword

## opinions

Thoughts on the importance of biking for kids, Dr. S. on value of mothers, Greenfare's warning about green lawns

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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.

## In Loving Memory Barbara Cheryl Terio-Simon



Barbara Cheryl Terio-Simon, 81, passed away peacefully on April 25, 2025. Born in Washington D.C., Cheryl lived almost the entirety of her life in the D.C. area, with more than 50 years in Reston.

She was fond of saying she was “raised by committee” owing her upbringing to her single mother, aunt, uncles, and grandmother. The extended Davenport family was her immediate family.

In her distinguished professional career, Cheryl was legal counsel at the American Institute of Architects, the Associated General Contractors of America, Ballard Spahr, chaired an American Bar Association Forum, and proudly served on the board of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall in D.C..

Cheryl's great love for Reston shone through her service on the Design Review Board, Lake Anne Condominium Association, and Reston Historic Trust Board of Directors. In 2017, she was instrumental in the U.S. Park Service naming Lake Anne Village Center to the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2022, she collaborated with Eric MacDicken to publish “Community Is What It Is All About, An Ode To Lake Anne.”

Cheryl's love for traveling, gardening, the arts, and sharing lake walks and good meals with friends was evident to all who knew her. She instilled these passions in her own children and it was a great source of joy and pride that the performing arts are vital to her grandchildren's lives. She loved attending their performances.

Cheryl was pre-deceased by her second husband, Robert E. Simon Jr., and is survived by her children Karen (Dan), Adam (Sarah) and beloved grandchildren Micah, Lillian and Abigail. A private memorial will be held at a later date. Donations in Cheryl's honor can be made to the Reston Historic Trust or to Cornerstones.

## In Loving Memory Margaret Louise Boyd



Margaret Louise Boyd, a lifelong educator, champion of diversity, tireless volunteer, and beloved pillar of the Reston, Virginia community, passed away peacefully on Monday, March 24, 2025. She was 89 years old.

Born on Sept. 5, 1935, in Ardmore, Oklahoma, Margaret was the second of six children raised in a proud, close-knit family of educators. With multicultural roots—her mother of Cherokee descent and her father Mexican American—Margaret carried a deep, inherent understanding of diversity and equity, values that would define her remarkable life's work.

A proud graduate of Langston University in 1957, Margaret's passion for education sparked early. She opened Smith's Kindergarten shortly after graduating and went on to teach across the globe, beginning with her first official teaching position at an American dependent school in Heidelberg, Germany. Margaret embraced the cultural richness of Europe, traveling extensively with her husband Donald Boyd and, beginning in 1962, their son Gilbert Boyd.

After settling in Reston, Margaret poured more than five decades of her life into teaching K-8 students in Fairfax County

public schools, including Forest Edge, Terraset, Lake Anne, Oak Hill, Herndon, Westbriar, and Herndon Middle School. Her classrooms were a beacon of inspiration—so much so that Reston founder Robert E. Simon Jr. would often stop in to witness her extraordinary ability to uplift and empower children from all walks of life. He considered her a living embodiment of his ideals: dignity of the individual, community, multiculturalism, and youth leadership.

Teaching was her passion, but her dedication to service reached far beyond the classroom. In 1975, she joined the Reston Community Association Board and later founded the Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program. She was a fierce advocate for diversity and inclusion, long before “DEI” was a familiar acronym. She developed an ESL program to bring English language education to hotels across the region, with her first client being the Reston Hyatt Regency.

A proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.—just like Vice President Kamala Harris—Margaret believed in sisterhood, scholarship, and service. She received countless awards over the course of her life, far too many to list, but each one hon-

ored her tireless efforts to uplift others and make her community a better place.

Margaret is survived by her devoted son Gilbert Boyd of Irvington, New Jersey, and his wife, her loving daughter-in-law, Valorie Hubbard. She is also survived by many beloved nieces and nephews whose lives she touched deeply.

A celebration of Margaret's extraordinary life will be held on Friday, May 2, from 2:30 to 5 p.m. in Reston. A service will begin at 3 p.m., followed by food and fellowship prepared with love by her son, Chef Gilbert Boyd. All are welcome to come, remember, and rejoice in the life of this incredible woman who gave so much to so many.

# Bike safety: Talk, listen, and take care of others as you ride

By Gene Powell, Staff Writer

With spring in full swing, cyclists in the greater Reston area have no shortage of scenic routes—from the ever-popular, nationally recognized Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail to the intersecting Fairfax County Parkway Trail, and the many paths that weave through Reston and its neighboring communities. Whether you're riding on a trail, a neighborhood path, or a road with or without marked bike lanes, safety should be your top priority.

A survey of local safety organizations and biking groups revealed these recommendations for staying safe on two wheels: Wear a helmet, and avoid ear coverings or headphones that could prevent you from hearing what's around you, especially approaching riders or vehicles.

Always call out when passing, and sometimes even when approaching others. A simple “Passing on your left!” from behind a jogger or “Bike up!” when approaching a group can go a long way. Just make sure to give others enough time to react.

Slow down on multi-use trails. These paths are shared by slower cyclists, runners, dog walkers, and families with strollers. Be extra cautious where horseback riders are present.

Check your bike before riding. Make sure your tires are properly inflated—nothing spoils a ride like a flat miles from home—and test your brakes. Stopping is just as important as pedaling.

If your bike has been idle during the colder months, or you're planning a longer ride, check for loose fittings and connections.

The W&OD Trail Patrol emphasizes that riders should move off the trail when stopped and remember the right-of-way rules: pedestrians have priority over bikes, and equestrians have priority over everyone.

NOVA Parks' “In the Know, On the

Continued on page 7

RA MEMBERS:  
SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS FOR THE  
2026 BUDGET



Reston Association is in the process of preparing its draft budget, and we're looking for your input. Let us know your budget priorities and/or any suggestions you may have by completing this feedback form on our website. Suggestions are being accepted until June 1. The draft budget will be presented this fall.

WE WANT YOUR  
FEEDBACK





# THE BULLETIN

## Reston’s lakes are for paddling, not swimming—here’s why

By Caroline Ayres, Staff Writer

As the weather begins to warm up, Restonians are shaking off winter and preparing to unpack their spring wardrobes, kayaks, paddleboards, and every other piece of warm-weather gear. But as tempting as it may be, you might want to leave your swimsuits packed away—at least when it comes to the lakes.

It’s no secret that swimming in Reston’s lakes isn’t encouraged (even though

some folks still take the plunge). But once you understand why the Reston Association urges residents to stay out of the water, you might reconsider.

All of Reston’s lakes are man-made—not just for scenic beauty and recreation, but also to protect the surrounding environment. Every one of our lakes serves an important function as a stormwater reservoir. That means water from roads, lawns, parks, and rooftops flows into these lakes, helping prevent flooding and maintaining natural habitats for local wildlife.

But here's the catch: that same runoff brings along some unpleasant baggage, like road salt, lawn fertilizers, motor oil, and other pollutants. On top of that, the lakes frequently experience algae blooms in the summer, which can release toxins that are harmful to humans and pets.

There’s also the matter of safety. Some parts of Reston’s lakes are over 20 feet deep, which is more than twice the depth of the deep end in any of our local pools. And unlike at the pools, there are no lifeguards standing by.

None of this means the lakes are dangerous to touch. Falling in occasionally or participating in one of Reston’s organized lake swim events, which involve water testing beforehand to ensure safety, is unlikely to cause any harm. However, making a habit of swimming in the lakes is probably not the best idea, especially given the number of top-quality (and clean!) pools available throughout Reston.

## Improv with a purpose: The heart behind the humor

### How Resonance Improv Alliance builds community through laughter

By Kaydence Smith, Staff Writer

The Resonance Improv Alliance is a local organization founded by passionate improvisers who believe that improvisational comedy can do more than make people laugh. It can also heal, inspire, and bring people together.

The founders began their journey in Lake Anne, taking improv classes in the basement of Washington Plaza Baptist Church. From those humble beginnings, Resonance was created to unite diverse improv communities and share the transformative power of improv comedy. Already, the group has begun teaching at organizations such as The Lamb Center, Insight Memory Care, and local schools.

Instructors at Herndon and South Lakes high schools describe Resonance as “incredibly professional, engaging, and positive,” noting that the team helps students “feel very comfortable to make choices and put themselves out there.”

Steve Gurney, founder of the Positive Aging Community and a pioneer of improv for Parkinson’s in the DMV area, has partnered with Resonance to bring workshops to Insight Memory Care. “We’re able to enable them to exercise their voice and do improv exercises that require movement,” he says. “It’s just fun. There is



Resonance hosted a performance at the Reston Community Center on April 11.  
Photo by Kaydence Smith

nothing that is not acceptable in improv... The goal is to uplift everybody.”

Lindsey Vajpeyi, Director of Early-Stage Programs at Insight Memory Care, said that improv has been a powerful tool for their patients to “let down their guard, let loose, and feel welcomed as you are,” a value Resonance holds dear.

Resonance Executive Director Nina Unger and Board Member Wes Gurney say their mission is to “empower individuals to build community through the principles of improv.” Along with their fellow members and with support from their sponsor, CORE Foundation, they continue working to spread the joy and

impact of improv across Northern Virginia.

On April 11, Resonance hosted its first public performance at the Reston Community Center, featuring improv groups from across the region. Performers included No Men Twirling, a musical improv group, as well as Home Improv Mints, Human Magnet, and the Friendly Neighborhood Fools. The show was a resounding success, with a lively, engaged audience and nonstop laughter throughout the evening.

For updates on future performances, follow Resonance Improv Alliance on Instagram @resonanceimprov.



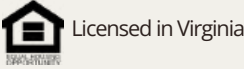
### Maybe it’s time to right-size.

Feeling overwhelmed by your home? Have you considered “**right-sizing**” to a home that would be easier to manage?

Let’s meet and figure out a plan to get you to your next adventure.



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## Pedal power: Cycling offers full-body benefits

By Liz Kamp, Founder of New Trail Cycling & Strength

As a fitness professional and founder of New Trail, a Reston fitness studio, I’ve seen firsthand how cycling, both indoors and outdoors, can transform lives. Whether you’re pedaling along Reston’s scenic trails or powering through an energetic indoor cycling class, this activity offers a wide range of benefits for both body and mind.

### Heart Health

Cycling is an excellent cardiovascular workout that strengthens your heart, improves circulation, and can help lower blood pressure. Studies show that regular cycling can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. It’s a powerful way to boost your long-term heart health while doing something enjoyable.

### Leg and Core Strength

Cycling builds strength in your legs and core with every ride. Whether you’re tackling hills, sprinting, or cruising on flat roads, consistent cycling tones and strengthens key muscle groups without the wear and tear of high-impact activities.

### Joint Health

One of my go-to lines about indoor cycling is that it’s a runner’s best friend. You can push your limits and get in the zone just like a good run—minus the impact. Cycling is a low-impact activity that’s gentle on your joints, making it a great option for those recovering from injuries or surgeries. At New Trail, we have many clients who come to us after joint replacement surgeries. Cycling helps them stay active and safely rebuild strength in the muscles around the hips and knees, offering long-term joint protection.

### Mental Health

All forms of exercise, including cycling, support mental well-being. It reduces stress, improves sleep, and lifts your mood. Indoor and outdoor cycling also offer something extra: community. The shared experience of riding can help foster connection, which has a powerful impact on mental health.

As Restonians, we’re fortunate that Bob Simon had the foresight to weave community into the very design of our trail system. He believed that people meeting on the trails—whether on foot or by bike—would strengthen our community. It’s actually how I first met him.

That philosophy inspired the name of my studio, New Trail—a place where people can forge new paths to fitness and connection.

If outdoor riding is your style, consider joining one of the many local cycling clubs in the Reston area. If you prefer the controlled environment, camaraderie, and energy of an indoor class, there are great options for that, too.

### Finding Your Fit

Whether you choose to ride indoors or out, what matters most is finding what works best for you. Outdoor cycling offers fresh air, natural scenery, and a sense of freedom. Indoor cycling provides consistency, structured workouts, and a motivating group dynamic. Both are great; just make sure your bike is properly fitted. A good fit supports your form, prevents pain, and helps you get the most out of each ride. For indoor cycling, always ask your instructor for a setup check. For outdoor riding, visit a local shop, like The Bike Lane, for a professional bike fitting.

If you’re looking for a welcoming and motivating indoor cycling experience, we’d love to see you at New Trail. All fitness levels are welcome!



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THE BULLETIN

St. Anne's Food Pantry: Serving local families with compassion and commitment

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

St. Anne's Episcopal Church's Food Pantry has been a beacon of hope for local families facing food insecurity. Established in 2011 by dedicated congregants, the pantry has grown steadily, now providing between 82,000 and 85,000 pounds of food annually to those in need.

For Glen Corso, the pantry's manager since 2019, the work is deeply fulfilling. After retiring, he responded to a church newsletter call for volunteers and soon found himself overseeing operations. "Seeing these people, especially families with young children, gives me satisfaction that we are doing good for our community," he said.

**Meeting a Growing Need**

Every third Thursday of the month, St. Anne's Food Pantry distributes food to approximately 100 to 200 families—serving between 250 and 325 individuals. In addition, the pantry donates food to Artemis House, a shelter for domestic violence victims, and the Embry Rucker Homeless Shelter in Reston.

Lately, the demand for assistance has been rising. Typically, a lull follows the high-demand holiday season, but Corso noted a sharp increase beginning in January that has continued into the spring. Despite increased demand, Cor-

so believes the full effects of recent government layoffs have yet to be felt in the community.

Despite these challenges, he said that the pantry has never missed a delivery, even during the pandemic, maintaining its commitment to those who rely on its services.

**Where the Food Comes From**

St. Anne's Food Pantry sources food from a combination of partnerships and individual donations:

- Capital Area Food Bank: Supplies nonperishable items and fresh produce.
- Food for Others Food Bank: Provides nearly all the pantry's frozen meat.
- A Simple Gesture's Cool Green Bags food collection program: Organizes bi-monthly community donations that support four area food pantries.
- Individual Donors: Contributions range from nonperishable goods placed in the church's outdoor bin to an anonymous monthly donation of two large cartons of cereal.

**Improving Food Distribution**

Pre-packed bags of nonperishables are provided—one for single adults, two for families with children. In addition, recipients receive frozen meat and fresh produce.

A recent survey of food pantry users led to operational changes aimed at better meeting community needs. The

pantry introduced a "choice table" system, where individuals can select from essential items such as cooking oil, soy sauce, shelf-stable milk, cranberry juice, and flour. This approach offers recipients more control over their food selection, ensuring they receive items that best suit their household needs. However, shortages still occur—recently, the Capital Area Food Bank was unable to supply peanut butter, a staple item.

**Welcoming All in Need**

The pantry serves everyone who seeks assistance, with no strict eligibility requirements. While recipients are asked to complete a basic form about their household, participation is voluntary. To streamline future visits, individuals receive a barcoded card, though those who prefer to remain anonymous are still welcomed without issue.

**Outreach and Community Support**

To spread awareness, Corso posts on Facebook pages such as Reston-Herndon and Latin Fairfax. He also collaborates with local elementary school social workers to notify families in both English and Spanish.

The pantry's operation is largely supported by St. Anne's congregation, with 85% of its 60 regular volunteers hailing from the church. These dedicated individuals collect food from partner organizations, pack grocery bags, sort fresh produce, and staff the choice tables. St.



Photo at St. Anne's by Patricia Kovacs

Anne's congregants, including its youth group, also contribute by organizing food drives once or twice a year.

**How to Help**

St. Anne's Food Pantry welcomes volunteers and donations from the entire community—regardless of religious affiliation. Those looking to help can drop off nonperishable food items in the metal bin outside the church or sign up to volunteer.

For more information, visit St. Anne's Episcopal Church at 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston, or call 703-437-6530.

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# THE BULLETIN

## NWFCU Foundation makes an impact for local students facing food insecurity

Contributed by Northwest Federal Credit Union Foundation

More than one-third (about 34%) of Fairfax County students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, underscoring the urgent need for food assistance beyond the classroom. To help bridge this gap, Northwest Federal Credit Union (NWFCU) partnered with Giant Food and Thompson Hospitality to launch a powerful initiative aimed at combating food insecurity.

Each quarter, the NWFCU Foundation selects a pressing community need to address. Recently, they focused on food insecurity—and the results speak volumes: 44,764 food items were collected to support the student weekend meal bag program, which ensures children have access to nutritious meals when school is not in session. Northwest employees and members collected food and made monetary donations to purchase additional supplies.

“At Northwest Federal Credit Union, we believe in tackling real challenges that affect our community,” said CEO Jeff Bentley. “Food insecurity is a pressing issue, and seeing the collaboration of our employees, members, and partners to collect over 44,000 food items was truly inspiring. Every contribution has made

a difference in the lives of students who rely on these meal bags to get through the weekend.”

Thompson Hospitality played a key role by introducing a “Round Up” feature at its restaurants, allowing guests to round up their bills to the nearest dollar for donations. More than 25,000 patrons participated, raising over \$7,442. With an average donation of just 30 cents per transaction, the success of the initiative showed how small contributions can drive big change.

“Giving back is at the core of Thompson Hospitality’s mission,” said CEO Alex Berentzen. “We are honored to support the NWFCU Foundation’s drive and help combat food insecurity in Fairfax County.”

Giant Food also stepped up, welcoming NWFCU employees to collect food donations at their North Point Village Center location in Reston and hosting multiple collection drives. Their generosity extended further with a \$2,000 gift card donation, enabling the purchase of even more food for students in need.

Thanks to these collaborative efforts, a total of 3,306 weekend meal bags were assembled, providing essential nutrition to students in 18 schools and food pantries across the community.



Thompson Hospitality presents a "Round Up" check to NWFCU Foundation staff. L to R: Meredith Hovan, Taralyn Tharp Kohler, Alex Brown, Caroline Patrickis. Photo contributed by NWFCU

The drive culminated in a Day of Service, with Northwest employees assembling meal bags filled with items like individual applesauce, shelf-stable milk, beef jerky, rice and bean packages, and granola bars. Local beneficiaries included Helping Hungry Kids, South Lakes Food Pantry, Laurel Learning Center; Aldrin, Armstrong, Clearview, Coates, Dogwood, Forest Edge, Hunters Woods and Terraset elementary schools.

Reflecting on the impact of the ini-

tiative, Taralyn Kohler, Vice President of the NWFCU Foundation, said, “The NWFCU Foundation is committed to ensuring that children in our community don’t have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. This initiative proves that when we work together, we can create real, lasting change.”

To learn more about the Northwest Federal Credit Union Foundation or to get involved, visit [www.nwfcufoundation.org](http://www.nwfcufoundation.org).

## Reston National Golf Course redevelopment proposal not recommended—for now

By Gene Powell, Staff Writer

A two-option plan to redevelop all or part of Reston National Golf Course has not been recommended for further study by Fairfax County in 2025. But the review process isn’t over, and a smaller version of the proposal could still move forward.

The Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development staff issued a “do not add to work program” recommendation on April 24. It was the only one of 11 developer submissions in the Hunter Mill District—which includes Reston—not advanced for further review this year. The recommendation appeared in a 50-page report evaluating site-specific development proposals countywide.

This is just the first step in the county’s multi-month Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process. The Planning Commission will review the recommendation on May 15, followed by a June 10 vote by the Board of Supervisors,

which has the final say.

Staff cited “clear and significant policy issues” related to land use compatibility and environmental protection. Developers War Horse Cities and Reston-based NVR are seeking clarification, but remain committed to the process, possibly with a scaled-down plan.

The two-option proposal is the latest in a series of redevelopment attempts for the 166-acre course, which opened in 1970 as “Reston South Golf Course.” The primary option would eliminate the golf course and build about 850 homes on half the property. The remainder would become a “linear park,” potentially owned by the county or Reston Association.

If that plan is rejected, the developers may pursue a smaller option: redesigning the 18-hole course and developing 288 townhomes on 14 acres already zoned for medium-density housing. This area borders Sunrise Valley Drive, Colts Neck

Road, and South Lakes Drive. It would include a renovated clubhouse, new restaurant, upgraded final nine holes, a multi-tiered lighted driving range, and other training amenities.

Both options have been presented at public meetings, including a contentious April 7 session at Langston Hughes Middle School attended by more than 400 people, and a smaller April 23 meeting at Herndon Middle School.

Developers say the course is not financially viable without major upgrades, and cannot compete with newer public and private courses or meet current demand for shorter play and enhanced practice facilities.

Many residents at the meetings opposed the plans, citing threats to Reston’s original open space design, increased traffic, added school-age population, stormwater concerns, and higher housing density. Some, however, pointed to the need for more affordable housing.

Developers said workforce housing units would be included and that new homes would generate revenue for Reston Association, which maintains community facilities. All new homes would be required to join the association.

They also said the proposed linear park would be protected from future development if the larger plan is approved.

War Horse Cities purchased the golf course in 2019 for \$23.6 million, citing the price as reflective of “future development potential.” Critics say that price doesn’t justify altering Reston’s original plan.

A Patch news report posted May 5 described an offer by the developer to pay an “annexation fee” as high as \$8.5 million to Reston Association to offset the association’s costs of taking on “capital” support services for the largest number of proposed residences. The final fee amount would be dependent on county approval and negotiation with RA.

## RISE UP! for a Weekend of Celebration and Community

By Cecily Thomas, Reston Pride

Reston Pride returns May 31–June 1 with the theme “RISE UP!” After drawing nearly 7,000 attendees last year, this two-day celebration promises even more community, music, and joy.

The weekend kicks off with Reston Pride’s first-ever Saturday Night Rising Voices Concert, showcasing local emerging artists from 6 to

9 p.m. Saturday, May 31, at Lake Anne Plaza. The free concert, presented in partnership with the Reston Community Center, will feature live music in a relaxed setting.

The main event—the 8th Annual Pride Festival—takes place on Sunday, June 1, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Lake Anne Plaza. Expect dynamic drag performances led by Katja Attenshun, live music, nearly 70 local vendors and sponsors, food trucks,

an arts and crafts tent, spin class, and more—all in one high-energy, inclusive space.

Both events are free to attend and include ASL interpreting services and on-site security.

Visit [restonpride.org](http://restonpride.org) or follow @RestonPride on social media for details on parking, performers, and vendors. To help keep the celebration going in 2026, donations are welcome and can be made online.



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

<div>10</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Reston Farmers Market</div>	<div>10</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Thrive in ‘25 Health Fair</div>	<div>15</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Bike to Work Day</div>	<div>17</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Tephra ICA Arts Festival</div>
<div>18</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Northern Virginia Tea Festival</div>	<div>23</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Happy Hour with Darden and Friends</div>	<div>24</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Bazaar at Sunset Hills</div>	<div>28</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Senior Movie Day</div>
<div>30</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Fab Fridays Summerbration</div>	<div>31</div> <div>MAY</div> <div>Lower Back and Sciatic Nerve Health Workshop</div>	<div>1</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Reston Pride</div>	<div>5</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Take a Break Concert Series</div>
<div>8</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Sunday Art in the Park</div>	<div>11</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Sunset Concerts</div>	<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Family Fun Entertainment</div>	<div>14</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div>Juneteenth Celebration</div>

**Saturdays through Nov. 25**  
**8 a.m.-12 p.m.**  
**Reston Farmers Market**  
Lake Anne Plaza

**Saturday, May 10**  
**10 a.m.- 2 p.m.**  
**Thrive in ‘25 Health Fair**  
Anytime Fitness  
Come to this free community event to learn and participate in health and wellness demonstrations. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/thrive-in-25-health-fair-tickets-1297077496709>

**Thursday, May 15**  
**7-9 a.m.**  
**Bike to Work Day**  
The Bike Lane  
Register here: <https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/register>

**Saturday-Sunday, May 17-18**  
**10 a.m.- 6 p.m. (Saturday)**  
**11 a.m.- 5 p.m. (Sunday)**  
**Tephra ICA Arts Festival**  
Reston Town Center  
Come join artists for the 34th anniversary of this arts festival. Cost: Free!

**Sunday, May 18**  
**10 a.m. - 6 p.m.**  
**Northern Virginia Tea Festival**  
Lake Anne Plaza

Buy tickets here: <https://www.eldenstreettea.com/tickets>

**Fridays, beginning May 23**  
**5:30-6:45 p.m.**  
**Happy Hour with Darden and Friends**  
Reston Town Park

**Saturday, May 24**  
**9 a.m.-12 p.m**  
**Bazaar at Sunset Hills**  
Sunset Hills Montessori School  
Come and browse for gently used items to support the school and get to know the Community. Cost: Free to attend  
Reserve at stall here: <https://shms123.givebacks.com/store/items/973119>

**Wednesday, May 28**  
**9:15 a.m.-12 p.m.**  
**Senior Movie Day**  
LOOK Cinemas  
Seniors 65 and older can enjoy “Priscilla” with coffee and donuts. More info here: <https://www.reston.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=1006&month=5&year=2025&day=4&calType=0>

**Fridays, beginning May 30**  
**7-8:30 p.m.**  
**Fab Fridays Summerbration**  
Reston Station

**Saturday, May 31**  
**10 a.m.**  
**Lower Back and Sciatic Nerve Health Workshop**  
11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 304

**Sunday, June 1**  
**11 a.m.-6 p.m.**  
**Reston Pride**  
Lake Anne Plaza  
More info here: <https://restonpride.org/pridefest2025/>

**Thursdays, beginning June 5**  
**7-8:30 p.m.**  
**Take a Break Concert Series**  
Halley Rise

**Sundays, beginning June 8**  
**7-8 p.m.**  
**Sunday Art in the Park**  
Reston Town Center

**Wednesdays, beginning June 11**  
**7-8:30 p.m.**  
**Sunset Concerts**  
Lake Anne Plaza

**Saturdays, beginning June 14**  
**10-10:45 a.m.**  
**Family Fun Entertainment**  
Reston Town Square Park

**Saturday, June 14**  
**1-3 p.m.**  
**Juneteenth Celebration**  
St. John Neumann  
Join the St. John Neumann Community as they hold their third Juneteenth celebration. There will be family-fun activities with some educational discussions

Community Calendar

Scan the QR code to access The Reston Letter's "Upcoming Community Events" calendar submission form and share your event!

<div>2025 Pool Schedule</div>							
SEASON 1 (May 10 - May 23)	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
North Shore Heated Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.
Ridge Heights Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.
SEASON 2 (May 24 - June 13) includes Memorial Day weekend	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Dogwood Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	4 - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	4 - 7 p.m.	CLOSED
Glade Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.	4 - 7 p.m.
Golf Course Island Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Lake Newport 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
Lake Thoreau Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>
North Hills Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
North Shore Heated Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. <i>Fitness 6-9 a.m. &amp; 7-9 p.m.</i>
Ridge Heights Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.	1 - 7 p.m.



# LIFETIME

## Flip the script: Talking about aging

By Scott Parkin, Staff Writer

A few summers ago, I was at the North Hills Pool getting into my bathing suit. A very young boy (probably around five or six) and his father were also there. The boy looked at me and asked “Is that an old man?” His father replied, “He’s older than you.” I smiled and finished putting on my suit.

The 2025 Older Americans Month theme, established by the Administration on Community Living is “Flip the Script.” The theme relates to how our society “perceives, talks about, and ap-

proaches aging.”

Organizations that represent, study or celebrate aging avoid broad labels whenever possible. Other than grouping about 40 million Americans born between 1946 to 1964 as Baby Boomers, they generally prefer the term “older adult” when referring to those over age 65. Surveys show that this is probably the least ageist or offensive term to use when a generalization is necessary.

However, whenever possible, communicators in those organizations—and increasingly, some major media outlets—recommend being more specific. Instead

of seeking a single label for everyone over age 65, it’s better to identify the actual age cohort you are talking about.

For example, in a news story, a reporter might write, “John Smith, 81, has just broken the Reston record for a triathlon in the 70-and-older age group,” instead of simply saying that a “senior” achieved something remarkable. In the headline, instead of “Senior Breaks Record,” the editor might choose “Smith Breaks Triathlon Record.”

Generic labels turn off a large percentage of those over age 65, including yours truly. I may be old, but I am not a

senior; I graduated from high school in 1965. I am not elderly, aged, young-old or old-old.

The boy at the pool was correct: I am not young. Another answer to his very innocent question might have been “Labels are for jars, not people.” But his father’s answer was much better— a teaching moment.

It’s time to flip the script.

*Scott L. Parkin, 77, is president of Reston for a Lifetime ([www.RestonforaLifetime.org](http://www.RestonforaLifetime.org)), a nonprofit organization with a mission to inform and educate residents about how to age in place.*

### Bike safety, cont'd from page 2

Go” campaign offers some easy-to-remember rhyming safety tips:

- “It’s not a race. We’re sharing space.”
- “Passing on left is always best.”
- “Need to stop? Leave the blacktop.”
- “Be polite. Slow on right.”
- “Be alert. Don’t get hurt.”

Reston Bike Club board member and experienced rider Gideon Schmidt says bike safety ultimately “comes down to communication.” Respecting all types of trail users, he says, is key to avoiding accidents. “Even on the open road, talking to others is the best ap-

proach,” says Schmidt, a self-described “fast rider.” With so many people sharing the paths, his advice is simple: don’t pass when there’s oncoming traffic, don’t pass side-by-side, and if you ride with earbuds, use only one so you can hear others.

For parents of young cyclists, Schmidt offers this tip: Teach kids to recognize the phrase “Passing on your left” and understand that it means stay to the right, keep riding straight, and don’t stop or swerve.

Reston Association officials point to their governing documents, which

allow certain types of e-bikes on RA’s 55 miles of paved and natural surface trails, provided the maximum speed does not exceed 20 mph.

Fairfax County’s rules require helmet use for all riders under age 15, and Virginia law mandates that bicycles ridden between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a white front light visible for at least 500 feet, as well as a red rear reflector visible from at least 600 feet. On roads with speed limits of 35 mph or higher, bikes must also have a red tail light—steady or flashing—visible for at least 500 feet.

Kelley Westenhoff, president of the nonprofit Friends of the W&OD, advises that group rides should be limited to no more than five riders. She also stresses the importance of calling out hazards and other users, a duty that starts with the lead cyclist and should be passed down the line. “Bike up!” or “Jogger ahead!” should echo through the group, especially when visibility is limited.

Westenhoff’s best advice? “Just practice what you learned in kindergarten: Take turns, don’t hurt anyone, and be nice.”

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Composting

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7



EDUCATION

Reston brothers bring Yale's finest voices to South Lakes

By Holly Weatherwax, Staff Writer

The Yale Alley Cats, a world-renowned a cappella group from Yale University founded in 1943, will perform at South Lakes High School at 7 p.m. Friday, May 16. Joining them on stage will be South Lakes' own DoReMigas, South Lakes Men's A Cappella (SMAC), and Noteworthy.


The Alley Cats have created more than 400 original arrangements, covering everything from jazz standards and Motown classics to timeless oldies and contemporary hits. They've released dozens of albums, performed internationally, and sung for luminaries including President Barack Obama, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Martha Stewart, and Jay Leno.

This Reston performance is part of a special "Hometown Tour" for brothers Cyrus and August Rivers, both members of the Alley Cats. Cyrus, a sophomore at Yale majoring in Biology and Economics, attended Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. August, a

first-year student studying Theater, Performing Arts, and Latin American Studies, is a South Lakes High School alum. Both began their musical journey at Lopez Studios, Inc. Performing Arts School in Reston.

Giving back to the community that nurtured their love of music is important to Cyrus and August. This event will raise funds for three local organizations: South Lakes Parents for Choral Arts, South Lakes Theatre Boosters, and Reston Stars (Core Foundation). Reston Stars was founded by August in 2023 as part of his IB CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) project. Its mission is to expand access to performing arts enrichment programs for economically disadvantaged youth in Reston, especially middle school students, through lessons, summer camps, and other opportunities.

Tickets and donation options are available via Eventbrite—scan the QR code or follow the link below. Local restaurants or organizations interested in donating meals to support the performers can contact Cyrus Rivers directly at [cyrus.rivers@yale.edu](mailto:cyrus.rivers@yale.edu).






# THE YALE ALLEY CATS

FRI | 5/16 | 7 PM


## South Lakes HS Theater

*Hometown Tour for Reston Brothers*  
August Rivers, SLHS '24  
Cyrus Rivers, TJHSST '23



[tinyurl.com/catsinreston](https://tinyurl.com/catsinreston)

Fundraiser for South Lakes Theatre Boosters, South Lakes Parents for Choral Arts, and Reston Stars!



Special appearances by  
SLHS A Cappella Groups: DoReMigas, SMAC, and Noteworthy!

Reston Runners community fund awards scholarships to three student athletes

Contributed by Reston Runners

The Reston Runners Community Fund (RRCF) awarded scholarships for Reston-Herndon high school seniors who are active in running/athletics. The \$4,000 Tim Cohn Scholarship is given in memory of Tim Cohn, avid runner, scientist, and longtime Reston resident. Two \$1,000 Reston Runners Community Fund scholarships are open to seniors attending Herndon or South Lakes high school who are active in running and the community.

These scholarships are funded by Run Thru Reston Half Marathon & 5K Race proceeds. The scholarship applications are managed by College Access Fairfax. Applications are reviewed by the board of the Reston Runners Community Fund and RRCF ultimately selects the scholarship winners.

This year's scholarship award winners were presented with their scholarships during the Run Thru Reston Awards Ceremony on April 27. Santiago Hernandez is the recipient of the \$4,000 Tim Cohn Scholarship. He is a stellar student at South Lakes High School, an IB candidate, a strong STEM student and a runner. He has been accepted to the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan.

Celeste Hammond is a recipient of a \$1,000 Reston Runners Community Fund scholarship. She is the track and field team captain at Herndon High School and is an AP and honors student. She will attend the University of Mary Washington in the fall.

Jason Raffel is a recipient of a



Selemon Getachew and Joan Koss, on the Reston Runners Community Fund Board of Directors, present a scholarship to Celeste Hammond from Herndon High.



Selemon Getachew and Joan Koss, on the Reston Runners Community Fund Board of Directors, awarded South Lakes senior Jason Raffel his scholarship on April 27. Photo by Ed Shanahan, Breakaway Images

\$1,000 Reston Runners Community Fund scholarship. He is an IB candidate and is the Cross Country and Track team captain at South Lakes High School. He plans to run Division 1 Cross Country at the University of Richmond in the fall.

SLHS puts a comedic twist on a classic tale



South Lakes Theatre performed "Once Upon a Mattress" the weekend of May 3. Photo by Jennifer Heffner & East 27 Creative

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

South Lakes High School's drama department delivered a royally entertaining run of "Once Upon a Mattress" May 1-3. The classic fairytale, turned on its head, left audiences laughing, cheering, and perhaps seeing underdogs in a whole new light.

Directed by Theatre Arts Director Michael Viola, the quirky 1959 musical comedy—a humorous retelling of "The Princess and the Pea"—was the perfect shift after years of emotionally heavy productions like "Bright Star" and "Radium Girls."

"After everything we've done these past few years, we needed something lighter," Viola said before the show's opening. "Honestly, it's what we all

needed right now."

Underdogs Who Stole the Show

For Viola, "Once Upon a Mattress" was a personal journey. He first played Prince Dauntless in high school, which made revisiting the show with his students all the more meaningful. "It was the first time I got to play a leading man," he said. "And I love Dauntless because he's an underdog, something I've always related to."

But this production wasn't just about nostalgia. It was about showcasing a group of students, especially the Class of 2025, who, as Viola shared, "defied expectations all year long."

Leading Roles, Lasting Lessons

Senior Eliana Redford dazzled au-

Continued on page 9

Herndon cuts loose with 'Footloose'



Herndon High School Theatre Department dazzled audiences with their spring musical performance of Footloose the weekend of May 3. Photos by Michelle Blanchet



# EDUCATION

## Making an Impact

# Heather Thomas gives back to Reston

By Chuck Cascio,  
Author and Former South Lakes Teacher

When Heather (née Fitzsimmons) Thomas, a 1987 South Lakes High School graduate, was a University of Virginia freshman, she experienced an occasion that brought the uniqueness of her life in Reston to light.

"There was an architecture student in my hall who asked to interview me about Reston as a planned community," Heather recalls. "It was through talking to her that I first really thought about my time at Dogwood Elementary School with its mix of students and how that enriched my early years. I was used to students of different nationalities, family income levels, and backgrounds. To me, that was just school."

Over the years, Heather's personal awareness of Reston's uniqueness has grown in many ways, but especially in her role as a guidance counselor at SLHS for seven years and in her current position there as Director of Student Services, which she has held for six years. In those positions, she has experienced many insights about individuals in Reston as well as the community itself.

"Working at South Lakes has strengthened my commitment to Reston," Heather says. "South Lakes is a Fairfax County school, but one of the things that makes it special is the community of Reston. We have a large number of alumni who have come back to work here, and many of them have children who now attend South Lakes."

Heather's family moved to Reston in the summer of 1974 from the Pimmit Hills area of Falls Church, and she fondly recalls her years at Dogwood Elementary: "I remember walking up to the doors of the school the afternoon before school started every year to find out who my teacher was. And, since Dogwood was an open-plan school, sometimes classrooms and hallways

would change over the summer."

Heather felt a sense of freedom growing up in Reston: "I remember when I was in fifth or sixth grade, I was allowed to ride my bike to Hunters Woods Shopping Center by myself. This meant I had access to the library and, on special occasions, ice cream from Baskin Robbins!"

Heather's personal instinct to seek new realities led her to a unique choice of majors at the University of Virginia. She had visited France three times with family before graduating from high school, and those travels sparked a desire in her. "I knew I wanted to study abroad," she says. "I majored in French at UVA and spent a semester studying in Paris. I got my masters in teaching from UVA too. When I graduated, I taught French for two years--one in a school outside of Philadelphia and then in Fairfax County. Since I had also been endorsed to teach social studies, I taught Virginia history for three years."

An awareness was growing inside of Heather while teaching. She found that discussions with students inspired her to pursue a new role. "I loved the conversations I had with students that were outside of the curriculum," she says. Those discussions gave Heather insights that did not always appear in the classroom. They inspired her to pursue a role that would allow her to work with students in ways not always available to teachers so, while teaching, she earned her degree in counseling.

Her position as Director of Student Services gives Heather the opportunity to impact staff members in ways that filter directly into the classroom and students' lives. She is aware that "college admissions seem to keep changing, especially around standardized testing like the SAT and ACT. So, we need to help students and families navigate the post-secondary planning landscape. And for students not interested in a four-year



Heather Thomas

institution, we need to help them understand different options."

Heather and her husband, Paul, also a SLHS graduate, moved to Reston from a neighboring county when their son was very young and Heather was pregnant with their daughter. Heather and Paul had very specific reasons for the decision, going back to their own childhood experiences. "We wanted the intentional diversity of the schools," Heather said. "We wanted the Reston camps, the trails, the pools. We wanted the community."

The Reston community had made a lasting impact on Heather, leading her to make an ongoing impact on youths throughout her career.

## 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 22<sup>nd</sup> crossword puzzle creation, made specifically for The Reston Letter readers!

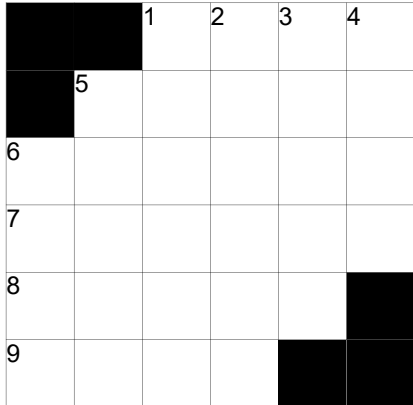
### Bees Abounding

#### ACROSS

- Jul. 4th shindigs
- Clear the shelves of (before a hurricane, say)
- Lucrezia \_\_\_, papal offspring and opera femme fatale
- Weepy veggies?
- 007, for one
- Went by snowboard or subway

#### DOWN

- Like some dog bones or desires
- Olden
- "Jaws" skipper and sharkfood
- Relaxing sites that emit and rhyme with aahs
- Poetry slam percussion instrument
- Creature that sounds like a snoozer



### Classic Tale, cont'd from page 8

diences as Queen Aggravain, bringing wit and flair to the show's larger-than-life villain. "To perform in a show as fun as 'Once Upon a Mattress' was a privilege," she said. "It was so exciting to perform alongside my peers in a musical filled with joy and laughter."

Redford's dedication to developing the queen's sharp voice, physicality, and even a deeper backstory paid off on stage. "She taught me to never let anyone get in the way of what I want to achieve," Redford said, "and to always appreciate the family I have."

Senior Clara Neag took center stage as the bold and unconventional Princess Winnifred. Having previously contributed to South Lakes productions both onstage and behind the scenes, Neag embraced the physical demands of her role with enthusiasm.

"I thought a lot about Winnifred's backstory and worked on building stamina since she's such a physical character," Neag explained. She described her character as "bold, lovable, and unique"—qualities she connects with personally. "Winnifred has taught me the value of sticking out," she said. "Life is so boring if you try to be like everyone else. Everyone has something unique to offer, and we should all share our gifts."

Reflecting on the experience, Neag said the show gave her the chance to develop both her comedic timing and her bond with her castmates. "The best part was joking around with my best friends on stage while still getting to explore meaningful acting."

#### Characters, Comedy, and Community

Senior Isaac Garcia charmed the audience as the Minstrel, complete with ukulele in hand, adding a musical twist to his storytelling role. "As a musician, I relate to the Minstrel's desire to tell stories," he said. "Everyone in the cast was so committed to making sure the audience, and each other, had fun."

Junior Liam Birch, who brought humor and heart to Sir Harry, loved hearing the audience's laughter throughout the show. "It felt thrilling to perform

something lighthearted," he said. "Sir Harry taught me to stay true to your heart."

Senior Itsuko Scoville embraced the chance to explore a more comedic side as Lady Larken. Typically drawn to dramatic roles, she found joy in letting loose. "It was super fun to explore a lighter, more playful character," said Scoville, who will pursue musical theatre at Ithaca College in the fall.

#### Trust, Training, and Teamwork

Acting coach Brigitte Thieme-Burdette helped students bring depth to their characters while building confidence along the way. "My approach starts with trust," she said. "I want them to fail gloriously and realize they're okay afterward. That builds confidence."

She emphasized that every cast member played an essential role in bringing the world of "Once Upon a Mattress" to life. "The more I can empower each person to have a point of view, the better chance we have of suspending the audience's disbelief."

#### A Collaborative Production

Viola, who assembled a new production team this year, expressed gratitude for the collaborative spirit that helped make the show a success. "I was nervous not knowing who the team would be," he said, "but these folks were great at what they do and incredible collaborators."

The team included Music Director James McNamara, Choreography Mentor Grace Yakubisin, Technical Director Matt Torres, and Backstage Supervisor Diane Cooper-Gould. Together, they guided students in creating a production full of laughter, heart, and unforgettable moments.

While the curtains have closed on "Once Upon a Mattress," the memories and lessons from the production will stick with the cast and crew long after their final bows.

"The more kids have to play, the more they discover," Viola said. "And the more they discover, the more they grow."

And what did audiences experience? "Besides the fact that our students are funny?" Viola said with a smile. "A whole lot of joy."



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FOLLOW ON SOCIAL





SPORTS

High School Athlete Spotlight

Finn Middleton  
South Lakes Track



Photo by Brooks Ross



Photo contributed by Renee Blosser

South Lakes High School senior Finn Middleton has been named Athlete of the Month for his outstanding track accomplishments. A 2025 Class 6 state champion in the 55-meter hurdles, Finn also earned Washington Post All-Met honors for boys indoor track and recently broke school records in both the 55m and 110m hurdles.

Finn will continue his track career at William & Mary this fall. Off the track, he gives back by coaching youth flag football for Reston Youth Association and youth track for Potomac River Running.

“Finn has steadily improved over his career and accomplished great things,” said Coach Scott Raczko. “He’s one of the most determined and hard-working athletes we’ve had, an excellent role model and leader.”



Herndon High Senior Earnest Gant is escorted by his family during Track and Field Senior Night. Gant throws the shot, discus, competes in the pole vault and ran a leg of the 4x100 this year. His brother also Caleb is also part of the Hornet Track & Field team.

Photo by Karl Majer

Smiles, medals, and milestones at Run Thru Reston

By Matt Reider, Staff Writer

A brisk spring morning set the perfect stage on April 24 as hundreds gathered for the "Run Thru Reston" half-marathon and 5K, a celebration of fitness and community spirit organized by Reston Runners.

While the race didn't begin until 7:30 a.m., South Lakes High School was buzzing more than an hour earlier. Volunteers in red shirts set up registration tables, unpacked race bibs, and prepared for the crowd. At the center of the activity was race co-chair Jeannie Johns, answering a steady stream of questions as the start time approached.

Johns stepped up to lead the event after previous chair Anna Newcome stepped down, determined to keep the race — a tradition since 2013 — going strong. Planning began as early as June 2024, with more than 125 volunteers needed on race day alone.

Co-chair Clyde Rollins noted that some participants had completed a 14-week training program, also organized by Reston Runners. He called the race a “good community event,” with all proceeds supporting scholarships for Herndon and South Lakes high school students through the Reston Runners Community Fund, a separate nonprofit.

Among the many volunteers, Johns’ son, Jason, and his friend John Palus set up the water station and prepared awards. Jason, in his third year helping

to organize the race, said, “Last night when we went to bed, we really felt prepared and ready.” Meanwhile, volunteer Sergei Plotnitskii and his 10-person team placed about 100 signs and chalked the course to guide runners.

To support runner safety, a medical tent was set up near the start. Volunteer podiatrists Dr. Kevin Diep and Dr. Stanley Idiculla, along with volunteer Kathy Le, were on hand to assist participants as needed.

By 7:30 a.m., the starting gate was in position, water and sponsor tables were ready, and the clocks were ticking. More than 450 participants gathered at the track. Half-marathon runners aiming for fast times moved to the front, followed by 5K runners, who started 15 minutes later.

After the races, awards were distributed. PR Running gift cards went to the top three male and female finishers in 15 age groups. The top three overall winners were: males: Nick Turner in 1 hour, 24 minutes, and females: Brianne Kaufman in 1 hour, 39 minutes. 5K overall winners were: males: Austen Motes in 18 minutes, 41 seconds, and females: Thea Motes in 22 minutes, 53 seconds.

The day also marked the awarding of scholarships. Santiago Hernandez, a South Lakes runner and STEM IB student accepted to the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan, received the first-ever \$4,000 Tim Cohn Scholarship. Two additional \$1,000



Photo by Benjamin Burgess

scholarships were awarded to Celeste Hammond, Herndon High School’s track and field captain heading to the University of Mary Washington, and Jason Raffel, South Lakes’ cross-country captain and future University of Richmond runner.

For Johns, the best part of the day was “seeing the smiles on the faces of the finishers.” Whether chasing a personal record or simply crossing the line, each runner had something to celebrate — made possible by the hard work of Reston Runners and its volunteers.

Reston-Herndon cricket teams bring international game to local grounds

By Matt Reider, Staff Writer

Cricket is a bat-and-ball game that dates back to the Middle Ages, with the first recorded reference in England in 1598. In our area, adult teams have played for more than 50 years, and the Washington Cricket League (WCL) was officially established in 1974. Today, the WCL includes 40 clubs playing across 22 different cricket grounds.

For those in the Reston-Herndon area, the Fairfax County Cricket Field at Lake Fairfax Park is home to four teams. Built in 1997, it remains one of the few fields in Northern Virginia large enough to meet international cricket standards.

On a sunny Saturday in April, the home team, the Hunters—named for nearby Hunter Woods Road—hosted the Windies, a team whose name honors its players’ West Indian heritage. An hour before game time, Hunters captain Ani Roy was busy organizing his team and preparing the field. The wickets were set, and a measuring tape was used to position cones marking the infield and boundary.

Most of the Hunters players are originally from India and Pakistan. Roy explained that many of them learned the game as children, and now enjoy playing competitively in Northern Virginia. The team loves to talk cricket and sees itself as an ambassador for the sport in the U.S.

American baseball, which uses a similar ball, is widely believed to have evolved from cricket. As in baseball, the batter tries to hit a ball to score runs, while the bowler attempts to hit the wicket—



Hunter's bowler Hariprasad Davanagere delivers a ball to Brent McQueed of the Windies as wicket keeper Imran Hamseed prepares to make a play. Photo by Matt Reider

three vertical sticks—to record an out. WCL games use the “Twenty20” format, which lasts about three hours, although international test matches can span three to five days and include multiple games.

Assistant manager Dinesh Chandrasekaran led the team in warm-ups, hitting grounders and then launching pop flies to the players. Before the game began, the Hunters held a brief ceremony to thank their major sponsor for the season: Bole Bole Ethiopian Kitchen and Bar, a Herndon restaurant.

Once the referees arrived, Windies bowler Stephen Bruney took a running start and delivered the ball toward the wicket. Roy, wearing a helmet and leg pads, connected with a powerful swing, sending the ball sailing through the air.

Roy’s wife, Khushu Joshi is a devoted fan of the team. “I love that there’s

a field here in Fairfax,” she said, noting that many players elsewhere have to travel to Maryland. When I asked how much cricket means to her husband, she smiled and recalled his proposal. “He got down on one knee and asked me to marry him—just not during cricket season.”

The cricket team is part of a larger community, with players, families, and friends regularly gathering for lunches and events throughout the year.

Ninety minutes into the game, the Hunters were still at bat, finishing their 20 overs with 152 runs and 9 outs. As the game drew to a close, it became clear that the Hunters’ lead was too much for the Windies to overcome. The final score: Hunters 152/9, Windies 136/5.

The WCL cricket season continues through August.



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Hydrating hand treatment





# KIDS

## Reston Rangers: Time to roll into spring!

Get ready to roll into fun this month, because our Kids' Section theme is biking in Reston! With miles of cool trails to explore, Reston is the perfect place to hop on your bike and discover exciting new adventures. Whether you're learning to ride for the first time,

trying out fun tricks, or teaming up with friends for a trail ride, there's something for everyone. Biking helps you grow strong, feel confident, and make great memories along the way. So grab your helmet and let's hit the trails—your next adventure is just a pedal away!



### Learning to travel safely: It's about more than just stop signs and traffic lights

By Fionnuala Quinn

When you think about being safe on the streets, you probably picture traffic signs—like stop signs and traffic lights. But did you know that signs are just one small part of a much bigger system? Our world is filled with streets, side-walks, trails, and intersections. On top of that, there are rules, good habits, and ways people communicate without even speaking! Kids like you are learning how to move safely through this “built environment” every day, whether you're walking, biking, or riding a scooter.

#### Why It's Different for Kids

Kids face special challenges when moving around:

- You're smaller, so drivers might not see you as easily, especially near parked cars.
- Your brain is still learning how to

judge speed and distance.

- You're still practicing how to predict what others might do.

Meanwhile, vehicles—especially big ones like trucks and SUVs—can be hard to see around, and they move fast. That's why learning good safety skills is so important!

#### Important Safety Skills to Learn

Moving safely isn't just about memorizing traffic signs. It's about building good habits and strong judgment skills. Here are some important things to practice:

- Know where it's safe to walk, ride, and play. Stick to sidewalks, trails, and parks.
- Watch how vehicles move. Learn to spot cars that are coming, turning, or backing up.
- Pay attention to how fast things

move—including you!

Be prepared to slow down, stop. Remember, vehicles can't stop too quickly. Don't take chances.

- Understand why rules matter. It's not just “because an adult says so”—rules help keep everyone safe.
- Cross streets the smart way. Look left, right, and left again before stepping into the road.
- Learn what signs and signals mean. A stop sign means STOP and check. A yield sign means slow down and be ready to let others go first. Traffic lights tell you when it's safe to cross.
- Notice other people. Watch for walkers, bikers, and drivers. Guess what they might do next!
- Practice with adults. Grown-ups can help you learn, until you're ready to travel more on your own.

#### Growing Your Independence

Over time, you'll build the skills to move safely and smartly by yourself. Remember, knowing what a traffic sign means is important—but it's only one piece of the bigger safety puzzle.

Stay alert, think ahead, and practice safe habits every day. That's how you become a strong, smart traveler in your neighborhood and beyond!



## Kitchen Science: Penny balance—Why bikes don't fall (when moving!)

#### Objective:

Understand how motion helps with balance—just like when riding a bike!

#### Concept:

When you're riding a bike, it's easier to stay upright because of something called gyroscopic stability and momentum. This experiment uses a spinning penny to model how that works.

#### Materials:

- 1 penny (or any small coin)
- A flat surface like a table or floor
- Optional: stopwatch or timer

#### Instructions:

##### 1. Stand the Penny Up

On a flat surface, try to balance the penny upright without spinning it. What happens? (It falls almost immediately!)

##### 2. Spin the Penny

Now spin the penny on its edge like a top. Time how long it stays upright before it falls. Try this several times.

##### 3. Compare the Two

Ask: Why does the penny stay up when it's spinning but not when it's still?

#### What's Happening?

When the penny spins, it creates something called angular momentum—the

same physics that helps a bicycle stay upright when you're riding. The spinning wheels of a bike act like the spinning penny, helping the bike resist falling over. When the penny (or bike) stops moving, it loses that momentum and falls more easily.

#### Extension Ideas:

- Try using different coins—do heavier coins spin longer?
- Time how long different spin speeds keep the coin up.
- Watch a slow-motion video of a spinning bike wheel to compare!



## May Art Magic

#### ...how to paint blossoms that popped!

Find a piece of cardboard.

Find a brown or black crayon or marker.

Draw a tree branch as best you can.

Glue popped corn on the branch for blossoms!

Paint the popcorn petals pink. Let it dry!

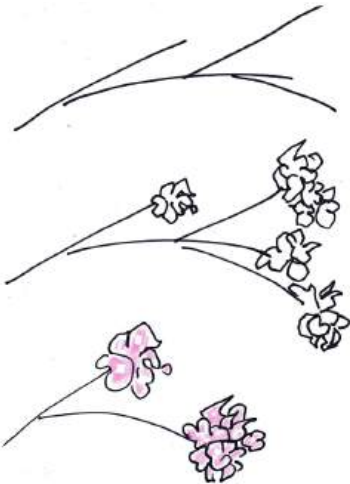
Add blue sky if you want...or

use a Q-tip dipped in green paint for leaves.

Put a hole in the top of your creation to hang it up.

Put it on the wall for all to see...

#### blossoms that popped!



## Ask an Expert: Cycling through the years

By Ryan Luczak, Restonian Triathlete (Athlete who participates in a race which includes three parts: swimming, running, and cycling.)

#### About the Expert:

Ryan says, “I have been on a bike for as long as I can remember and have used two wheels to get to friends' houses, explore the extensive path network, mountain bike in Lake Fairfax, and visit the Reston ponds to fish. I am now a professional triathlete and spend upwards of 15 to 20 hours a week on my bike and travel around the world competing. I still think Reston is one of the best places to cycle as there are endless paths to explore, bike lanes, the W&OD trail, and an overall friendly attitude towards cyclists.”

**When did you begin cycling?** I began cycling when I was about 4 years old and haven't stopped since!

**Why have you continued cycling?** For the health and performance benefits, the freedom it brings, and the ability to explore and go virtually anywhere you desire.

**What do you love most about cycling?** Being able to be in nature and having the ability to travel in a healthy and fun way.

**What is/has been your biggest challenge with cycling?** Learning how to service my bike and keep it in tip-top shape.

**What advice would you give to young people**



Left: Ryan biking as a youngster. Right: Ryan biking as an adult. Photo courtesy of Ryan Luczak

**curious about venturing out on their own on a bike (around Reston or out on trails)?** To let your parents know where you plan on going, when you will be back, and to follow safety protocols like wearing a helmet and following trail etiquette. But really, just have fun and don't be afraid to get a bit lost. It is part of the fun!

**Anything else you think young cyclists should know?** To get out there! The hardest part is stepping out of the door.



# KIDS

## sMOREs Youth rides bring mountain biking to the next generation

By Anne Mader,  
Owner of The Bike Lane in Reston

For more than 15 years, the sMOREs have been a staple of the local mountain biking scene. The Bike Lane sMOREs rides are youth mountain bike outings organized and led by dedicated volunteers. These rides offer kids and their parents a chance to bond over a shared love of the outdoors, biking, and community.

The rides are a collaborative effort between the local IMBA chapter, MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts), and The Bike Lane, a community-focused bike shop in Reston. Every Tuesday at 5:45 p.m., weather permitting, families gather at The Bike Lane before

setting off for miles of fun singletrack at Lake Fairfax Park. Designed for riders of all levels, participants are grouped by age and experience to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Most riders range in age from 5 years old to middle schoolers.

The origin of the sMOREs rides stems from a shared goal: to create a fun and safe way for kids to enjoy and learn the sport of mountain biking. Started by volunteers and parents from The Bike Lane race team, the rides were originally held at Wakefield Park in Annandale. The program was later adopted by MORE, the local mountain biking advocacy club, and expanded to more than nine parks across the DMV. Each sMOREs ride varies slightly by location, but all share a

focus on inclusivity, skill-building, and getting more kids on bikes.

Over the years, sMOREs has inspired countless young riders to develop a lasting passion for mountain biking. Many who started with the program have gone on to race at the high school and collegiate levels and even compete professionally.

Beyond the trails, sMOREs rides foster a strong sense of community. Each Tuesday, The Bike Lane sMOREs wrap up their rides with popsicles for the kids and cold brews for the parents on the Bike Lane Brewing patio. The program has become a cornerstone of camaraderie and connection in the Reston area.



Families gather outside of the Bike Lane in Reston just before their weekly sMOREs ride.  
Photo by Benjamin Burgess

To learn more about the sMORE’s rides, visit the sMORE’s Facebook page.

## Calm Corner Beginner's mind: How riding a bike can teach us about mindfulness

By Victoria Stacy, Staff Writer

### Beginner’s Mind: Your Hidden Superpower:

Have you ever tried something new, like riding a bike without training wheels, and felt both excited and nervous? That’s where something called beginner’s mind comes in—and it’s a superpower you already have!

#### What Is a Beginner's Mind?

Beginner’s mind means looking at things with curiosity and openness, like you do when you try something for the first time. It’s not about being perfect—it’s about being ready to learn and grow. Even if you’ve ridden a bike many times, a beginner’s mind helps you keep improving, like learning to ride on new terrain or mastering new skills.

### Learning to Ride: A Perfect Example

Remember when you first learned to ride? You may have wobbled, or even fallen, but you kept trying. You didn’t expect to be perfect—you just stayed in the moment and trusted you’d improve. That’s beginner’s mind in action.

#### Facing New Challenges

Each time you try a new path or trail, you use a beginner’s mind again. You don’t know exactly what to expect, so you stay alert and flexible. Even if you hit a bump, get a flat tire, or face a steep hill, you say, “That’s okay—I’ll figure it out.”

#### Why It Matters

This mindset builds resilience—the ability to bounce back when things get tough. Each time you try again after a setback, you grow stronger.

#### You Can Use It Anywhere

Beginner’s mind isn’t just for biking. Use

it when starting school, learning a new sport or instrument, meeting someone new, or facing a tough problem. When you stay curious and open, you can handle anything that comes your way.

So the next time you face something new, remember: stay curious—and enjoy the ride!



Match the bicycle safety sign on the left with its meaning on the right.  
How many do you know?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

A. Bicycle Pathway.

B. Come to a complete stop and look both ways.

C. Bicycles are not permitted in this area.

D. Path ahead splits into two directions—stay aware of other users.

E. Two roads come together—watch for merging traffic.

Answers: 1-C, 2-E, 3-D, 4-B, 5-A

## Meet our May Super Citizen

By Lisa Johnson, Staff Writer

*Celebrating Reston kids who are making differences in our community*

Meet Julisa, a senior at South Lakes High School with a passion for art and for making a difference in her community. Julisa heads the Students of Art Reston (SOAR) club at her school where she helps put on art shows for the club members and develops art-related projects in her community. She is passionate about creating art that uplifts others, makes them happy, and brings them hope.

Julisa joined Students of Art Reston her sophomore year just as it was

beginning. Since then, she has become president of the club and has helped it grow in both membership and community engagement. Most commonly, the Students of Art Reston volunteers with residents of The Hunters Woods fellowship house, a retirement community. There, they work with residents to make all different types of art projects and put on art shows with the residents’ work. “It’s really fun for the residents,” she explained. “They not only get to be creative and have fun making art, but they also say that they really love getting to spend time with young people.”

Julisa also leads SOAR’s engagement with Terraset elementary’s “Get to Green

Club” where they have helped make booklets for their endangered species project and worked with students at the school in other art-related ways. “It’s so fun getting to volunteer at elementary schools,” she says, “I remember when I was that age. It was so exciting when we got to do projects with high schoolers. It feels great to be able to pay it forward.”

When asked about the importance of kindness in a community, Julisa shared, “It is really important to me to be happy and to help make other people happy. To me, bringing people into a creative space is a form of kindness because it gives people a chance to express themselves and find joy when they might not other-



Julisa at the Youth Art Walk at Dulles Airport.  
Photo contributed by Julisa Obregon

wise have the resources to create things on their own. I think it’s so important to treat people the way that you would want to be treated because it helps everyone have a more joyful and fulfilling life.”

*Do you know a young person in Reston under 18 who has made a difference in their community? Scan the QR code below to nominate them as a Super Citizen in an upcoming issue of The Reston Letter.*



## Kids' Crossword

By Reston crossword constructor, Joe O'Neill

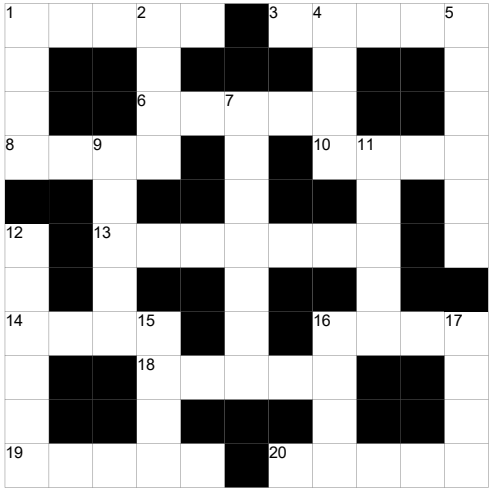
### ACROSS

- Yummy
- "Good dog" reward
- Perform better than
- Young kiddos ... or tater types
- Some arm art, for short
- Kiddies' stuffed bears
- Doofus
- Exam, e.g.
- Concur
- Pre-K kid's bike
- Fairy tale monster or Internet trouble maker

### DOWN

- Tail end of a lion's tail ... or top of a titmouse
- "Terrible" years (for some kids)
- Cheer (for) ... or kind of beer
- Kleenex product
- One just starting to walk
- \_\_\_ -frutti (ice cream flavor)
- Pathway to the altar
- Double-clicking sound of disapproval
- Lose on purpose ... or a sleeveless top
- Hot streak ... or eye drop
- Hammer or screwdriver

### Tee Time





# 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](mailto:ezreston@gmail.com)

## GREENFARE

# The cost of a green lawn

By Gwyn Whittaker

When I was growing up, our lawn was green—but in many shades. Dandelions, plantain, chickweed, purslane, and other useful plants were mowed alongside grass, creating a diverse landscape that fed bees, birds, and butterflies. I remember picking dandelions in front of my dad’s lawnmower and placing their bright yellow cheer on the kitchen table. That changed with the arrival of ChemLawn in the late 1960s. By 1992, it was acquired by ServiceMaster, the parent company of Terminix, and rebranded as TruGreen, reflecting growing public awareness of the dangers posed by chemical lawn treatments. While ChemLawn was among the first to bring chemical warfare to our yards, it certainly wasn’t the last. Today, the lawn care industry is a \$300 billion market, and more glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) is applied to lawns than to all U.S. farmland. Beginning in the 1990s, industry lobbying led to pesticide preemption laws in 46 states, including Virgin-

ia. These laws prevent localities from enacting their own pesticide restrictions. Maryland, which does not have pesticide preemption, took action. Montgomery County banned glyphosate on public and private lawns, citing concerns for public health, pets, and pollinators. And for good reason. Homes with chemically treated lawns have been linked to increased risks of cancer, fertility issues, autoimmune diseases, and learning disabilities. A 2015 Pediatrics meta-analysis found a significant risk of leukemia in children exposed to outdoor herbicides. Other studies tie lawn chemicals to ADHD, cognitive delays, and conditions in adults including Parkinson’s disease, diabetes, dementia, and various cancers. Pets are at risk, too: dogs on treated lawns are four to six times more likely to develop bladder cancer and 70% more likely to develop malignant lymphoma. Pollinators suffer as well. Herbicides not only kill bees outright, but also destroy their food sources, contributing to alarming colony collapses. So what can we do? Skip the chemical lawn. Follow

the lead of Montgomery County: Overseed with grass, and let go of the dream of a flawless green monocrop, a look that comes at a toxic cost. *Links available at the online version of The Reston Letter.*



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## Ask Doctor S.

# Moms, you matter!

Many memes and psychotherapy jokes poke fun at the roles mothers play in our lives in general, and, in particular, our mental health. People often jest that therapists are just going to “blame it on your mother.” In reality, our mothers—or those dads, grandparents, or others who take on the role of moms in our lives—play a critical role in our physical, social-emotional, and psychological development. As young children, we need our moms for survival. From an early age, we learn how to be in the world by watching our moms, or those who serve as moms, run, handle, and navigate so many relationships and situations. When clients ask me why I am curious about their relationships with their moms, it is because that is our very first relationship in life. This relationship is the foundation for all the rest of our relationships, including the one with ourselves, throughout our lives. So many moms, for so many reasons, prioritize the needs of their children and others before their own. Over the years, many moms have shared that they feel “selfish” when they do something for themselves, and I often explain that selfishness and self-care are not the same. When moms take care of themselves, whether that means getting up extra early to enjoy a shower and a cup of coffee before their children wake up, exercising, meeting up with a friend, going to therapy,

or pursuing a hobby, they feel better and, as a result, they show up for their children (and in their lives in general) with more to give. Too often, moms are exhausted, overwhelmed and burned out from juggling too many demands and responsibilities. Because mothers often carry the primary responsibility for childcare and eldercare, they were disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic, especially those who had to manage multiple roles during a time of tremendous uncertainty. Numerous studies consistently show that mental health challenges were particularly pronounced for mothers of young children, mothers of children with special needs, and mothers in low-income families. Many mothers are still feeling the long-term effects of these challenges. Far too many women generally have turned to “quick” fixes, such as excessive alcohol or screen-use, to self-soothe and escape, which, unfortunately, only exacerbates symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, in the long-term. So, moms out there, I see you. I encourage you to take time for yourselves whenever you can and be you, not mom, or wife, or partner, or employee. Just do a little bit of what you love and what fills your tank. Running errands, doing chores, and driving your kids to soccer practice does not count! Partners, spouses, and friends,

giving moms in your lives the gift of time so they can take care of themselves is not something they need only on their birthdays or holidays. Moms need (and want) a little time every single day to dedicate to themselves. Wishing all moms and those who fill those shoes a very Happy Mother’s Day. And a meaningful and fulfilling life every single 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!*

# Biking: Reston's design offers a perfect start for young riders

By Fionnuala Quinn, Reston resident

There’s so much to love about Reston, but one of my favorites is seeing local kids out riding their bikes. On my daily walks around Lake Anne, I spot every stage of biking: toddlers wobbling on balance bikes, 5-year-olds pedaling to the farmers market with a parent, 7-year-olds trying tricks on homemade ramps, kids returning from the parent-child mountain biking program at Lake Fairfax, and older riders heading off with fishing poles in tow. They’re not just learning; they’re gaining confidence, navigating social interactions, and experiencing the joyful childhood we all imagine. Nearly every morning at 7 a.m., I pass Elliott riding his bike while his dad walks their dog. They live in a nearby cluster, and as his dad told me, “Bike riding gives him a bit of freedom in the morning to socialize and get the wiggles out before school.” Their loop is about a mile, and since I first met Elliott at age 5,

he’s progressed through different bikes and grown more independent. He now rides well ahead of his dad while they stay in touch via walkie-talkies. Then there’s my neighbor Amelia, who started scooting on a balance bike at age 2. Now 4, she says she wants a “black, white, and red bike with pedals,” and word is she’ll be pedaling by summer. Her crew often stops by our quiet street—some still on balance bikes, others already pedaling on two wheels. That’s the beauty of biking: it’s social, full of confidence-building milestones, and encourages kids to actively engage with their world. Reston was designed to break down barriers and connect neighborhoods through 55 miles of trails, allowing kids to move around without crossing major roads. Robert E. Simon’s original plan focused on creating a community for all ages, and the trail system—with more than two dozen underpasses separating people from traffic—was central to that vision. That vision comes to life when

you see kids biking to school, playgrounds, pools, and village centers. I can’t imagine my own childhood without biking; it’s how I got to friends’ houses, the library, and summer jobs. I didn’t grow up in Reston, so I asked Galen Mook what it was like for someone who did: “Being able to bike safely from my home to Lake Anne, to school, a girlfriend’s house, the pool, or to visit my grandparents who owned the used bookstore—it all gave me independence and a deep sense of connection to the community. As I got older, I extended my range, biking to Herndon to spend my allowance at the comic shop, or to Vienna to catch the Metro. The freedom to explore on my own terms—even at a young age—gave me a lifelong sense of curiosity and self-reliance.” Fittingly, Galen went on to launch Capital Bike-share in Reston and now leads MassBike, Massachusetts’ state biking organization. Unfortunately, children’s biking rates in the U.S. have dropped. Between 2001 and 2017, the percentage of kids taking

30-minute bike trips fell by more than 50%, according to American Community Survey data. Many communities feel unsafe or unwelcoming for families, and parents are understandably hesitant to let their kids ride near traffic. In contrast, Reston’s trail network, created more than half a century ago, shows what’s possible when communities are designed with children in mind. It supports biking as a normal part of childhood and functions like a built-in biking school. Knowing where kids can develop safe riding skills is key, and ideal spots depend on age, confidence, and ability. Sidewalks, trails, and low-traffic streets offer supportive spaces for young riders to begin a lifetime of learning. Bicycling is more than just a pastime. It’s a gateway to freedom, health, and community. In Reston, biking is woven into the fabric of the place by design, and 60 years on, new generations continue to discover the joy of two wheels.



LIFESTYLE

Inside Art

By Louise Seirmarco-Yale, Reston Artist



Memorial Day, during which families gather annually to clean up a gravesite, reconnect with family, and honor the memories of ancestors, creates a cherished art experience.

From intricate carvings to solemn statues, the cemetery's landscape tells us stories of love, loss, life, and the human desire for immortality through art. Cemetery iconography serves as a visual language, conveying messages about the deceased's identity, beliefs, and the cultural milieu of their time.

All gravestones are pieces of sculpture. The very idea of chiseling and etching stone into shapes with poetic sayings is the essence of creativity. If you ever considered creating your own headstone, there are many ideas and resources online.

Auguste Rodin, the famous sculptor of “The Thinker,” created a commemorative piece for Thomas Merrill, of Middleburg, Virginia, in 1908. Known as “Mère et enfant” or, sometimes “Mother and Her Dying Daughter,” the piece was auctioned in December 2021. So valuable is cemetery art that it does not always stay in the cemetery!

The sculpture, “Black Aggie,” was placed on the grave of General Felix Agnus in Druid Ridge Cemetery, in Pikesville, Maryland. In the 1950s and ’60s, Black Aggie became a mecca for Baltimore teenagers testing the myth that sitting in Aggie’s lap would cause sudden death. “Black Aggie” was later moved to a courtyard behind the Dolley Madison House on Lafayette Square in Washington, where she currently stands.

While Reston itself has limited examples of large-scale cemetery art, the surrounding areas offer rich opportunities to explore memorial art, blending history, community, and artistic expression.

Reston’s historical Brown’s Chapel Cemetery has more than 370 memorials with traditional markers that offer insight into local memorial practices. Nearby, Saint Anne’s Episcopal Church maintains a memorial garden as a tranquil space for reflection.

The Initiative for Public Art Reston (IPAR), integrating public art into Reston’s landscape, has supported the creation of a memorial garden of reflection, blending art and remembrance. Art endures.

More than 400,000 people are buried in the 639-acre Arlington National Cemetery, the largest cemetery in the U.S. National Cemetery System. The cemetery is itself a work of art, laying out in precise military order, lines of simple stone markers that seem to march through time.

Words and images on a rock can bring powerful emotions. Two wedding rings can express ‘together forever’ strengthened by forget-me-nots planted nearby. Spike Milligan, the renowned Irish comedian, famously expressed a desire for his epitaph to read, “I told you I was ill.”

Walking through the stillness of a cemetery is an emotional art experience. Add to the art while you are there, leave a rock, a penny, or a flower, as tradition dictates, to say that you were there. It will make you feel good. Making art always does. 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” is available on Amazon. Learn more at [www.peopleneedart.com](http://www.peopleneedart.com), or email her at: [hello@peopleneedart.com](mailto:hello@peopleneedart.com) FB and Instagram: [louise\\_seirmarco\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/louise_seirmarco_art)

How to bring the red, white, and WOW to your summer party

By Noelle Sharbaugh, High Heeled Hostess

Welcome to the final installment of my six-part series on mastering the art of hosting.

As summer kick’s off, it’s time to prepare for the upcoming patriotic holidays. I’ll share hosting tips to take Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day parties from ordinary to extraordinary. With the warmer weather, take the party outdoors. Whether you’re grilling, sipping cocktails and mocktails, or simply enjoying backyard bliss, these holidays are about good company, delicious food, and honoring those who have served.

1. Set the Stage for Celebration

Create a welcoming, festive atmosphere that embodies the spirit of summer and patriotism.

Patriotic Décor

- Incorporate red, white, and blue accents with table linens, banners, balloons, and floral arrangements
  - Add a natural touch with wildflower-filled mason jars or small potted plants.
  - Use miniature American flags as centerpiece accents or personalized place cards.
- Outdoor Entertaining**
- Host outdoors, weather permitting.
  - Enhance the ambiance with string lights, picnic blankets, and patio seating.
  - Keep guests cool with umbrellas, or pop-up tents.

Moments to Reflect

- Honor the holiday’s meaning with toasts, a moment of silence, or festive sparklers.
- Have a memory table for guests to display photos or share stories of

loved ones who served.

2. A Menu to Please

A well-planned menu is the heart of any celebration. Serve classic dishes and refreshing treats that everyone will love.

Grilled Favorites

- Grill burgers, hot dogs, and veggie kabobs.
- Pair with fresh sides such as watermelon-feta salad, grilled corn, or a light pasta dish.

Seasonal Drinks

- Create a drink station with summer cocktails like sangria or spiked lemonade and mocktails like berry spritzers.
- Garnish drinks with patriotic touches like blueberries, strawberries, and sprigs of mint.
- Provide water, ice, and various beverages to keep everyone hydrated.

Patriotic Desserts

- Surprise guests with red, white, and blue parfaits or star-shaped cookies.
- A DIY s’mores station doubles as dessert and interactive fun.
- Set up a festive candy bar cart with red, white, and blue treats.

3. Entertainment

Keep the energy alive with fun activities.

Fun and Games

- Cornhole, horseshoes, or giant Jenga are always favorites.
- Water balloon tosses, team relay races, sparklers, or other safe and approved fireworks displays add excitement.

Patriotic Tributes

- Provide a memory wall or gratitude tree for guests to leave messages.
- Invite a veteran to share stories or host a ceremonial flag-folding.
- Include fun, patriotic trivia covering history, holidays, and summer



Photo courtesy of High Heeled Hostess

traditions.

Set the Mood

- Curate a playlist that blends summer hits with patriotic standards.
- Elevate the event with live music or an outdoor movie screening.

Thank you for following my How to Host series. I hope it sparked your creativity, boosted your confidence, and inspired you to begin if you’re a novice or uplevel your hosting skills if you’re more experienced.

Enjoy the summer by embracing the art of entertaining, from casual backyard barbecues to elegant dinners under the stars. Here’s to creating fabulous memories one gathering at a time. Cheers!

For more seasonal inspiration and entertaining ideas, visit [www.highheeledhostess.com](http://www.highheeledhostess.com) and follow for updates and exclusive content.

Noelle Sharbaugh, the High Heeled Hostess, is a published and award-winning tablescape designer dedicated to helping people transform dining experiences into unforgettable events. For more tips, tricks, and hosting inspiration, visit [www.highheeledhostess.com](http://www.highheeledhostess.com), or email her at [noelle@highheeledhostess.com](mailto:noelle@highheeledhostess.com)

Bar VIDA delivers unexpected dining inside VIDA Fitness

By Phantom Foodie

This month, I’m heading just down the street and around the corner from Reston Town Center to the up-and-coming Reston Row at Wiehle-Reston East. I’ve been keeping an eye on the new VIDA Fitness over the past year, not only as a key anchor in the growing development but also, admittedly, as a foodie quietly sampling the menu.

Bar VIDA may seem like an unexpected choice for a food review, but I’m open to all venues, and I was curious to see if it could hold its own. Located on the first level of VIDA Fitness, BAR VIDA is open to the public—members and non-members alike. Full disclosure: this review is based on multiple visits.

The vibe is anything but typical. Think bar and lounge seating with views of the gym and salon, a mix of fitness fanatics, locals dropping in for a bite, and even folks playing video games in a dedicated nook. You can order via QR code at your table or pull up a stool at the bar. Soft background music creates a relaxed atmosphere that makes it easy to linger, chat with the bartender, and enjoy some real human interaction.

Beyond the usual lineup of smoothies, protein shakes, Mediterranean and Southwest bowls, and healthy salads, I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the other menu choices. The pizza is a standout: crisp crust, gooey cheese, and

consistently tasty. The portion is perfect for sharing alongside a salad or another small plate. Want more greens? Order your pizza topped with fresh arugula. Other complimentary toppings include diced red peppers, red onion, tomato, and jalapeños for a little heat. Premium toppings like pepperoni, bacon, and salami are available for an upcharge.

The remarkably tasty smash burger is served with special sauce, lettuce, tomato, and pickles. Standard sides include a side salad, potato chips, or tater tots. The wings fly to your seat in traditional and trendy flavors like buffalo, truffle garlic parmesan, and Old Bay for the DMV faithfuls. They’re served with ranch or bleu cheese dressing, plus celery and carrots for dipping.

The Quesa Vida quesadilla with chipotle crema was mediocre, but the chicken salad sandwich delivered. Packed with celery, raisins, and cashews and topped with a flavorful curry aioli, it had a satisfying crunch and balanced flavor. The best-kept secret is the VIDA breakfast served 8 to 11 a.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekends. Highlights include bagels, hearty omelets made to order, and avocado toast on multigrain bread.

Service across my visits has been consistently warm and attentive. However, my group and I have encountered faulty draft taps on multiple occasions. While staff promptly swapped in cold cans and acknowledged the issue, the problem



Photo by Phantom Foodie

remained unresolved as of my latest visit.

Whether you’re a VIDA member, a Metro commuter, or simply curious about a fresh spot in Reston, Bar VIDA is worth checking out. The prices are fair, the vibe is casual, and the food may just surprise you.

Time for this foodie to hit the treadmill.

Bar VIDA

1800 Reston Row Plaza, Reston (703) 956-9036

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Booking smarter: How travel advisors add value in a DIY world

By Andreen Anglin

As the seasons change, you and your family may be planning your next summer or winter vacation. Will you get lost among the spruce-firs of the Great Smoky Mountains, sip an ombré-colored cocktail on a black sand beach, or cycle through the castles of the Emerald Isle? The possibilities are endless; your only real limits are time and budget.

In the age of do-it-yourself booking, many wonder: why use a travel advisor at all? It's a fair question, and the answer depends on your needs. Not every trip requires a travel advisor, but every trip can be enhanced by one.

Travel advisors serve as vital bridges between clients and the travel industry. Their job is to curate the best possible experience—accommodations, activities, and overall planning—by leveraging both their expertise and their industry relationships. If you're considering working with one, it's important to ask if they're affiliated with a host agency.

Host agencies matter. They provide

advisors with platforms for booking, support for supplier relationships, operational tools, and access to a collaborative community of fellow advisors. Not all host agencies are created equal, and the benefits they offer can impact the service an advisor can provide.

As a travel advisor affiliated with Fora, I have access to a broad catalog of hotels, villas, cruises, excursions, vacation packages, travel insurance, and ground transportation. If you're a loyalty member with a particular hotel chain, you can still use my services and receive your points. Thanks to Fora's supplier partnerships, I can often offer clients exclusive perks—such as room upgrades, hotel credits, and personalized amenities—that elevate the experience beyond what's available through self-booking.

So how do advisors offer these kinds of incentives? The answer lies in how the travel industry works. Travel advisors represent a lower cost of distribution compared to large third-party booking platforms, which typically take higher commissions. Independent advisors, by

contrast, bring more contextual knowledge of destinations, properties, and experiences. That local insight allows us to match clients with the right options, and that's something algorithms can't replicate.

Ultimately, the value of a travel advisor comes down to personalized service. We tailor every trip to your budget, travel style, and preferences. Want a restful vacation? I can secure a spa credit for you. Traveling with a special needs family member and worried about crowds? I can arrange for a local guide to ensure your visit is both accessible and enjoyable.

Without that personal touch, much of travel becomes trial and error. You might watch hours of YouTube videos and trust influencers' recommendations, but you won't truly know if something suits you until you experience it. With a travel advisor, you are the central focus—not someone else's taste or travel style. Your trip becomes exactly what you want it to be.

Look up! Peregrine Falcons are nesting at Reston Town Center

By Reston Environmental Advisory Committee

In the heart of Reston Town Center, high above the shops and restaurants, a drama of talons and wings plays out every spring—and most locals have no idea it's happening.

It all began in June 2015, when two baby peregrine falcons were discovered on Market Street. The downy chicks had tumbled from a nest atop one of RTC's high-rises, but they were already feathered enough to survive the fall. That surprising sidewalk discovery was the first clue that the iconic bird of prey had taken up residence in the heart of Reston.

Once nearly wiped out from the Eastern United States due to pesticide exposure, especially from DDT, peregrine falcons have made a remarkable comeback since the chemical was banned in the 1970s. By 1999, their numbers had rebounded enough to be removed from the Federal Endangered Species list, although Virginia still considers them a Rare and Endangered Species.

Much of their recovery is credited to conservationists who bred peregrines in captivity and released them into the wild, often on skyscrapers, bridges, and towers. These urban substitutes for cliffs turned out to be ideal nesting spots, and today, more than 30 breeding pairs thrive across the Commonwealth. Reston's pair is among the most urban of them all.

Fast, fierce, and elegant, peregrine falcons are the fastest animals on Earth, capable of diving on prey at speeds approaching 200 mph. Their RTC nest, located on the 20th floor of an office building, gives them a

perfect vantage point to hunt pigeons, starlings, doves, and blackbirds. Biologists have identified the remains of more than 15 species of birds from this nest site alone.

The nest's location offers more than just a great view. Facing south and sheltered from rain and harsh sun, it is well protected. Nearby tall buildings give young fledglings a safe place to land as they learn to fly. All in all, it's prime real estate for a raptor family.

Retired raptor biologist and Reston resident Steve Potts keeps a close eye on the falcons through his work with the Center for Conservation Biology. Each spring, Potts and the team band, weigh, and examine the chicks to monitor their health. If needed, they provide medical treatment as well. Support from Boston Properties has been crucial; they have worked with Potts to secure and safeguard the nest, ensuring the birds can raise their young undisturbed.

Peregrines typically mate for life, and Reston's longtime couple seems to be thriving. This year, they welcomed four new chicks. Want to see them for yourself? You can watch them live on Boston Properties' falcon cam: <https://hdontap.com/stream/271048/reston-town-center-falcon-cam-live>. The fledglings are expected to take their first flights later this month.

But it's not all good news. In recent years, peregrine numbers have declined again in some areas, particularly along the coast. The cause remains unclear, but avian flu is a prime suspect. So far, Reston's falcons are faring well—let's hope they stay that way.



The Reston falcons have their own live camera. Photo by Steve Potts

So next time you're at Reston Town Center, look up. You might just catch a glimpse of these magnificent aerial hunters, soaring high above the bustle below.



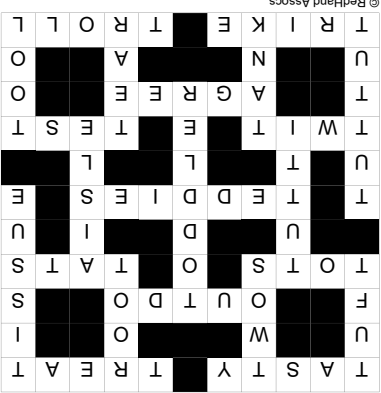
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