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'Democracy Thrives In Sunshine'

THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH'S INDEPENDENT, LOCALLY-OWNED NEWSPAPER OF RECORD, SERVING N. VIRGINIA

F.C. Joins 7th District in New Redistrict Plan; Beyer in 8th

Special Referendum Set April 21 Aims To Counter Trump's Redraw Initiative

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

Apologies to our readers for publishing the incorrect information provided to us in last week's paper that long-time Falls Church "favorite son" U.S. Rep. Don Beyer would continue to represent the City of Falls Church in the new congressional redistricting plan that will now be on a statewide ballot on April 21.

We chalk it up to the considerable confusion that attended the release of the proposed new maps last week. But now, with the help of the dauntless Virginia Political Action Project (VPAP), we can confirm that the Little City will be in a newly-carved 7th District (not Beyer's 8th, now slightly to F.C.'s east) that currently has no incumbent congressman. The current U.S. Rep for the 7th, Eugene Vindman, has said he would be running instead in the 1st.

Two Democrats have announced so far. Arlington-based J.P. Cooney, who has served as a special counsel to federal prosecutor Jack Smith's top deputy, announced last week. State Del. Dan Helmer of the 10th State District that runs from Centreville to Burke in Fairfax County, announced yesterday. Given the odd and long shape of the proposed dis-

trict, voters can be assured that an abundance of candidates will likely apply for the job as if the new U.S. Congress map referendum passes in April.

With the district drawn to favor the Democrats (in last November's gubernatorial election, Democrat Abigail Spanberger carried it with 58.4 percent of the vote compared to 41.6 percent for Republican Winsome Earle-Sears), a primary that would be scheduled for the early fall in advance of this November's midterm elections promises to offer an abundant number of choices.

But with 55 percent of the district population in its northernmost area of North Arlington, East Fairfax County and the City of Falls Church, it is most likely a candidate from this region, such as the two who've already announced, would be favored to win,

With state legislators currently in the heat of the Richmond session, it is unlikely any will tip their hand before that effort is resolved, if indeed they will not wait until after the April 21 referendum altogether. Falls Church leaders expressed hope this week someone with an intimate knowledge of their city will throw his or her hat in the ring, even as the City itself with its 11,049 citizens of voting age, is only 1.80 percent of the entire lobster-shaped district.

Continued on Page 3

PROUD OF OUR ILYA



FALLS CHURCH AREA native Ilya Malinin at the Winter Olympics in Italy last week failed to win gold in the individual figure skate, but won his "golden soul." (Photo: U.S. Figure Skating)

No Gold, But a 'Golden Soul' for Malinin

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

Falls Church-area native, nearby Marshall High graduate and 21-year-old global Olympic figure skating superstar Ilia Malinin "blew it,"

in his words, in front of a wide eyed and highly anticipating global TV audience at the men's free skate finals in Milan last weekend. In a shocker, he went from odds-on overwhelming favorite to win as the brightest light of

the century in his sport to a stunning eighth-place finish with a sputtering, error-riddled performance.

Nonetheless, he came away with the gold, the best of the

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FALLS CHURCH NEWS BRIEFS

Mark Gross Bestowed VPIS 'Spirit of Falls Church' Award

Long-time Falls Church resident Mark Gross's service to the community was recognized with the "Spirit of Falls Church" Award from the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS). The award recognizes long term contributions to multiple spheres of the community that has enriched the quality of life in Falls Church. Prior winners of the Award include Barb Cram, Barry Buschow and Lou Olom.

Mark Gross served on the Falls Church Housing Corporation (starting in 1982) and the Housing Appeals Commission, and later the Housing Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals. In 1989, he was appointed to the Falls Church Planning Commission where he served for 12 years, including twice as Chair of the Commission. He also served on the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board which provides lifesaving services for people experiencing mental health concerns, substance misuse and/or developmental disabilities. This was helping people in our community gain the support needed to live a healthy, fulfilling life.

Gross served on the VPIS Board of Directors for 24 years from 2001 to 2025, including his role as Vice President of the Society and on different occasions serving as President three times. His enduring focus included ensuring candidate forums for those running for local public office and maintaining the tree canopy. VPIS President Bonnie Murphy noted "Mark Gross has provided his time, energy and intellect to the community for over 43 years and is a very deserving recipient of the Spirit of Falls Church award."

Creative Cauldron Hosts 250th Anniversary Forum

Falls Church's Creative Cauldron and the Falls Church Arts co-hosted a novel "Soap Box Conversation" this Monday night as part of the City's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States as a democracy. A quote by poet and playwright Freiderich Schiller that "art is the daughter of freedom" that, in the words of Bertolt Brecht, holds up a "hammer" to society, underscored the event.

The "Soap Box Conversations" initiative was launched by the Falls Church 250 Committee, as one of a series of activities that encourage civic engagement and provide residents with the opportunity to share their voices. Each person who attended and wished to speak was given three minutes to address the topic and share their views about the topic.

Grocery Outlet Opens 560th Store in Falls Church

The Grocery Outlet Holding Corp. held a ribbon cutting grand opening event last week for its 560th store nationwide, and its first in Virginia, that opened in the City of Falls Church at the site of the former Target mini-store. The company announced that Virginia entrepreneur Prince Wafa will lead the location as the store's independent operator.

Grocery Outlet Senior Director of Marketing Kyle Noble said, "We are so excited to be expanding Grocery Outlet's footprint with our first location in Virginia. We couldn't ask for a better operator than Prince. If you've never been to a Grocery Outlet before, we are looking forward to getting to know you and providing you and your family with new options for high-quality, affordable produce, meat and groceries."

Grocery Outlet has more than 560 stores across the United States. It uses an opportunistic buying model to surprise shoppers with unexpected and rare finds in addition to providing great fresh produce and meats.

Busy Week in Richmond as Legislature Hits 'Cross-Over'

At the Richmond state legislature, the cross-over of bills passed by one body to be voted on by the other claim yesterday, Feb. 18, and a large number of bills advancing are of interest to this region.

A proposal to bring a casino and entertainment district to Northern Virginia passed the state's senate Friday, even as some Fairfax County leaders and residents criticized the idea.

The "Yes in God's Backyard" movement scored a win this week as the Faith in

Housing bill passed the Virginia Senate after gaining initial approval in the House of Delegates. It would eliminate the rezoning step for faith-based organizations and other tax-exempt nonprofits to develop affordable housing on their properties. The legislation might still need final approval in the House next year, however.

In good news for the public's right to know, legislation which would have reduced the information that the public could obtain about crimes committed in their localities by sealing records related to criminal complaints from public view was defeated in subcommittee by a vote of 7-3 and is dead for the year.

After working on Comprehensive legislation to restrict Virginia collaboration with federal immigration enforcement since August of last year, Falls Church area Del. Alfonso Lopez announced, "I'm very proud to announce that all five of the bills my Democratic colleagues and I presented on this topic passed the House. The primary bill I carried, HB 1441, will restrict the collaboration of local or state law enforcement and commandeering of state resources by federal immigration enforcement without a judicial warrant issued by a judge or magistrate. This bill will put a stop to this in Virginia, requiring that these enforcement actions align with standard law enforcement requirements and will ensure that our State and local police remain focused on local public safety."

Del. Lopez added, "My other two introduced bills in this space, HB 1440 and HB 1442, which restrict immigration enforcement actions in state/public schools, hospitals, commonwealth attorney offices, polling sites, and other protected places, were incorporated into Del. Callsen's HB 650, which also passed the House last Thursday."

House Bill 5 passed, a top priority to expand paid sick leave protections to workers across the commonwealth. The bill extends Virginia's existing earned sick leave law to cover employees of private employers and state and local governments, allowing workers to earn one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

HB5 ensures accrued sick leave is not lost when a worker is transferred or their employer changes, allows employers to offer more generous policies, and permits workers to use earned sick leave to care for their health, support a family member, or address situations involving domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The bill includes clear enforcement standards and a delayed effective date of July 1, 2027.

Other bills that passed one chamber so far include one which would ban non-competes for healthcare workers making under \$500,000 a year, one which clarifies a judge's ability to gather information and order a full custody evaluation report during child custody and visitation proceedings, one which will allow utilities to offer discounted water rates to low-income families, making it easier for families in need to catch up on their bills, passed the House, one which creates a public dashboard maintained by the State Corporation Commission (SCC) to detail involuntary electric utility disconnections across the Commonwealth, and one which allows the SCC to set maximum allowable disconnection fees for utilities, passed the House with strong bipartisan support.



ALLI AND MORIAH, owners of The Mane Edit Salon, celebrate their ribbon cutting alongside Falls Church Mayor Letty Hardi, in coordination with the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and Elise Bengtson, at 444 W. Broad St., Suite G, Falls Church, VA 22046. (Photo: Elise Bengtson)

Falls Church Will Be in 7th District If April 21 Redistricting

Continued from Page 1

The proposed 7th District encompasses an astonishing 16 independent jurisdictions, with its part of Fairfax County having the largest share of its voting age population at 34.2 percent, followed by its part of Arlington County at 19.6 percent and then, as the district map extends to the south and west, it includes (in order of populations of eligible voters) part of Rockingham County, Culpepper County, Louisa County, Orange County, Powhatan County, part of Augusta County, Goochland County, part of Fauquier County, part of Prince William County, Greene County, the City of Falls Church, Madison County, part of Cumberland County and part of Buckingham County.

Last Friday, the Supreme Court of Virginia agreed to allow Democratic lawmakers' mid-decade redistricting attempt to move forward, announcing it will hear the case on an expedited basis. The court denied Republican lawmakers' motion to pause a redistricting referendum as the high court deliberates the case.

The order means voters will be able to approve or reject the redistricting amendment in a referendum scheduled for April 21. The effort would redraw Virginia's congressional maps, with 10 districts favor-

ing Democrats and one tipped towards Republicans.

According to the Virginia Department of Elections, the wording of the measure on the ballot will be: "Question: Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow the General Assembly to temporarily adopt new congressional

for all future redistricting after the 2030 census?"

Almost immediately after the Supreme Court order was released last Friday, Democratic leaders began to emphasize that the decision to redistrict or not will be in the hands of Virginians this spring.

"It's a question of wheth-

rated Gov. Abigail Spanberger said. "Certainly the General Assembly was clear with the amendment process they put forward, and now it's up to voters."

Virginia House Speaker Don Scott, D-Portsmouth, also echoed the sentiment. Virginia's redistricting effort is a response

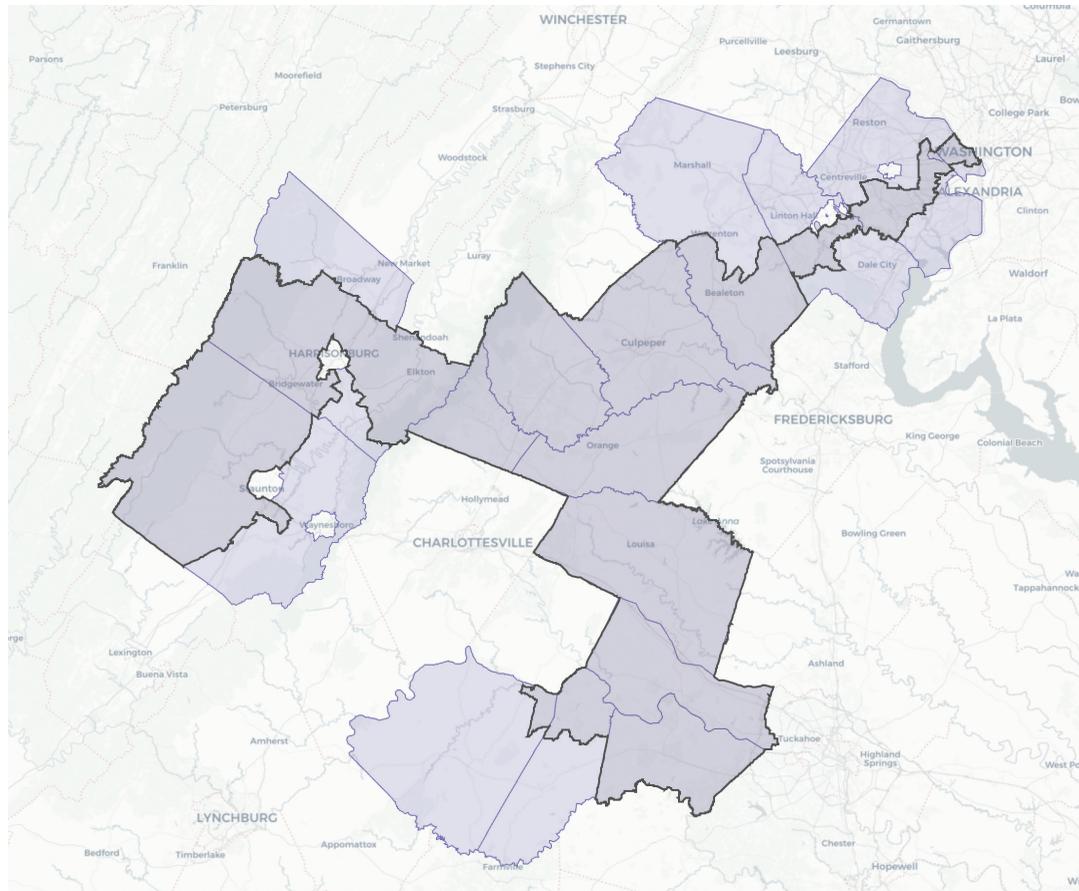
their party by redrawing their Congressional maps, Scott said.

"We have a president that's run amok," Scott said to the press last Friday morning. "So we have no choice but to respond and try to do everything in our power to level the playing field."

While Virginia's redistricting amendment surfaced in recent months, the national debates first began late last summer when Trump prompted Texas to redraw its maps. Other GOP states began following suit and pro-Democratic states like California, New York and Maryland began their own processes.

In advertising that began airing immediately, the Virginians for Fair Elections launched a website to advocate for and elicit support for passage of the measure. "Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and right now, they're under threat," the site states.

It adds, "Across the country, Trump and MAGAs-controlled legislatures are taking unprecedented steps to redraw congressional maps, without voter approval, to rig upcoming elections. As states like Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, and soon Florida move forward, Virginians face the real risk of having our voices diminished in Washington. The amendment gives Virginians the power to act - before it's too late."



districts to restore fairness in the upcoming elections, while ensuring Virginia's standard redistricting process resumes

er people want to move forward that's responsive to the redistricting that we've seen in other states," newly inaugu-

to President Donald Trump kicking off redistricting squabbles nationally by encouraging GOP-led states to fortify

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'Golden Soul' Trophy Goes to N. Va.'s Own Malinin at Olympics

Continued from Page 1

best in the Renaissance "golden soul" department.

Malinin's gracious, genuine, smiling and extended embrace of congratulations extended to the young man who won in his place, coming only seconds after his crushing defeat, stands as one of the highlight moments in all sport, in all human endeavors, for that matter, that will be remembered for those who saw it far after almost all else is forgotten.

It was as unexpected as Malinin's bad day on the ice. With most viewers still in a state of shock from the performance, most probably barely registered it. But it could even be called downright subversive.

Not lost in this, either, is the tempering spirit that now defines the sport in the wake of the incredibly tragic plane crash that took the lives of so many future stars and their family members barely a year ago, manifested in the Olympic performance of Maxim Naumov, whose parents were lost then. Life and the aspirations of the entire

small, close knit world of figure skating was put into a greater perspective.

Malinin's grace in the face of loss last weekend showed the world the depths of this young man's ability and ease to tap into his humanity far beyond the pale of the emotional highs and lows of competition in a way that functions as a sorely-needed salve to the anger-driven divides that currently plague us.

So the world, and the immense fan base that grew quickly out of the uncommon fame and recognition that his Olympic appearance afforded him, has come away even more fond of him than before. He's done it. He achieved the apex of recognition and exposure going into these games, and he's made his permanent mark to the betterment of us all, greater than what a mere Olympic medal would ever achieve.

If he is emblematic of what his generation is about, beyond any temporary deviations, then we need not fret about the future of our species.

This, and not anything this nation has to offer from its highest office at this point, is what parents can hope their

children will learn to emulate in life.

The expressions of love and support for Malinin came rushing in from all quarters in the hours after these dramatic events.

Needless to say, in the midst of the shocking events, Olympic gold winner Mikhail Shaidorov of Kazakhstan did not get the credit he deserved. His was a brilliant skate, but this is not about the sport, per se. He did get Malinin's best hug.

Afterwards, Malinin is quoted as saying, "Right before I got into my starting pose, all the negative thoughts just rushed into my head — all the negative, traumatic experiences.. I've been through a lot, and it's not easy. Being the Olympic gold hopeful is really just a lot to deal with, especially at my age."

Indeed, learning how to tamp down the negative thoughts that can arise suddenly and unexpectedly is one of life's greatest challenges for every human being, no matter what the venue or circumstance.

Most all of us have our personal ways of dealing with this. When they strike we can be knocked off kilter and

momentarily falter. But they are ultimately defeated by how we respond to them when we call upon our inner spirit to rise up and prevail.

This is what happened to Iliia Malinin for the entire world to see last weekend, and we can all relate to the extent we are in touch honestly with our own human experience. Sadly, too many are incapable of acknowledging this.

Most of us who've done sports in our lives know what "choking" at the plate, at the free throw line, or in a critical championship moment is like. This writer certainly did. I took a called third strike with the winning run on third in high school. I inexplicably dropped a throw at first from my third sacker in the late innings of a playoff game in college..

It just happens. But with enough support and solace, we get through it, often better for it than before. We don't deny it or berate it, as some do.

So in the case of the young Mr. Malinin, humanity has been blessed by his great example. Carry on with love and grace.

Celebrate Black History Month

Symposium
Voices of Resilience: Embracing Black History and the Arts
From Insight to Action
Saturday, February 21, 2026 • 1:00–3:30 PM
Marian Costner Selby Exhibit & Peace Garden • 5th Floor
Meridian High School • 121 Mustang Alley • Falls Church, VA 22043

You are invited to a free symposium exploring how Black history, visual arts, and performing arts challenge stereotypes, reshape narratives about race, foster inclusivity, and preserve the African American legacy.

Program Highlights

- Special Music by Wammie Award Winner, **Carly Harvey**, "DC Queen of the Blues"
- Performance Poetry Recital by **Angelique Palmer**, 2024-2027 Fairfax County Poet Laureate
- Moderated Panel Discussion
- Audience Participation
- Tour of the Marian Costner Selby Exhibit

Distinguished Panel

- **Dwan R. Reece, PhD** – Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
- **Spencer Crew, PhD** – George Mason University, Department of History and Art History
- **Audrey Davis** – African American History Division, Office of Historic Alexandria
- **Irene Chambers** – Board of Directors, Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation (THHF)

Moderator: Inga A. Watkins, J.D. – Social Justice Committee, an initiative of THHF

FREE - The public is invited.

Doors open at 12:30 PM

Registration requested but not required. Walk-ins are welcome.

<https://Embracing-Black-History-Arts.eventbrite.com>

Information: www.tinnerhill.org

Refreshments will be served.



Presented by the Social Justice Committee, an initiative of the
 Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation in partnership with the
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The Epstein Class, Inhumanity Unhinged?

NICHOLAS F. BENTON

FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

When it comes to the Epstein files, what is most evident so far is that “we ain’t seen nothin’ yet.” Just as with the Webb telescope when it comes to the magnitude of the universe, so with what first dribble making it through the dyke portends, and so with what those sleepy officers on the Titanic saw as a pesky little icy configuration dead ahead, what we are now seeing of the Epstein files is, well, only the tip of the iceberg.

But even this, so far, is incredible. Trump appears 1,433 times as yet. His billionaire backers are also members. Elon Musk appears 1,122 times. Howard Lutnick is a member. So is Trump-backer Peter Thiel (2,710 times), and Leslie Wexner (565 times). As is Steven Witkoff, now Trump’s envoy to the Middle East, and Steve Bannon, Trump’s consigliere (1,855 times).

The Epstein Class isn’t limited to Trump donors. Bill Clinton is a member (1,192 times), as is Larry Summers (5,621 times). So are LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman (3,769 times), Prince Andrew (1,821 times), Bill Gates (6,385 times), and Steve Tisch, co-owner of the New York Giants (429 times).

As former U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Reich correctly points out, this configuration of Epstein villains constitutes an entire class of society, the Epstein Class, connected by more than just by association with and possible participation in the crimes for which Epstein was convicted. Reich notes, “If not politics, what connects the members of the Epstein Class? It’s not just riches. Some members are not particularly wealthy, but they’re richly connected. They trade on their prominence, on whom they know and who will return their phone calls. They exchange inside tips on stocks, on the movements of currencies, on IPOs, on new tax-avoidance mechanisms. On getting into exclusive clubs, reservations at chic restaurants, lush

hotels, exotic travel. They entertain one another, stay at each other’s guest houses and villas. Some exchange tips on how to procure certain drugs or kinky sex or valuable works of art. And, of course, how to accumulate more wealth.”

But, still, the formidable Mr. Reich is keeping it clean. Beneath this web of deceit crawls something even more sinister, far more so. It makes Stanley Kubrick’s “Eyes Wide Shut” expose film seem like a walk in the park. This web of human flesh devouring compulsions that know no bounds, none whatsoever, is grounded in a taught hyper-cynicism and honed cruelty which are preconditions for admittance. Their bond is their shared, unspeakable depravity.

Oh, how the Rev. Franklin Graham could accommodate this? Oh, how his pappy would spin in his grave. This is that from which the Lord’s Prayer urgently seeks deliverance.

See the telltale signs on the surface. See the life of Donald Trump. See how bankruptcies and other betrayals of common civility, the screwing of anyone doing business with him that he can, are his brand, not his mistakes, but his m.o. See his uncommon identity with the art of the lie. See how every accusation is a confession, how everything he accuses others of mirrors his own behavior. See how there are no bounds to any of this. Then imagine him in a room with ropes and a human victim, and age, any gender.

These grounds for viable hypotheses are the rightful starting points for our daring venture into the lives of Trump and the Epstein Class fraternity.

I for one think we may be scratching the surface of one of the biggest scandals in modern human history. Why are there millions and millions of pages of evidence? Why all the photographs? Why all the videos? To what purpose were they all put in their accumulation? Was this a massive blackmail enterprise, designed to bring down the West? Was this why, to begin with, Moscow chose Trump as its designated U.S. president-to-be in 1987?

This could rival the abject depravity of Hitler, or Stalin, or Pol Pot. Being boundless and with boundless power, a direct extension. Man’s inhumanity to man, and woman, unhinged.



A Penny for Your Thoughts

By Penny Gross

Former Fairfax County Supervisor

It’s doubtful that M. C. Escher (the Dutch graphic artist known for his minutely detailed pictures with staircases and bridges going nowhere and other fantastic images) ever crossed paths with Donald Trump, but Escher’s comments about chaos seem to mirror Trump’s actions as both a businessman and a president. Escher said “we adore chaos because we love to produce order.” He added that “chaos is multiplicity without rhythm.” That last quote seems to sum up the first year of Trump’s second term.

With all the gasp and grift, gold and goofiness in Trump’s White House, governance is lost and it feels like we have lost our national rhythm. Our Constitution is under attack by our elected and appointed leaders – all who swore oaths to preserve, protect, and defend that august document. Our democracy is shaky, and tyranny edges closer, aided by multiple cabinet members whose allegiance appears to be not to the nation, not to the public, not to their oaths, but to one man. The latest example is the appalling performance by Attorney General Pam

Bondi before the House Judiciary Committee last week. Summoned to discuss the laggardly release of the Epstein files by the Department of Justice (DOJ), Bondi was rude, arrogant, and argumentative with Republicans and Democrats alike. Rather than respond honestly to questions, Bondi consulted a binder full of opposition research more suited to a campaign debate than a congressional hearing and refused even to look at the Epstein survivors seated behind her. The DOJ’s duty to protect and defend democracy didn’t appear to be part of her portfolio.

So what can we do? What can we, as ordinary citizens, patriots, and concerned human beings, do to protect and defend democracy? Asking hard questions is not being disloyal or obstructive. It’s asking for, and expecting, accountability. One approach is something that my first Capitol Hill employer, Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, discussed in his May 1, 1967 speech on the Senate floor, “The Right and Responsibility to Dissent.” Morse was one of only

two votes against the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that gave Lyndon Johnson permission to escalate the war in Vietnam. Morse argued that the function of dissent is to keep the government and its institutions open to better and fuller consideration of its own doctrines and actions. To quote Morse: “The dissenter is a person who feels or thinks differently. I venture to suggest that to allow dissent is to foster difference; to criticize dissent is to penalize difference, and to ban dissent is, in the extreme, an attempt to eradicate differences in thinking and feeling. It seems to me that a society’s attitude toward dissent is a pretty good barometer of its regard for the private individual human personality, as well as the public institutions of democracy.”

Morse made full use of his debate skills and broad knowledge of people. He said “parties to a debate should attempt to be responsible. They should respect the truth and make every effort to obtain all the facts which are available to them. They should make their criticism logical and germane and propose constructive alternatives...and stay within the bounds of law and order... I believe we are helped rather than hindered by the dissenter who keeps alive the conscience of the nation.”

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CRIME REPORT

Week of Feb 9 - 15, 2026

No Valid Operator’s License/Drunk in Public, Lincoln Ave, Jan 25, 3:26 p.m., a male, 34, of Annandale, was arrested for Drunk in Public and No Valid Operator’s License.

Defrauding an Inn Keeper, E Annandale Rd, Feb 10, 2:01 a.m., two identified suspects left without paying their tab.

Commercial Burglary/Destruction of Property/Larceny from Building, S Washington St, Feb 11, 6:03 a.m., an unknown suspect broke a glass door to gain entry to a business and took equip-

ment and cash. Investigation is ongoing.

Disorderly Conduct/Trespassing, W Broad St, Feb 12, 8:39 p.m., a black male, 49, of the District of Columbia, was arrested for Disorderly Conduct and Trespassing.

Simple Assault, Falls Ave, Feb 13, 4:38 a.m., victim reported their boyfriend assaulted them.

Fraud – Wire Fraud, Poplar Drive, Feb 13, 5:00 p.m., victim reported an unknown suspect claiming to be a customer service representative wired money from the victim’s account.

Driving Under the Influence, Park Ave,

Feb 14, 9:57 p.m., a male, 47, of no fixed address, was arrested for Driving Under the Influence and Refusal to Submit Breath Sample.

Shoplifting, W Broad St, Feb 15, 5:12 p.m., an unknown suspect stole merchandise. The suspect is described as a male, approximately 40 years of age, approximately 5’6” to 5’8” in height, medium build, wearing a green jacket, light blue jeans with rips around both knees, a green beanie, and carrying a blue and black backpack.

Destruction of Property, Wilson Blvd, Feb 15, 8:24 p.m., victim reported the rear window of their car was smashed.

2026 Issues Coming Soon:

March 5 – Camp Guide

March 12 – Spring Arts Issue

March 19 – Little League Kickoff / Spring Sports Kickoff

March 26 – Real Estate

Falls Church News-Press

Since 1991, an award-winning LGBT-owned general interest community newspaper.

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EDITORIAL

New Energy for F.C. Public Events

Last week, a follow up meeting to December's unprecedented pow-pow that brought together Falls Church restaurant owners with City government officials in reaction to the late-coming word the City would not be closing the 100 block of W. Broad St. for a New Year's Eve "Watch Night" event was held, as reported in last week's News-Press.

The purpose of the follow up was to brainstorm on ways to attract more outside folks to visit the Little City, and including to dine at its growing roster of restaurants. The concern, clearly, is that, with the regional economy in trouble, a loss of business is hurting our local businesses and resulting in declining tax revenues to the City.

The meeting last week was energetic, especially coming from the restaurant owners' side. A list of possible inflection points around which special events could be built to attract outside dollars into the City was drawn on a wall slate board. It was noted that, in fact, the City has lost some big events in recent years, in addition to the major downsizing of Watch Night with the decision not to close the street, including the loss of its usual Fourth of July fireworks show that used to include a lively police dog demonstration and the annual Tinner Hill Blues Festival that peaked only a couple years ago when there was a huge turnout at Cherry Hill Park.

It was also noted that some of the existing events have persisted as echoes of a Falls Church of the past, when it was more a sleepy southern village, instead of the vibrant urban scene it is becoming today. The fall festival was known as the Harvest Moon festival, and there still are farm days and Civil War reenactment days when, even only a few years ago, Confederate soldiers were given more equivalency with Union ones and a reenactor of Robert E. Lee was featured. Now, the City's needs cry out for more up-to-date, popular themes in its public events. Even the annual Memorial Day Parade and Festival, the most popular of the Little City's public celebrations, hasn't evolved in decades.

The biggest issue is the need for the City government to step up and make sure events are built, publicized and pulled off. This requires an investment of resources the City has been unwilling to provide, to date at least. In past cases, the City enjoyed the benefit of some extraordinary citizens to make good things happen.

But that level of remarkable volunteer commitment cannot be counted on, nor can hard working business owners be expected to step away from their daily efforts to take on large organizing events. As taxpayers benefit from the new revenue that comes into the City with effective public events and celebrations, more of their dollars should be used to make sure such events happen and grow.

PLATFORM

1. Keep the news clean and fair.
2. Play no favorites, never mix business and editorial policy.
3. Do not let the news columns reflect editorial content.
4. Publish the news that is public property without fear or favor of friend or foe.
5. Accept no charity and ask no favors.
6. Give 'value received' for every dollar you take in.
7. Make the paper show a profit if you can, but above all keep it clean, fearless and fair.



Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Accepting Applications through April 12, 2026

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the General Assembly to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia between 1954 and 1964 due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance. The scholarship is now available to those individuals and to their descendants. The program is open to eligible applicants for the 2026-2027 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

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A Fiery Welcome: Year of the Fire Horse at Eden Center



A huge crowd gathered at the Eden Center on Tuesday to celebrate the Year of the Fire Horse, marking the Lunar New Year with vibrant performances, festive decorations, and community spirit, including traditional dances, music, and firecrackers and cuisine. (Photos: News-Press)

Winter Health



Pages 8-9

Finding Steady Ground: Anxiety and Stress Management

BY FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

In a moment when life feels relentless, from rising costs at the grocery store to political tension and economic worries, anxiety is not just a passing feeling. It has become a common, lived experience. Recent data show this is not just perception. Nearly two out of every five American adults say they feel more anxious now than a year ago, and about 70 percent cite current events as a significant source of stress.

Behind the headlines and social media feeds are real people struggling with very real symptoms. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

roughly 12 percent of adults report regular feelings of worry or nervousness serious enough to affect daily life. Mental health concerns are now among the leading reasons for doctor visits nationwide.

These numbers reflect what many in our own community quietly acknowledge. Surveys from the American Psychological Association show that 66 percent of adults describe the current political and social climate as stressful. More concerning, about 27 percent say their stress is so severe that it interferes with their ability to function, whether that means going to work, caring for family, or sleeping through the night.

Stress does not stay in the mind.

It shows up physically as headaches, fatigue, digestive problems, muscle tension, and disrupted sleep. Over time, chronic stress is linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, and weakened immune function. When turmoil stretches on, the body never fully resets.

So what can people do when uncertainty feels constant?

One of the most practical steps is to limit nonstop exposure to news and social media. Staying informed matters. Consuming distressing updates every hour does not. Setting designated times to check the news can prevent the nervous system from remaining in a constant state of alert.

Movement also plays a powerful

role. A daily walk, light exercise, or even routine yard work helps regulate stress hormones and improve mood. Physical activity does not have to be intense to be effective. Consistency is what matters.

Sleep deserves protection. Anxiety often disrupts rest, but maintaining regular bedtimes, limiting screens before bed, and creating a calming nighttime routine can make a measurable difference in resilience.

Perhaps most importantly, connection matters. Research consistently shows that social support reduces the effects of stress. A conversation with a friend, a shared meal, or even a brief check-in call can remind us that we are not navi-

gating uncertainty alone.

Anxiety during turbulent times is not a personal failing. It is a natural response to prolonged uncertainty. But if worry begins to dominate daily life, interfere with work or relationships, or lead to feelings of hopelessness, professional help can provide relief. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day for confidential support.

We cannot control national events or global shifts. We can control how we care for ourselves and one another. In times of turmoil, steadiness comes from small, intentional actions. Those actions, repeated daily, are what build resilience in a community and in ourselves.

Drs. Love & Miller, PC

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Mark A. Miller, DDS, Melanie R. Love, DDS

Drs. Love and Miller provide a family practice with special emphasis on healthy and beautiful smiles for adults and children. Both doctors graduated from the Medical College of Virginia and have been practicing together in Falls Church for over 25 years.

SPECIALIZATION

ADA, Virginia Dental Association, Northern Virginia Dental Association (Dr. Love is Past President), American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry

AWARDS

Washingtonian Best Dentists; Washingtonian Best of Hall of Fame. Best Dentist of Falls Church 2013-2021; Virginia Living Magazine and Northern Virginia Magazine Best Dentist, 2016-2024 Best of Washingtonian, 2009-2025 Best of Falls Church, (FCNP) 2024 & 2025



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Your Gums, Diet, and Daily Habits: What You Need to Know?

BY FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

Five everyday oral-health issues—explained (with what to do next):

1) Signs you're developing gum disease

Gum disease (periodontal disease) usually starts as gingivitis, a reversible inflammation of the gums caused by plaque buildup. Common early signs include red or swollen gums, bleeding when brushing or flossing, and persistent bad breath. People often miss it because gingivitis may cause little or no pain—even while damage begins. If gingivitis isn't treated, it can progress to periodontitis, where the infection and inflammation can affect the tissues and bone supporting the teeth. Over time, this can lead to receding gums, loose teeth, and eventually tooth loss.

What to do: Don't "wait and see" on bleeding gums. Consistent brushing + interdental cleaning and a dental checkup can catch gingi-

vitis before it becomes harder to treat. Periodontitis treatment may include deep cleaning and (in some cases) more advanced care, with approaches tailored to the individual.

2) Dry mouth: causes, risks, and solutions

Dry mouth (xerostomia) happens when you don't have enough saliva to keep your mouth wet. It can occur temporarily (stress, dehydration), but persistent dry mouth is often linked to medication side effects, radiation therapy, or certain medical conditions affecting salivary glands. It's not considered a normal part of aging.

Why it matters: Saliva is a major defense system. When saliva is low, it becomes easier for harmful germs to thrive, and dry mouth can increase risk of tooth decay and oral fungal infections, plus make chewing, swallowing, or speaking uncomfortable.

Solutions that help many people: Sip water regularly and limit

caffeine/alcohol if they worsen dryness.

Chew sugar-free gum or suck on sugar-free lozenges to stimulate saliva (ask your dentist if you have TMJ issues).

Use fluoride toothpaste and ask about fluoride rinses or gels if you're cavity-prone.

If the issue is persistent, ask your clinician whether a medication review (or alternatives) is possible.

3) Are electric toothbrushes worth it?

Evidence suggests powered toothbrushes can reduce plaque and gingivitis more than manual brushing, especially certain technologies. A Cochrane review comparing powered brush types found that rotation-oscillation brushes reduced plaque and gingivitis more than some other powered designs in the short term.

The "worth it" question comes down to consistency and fit. Electric brushes can be especially helpful if you: struggle to brush for a full

two minutes, have limited dexterity, braces, or restorations, tend to brush too hard (many models include pressure sensors).

But technique still matters: whichever brush you use, focus on gentle, thorough cleaning along the gumline.

4) The truth about mouthwash

Mouthwash can be useful—but it's not a substitute for brushing and cleaning between teeth. The ADA notes mouthrinse may be a helpful addition for some people because it can reach areas not easily accessed by a toothbrush, but it should complement (not replace) daily hygiene.

"Best" depends on your goal:

Fluoride rinses can help strengthen enamel and reduce cavities risk.

Antimicrobial rinses may help with gingivitis under professional guidance.

Cosmetic "breath" rinses may freshen temporarily but won't fix the underlying cause (like gum disease or dry mouth).

Also, timing matters: if you're

using a fluoride toothpaste, some dental guidance suggests avoiding immediately rinsing away fluoride benefits; talk with your dentist about what fits your routine.

5) How diet impacts your teeth

Diet affects teeth in two major ways: sugars/starches feed acid-producing bacteria, and acids can directly wear down enamel. When decay-causing bacteria meet sugars and starches, they form acid that attacks enamel, causing mineral loss; frequent exposures make the damage more likely to progress.

Acidic foods and drinks (including many sodas, sports drinks, citrus-based beverages) can contribute to erosive tooth wear, even when they're sugar-free.

Pair sweets with meals when possible: saliva flow increases during meals, which helps rinse and buffer acids.

Make a dental appointment if you have bleeding gums, persistent bad breath, loose teeth, or dry mouth that doesn't improve.



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Dr. Peterson Huang is a Dual Board Certified Prosthodontist, dedicating 11 years to honing his craft. He grew up in Vancouver, Canada. After obtaining his dental degree from Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, he received his Certificate of Specialist in Prosthodontics and a Master of Science from the University of Maryland, where he is a Clinical Assistant Professor on the Dean's Faculty. Dr. Huang is also a staff member in the Department of Surgery, INOVA Fairfax Hospital and is a member of the Tumor Board as well. Dr. Huang lives in Falls Church, where he also has established his dental practice.

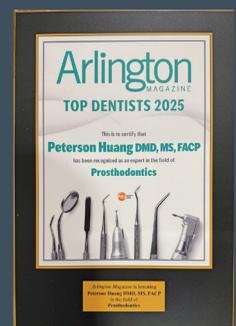
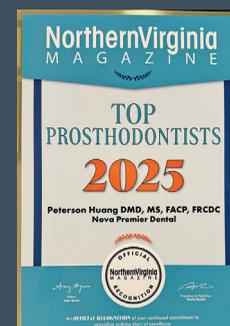
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Cauldron's New Show, 'Snapshots Musical Notebook' a Big Winner

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

"At its heart, this play asks us to consider who we were and who we want to be. This production holds up a mirror, inviting us to see ourselves, our pasts, our hopes and our futures. Without reflection on where we've been, how can we find the perseverance to move forward?"

So writes Matt Conner, director of Creative Cauldron's new and first ever DMV production of "Snapshots: A Musical Scrapbook," that opened last weekend and runs through March 8 at the Falls Church-based troupe's new location near Washington and Broad.

With music and lyrics by the Academy Award-winning Stephen Schwartz, from the book by David Stern, this show grabs the audience with a wide range of tunes from Schwartz'

"Pippin," "The Magic Show," "Wicked," "Children of Eden," "Godspell," the "Baker's Wife," and more. But more than the songs and the creative staging, the cast of six draws us in with an imaginative presentation of a story most all of us (if we've been around awhile) can relate to deeply.

It's domestic. There's no violence. It's between a man and wife. But it cuts through seeming conventionalities to address the far greater complexities of the human experience of primary relationships.

Sally Imbriano as Susan, Gretchen Midgley and Susie, Jennifer Redford as Sue, Joshua Redford as Dan, Ben Ribler as Danny and Carl L. Williams as Daniel weave stories of a life-long intimate friendship, relationship, marriage and child raising as a confluence of all that confronts the prospect of dashing them all.

In case you didn't notice,

among those six just named, there are only two characters, really. It's Susan/Susie/Sue and Dan/Danny/Daniel.

The play takes us through all the stages of their lives together. Where will they go now that one of them has maybe hit a wall? For whatever time they may have? Or not?

I was moved by the play's apparent "ordinariliness" because that is the sneaky channel through which it speaks deeply to the heart, to memories and especially feelings about things we did, or maybe didn't do, in the process of our growing up and that were able to make it work, or not, with someone we truly loved. Or, perhaps best of all for audiences, to show a way it still can for all who struggle with these options.

According to the Cauldron's website, "Snapshot is a touching and authentic look into how we fall in love and the

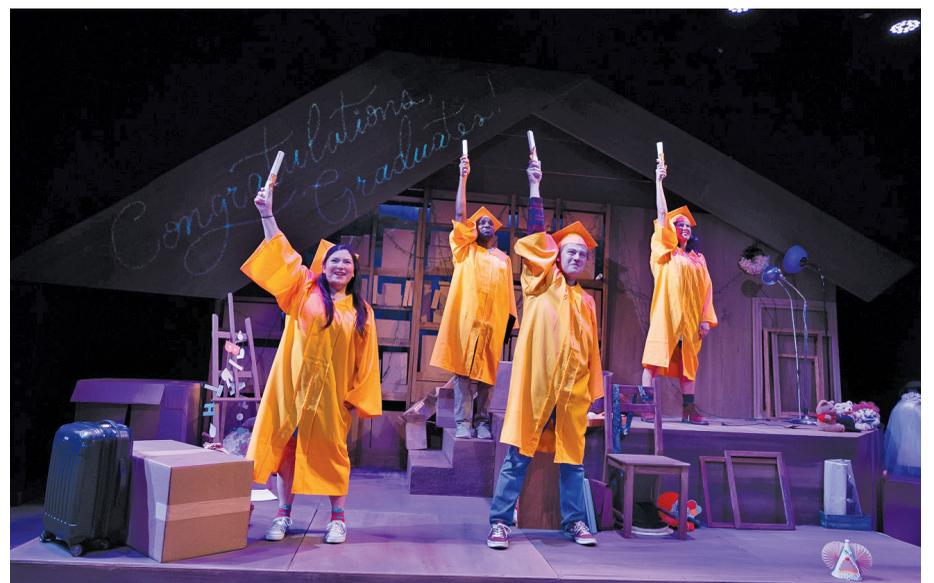
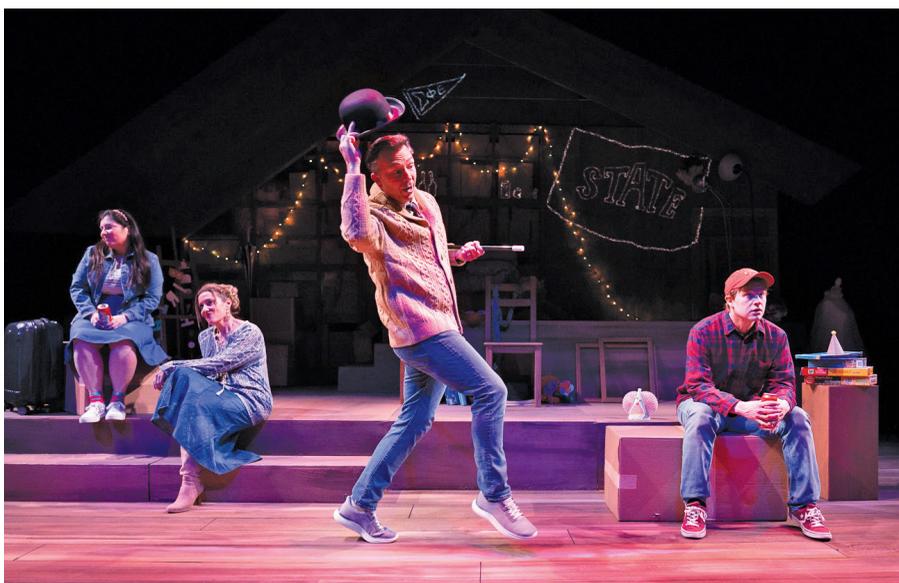
poignant power of trusting our hearts and memories. Sue has her bags packed, her farewell note written and the resolution to leave her husband, Dan, after decades of their lives entwined. Finding herself in their dusty, suburban attic for a final goodbye to the life they led, Sue is startled when Dan arrives home early from his all-consuming job. Surrounded by a lifetime of memories and phantoms of their former selves, Sue and Dan embark on a cerebral journey to the past, rediscovering their true love that remained hidden in a lifetime of Snapshots."

Kudos to everyone involved, to Creative Cauldron and especially its soul, the great Laura Connors Hull, for this penetrating show.

In addition to Hull and the talented and delightful cast whose bios are filled with momentous achievements, there is the Production Team

of Matt Conner, Director, Elisa Rosman, Music Director, Stefan Sittig; Choreographer, Nicholas Goodman, Stage Manager; Margie Jervis, Set/Props Designer; Tessa Grippaudo, Costume Designer; Fern Middleton, Lighting Designer; Projection Designer; E. Lieu Wolhardt, Assistant Projection Designer; Jo Adereth, Assistant Stage Manager; Shana Fishman, Dance Captain/Female understudy; Odette Gutierrez del Arroyo, Male understudy; Cristian Bustillos, and Musicians: Drums, Dakota Kaylor (Guido Vit sub) Bass, Joe Lostumbo; Guitar, Ryan Roikola; Keys, Elisa Rosman

"Snapshot: A Musical Scrapbook" runs from now to March 8 with shows Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Recommended for ages 10 and up, tickets are \$40 or \$50 and \$25 for students.



"SNAPSHOTS: A MUSICAL SCRAPBOOK," now on stage at Creative Cauldron, brings Stephen Schwartz's beloved songs to life. (Photo: William T. Gallagher Photography)

This Week Around Falls Church

Friday, Feb. 20

City Council Budget & Finance Committee Meeting
8:30–9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Dogwood Room A, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church
Committee meeting.

Military History Forum: An Extraordinary WWII Story of Survival, Faith, and Brotherhood
10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Falls Church Senior Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church
Forum program.

Regional Playoffs — Girls Varsity Basketball
6 p.m.
Meridian High School Gym, 121 Mustang Alley, Falls Church, VA 22043
Regional playoff game.

Regional Playoffs — Boys Varsity Basketball
7:30 p.m.
Meridian High School Gym, 121 Mustang Alley, Falls Church, VA 22043
Regional playoff game.

Saturday, Feb. 21

Falls Church Farmers Market
8 a.m.–12 p.m.
City Hall Parking Lot, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church
Weekly outdoor market.

Eden Center Lunar New Year Celebrations
Starting at noon
Eden Center, 6751–6799 Wilson Blvd., Falls Church
Free face painting, balloon twisting, and caricatures.

Black History Month Symposium
1:00–3:30 p.m.

Meridian High School, 121 Mustang Alley, Falls Church
Panel of historians, art and culture experts, music, poetry, and Peace Garden tours. Free and open to the public.

Better Said Than Done: ‘Player’
6–8 p.m.

Clare & Don’s Beach Shack, 130 N. Washington St., Falls Church
Live storytelling show featuring stories about games, cheats, and tricks.

The Mane Edit Salon Grand Opening Event
6:30–9:30 p.m.
The Mane Edit Salon, 444 W. Broad St., Suite G, Falls Church, VA 22046
Drinks, snacks, and giveaways.

Sunday, Feb. 22

Washington Saxophone Quartet (Holy Comforter Concert Series)
4 p.m.

Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road NE, Vienna
Works mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries, plus the world premiere of a piece by Arlington composer Heather Spence. Free and open to the public. Reception follows.

Monday, Feb. 23

City Council Meeting
7:30–11 p.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers/ Court Room, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church
Regular meeting.

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Family Coloring Club
3:45–4:45 p.m.
Mary Riley Styles Public Library, 120 N. Virginia Ave., Falls Church
Family-friendly coloring program.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

Mayor’s Agenda Meeting with Staff
8:30–9 a.m.
City Hall, Oak Room, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church
Agenda meeting.

City Council Government Operations Committee Meeting
9–10 a.m.
City Hall, Oak Room, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church
Committee meeting.

AI Workshop for Parents of Teens (Online)
6–7 p.m.
Online
Workshop for parents.

Eli Lev
7 p.m.
Clare & Don’s Beach Shack, 130 N. Washington St., Falls Church
Live music performance.

Ongoing (Feb. 4–28) McLean Art Society ‘From the Heart’ Exhibition and February Members Show

Wednesday–Sunday, 12–6 p.m.
McLean Art Gallery, 6224B Old Dominion Drive, McLean (Chesterbrook Shopping Center)
170 new works from more than 40 local artists. Free and open to the public.

Have an event you want to see in the News-Press?

Send us an email to calendar@fcnp.com



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MAR 14 SAVED BY THE 90S 90S DANCE PARTY

MAR 20 FOLSOM 4 JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE

MAR 21 THE STRANGER BILLY JOEL TRIBUTE

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LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA**

A Planning Commission public hearing and possible recommendation for City Council action on the following is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

(TO25-22) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CHAPTER 48, "ZONING," SECTION 48-2, "DEFINITIONS," SECTION 48-3, "GENERAL REGULATIONS" AND SECTION 48-1101, "GENERAL REQUIREMENTS," TO INCREASE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TREE CANOPY COVERAGE WITHIN NONRESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code would update minimum standards for tree canopy coverage within non-residential zoning districts, including B-1 Limited Business, B-2 Central Business, B-3 General Business, T-1 Transitional, T-2 Transitional, O-D Official Design, and M-1 Light Industry districts.

All public hearings will be held in the Council Chambers, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia. All persons desiring to present their views on the items will be heard. Comments may also be sent to jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov. Remote participation information at www.fallschurchva.gov/pc. For copies of legislation and other information, contact Jack Trainor jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov. The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability, call 571-421-7943 or e-mail jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA**

The following was given first reading at the September 8, 2025, City Council meeting. Public hearing, second reading, and possible City Council action is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

(TR24-28) RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO UPDATE CHAPTER 8, "COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS: COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES"

The following was given first reading at the February 9, 2026, City Council meeting. Public hearing, second reading, and possible City Council action is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

(TO25-22) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CHAPTER 48, "ZONING," SECTION 48-2, "DEFINITIONS," SECTION 48-3, "GENERAL REGULATIONS," SECTION 48-1101, "GENERAL REQUIREMENTS," SECTION 48-1106, "TREE CANOPY REQUIREMENTS IN NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS," AND SECTION 48-1135, "PRELIMINARY SURVEY DOCUMENTS," TO INCREASE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TREE CANOPY COVERAGE WITHIN NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

All public hearings will be held in the Council Chambers, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia. All persons desiring to present their views on the items will be heard. Comments may also be sent to cityclerk@fallschurchva.gov. Remote participation information at www.fallschurchva.gov/publiccomment. For copies of legislation and other information, contact the City Clerk's office at 703-248-5014 or cityclerk@fallschurchva.gov or visit www.fallschurchva.gov/councilmeetings. The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability, call 703-248-5014 (TTY 711) or e-mail cityclerk@fallschurchva.gov.

CELESTE HEATH, CITY CLERK

**PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING**

A Planning Commission public hearing and possible recommendation to City Council is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the following:

The Proposed Fiscal Year 2027-2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) identifies capital needs of the community and indicates how these needs will be funded over the next six-year period. The CIP is updated annually and is subject to change with each update. Following the public hearing on March 4, the Planning Commission will submit its recommendations to the City Council, for consideration and subsequent adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget and Fiscal Year 2027-2032 Capital Improvements Program. The proposed plan and more information may be found at www.fallschurchva.gov/CIP.

The materials for the above item will be available on the city's webpage prior to the public hearing: <http://www.fallschurchva.gov/PC>. All persons desiring to present their views on the items will be heard. For copies of materials and other information, contact Jack Trainor jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov.

All public hearings will be held in the Council Chambers, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia. All persons desiring to present their views on the items will be heard. Comments may also be sent to jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov. Remote participation information at www.fallschurchva.gov/pc. For copies of legislation and other information, contact Jack Trainor jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov. The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability, call 571-421-7943 or e-mail jtrainor@fallschurchva.gov.

**PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING**

The City of Falls Church Historic Architectural Review Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 7:00 PM in City Hall's Dogwood Room (first floor), Park Ave, Falls Church, VA 22043 to consider the following:

PROPOSED ALTERATION OF 319 N MAPLE AVENUE

Information or copies of the proposed alteration can be viewed at the Community Planning and Economic Development Services (CPEDS) counter at City Hall, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, VA, Monday through Friday (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). You may contact the Planning Division at plan@fallschurchva.gov with any questions or concerns.

This location is fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities and special services or assistance may be requested in advance. (TTY 711)

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Notice is hereby given that Haime LLC, 4522 Shoal Creek Ct, Alexandria, Virginia 22312, has filed an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity that would authorize: 1. Passenger transportation as a Common Carrier over Irregular Routes, providing service in the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester, Virginia, and the Counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford, Virginia and; 2. The transportation of Medicaid recipients throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Carrier as defined in Section 46.2-200 et seq. Of the Code of Virginia.

Any person who desires to protest the application and be a party to the matter must submit a signed and dated written request setting forth (1) a precise statement of the party's interest and how the party could be aggrieved if the application was granted; (2) a full and clear statement of the facts that the person is prepared to provide by competent evidence; (3) a statement of the specific relief sought; (4) the name of the applicant and case number assigned to the application and (5) a certification that a copy of the protest was sent to the applicant. The case number assigned to this application is MC2600070BW.

Written protests must be mailed to DMV Motor Carrier Services, Attn: Operating Authority, P.O. Box 27412, Richmond, VA 23269-0001 and must be postmarked on or before March 11, 2026.

Any protest Filed with competent evidence will be carefully considered by DMV, however DMV will have full discretion as to whether a hearing is warranted based on the merits of the protest filed.

Cemetery Plots For Sale

1-4 cemetery plots in National Memorial Park in Falls Church Virginia. Beautiful cemetery with a serene, quiet location for these plots. \$5995 each. Contact information: Richard Honaker 214-532-1420 Honaker@aol.com

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Delegate Marcus Simon's Richmond Report



The story of Virginia cannot be told without the voices, leadership, and resilience of Black Virginians. Their contributions have helped build our Commonwealth and move our nation forward. This is a time to celebrate that legacy, but also to acknowledge that meaningful progress requires honest reflection and continued action to expand opportunity and justice.

That same sense of responsibility—to honor the past while doing the work of the present—has been on full display at the Capitol. Last week marked the final stretch before crossover, the halfway point of the legislative session, when the pace quickens and the days grow longer. Extended House floor sessions and marathon committee meetings are part of this moment, ensuring that every bill receives the careful hearing, debate, and vote it deserves. As hundreds of proposals move forward, our focus remains steady: advancing legislation that delivers real, tangible results for families, workers, and communities across Virginia.

Transparency & Efficiency

Transparency and efficiency remain central to our work. Several bills this session are designed to protect consumers and make public and private systems work more clearly and fairly. HB 484 stops insurers from using automated tools to reduce medical claims unfairly, ensuring patients and providers receive the coverage they are owed. HB 618 improves how health plan information is collected and reported so it is easier for the public and regulators to access. HB 676 allows providers to submit information electronically while requiring insurers to offer payment options without extra fees. In housing, HB 616 and HB 1325 require landlords to provide clear, itemized statements, written leases, and a summary of tenant rights, including disclosures about fees and flood risk.

Affordability

Affordability continues to be a major priority. HB 519 treats air conditioning as an essential service in rental housing, protecting tenants during extreme heat. HB 625 caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, while HB 837 expands eviction diversion programs and ensures tenants know about available rental assistance. HB 1005 requires landlords to accept common payment methods and limits extra fees for maintenance. HB 1078 prevents large landlords from denying applicants based on old eviction records. HB 1093 limits excessive attorney fees when tenants pay overdue rent

before court, HB 1214 lowers the monthly insulin cap to \$35, and HB 1408 protects survivors of family abuse from eviction penalties. These measures make daily life more manageable for Virginians and ensure that fairness guides our laws.

Economic & Social Justice

The House has also advanced a slate of bills on public safety, civil rights, and economic fairness, now under consideration in the Senate. Economic and environmental justice legislation includes HB 1, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2028; HB 4, allowing localities to preserve affordable housing; HB 397, preparing Virginia to re-enter RGGI to combat climate change; and HB 449, giving Virginians the tools to hold powerful companies accountable through class action lawsuits.

Public Safety

Gun violence prevention remains a top priority. HB 21 creates civil accountability for firearm manufacturers. My HB 40 to ban ghost guns once again passed the House. HB 93 prevents illegal firearms from reaching domestic abusers. HB 217 prohibits assault weapons, HB 229 bars firearms in hospitals that provide mental health services, and HB 871 requires safe firearm storage in homes with minors or prohibited individuals. Together, these measures make our communities safer while respecting lawful gun ownership.

Redistricting

With the Governor's signature on the enabling legislation, the approval of funding in the budget, and the election calendar now finalized, the mid-decade redistricting process is officially underway. The legal framework and resources are now in place to implement the updated congressional district maps, and the timelines for the April 21st election have been set so voters can plan accordingly. Our focus now shifts to executing this process smoothly and transparently to ensure voters have clear information and confidence in the updated congressional districts and upcoming election schedule.

Championing the issues that matter the most to my constituents means showing up, standing up, and lifting up the voices of all our neighbors. It means advancing policies that improve lives, build trust, and create opportunities. Together, we can make Virginia a Commonwealth that works for everyone. And the legislation that is advancing this session is designed to do just that.

Guest Commentary: Dr. Nollen on Tariffs

Exclusive to the News-Press
BY DR. STANLEY NOLLEN

On April 2nd 2025, newspaper readers were greeted with headlines like this one:

“Trump Imposes 10 percent Baseline Tariff Rate on All Imports, and Higher Rates for Some Nations (Wall Street Journal, April 2, 2025)

The baseline tariff of 10 percent meant that all imports from any country would face a 10 percent tariff. Higher ‘reciprocal tariffs’ were imposed on several other countries, for example: China 35 percent, European Union 20 percent, Japan 24 percent, South Korea 25 percent, and Vietnam 46 percent, with similar higher rates for several other countries.

In the following days, we read news stories that reported the views of economists, business people, and the public that said the tariffs would cause price inflation:

“... economists said Trump's tariffs could ‘reignite inflation’ and increase costs for U.S. households (Reuters April 3, 2025)

“73 percent of Americans expect a price surge under Trump's tariffs.” (Reuters April 8, 2025)

However, the expected surge in price inflation appeared not to happen, according to official US Bureau of Labor Statistics figures. The official consumer price index (CPI) as of March 2025 just before the tariffs were announced was 2.4 percent and the CPI most recently posted was 2.7 percent. (These figures report the annual rate of price increase for the past one year; on a monthly basis the rate of price increase was 0.2 percent in March and 0.3 percent in December.)

While affordability is now a potent political issue, it looks like Trump's tariffs have not caused price inflation, or at least not much of it. Why? Were economists wrong? Was the public misinformed?

No, neither was wrong or misinformed. We know why the measured effect of tariffs on prices is small as of now. Based on mainstream economics and the realities of the US economy, here are eight reasons.

Many announced tariffs were withdrawn and did not go into effect at that level.

The April 2nd tariffs against several countries were quickly cut back. Trump made deals with countries that promised to make direct investments in the US in return for cuts in tariffs. For example, the tariffs on imports were reduced to 15 percent for the EU, 15 percent for Japan, 15 percent for South Korea, and

20 percent for Vietnam. The tariff on imports from China went down and up and down again several times from a peak of 145 percent to a late 2025 rate of 30 percent.

There were many ‘carve-outs’ so that the average tariff was less than many headlines reported.

The average effective tariff against imports into the US was 2.3 percent before Trump's tariffs. Now the figure is about 15-17 percent. (This figure measures total customs duties collected as a percentage of the value of imports; it reflects both statutory tariff rates and trade behavior (e.g., sourcing shifts, exemptions, tariff avoidance).

Importers in the US absorbed part of the tariffs and passed along only a minority share of the tariffs to their customers.

Studies from authoritative sources say that US businesses paid about half of the tariffs, consumers paid about a third in the form of higher prices, and foreign exporters absorbed about 10 percent of the tariff by reducing their price to the US importer (sources include Goldman Sachs, Yale Budget Lab, EconoFact).

There was a surge of import buying just after the tariffs were announced in April and before they came into effect, with a drop-off in imports coming into the US afterwards.

Imports of goods into the US were about \$330 billion in January and February 2025 but jumped up to \$347 billion in March, the month before the tariffs were announced in anticipation of them, but then dropped to around \$270 billion for April, May, and June as importers advanced their import purchases ahead of the expected tariffs and reduced their imports after the tariff announcement (US Bureau of Economic Analysis). The smaller import figures for the months after the tariffs mean they could not have as great an effect on prices.

The effects of tariffs on prices will be felt more in the long run than in the first few months.

Businesses often don't raise their prices to customers right away because of uncertainty about where the tariffs will end up and uncertainty about what their competitors will do. Instead they take smaller margins in the short run. Tariffs are a once-for-all increase in the business's costs, and many businesses chose to take lower profits rather than lose customers.

Continued on Page 14

IN MEMORIAM: JON ALAN BENNETT

Jon Alan Bennett, 73, formerly of the Falls Church area and Arlington, passed away unexpectedly on February 3 of a heart related issue in a nursing and rehabilitation center in Debarry, Florida, after being hospitalized for a non-life threatening condition in December.

Mr. Bennett graduated in 1972 from J.E.B. Stuart High School, where he was a member of the rifle team. He was active in the Crossman United Methodist Youth Fellowship as a young man, and volunteered as a youth counselor at a church in Reston in later years.

He was a tall and big man, known to many as "Big Jon." A devotee of body art, he had a large number of tattoos on his body, and won a second place award in the 1990s at the Nashville Tattoo Arts Festival for a custom tattoo on his leg.

A music fan who attended concerts at many venues in this area, including the Capital Center, JV's Restaurant, Merriweather Post Pavillion, and Wolftrap, he had a large record collection of LPs, 45s, and 78s in various musical genres, including blues, bluegrass, country, folk, jazz, and rock and roll.

Mr. Bennett developed a reputation as a firearms expert, and worked as a security guard for several companies during

his professional career. He retired in 2003 with the rank of captain after 25 years of service at The Colonies condominium community in McLean.

He is survived by his sister, Mary Anne Bennett of Florida, many first cousins in Florida and Virginia, including former Delegate Bob Hull, who represented the Falls Church area in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1993 to 2010, and numerous second and third cousins, primarily in Florida and South Carolina.

Mr. Bennett was predeceased by his father, Steve Bennett, and mother, Aileen Farmer Bennett, who taught mathematics in Arlington County public schools for 35 years. A Master Mason, a memorial service will be held for him in Titusville, Florida, later in March.



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Mixed Reviews on Tariffs

Continued from Page 1

Tariffs are quite a small share of the US economy, so their effect on prices overall cannot be large.

The size of the US economy in 2025 measured as gross domestic product was \$30.6 trillion. Imports were about \$3.4 trillion. That is a big number, but it is only a bit more than 10 percent of GDP. Imports are a relatively small tail wagging a big dog.

The tariffs affect goods, not services.

Imports of services amount to roughly 20 percent of all imports, but services are not affected by tariffs because unlike goods, they are not shipped physically through ports of entry. This reduces the impact of tariffs on US consumer prices.

Prices to consumers are influenced by many forces, not just tariffs.

Tariffs are one among many costs of production for businesses. While tariffs were raised, there were other cost savings that tended to offset the impact of tariffs. For example, labor productivity increased about 3.5 percent in the post-tariff 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2025 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics).

So the short answer to the question is this: There was an inflationary impact of Trump's tariffs. It was rather

small but likely to grow over time. Why was it small, so far? Because the tariffs were not as high as originally announced, they were partly absorbed by businesses and not, so far, passed along to consumers, and they affect only a relatively small share of the US economy. A caution: the long run hasn't arrived yet. The bigger question to ask next is what effect will the tariffs have on the growth and competitiveness of the economy.

Dr. Stanley Nollen has had a 50-year career as a professor of economics at Georgetown University.

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FALLS CHURCH BUSINESS NEWS & NOTES

Lions Club Fruit Sale

The Falls Church-Annandale Lions Club Charities announce their Premium Citrus Fruit Sale will be this Saturday, February 21, 8:15 a.m. until sold out. All proceeds support their charitable work in the Falls Church and Annandale communities. Visit them Saturday at the Annandale Swim and Tennis Club. The address is 7530 Little River Turnpike between Wendy's and McDonald's in the Craig Moving Van. <http://fc-alions.org>

Black History and The Arts

Historians and art and culture experts will lead an interactive discussion this weekend in Falls Church on Black history and the arts. The afternoon will feature four presenters, audience discussions, musical performances, a poetry reading and tours of the Marian Costner Selby Peace Garden and Exhibit at the high school. "Voices of Resilience: Embracing Black History and the Arts, From Insight to Action" will be held from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21, at Meridian High School, 121 Mustang Alley. The program is sponsored by the Social Justice Committee of Falls Church and Vicinity, an initiative of the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation of Falls Church. Members of the Chi Beta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. are also partnering to host the event.

Casual Pint Hosts Port City

Casual Pint Falls Church highlights some of Port City Brewing's beers on multiple taps tonight, February 19, 5:00 – 9:00 pm. Try them and learn more about the Alexandria brewery too.

Kettlebell Introduction

Saturday, February 21, 12:00 – 1:00 PM – Functional Fitness offers a monthly, free introduction to kettlebell fundamentals. Think: hip hinge, goblet squat, and cheat clean moves. The class will teach you how to "move better" and "get stronger" using the kettlebell swing, deadlift, squat and press. No experience is necessary and the class is scalable to suit individual ability levels.

Civic Jam 250: Call for Civic Groups and Nonprofits

As part of the country's 250th commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the City of Falls Church is inviting civic groups and nonprofits to participate in Civic Jam 250 on Friday, July 3, 6:00 – 10:00 pm. Those interested in increasing their volunteer or membership base may participate by contacting Corey Payne at cpayne@fallschurchva.gov. A virtual 30-minute session will be held next Tuesday, February 24 at 6:00 pm with information and the opportunity to ask questions. The event will include a beer garden, local food, and classic summer fun. Only civic and nonprofit groups, breweries, and restaurant/food vendors may participate. There will be no fireworks at this event.

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Our Man In Arlington

BILL FOGARTY

As I reach my one-year anniversary of writing this column, I am appreciative of all the interesting stories that folks share with me. A friend recently sent me some information about the Arlington Rotary Club, which aligned with my concerns about access to local news. In this case, it started with an obituary in the club's newsletter that highlighted the amazing story of a long-time club member, Joseph Lott, who was a survivor of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. He narrowly escaped being in the wrong place at the wrong time, thanks to a last-minute gift of an art tie from a friend. It is a fascinating story that you can access with a word search of "Joseph Lott World Trade Center."

As Mr. Lott walked through the smoke and debris of lower Manhattan that day, he assisted strangers and friends in a remarkable journey that no doubt influenced his decision to join the Rotary Club, and to live with a strong commitment to service. As noted in the obituary, community service was central to Mr. Lott's identity. He was a proud member of Rotary International, serving twice as President of the Arlington Rotary Club. He particularly enjoyed supporting the Arlington Rotary Educational Foundation, directing scholarship funds to local students. In recognition of his commitment, he received the Arlington Inter-Service Club Council Community Leader Award in 2014.

I share this story about Mr. Lott as a follow-up to my column last week, where I wrote that there were three things I would like to see in our local news landscape in Arlington. Those three elements are (i) local sports news, (ii) letters to the editor, and (iii) obituaries. Of course, those items are an add-on to the need for basic community news on a daily basis. At this time, I am finding that, for daily Arlington news, I am generally relying on the online publication known as ARLnow, which provides newsletter emails with Arlington-focused articles. I also appreciate their "Early Morning Notes," where they curate news items from other publications in our region. Their website has

several separate sections, which include a listing of letters to the editor, obituaries, and sports. Those categories appear to be in the early stages of development for ARLnow; hopefully we will see an expansion in those matters. I must say that one potentially dangerous part of their system is that ARLnow accepts anonymous comments – I have mixed feelings about the usage of comments in publications.

There are other online publications that send out newsletter emails, such as Arlington Patch (daily emails) and Arlington Buzz (a weekly email with a listing of local events). Then there is *Arlington Magazine*, which covers Arlington and Falls Church with a print magazine issued six times a year. And I am certain that I will hear from many of you of other suggestions for local news and information.

In closing, it is appropriate to note the passing of William T. Newman, Jr., who grew up in Arlington, started a local law practice, and went on to become the first African American elected to the Arlington County Board in the 20th century. Newman became a judge for the Arlington County Circuit Court, where he was chief judge for two decades. His legacy includes being the founder of the Arlington Community Foundation, which has blossomed as an organization and now touches virtually every corner of the Arlington community. It is my hope that you can find some comprehensive obituaries about Judge Newman that capture the extent of his life's work. I would note that in one of my history columns last year, I shared a story about an experimental worship service held at Rock Spring Congregational Church in 1968, involving a play with "racial tensions," written by a Wakefield High School senior by the name of Bill Newman. His commitment to justice started at an early age!

The life stories of people such as Judge Newman and Mr. Lott are a testament to the value of making a commitment to serving the community, and to sustaining institutions that outlast any one moment. It is good to be reminded of such stories by way of our local news coverage.

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